

<b>21 October 2021</b>		<b>ITEM: 7</b>
<b>Hidden and Extreme Harms Prevention Committee</b>		
<b>Thurrock Council's Response to Prevent Duty 2015</b>		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Non Key	
<b>Report of:</b> Michelle Cunningham - Community Safety Partnership Manager		
<b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> Les Billingham - Assistant Director for Adult Social Care and Communities		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Julie Rogers - Director for Public Realm and Chair of Community Safety Partnership		
<b>This report is Public</b>		

## Executive Summary

This report is to provide the Hidden and Extreme Harms Committee the opportunity to fulfil their purpose in relation to ensuring that all elements of the Council work together to ensure that the Council is fulfilling its duties in regards to Prevent, in line with the Council's responsibilities under the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and to enable elected members to drive the improvement of the services involved forward.

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 implementation of the Prevent Duty by Thurrock Council.

**1. Recommendation(s):**

- 1.1 That Members of the Committee scrutinise and assure themselves of the response to the self-assessment audit completed using the Local Government Association Toolkit and provided for scrutiny at Appendix 2.**
- 1.2 That Members of the Committee scrutinise and assure themselves of the response to the Channel Panel self-assessment completed in April 2021 and provided for scrutiny at Appendix 3.**
- 1.3 That Members agree a process through the annual work plan for monitoring of identified actions to ensure Thurrock Council fulfils its duty in relation to Prevent.**

**2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 On 8 February 2021 the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC) downgraded the UK national terrorism threat level from SEVERE to **SUBSTANTIAL**. This means that a terrorist attack is likely. There is no specific threat to the UK and no greater threat to Thurrock than anywhere else. The fact remains we should be vigilant to all potential risks from extremism and terrorism.
- 2.2 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. The Local Government Association developed a self-assessment toolkit in order to identify how Local Authorities respond to the risk and ensure appropriate actions are in place to mitigate against them. It is this tool kit which forms the basis of this report and is provided for scrutiny at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 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. Our adherence to this guidance is measured through an annual self-assessment return and is provided at Appendix 3.
- 2.4 Counter Extremism and Terrorism – preventing violent extremism locally, remains one of the priorities for the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in 2021/22.

- 2.5 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. This is published on our web site: [Prevent Strategy 2020/23](#)
- 2.6 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.

### 3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Local Government Association have put in place a self-assessment toolkit for Councils to benchmark themselves against over 10 key areas. Thurrock's Prevent Board have reviewed this with current situation as of June 21. The areas highlighted for further development and agreed actions are contained with Appendix 2 and summarised below:

<p><b>1. Local Risk Assessment</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Green</b>  Actions: all complete  Comments: Quarterly briefings, summarised within action plan and quarterly report to Directors Board</p>
<p><b>2. Multi Agency Partnership Board</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Green</b>  Action: Increase member engagement through Hidden and Extreme Harm Committee  Comments: The Committee will serve to aid elected members to drive the improvement of the services involved forward including by interacting with partners and stakeholders</p>
<p><b>3. Prevent Partnership Action Plan</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Green</b>  Actions: To embed in service plans, linked to S17 Duty  Comment: Partnership strategy and delivery plan in place</p>
<p><b>4. Referral Process</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Green</b>  Actions: Respond to audit findings in Q4 21/22  Comments: Referral process in place and embedded</p>
<p><b>5. Channel Panel</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Green</b>  Actions; As per self-assessment  Comments: Self-assessment completed April 21 and rated Green</p>
<p><b>6. Prevent problem Solving process</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Green</b>  Actions:  Comments: Process in place to monitor</p>
<p><b>7. Training Programme</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Amber</b></p>

<p>Actions: Needs assessment to identify gaps to be completed and exploring resilience training for schools.</p> <p>Comments: Training offer is strong and continues to be delivered virtually. Will require review in line with Home Office updates</p>
<p><b>8. Venue Hire</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Amber</b>  Actions: Now re-opened we will support education settings/ licensed premises and community venues with guidance on venue hire  Comments: Policy in place within Local Authority</p>
<p><b>9. Community Engagement</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Amber</b>  Actions: To continue to identify gaps in opportunity for engagement and ongoing outreach work  Comments: We are mindful that there is always more we can do to reach out to a wide range of our communities</p>
<p><b>10. Communications</b>  RAG Rating: <b>Green</b>  Actions: none noted  Comments: Communications team engaged on this agenda and support</p>

3.2 The Home Office required the first assurance statement in relation to Channel Panels to be returned in April 2021. This forms part of a strengthened quality assurance framework for all Channel panels across England and Wales, which includes an enhanced role for the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) in strengthening oversight of panels, enabling those requiring assistance and support to be identified. This recognises the importance of Channel panels as part of Prevent delivery, and the related roles within them. The areas highlighted for further development and agreed actions are contained with Appendix 2 and summarised below:

Ref	Key area of Control:	Compliance Rating	Areas for Improvement
1.	Legal Requirements under CTSA 2015		N/A
2.	Strategic Governance		An escalation process has now been added to the confidentiality and disclosure agreement
3.	Chairing skills / core competencies		N/A
4.	Panel Function and Form		Written consent is now provided. The process for consideration to families is to be reviewed
5.	Data Protection		SET wide Local Data Protection Notices to be signed up to. Support plans to be detailed for each individual

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 4.1 Scrutiny of the self-assessment audit will provide the committee an opportunity to be assured that Thurrock Council is meeting its statutory requirements placed upon it within the Counter Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA) 2015.
- 4.2 Scrutiny of the Channel Panel self-assessment will provide the committee an opportunity to be assured that Thurrock Council is compliant with Channel panel requirements for the financial year 2020/21, as detailed within the Channel Duty guidance 2020.
- 4.3 To enable members to agree a process for monitoring of identified actions to ensure Thurrock Council fulfils its duty in relation to Prevent.

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

- 5.1 The purpose of bringing this report to the HEHC is for scrutiny by members.
- 5.2 All partners within the Prevent Strategic Board have contributed to the self-assessments and reviewed. They monitor the actions identified through the local action plan.

#### **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 ensuring that Thurrock Council fulfil their statutory duties outlined in the CTSA 2015 we can be confident in processes in relation to safeguarding those vulnerable to radicalisation.

#### **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: **Judith Knight**  
**Interim Deputy of Legal (Social Care and Education)**

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill is currently going through Parliament. Once the Bill becomes law it will introduce a duty on specified authorities for the local government area to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area. Specified authorities include the police, probation, youth offending services, fire service, health and local authorities.

The duty requires the specified authorities to:

- (a) Identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area
- (b) Identify the causes of serious violence in the area, so far as it is possible to do so, and
- (c) Prepare and implement a strategy for exercising their functions to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area.

The government has produced draft statutory guidance for responsible bodies on the serious violence duty. Once finalised this will mean that responsible bodies must have regard to the guidance in exercising this function.

The Council is already under a duty to produce a strategy to reduce crime and disorder under Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This section will be amended by the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill to cover serious violence.

The draft statutory guidance sets out the responsible authorities' other statutory duties, which will be relevant in exercising the serious violence functions, in paragraph 138.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**  
**Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer**

There are no direct implications in relation to diversity and equality from this report. The Prevent strategy has an Equality Impact Assessment in place.

## 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, Health Inequalities, and Impact on Looked After Children

This report will support members in ensuring that they are delivering on 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):

- 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/736759/Prevent_Duty_Toolkit_for_Local_Authorities.pdf)
- 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](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/928326/6.6271_HO_HMG_Channel_Duty_Guidance_v13_WEB_Engish.pdf)

**9. Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1: Home Office Prevent handbook for Elected Members
- Appendix 2: LGA self-assessment toolkit for Thurrock June 2021
- Appendix 3: Channel self-assessment for Thurrock April 2021

**Report Author:**

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Public Realm