

4 February 2021		ITEM: 6
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Community Safety Partnership Report on Prevent		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager		
Accountable Assistant Director: Carol Hinvest, Assistant Director of Housing		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers, Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This annual report provides the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to review the Councils response to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and ensure that:

- i) We understand the local threat; and
- ii) Judge whether the strategy and actions planned will address that threat.

The recently published Home Office Prevent handbook for Elected Members (Appendix 1) says: *“Elected Members are crucial for successful delivery of Prevent, by overseeing and scrutinising local plans which ensure that citizens are kept safe, and vulnerable people are given safeguarding support from the harms of radicalisation. Elected Members also play a critical role in representing members of their local community. They act as both a voice of local citizens; raising issues and concerns, whilst speaking on behalf of the Local Authority to communicate how policies and programmes operate.”*

The handbook outlines three key roles for Elected Members in shaping and delivering Prevent activity locally:

- 1) Leadership and Direction**
- 2) Community Dialogue**
- 3) Scrutiny:** *Elected Members may also consider their role in providing transparency and accountability in delivering Prevent through formal scrutiny procedures. By holding to account the local delivery of Prevent, improvements*

can be made to implementation, and communities can be reassured by increased transparency.

This paper allows Elected Members the opportunity to scrutinise the local implementation of Prevent in Thurrock

The *Prevent* strategy is a key part of CONTEST, the Governments Counter Terrorism Strategy and aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The strategy aims work in partnership to identify and safeguard those vulnerable to radicalisation and to manage that risk through diversion and disruption.

On 3/11/20 the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) upgraded the UK national terrorism threat level from SUBSTANTIAL to **SEVERE**. This means that a terrorist attack is highly likely. The increased threat level was following on from 2 terrorist incidents in France and Islamic State Group claiming responsibility for attack in Vienna. There is no specific threat to the UK and the threats remain from ISIS and extreme right wing groups alongside the threat from individuals.

The fact remains we should be vigilant to all potential risks from extremism and terrorism.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 created a new duty on Local Authorities, and partners to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.

In November 2020 the Home Office published Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. This document provides statutory guidance for Channel panel members and partners of local panels. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act sets out the duty on local authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. In England and Wales, this duty is met through Channel panels.

Counter Extremism and Terrorism – preventing violent extremism locally, remains one of the priorities for the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in 2020/21.

Thurrock's *Prevent* strategy was refreshed in October 2020 and outlines our multi-agency response to tackle extremism and respond to the duty placed on agencies within the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

Protecting children and vulnerable adults from the risk of radicalisation should be seen as part of the Councils wider safeguarding duties, and is similar in nature to protecting them from any other harms be that whether these come from within their family or are the product of outside influences.

The CSP has a Strategic Prevent Board which meets quarterly and is chaired by Carol Hinvest, Assistant Director of Housing. The CSP board chair, Prevent chair, Channel Panel chair and CSP manager support a member working group on Prevent which is chaired by Cllr Ralph.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee members:

- 1.1 **Note the increased National risk.**
- 1.2 **Understand the implications for the Local Authority in relation to the Channel Duty Guidance.**
- 1.3 **Consider the ratings and actions reported in the self-assessment Prevent duty toolkit for Local Authorities.**
- 1.4 **Support the members working group to promote the important role that members play in raising awareness of Prevent, community tension monitoring and reporting concerns.**

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The PREVENT strategy is a key part of CONTEST, the Governments Counter Terrorism Strategy and aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. CONTEST is structured around a 4P approach to safeguard and support those vulnerable to radicalisation, to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism:

- Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks.
- Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.
- Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

2.2 Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies, of which Local Authorities are one, in the exercise of their functions to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. This *Prevent duty* guidance¹ states that the authorities subject to the provisions must have regard to this guidance when carrying out the duty.

2.3 The other specified authorities in the Act who are also subject to the *Prevent* duty include criminal justice agencies including prisons, educational and childcare establishments, health and the police.

2.4 Prevent addresses all forms of terrorism. According to the 2020 Channel Duty guidance the most significant of these threats is currently from terrorist organisations associated with Al Qa’ida, Daesh, terrorists associated with extreme right-wing ideologies and lone actors inspired by such organisations.²

¹ *Prevent* duty guidance for England and Wales 16th July 2015 revised 2019

² This list is not exhaustive. Risk and threat to the UK is subject to constant review and updated accordingly.

- 2.5 In order to prevent terrorism the Government is clear that this will mean challenging extremist (and non-violent) ideas that are also part of a terrorist ideology, including instances of unclear, mixed or unstable ideology whilst remaining committed to protecting freedom of speech.
- 2.6 The foundation of delivery of Prevent is based on early intervention and safeguarding. Prevent also facilitates interventions to stop people moving from extremist activity to terrorist-related activity.
- 2.7 Channel panels form a key part of Prevent. This is a multiagency approach to i) identify those individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism ii) assess the nature and extent of that risk and iii) to provide early support to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. There is no defined threshold to determine whether an individual is at risk of being drawn into terrorism as there is no one profile of a terrorist. Channel is a voluntary process and offers early support regardless of age, faith, ethnicity or background. Channel allows individuals to receive support before their vulnerabilities can be exploited and before they potentially become involved in criminal terrorist-related activity.
- 2.8 In 2015 Thurrock CSP adopted Counter Extremism and Terrorism – preventing violent extremism locally as a priority and it remains one of our priority areas
- 2.9 Our *Prevent* strategy 2020/23 (Appendix 2) was published in October 2020. We have aligned our local strategic objectives to the national strategic objectives which are:
1. **Identify:**
 2. **Safeguard:**
 3. **Manage Risk:**

To deliver these National objectives in Thurrock we will:

1. **Identify:** We will promote, challenge and develop communities' capacity to challenge extremism through increased multi-agency working
 2. **Safeguard:** We will ensure that we safeguard our children and vulnerable adults from exposure to extremism
 3. **Manage Risk:** Through our Channel Panel we will take a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism
- 2.10 Local risks are reviewed and updated quarterly through the strategic governance board for Prevent and the action plan reviewed accordingly and are based on the Eastern Region Counter Terrorism Local Profile. Our action plan was refreshed in line with the strategy and reflects the strategic
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objectives outlined in 2.4 as well as **Monitoring:** Managing the approach to Prevent in Thurrock through the Local Authority Toolkit

2.11 The Home Office have developed a *Prevent* duty toolkit, which the Prevent strategy group rated as follows (Dec 20):

	Benchmark	RAG Rating
1.	Local Risk Assessment	Green
2.	Multi Agency Partnership Board	Yellow
3.	Prevent Partnership Action Plan	Green
4.	Referral Process	Green
5.	Channel Panel	Green
6.	Prevent Problem Solving Process	Green
7.	Training Programme	Green
8.	Venue Hire	Yellow
9.	Community Engagement	Yellow
10.	Communications	Green

The following are within our action plan to achieve green RAG ratings for all areas:

- Develop links to communities through member engagement.
- Council's policy on venue hire has been refreshed in line with the Prevent duty. Next steps are to promote and cascade internally and develop for community groups, licensed premises and schools.
- Nationally it is has been recognised that Prevent is poorly understood, with many never having heard of the programme.³ In recognising this the Home Office have recently launched ACT Early <https://actearly.uk/> and there is a need to promote this to all communities locally.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

3.1 Summary of Activity Delivered in 2020

- Training has been developed into virtual learning with 2 sessions delivered and 2 more planned. Meanwhile the Home Office on line training has been promoted.
- Thurrock Councils events protocol and checklist now reflects checks required to ensure compliance to the Local Duty with regards to Prevent.
- Our member working group on Prevent have had a briefing from the Counter Terrorism team, attended hate crime awareness training and ideology training with Me and You Education.
- Our member working group developed and agreed a 5 point pledge card (Appendix 3).

³ Past, Prevent and the Future: Tony Blair Institute for global change Sept 2020

- Prevent is included within the monthly contextual safeguarding report written by Children's Social Care and is included within the exploitation risk assessment.
- Our commissioning processes ensure that any placements for young people outside of Borough have Prevent awareness training.
- Resources on digital safety and Prevent were shared with schools.
- Prevent is now recognised and monitored through the corporate risk log.
- Chair of Prevent Board attends the Essex Contest Board to ensure consistency and share best practice.

3.2. Work planned to deliver in 2021/22

- Continue to respond to the quarterly Counter Terrorism Local Profile, revise action plan if new risks and threats identified, and update and share as appropriate the situational risk assessment for Thurrock.
- Event policy to be cascaded to community premises for hire, sports settings, playing fields and theatres.
- Guidance on event bookings and booking form to be drafted and shared with faith groups, schools and licensed premises.
- Working with the communications team and resident engagement team to promote ACT Early and increase awareness within communities.
- Support the Members working group to develop their work plan to reach out to all communities on this agenda.
- Continue with monthly programme of training for professionals.
- Children's social care will continue to raise the profile of Prevent in relation to exploitation and safeguarding.
- Briefing for the Independent Advisory Group to Essex Police planned for January.
- Review new Channel duty guidance, complete self-assessment when issued and respond to any gaps identified.

3.3 Channel Panel

- The Home Office in November 2020 published Channel Duty Guidance: Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. (Appendix 4) Section 36 of the Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 (CT &S) sets out the duty on Local Authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. In England and Wales, this duty is met through Channel panels. Within this guidance, the term 'Channel' refers to the local authority-led support and the duty as set out in the CT&S Act.
- As a designated statutory duty, the requirements of Channel should be reflected in relevant local policy, guidance and the local authority's constitution.
- Some of the key practical requirements for local authorities include:
 - Designating a Channel chair and deputy chair; core competencies have been introduced covering skills, training and experience to fulfil the roles.

- Embedding Channel within local governance arrangements.
 - As a statutory function, ensuring Channel is incorporated within Local Authority constitutions.
 - Updating local Data Protection Information Notices (privacy notices) to reflect Channel panel and the use of personal data.
- Summary of key changes in updated guidance:
 - Greater emphasis placed on the statutory nature of panels , the requirement to have regard to the guidance and expectations on local ownership and delivery.
 - Introduces arrangements for monitoring local compliance with Channel.
 - Introduces the concept of minimum core competencies for panel chairs and deputy chairs, directing levels of skills, experience and completion of Home Office training for these roles.
 - Introduces guidance for local governance and proposes minimum requirements to direct panel form and function, including audibility
 - Provides opportunity for chairs to gain UK National Vetting Security Check clearance from police.
 - Extends availability of referral data to panels from police, to support practice delivery, governance and performance oversight.
 - Sets the expectation that local authorities inform the Home Office of their named chair and deputy chair, and that the Chief Executive of the local authority is satisfied with the appointment.
 - Introduces the expectation to convene panel meetings monthly where a live case is held.
 - In reviewing the guidance in relation to Channel we can assure members that:
 - We have an appropriately designated chair and vice chair.
 - The chair has security clearance and has completed all required training.
 - Our panel meets monthly and has appropriate representation.
 - Governance is in place through the Prevent Strategic Board.
 - Our peer review in February 2020 found:
 - Good representation across all agencies.
 - Confidentiality agreement in place.
 - Summary clearly presented and all able to input to discussion.
 - History and concerns well-presented alongside Police who provided a good update with discussion and involvement of all present and that outcomes are either managed by individual agency or Intervention Provider is required and appointed.

3.4 Equality Impact Assessment

The Community Safety Equality Impact Assessment 2020 (within Appendix 2, strategy) highlighted:

- There is no age profile and applies to all age groups, however the action plan has a clear focus on prevention of radicalisation of young people and in particular focus is the local duty in educational establishments.
- Prevent needs to support people vulnerable to radicalisation due to learning disabilities or mental health and therefore may have a positive impact on this group.
- There is a concern nationally that Prevent stereotypes the Muslim community and therefore has a negative impact on the Muslim population. A positive benefit of the strategy is to encourage dialogue between all communities.

3.5 Summary

- The current threat level nationally is severe and this is why the *Prevent* agenda remains a priority for the CSP in Thurrock.
- There is no identified greater risk to the community of Thurrock than elsewhere in England.
- The key challenges faced by the CSP for the coming year are to:
 - Increase awareness of communities and the *Prevent* agenda.
 - Embed the new Channel guidance.
 - Review the training offer in line with Home Office updates to increase awareness amongst professional.
- The key message for members and communities is that “Communities Defeat Terrorism” and that if you act early help is available to families and friends.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To ensure members understand the current risk both Nationally and Locally and are satisfied that we are responding appropriately.
- 4.2 That members understand the Statutory Duty placed on Thurrock Council with regards to Channel Panels.
- 4.3 That members are apprised of current fulfilment of statutory duties and are satisfied actions are in place to close the gaps.
- 4.4 To equip members to champion the Prevent agenda within our communities who are often first to spot the signs of change and need to know how to recognise and seek support.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 The strategy was shared with the Members working group for an opportunity to comment before it was signed off by partners at the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Board and Directors Board.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership is central to delivering Thurrock Council's priority of:

People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

This means:

- High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
- Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
- Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

6.2 In implementing the *Prevent* strategy in Thurrock there is an opportunity to increase awareness of Prevent, dispel any myths and safeguard those vulnerable to radicalisation.

6.3 Historically when there has been an International or a National terrorist attack Thurrock has experienced a spike in hate crime. As part of *Prevent* awareness training we include an awareness of hate crime and how to report, based on the "Stop the Hate" campaign. We also monitor and report on any community tensions.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Ian Hunt**
**Assistant Director of Law and Governance and
Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Members have the opportunity to scrutinise the Council's arrangements through the current Member working group and the Council's wider Scrutiny arrangements in line with the guidance.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
**Community Development and Equalities
Manager**

Our Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) identified in 3.4 are recognised within our action plans.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

This report will help the Council and its Partners ensure that they are delivering on its commitments to Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- *Prevent* duty guidance for England and Wales revised 2019
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prevent-duty-guidance/revised-prevent-duty-guidance-for-england-and-wales>
- Thurrock's *Prevent* Strategy
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/prevent-strategy-v03.pdf>
- Community Safety Partnership Delivery Plan 2020/21
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/tcsp-plan-2020-v01.pdf>
- Government *Prevent* duty tool kit for Local Authorities
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/736759/Prevent_Duty_Toolkit_for_Local_Authorities.pdf

9. Appendices to the report

1. Home Office Prevent handbook for Elected Members
2. Thurrock's Prevent Strategy and Equality Impact Assessment
<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/prevent-strategy-v03.pdf>
3. Pledge Card
4. Channel Duty Guidance
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928326/6.6271_HO_HMG_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v13_WEB_English.pdf

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