



Cabinet
14 December 2015

**Report from the
Chief Operating Officer**

Wards affected:
ALL

Brent Stronger Communities Strategy

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the thinking towards a strategy for a community-led response to protecting communities from the threat of extremist behaviour.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet agree the strategic approach as set out in the Stronger Communities Strategy at Appendix 1.
- 2.2 That Cabinet consider and note the content of the Equality Impact Assessment which is set out in Appendix 2 to this report.

3.0 Detailed Considerations

- 3.1 Brent is a highly diverse borough with high levels of risk of:
- General crime, ASB and Hate Crime
 - Extremism and radicalisation;
 - Gangs and CSE; and
 - DV and Harmful Practices.
- 3.2 Crime and hate crime
It must be recognised that global events have repercussions, not just in Britain but in London and in Brent in particular. It is, therefore, unsurprising that the number of incidents of race and religious hate crime, islamophobia and anti-Semitism are all on the rise across Europe.
- 3.3 Extremism and Radicalisation
Brent is one of 43 Home Office "Prevent Priority Areas", indicating that intelligence suggests Brent is of particular national concern for fermenting extremism and radicalisation. Brent

receives funding from the Home Office to tackle radicalisation through a range of projects including working with religious and educational establishments, young people and parenting. This strategy will be positioned to work in a currently unfilled space for effectively engaging with communities and to up-skill communities to 'spot the signs' and empower parents, teachers and Community Champions to act a robust challenge to extremist behaviour.

3.4 Protecting Communities and 'Grooming'

There are significant similarities between the processes used to "groom" young and vulnerable people into gangs, sexual abuse, harmful practices and extremism.

The techniques used in grooming are common across the issues, and may include:

- Offering free drugs and alcohol
- Buying gifts and unexplained money
- Older individuals befriending younger girls/boys
- Young person acts out in an inappropriate sexual way for their age, or with toys/objects
- Inviting children to parties, which are mostly attended by men
- Talk of a new, older friend
- Becoming unusually secretive
- Running away/ going missing
- Online grooming - using usernames or comments that are flirtatious or have a sexual meaning; and pretending to be someone they are not, for example saying they are the same age online.

There is also an element of cross-pollination between these issues, including, at times, individuals (in terms of both victims and offenders). This is captured in the table below:

	Domestic abuse and harmful practices	Gangs	Extremism and radicalisation	Child Sexual Exploitation
Domestic abuse and harmful practices		<p>Research suggests that the risk of violence against women and girls is substantially higher where one or both parties are gang-associated.</p> <p>Gang members are more likely to perpetrate violence against women and girls, compared to a non-gang</p>	<p>People involved with any radicalised person could be at greater risk of Honour BV and FM.</p>	<p>Young female victims of domestic abuse are at a greater risk of CSE due to their added vulnerabilities as a young controlled DA victim.</p> <p>Men can use sexual abuse through sexual exploitation to maintain control of their partner.</p>

		<p>member.</p> <p>“County Lines” activity exploits the use of vulnerable women, relating to the vulnerability of victims of violence against women and girls</p>		
Gangs	<p>Research suggests that the risk of violence against women and girls is substantially higher where one or both parties are gang-associated.</p> <p>Gang members are more likely to perpetrate violence against women and girls, compared to a non gang member.</p> <p>‘County Lines’ activity exploits the use of vulnerable women and girls.</p>		<p>Radicalisation and gang membership have a good deal of common ground and some gang members have been known to become radicalised.</p> <p>The practices of “grooming” for gang membership are similar to those being used to radicalise</p>	<p>Gangs operate “County Lines” which can include CSE as a tool of coercion. County Lines involve exploitation and/or human trafficking of boys and girls.</p>
Extremism and radicalisation	<p>People involved with any radicalised person could be at greater risk of harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation or Honour based</p>	<p>Radicalisation and gang membership have a good deal of common ground and some gang members have been known to become radicalised.</p>		<p>Radicalisation can target and prey upon the most vulnerable members of society, including young people being exploited.</p>

	violence.			
Child Sexual Exploitation	<p>Young female victims of domestic abuse are at a greater risk of CSE due to their added vulnerabilities as a young controlled DA victim.</p> <p>Perpetrators can use sexual abuse through sexual exploitation to maintain control of their partner.</p>	<p>Gangs operate "County Lines" which can include CSE as a tool of coercion. County Lines involve exploitation and/or human trafficking of boys and girls.</p>	<p>Radicalisation can target and prey upon the most vulnerable members of society, including young people being exploited.</p>	

3.5 Extremist behaviour, in all its forms, requires a response - by professionals and by communities themselves – to ensure that there are appropriate referral pathways for those who are vulnerable to extremist behaviour.

4.0 Developing a community-led approach

4.1 The purpose of the community-led approach is twofold:

- to enable the community to become aware of and resilient to issues and tensions that are currently happening; and
- to ensure that there is an appropriate community-level response to any potential incident.

4.2 It is proposed that Brent adopt a similar approach undertaken in Manchester. Last year, Manchester City Council worked with the Foundation for Peace to initiate a 'Big Questions' event to get communities together to speak about what no-one is talking about. To follow up the conference, they held several further workshops on radicalisation across the city and involved young people. The workshops themselves formed the basis for a number of community-derived activities.

Brent could hold a similar series of events, with community leaders to lead discussions. This is important for two reasons: by invoking a community-led response, we empower communities to tackle the issues in their own way; and there is no issue of buy-in or the feeling that council owns the work – they own it from day one. The council only enables the discussions to happen.

4.3 Engagement alongside the Big Questions events

Engagement with our community leaders, faith groups and residents will be intrinsic to developing this programme of work. The newly formed Community Action Groups and faith groups [REDACTED] will provide the pathways to engagement on cohesion and resilience work. It is, therefore, proposed that the [REDACTED] forums be

reviewed and/or widened to include new members so that it is more representative of the wider faith community and improve action tasking and outcomes.

Council members will also have a key role to play in gaining regular insight from residents and feeding back on council and partnership activities. Throughout the year of engagement, we will prioritise finding our 'Community Champions'. The new Community Champions will form part of a small network of non-statutory partners who will help other partners to act as eyes and ears in the community relaying messages in both directions. The aim here is to ensure that tensions are spotted early on and that adequate responses may be developed with community leaders themselves, working alongside statutory services.

The diagram below shows how these, and other groups, will inform the work programme for building stronger, more resilient communities.



5.0 Governance

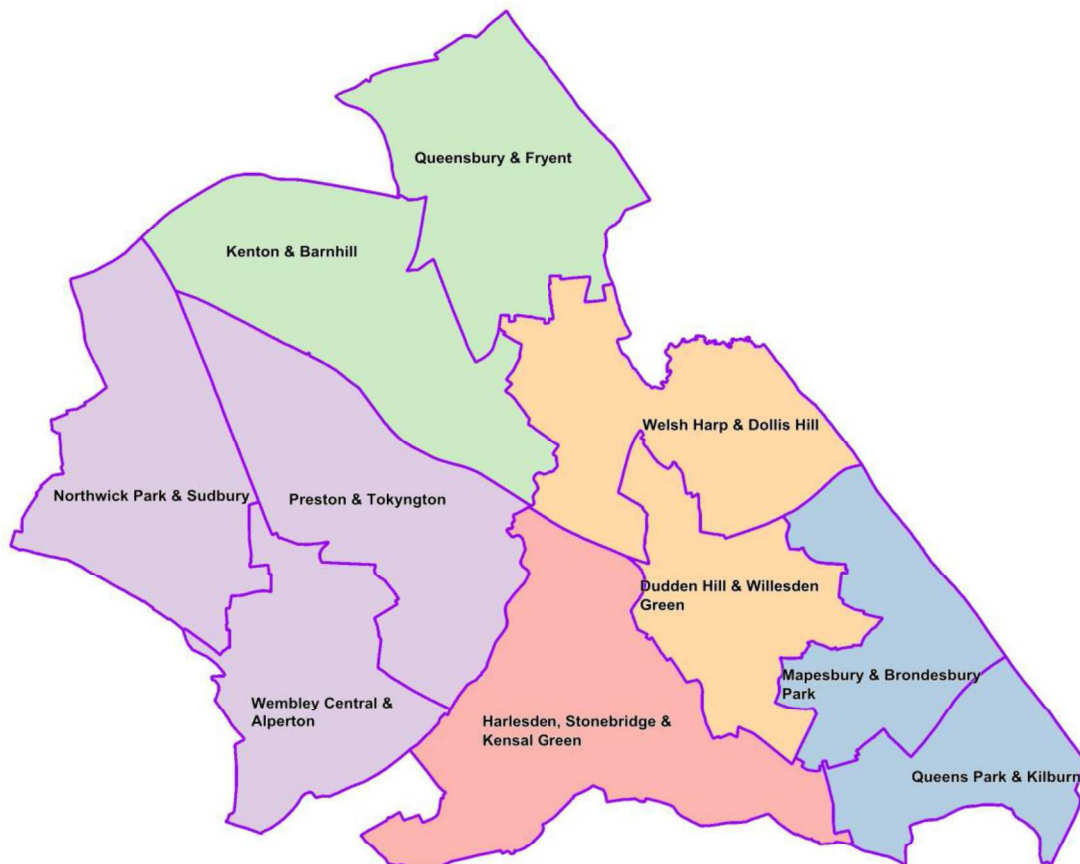
- 5.1 At the strategic level, this strategy must be owned and overseen by Brent's Local Strategic Partnership, Partners for Brent. The revised structure and terms of reference for the partnership provides the best platform for this type of joined-up approach. Ultimately, this means mainstreaming cohesion where possible. At the delivery level, this strategy will sit under the Safer Brent Partnership to oversee delivery and report on progress to Partners for Brent, as illustrated below.



5.2 Ultimately, the real work of this will be derived and delivered by and for communities. The Community Action Groups, here, will have the flexibility to determine priorities and projects of interest to them.

6.0 Community Action Groups

6.1 Community Action Groups will be empowered to take on the learning from the workshops and deliver further workshops or network with others within their localities to produce locally derived ideas to tackle these issues. Importantly, what is done in Queens Park and Kilburn will not be the same in Queensbury and Fryent.



7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The costs for the consultation events will be covered within the existing COO budget envelope. This proposal presents a community led approach to protecting the residents and communities of Brent from extremism and radicalisation. The strategy does not require any additional resources and will influence how our existing resources can be used to best effect.

8.0 Legal Implications

Hate Crimes

- 8.1 Hate crimes are essentially crimes committed against someone because of their disability, gender-identity, race/ethnicity/nationality, religion/faith/belief or sexual orientation. Crimes which are ruled to be hate crimes enable the Court to impose tougher sentences on offenders under the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 8.2 The law on anti-social behaviour was modified by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ("the 2014 Act") which abolished anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs). The 2014 Act allows local authorities and certain other public bodies to apply for civil injunctions relating to anti-social behaviour. Under the 2014 Act, local authorities have powers to issue community protection notices to seek to stop a person aged 16 years or over or a business or organisation committing anti-social behaviour which spoils the community's way of life. Local authorities have powers to make Public Space Protection Orders, after consultation with the Police and other relevant persons and bodies, to seek to stop individuals or groups committing anti-social behaviour in a public space. Local authorities and the Police have powers to issue a closure notice to last up to 48 hours and apply to the court for a closure order to last up to 6 months which are designed to allow local authorities and the Police to quickly close premises which are being used, or are likely to be used to commit nuisance or disorder. The 2014 Act also introduced the "community trigger" which gives victims and communities the right to request a review of their case relating to anti-social behaviour to local authorities, the Police, Clinical Commissioning Groups and certain registered providers of social housing and according to the Home Office's Statutory Guidance regarding the 2014 Act, the purpose of the community trigger is to bring agencies together to take a joined up, problem-solving approach to find a solution.

Prevent Duty and Radicalisation

- 8.3 Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 has introduced a duty on local authorities and schools to "have due regard to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" in the exercise of their functions – also known as the "Prevent Duty". Statutory guidance has been provided by the Home Office regarding the Prevent Duty and in that guidance, "radicalisation" is described as referring to the process by which a person comes to support terrorism and extremist ideologies associated with terrorist groups.

FGM

- 8.4 Offences of female genital mutilation (“FGM”) are set out in the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 (“the 2003 Act”) and further offences were added to the 2003 Act by the Serious Crime Act 2015 which include failing to protect a girl from risk of FGM and assisting or carrying out acts of FGM outside the UK. The 2003 Act has also been amended to make provision for the anonymity of victims of FGM.

Forced Marriage

- 8.5 Under the Forced Marriage (Civil Protection) Act 2007, a person who is being forced into a marriage or has been forced into a marriage may apply to the court for a Forced Marriage Protection Order (“FMPO”). The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 made forced marriage and breach of FMPOs criminal offences.

CSE

- 8.6 Although there is no specific criminal offence for Child Sexual Exploitation (“CSE”), perpetrators can be convicted under a range of offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. The Children Act 1989 imposes a range of responsibilities on local authorities for the care and protection of young people under the age of 18, including a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need (section 17) and a requirement to make enquiries where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, to enable them to decide what action they should take to safeguard or promote the child’s welfare (section 47). Under section 11 of the Children Act 2004, local authorities must make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. In 2009, the Department for Children, Families and Schools provided detailed guidance regarding CSE entitled “Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation - Supplementary Guidance to working together to safeguard children”.

9.0 Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Brent’s Stronger Together strategy will have a positive equalities outcome for the following groups protected by the Equality Act 2010: age; race; disability; sex; gender re-assignment and variance; sexuality, marriage and civil partnership, and religion-belief. It will likely have a neutral impact on pregnancy and maternity where no equalities implications have been identified.
- 9.2 Whilst the strategy has positive equalities outcomes for the groups outlined above, it affects different groups in different ways. For example, research has shown that young people are the age group most at-risk of falling victim to radical and extremist ideology; therefore the strategy would have a positive equalities outcome insofar as it would aim to prevent a certain age range from becoming radicalised. However, for LGBT residents for example, the strategy would have a more general positive equalities outcome in the context of promoting greater overall cohesion in the borough and reducing the likelihood of LGBT hate crime.
- 9.3 Key outcomes from the strategy include inter-faith and inter-generational dialogue which will likely have a positive equalities outcome for the nine protected groups and cohesion in the borough overall.
- 9.4 At this stage no negative equalities implications of the strategy have been

identified, see Appendix 2 for the full equalities impact assessment.

10.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

10.1 N/A

11.0 Background Papers

11.1 Brent Stronger Communities Strategy

11.2 Brent Stronger Communities Strategy – Equality Impact Assessment

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