

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Counter Extremism</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> October 2018</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Melinda King</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 292949</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE.**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to brief the committee on work being undertaken under the local Counter Extremism (CE) strategy to challenge extremism in all its forms.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That committee:
- 2.2 Note the contents of the report.
- 2.3 Note that the committee has access to the national Special Interest Group on Countering Extremism (SIGCE), and is invited to nominate a lead from each political group on the committee to join the SIGCE.
- 2.4 Note that committee members are invited to attend the half day *Workshop on Countering Extremism* facilitated by the Communities Coordinator, and agree to feedback relevant concerns from constituents to the Communities Coordinator.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

National Context

- 3.1 The National Counter-Extremism (CE) Strategy was published in October 2015. This strategy sets out the Government's overarching approach to tackling extremism in all its forms. The strategy defines extremism as "*vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs*"
- 3.2 The CE Strategy recognises the wider harms of extremism, outside of terrorism and radicalisation which come under Prevent. These wider harms are identified

as hate incidents and hate crimes, less cohesive society, harmful practices (e.g. forced marriage), and rejection of democracy and of the rule of law. The CE strategy is therefore distinct and complementary to the Prevent Strategy.

- 3.3 In December 2017 a national Special Interest Group for Countering Extremism (SIGCE) was launched to bring together Local Authorities to share learning, co-produce tools and resources, and collectively resolve shared challenges. The dedicated online SIGCE Knowledge Hub hosts the emerging outputs from the SIGCE's work, including a resource library and a platform for discussing issues and ideas. The SIGCE has held an initial seminar on "extremist speakers" and future seminars on extremism topics are being planned.
- 3.4 On 24th January 2018 the Home Office announced the appointment of the new lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism. The Commission is engaging widely to support communities and public sector in confronting extremism where it exists.
- 3.5 Nationally the most significant risks in relation to extremism have been identified as extreme right-wing groups and Al-Qaida (AQ) or Daesh inspired or affiliated extremists.

#### Local Context

- 3.6 The Communities Coordinator came into post in the council in July 2017, as a dedicated resource to embed the national CE strategy and build capacity in countering extremism at the local level. This is a Home Office funded post in the Communities Equality and Third Sector Team, currently funded until the end of March 2019.
- 3.7 The local CE Strategy sits within the *The Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2017-20*. An action plan has been developed to support this strategy.
- 3.8 In agreement with the Home Office, initial work has focused on pillar 2 of the national strategy (*building a partnership with all those opposed to extremism*), which is closely linked to pillar 4 (*building cohesive communities*).
- 3.9 In May 2018 the Home Office announced a renewed focus on pillar 1 (*countering extremist ideology*) and pillar 3 (*disrupting extremism*). Whilst in many areas the focus is on disrupting extremist speakers and events, in Brighton & Hove, current local strategic assessment suggests the need to prioritise ongoing focus on tackling extremist ideology through developing counter-narratives and on addressing hate crime, whilst being flexible to respond to emerging risk and focus on the disrupting extremism as the need arises.
- 3.10 The Communities Coordinator has developed CE work through building an understanding of the wider harms of extremism in the local area, identifying partners, building networks between partners, and supporting groups to build capacity and amplify reach. Detail on each strand is provided directly below.

#### Building Understanding

- 3.11 Building an understanding of the nature of extremism in Brighton and Hove is complex as the harms of extremism can often exist under the surface within communities. In addition there is not one single set of data but rather a series of indicators which together give a picture of the nature of extremism within our communities (including hate crime reports, harmful practices reports, graffiti, protests, events of concern, online comments and anecdotal information from communities).
- 3.12 Through strategic assessment key concerns for Brighton & Hove have been identified as anti-minority narratives (of the type most commonly associated with far right extremism), hate incidents and hate crimes (across the protected characteristics), and the associated impact on community cohesion. In 2017/18 there were 572 racially and religiously motivated hate incidents and crimes reported, 236 homophobic/biphobic/transphobic hate incidents and crimes reported, and 62 disability hate incidents and crimes reported. However information from community groups suggests that not all incidents are reported and that the real number is higher. In particular recent concerns have been raised around Islamophobia and particularly the targeting of visibly Muslim women, anti-Semitism, racist incidents (including within schools), and incidents of transphobia. Positive partnership work is being developed with community groups to tackle these concerns.
- 3.13 Reported incidents of harmful practices (female genital mutilation, 'honour based' violence and forced marriage) are low, with 15 police recorded crimes and incidents of harmful practices and incidents in 2016/17, however the real number may be higher. The Communities Coordinator continues to work with colleagues and partners to understand these issues in the local area and shape future work.
- 3.14 Work with local communities identified public transport as one of the locations where hate crimes occur. Positive partnership work has been done with Brighton & Hove Bus Company who have been facilitated to attend community group meetings to build trust and confidence and a partnership hate crime campaign will be launched for Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- 3.15 Two City Conversation events were held in May attended by approximately 50 people to give their views on the National Integrated Communities Green Paper with the feedback sent to national Government. The feedback highlights the importance of use of positive language, taking an asset based approach, and not focusing negatively on any particular community.
- 3.16 The Communities Coordinator continues to undertake work to further build an understanding of extremism, a Joint Workshop between the council and Sussex Police will held in September.

#### Identifying Partners

- 3.17 Approximately 70 community groups have been met with to raise awareness of the CE strategy, hear community concerns, and gain buy-in for working together on countering extremism. This includes groups who have tackling hate as their main priority such as the LGBT Community Safety Forum, but also those which use art and sports to bring people together, those working in neighbourhoods, and those working with young people. The Communities Coordinator has, for

example, met with young people participating in UK Unsigned to hear their views, supported Ambigo CIC to ensure their ambition workshops reach a diverse audience building cohesion, and supported events held by the International Network of Women.

- 3.18 This work seeks to ensure that projects with communities of identity are linked with work in geographical neighbourhoods and support work to tackle the harms of extremism in the Neighbourhood Action Plans.
- 3.19 Communication with partners takes place on a regular basis to continue relationship building and share information and opportunities.

#### Building Networks

- 3.20 All extremisms are divisive in nature hence local work is focused on bringing people together and doing positive work around intersectionality.
- 3.21 A Joint Networks Forum has been created to bring together a range of community groups representing diverse communities (including BME, LGBT, inter-faith and women's groups) to discuss common issues and joint working, the forum has now met three times. This has enabled the Racial Harassment Forum to share the learning from their hate crime consultation with other community groups, and for the groups to have a presentation on restorative approaches, with a full training session now being planned. This has also given Forum members the opportunity to discuss their shared priorities which have been identified as social media training and advice for witnesses when a hate crime occurs. The Communities Coordinator is now working collaboratively with community groups to develop projects on these priorities. Two open networking events have also been held for groups and networking across community groups is supported on an ongoing basis.
- 3.22 A range of positive cohesion events have been held and supported including the Strong Sisterhood women's panel event held as part of LGBT History Month and the participation of inter-faith groups in the Brighton Pride parade. Positive messaging is maximised through social media.

#### Building Capacity and amplifying reach

- 3.23 The local approach to CE is collaborative working with community groups and starting from an asset based model, recognising and build on the wide range of work already being undertaken in Brighton & Hove.
- 3.24 Two funding events have been held to support groups to apply for funding streams to help maximise their work in CE. Several individual groups have been supported to apply for funding and successes have included Racial Harassment Forum, Brighton Table Tennis Club, and Brighton & Hove Faith in Action. Information about funding streams is shared with community groups on an ongoing basis.
- 3.25 The Communities Coordinator supports ongoing projects being run by community groups such as the Combatting Faith Hate Partnership which will include a panel of religious leaders doing assemblies in schools to model religious tolerance and

run a faith tour of places of worship. The post also delivered hate crime awareness sessions to young people taking part in the National Citizens Service.

- 3.26 There has also been use of the Safe in the City social media accounts to spread positive messages of cohesion and communicate information from community groups to reach a wider audience.

#### Future Plans

- 3.27 Future plans include:

- Continue to build an understanding of the nature of extremism in Brighton & Hove through partnership work with Sussex Police and direct engagement with residents
- Launch a partnership hate crime awareness campaign with Brighton and Hove Bus Company and work with Brighton and Sussex Universities on hate crime awareness.
- Hold a half day CE Workshop with Councillors.
- Build further links with the SIGCE to maximise the knowledge gained from national learning.

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 This report is intended to provide an update on current progress on the work under the CE section of the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy, this section is not applicable. The work of the Communities Co-ordinator is required by the Home Office.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The full strategic assessment for current *Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy* was carried out in autumn 2016, and included a consultation event on the findings and proposed priorities for 2017-20. Invited participants included members of the Safe in the City Partnership Board, and community and voluntary sector partners, including representatives of Local Action Teams and communities of interest.
- 5.2 A draft of the Community Safety Strategy was made available for public comment via the consultation portal and in more targeted arenas.
- 5.3 Ongoing engagement is central to the work of countering extremism and projects are developed accordingly.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The report is to provide an update on progress of work relating to CE and to invite any comment.

## 7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The Communities Coordinator is a Home Office funded post in the Communities Equality and Third Sector Team, currently funded until the end of March 2019.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Name Michael Bentley Date: 21/08/18*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There is a specific statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism (section 26, Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015). This is primarily focused on the Prevent agenda but there is some crossover in to the agenda around extremism as this could lead to terrorism.

Local authority responsibilities for community safety fall to be discharged in such a way which counters extremism. Extremism often includes discriminatory behaviour and all local authorities have duties under s149 of the Equalities Act 2010 to promote equality.

This Committee has delegated authority for discharging the Council's functions relating to community safety, and for monitoring risk and co-ordinating Prevent and other counter-extremism activity. As such it is the appropriate body to receive this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Victoria Simpson Date: 12.09.18*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Work within the CE strategy focuses specifically on building good relations, increasing positive messaging about and between diverse communities and avoiding harm to vulnerable people and communities. Assessments of equality impact and engagement with diverse groups are central to the approach

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 None

### Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. None

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

### **Background Documents**

1. National Counter Extremism Strategy  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/counter-extremism-strategy>
2. Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2017-2020  
<https://www.safeinthecity.info/sites/safeinthecity.info/files/Brighton%20%26%20Hove%20Community%20Safety%20and%20Crime%20Reduction%20Strategy%202017-20%20-%20Yr%201%20Review.pdf>

