INTEGRATING COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY BOARD

ITEM 7

Derby City Council

Report of the Strategic Director of Communities and Place

Counter Extremism

SUMMARY

1.1 The Government introduced the new Counter Extremism Strategy in 2016, due to the increase in hate crime, concerns that society is becoming more divided and the raise in anti-establishment, extreme politics, the key elements are:

- Countering extremist ideology – to confront and challenge extremist propaganda, ensuring no space goes uncontested, including online, promoting a better alternative, and supporting those at risk of radicalisation.

- Building a partnership with all those opposed to extremism – to stand with and build the capacity of mainstream individuals, community organisations and others in our society who work every day to challenge extremists and protect vulnerable individuals.

- Disrupting extremists – create new targeted powers, flexible enough to cover the full range of extremist behaviour, including where extremists sow division in our communities and seek to undermine the rule of law.

- Building more cohesive communities – review, understand and address the reasons why some people living here do not identify with our country and our values. A new Cohesive Communities Programme will help those communities most at risk of isolation.

1.2 The Home Office have approached the City Council and agreed that Derby receive a grant to support this work and be a pilot area for the development of this new and innovative agenda

---

RECOMMENDATION

2.1   To consider the information provided and make any comments and relevant recommendations on the content.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

3.1   To ensure that Board members are kept updated on the development of the counter extremism strategy and plan

3.2   To ensure that the Board has sufficient opportunity to make any comments or recommendations in relation to the issues discussed.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1   Derby welcomes the new approach developed by the Government and at a local level we see a number of issues and opportunities to develop this agenda:

- Whilst the prevent agenda has had some success, particularly in Derby, it is seen as a barrier to fully engage communities. The Muslim community are the group most likely to be a victim of hate crime and are often seen as isolated and vulnerable. The Prevent agenda whilst having good intentions has not fully engaged the Muslim community and will not be widely accepted whilst part of a wider counter-terrorism strategy (CONTEST). We need to engage the community on their concerns and grievances, such as vulnerability and hate crime, not just enter a dialogue on Islamic Extremism and Terrorism. We see the Counter Extremism agenda as more positive and more likely to engage a wider range of communities and partners
- There has been an increase, nationally since Brexit, of hate crimes and across Europe a perceived increase in extreme right wing political activity
- We want to develop a city-wide partnership of faith, religious, cultural and community groups to come together and speak with one voice on what it means to be part of a family, a community, Derby and Britain, our shared values. This will enable us to effectively challenge and tackle extremism in all its forms
- We will continue to promote cohesion and integration and positive messages and images of our diverse communities, via the Council's and partners work
- We will develop a range of events, bringing different communities together and implement a city twinning programme between community groups, churches and faith groups
- We need to better develop our understanding of risk and threat and not solely rely on the police strategic intelligence assessment. This needs to include more community intelligence and information from partner agencies
- As part of this agenda we (the council, its partners and our communities) need to carefully consider how we challenge extreme narratives and extremist groups who are active or visit the city.
- Increasingly, communications are conducted via social media. To challenge and disrupt extremist ideology authorities need to become more adept and skilled in the use of social media

- As part of this work we will work closely with the Counter Extremism Unit at the Home Office and share and learn what works across the East Midlands with partners in Nottingham and Leicester.

4.2 There are a number of key challenges and issues in delivering this agenda, these include:

- Operationally recruiting a suitable candidate with the right skills and attributes to develop and deliver this difficult work

- Developing a counter narrative approach, that challenges and disrupts individuals and groups without providing increased publicity and increasing risks to violence and public disorder

- Developing our use of social media to counter extremist ideology

- Building a genuine partnership across the city to lead on this agenda in partnership with the Council and other statutory partners such as the police.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 None

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Estates/Property officer	N/A
Service Director(s)	John Tomlinson
Other(s)	

For more information contact:	Andy Thomas 01332 643020 andy.thomas@derby.gov.uk
Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	

<div align="right">**Appendix 1**</div>

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

1.1   A grant of up to £70k has been awarded to the City Council from the Home Office to employ a Counter Extremism Community Co-ordinator

Legal

2.1   None

Personnel

3.1   None

IT

4.1   None

Equalities Impact

5.1   The project will operate across the city and target under represented communities, where there is a lack of social capital and community infrastructure

Health and Safety

6.1   None

Environmental Sustainability

7.1   None

Property and Asset Management

8.1   None

Risk Management

9.1   None

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1   Building stronger and safer communities