

17 March 2016		ITEM: 6
Cleaner, Greener, Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Prevent		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Not applicable	
Report of: Lucy Magill, Head of Resident Services		
Accountable Head of Service: Lucy Magill, Head of Resident Services		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Director of Environment and Place		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report is to make members aware of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Prevent Strategy. As agreed by Full Council the report also moves towards establishing a members working group on Prevent.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the contents of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Prevent Strategy are noted.

1.2 That a Working group be established in the new municipal year to address the terms of reference found at Appendix 2 of this report.

1.3 That the number of Members of the Working group be agreed, following which Group Leaders will be requested to make nominations in accordance with political proportionality.

1.4 That the scope and terms of reference of the working group be agreed, as outlined in draft in appendix 2.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act became law on 16 February 2015. The Act places a statutory duty on all principal councils from the 1 July 2015 to have "due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism". This is known as the Prevent Duty. The Act allows the Secretary of State to issue directions to councils if they are not satisfied that they are complying with the Prevent Duty.

The Prevent Duty Guidance

- 2.2 The Prevent duty guidance, published alongside the Act sets an expectation that local authorities will:
- Establish or make use of an existing local multi-agency group to agree risk and co-ordinate prevent activity (these multi-agency groups, through local authorities, will be expected to put in place arrangements to effectively monitor the impact of Prevent work).
 - Use the existing counter-terrorism local profiles to begin to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism.
 - Engage with Prevent coordinators, schools, universities, colleges, local prisons, probation services, health, immigration enforcement and others as part of the risk assessment process.
 - Mainstream the prevent duty so it becomes part of the day-to-day work of the Authority, in particular children' safeguarding.
 - Any local authority that assesses, through the multi-agency group, that there is a risk will be expected to develop a Prevent action plan.
 - Ensure frontline staff have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism and are aware of available programmes to deal with this issue.
- 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 The intensified and changed nature of the threat, particularly from those seeking to travel to, or return from Syria, now affects many councils, not just those deemed "priority areas." To comply with the new duty local authorities will also need to develop skills and abilities to recognise signs and indicators of radicalisation amongst all front line staff, particularly those working with children and young people or children's and adult safeguarding leads.

Existing local Prevent provision

- 2.5 To date the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership (TCSP) has been leading on Prevent since it was originally brought in. The overall governance is through the Strategic Partnership Board, which is chaired by the Councils Head of Resident Services. The Portfolio Holder for Communities is the statutory Member for this Board. The Fire Authority Member also has a place on this board. Within the TCSP structure there is currently a Prevent Strategic Group (PSG) who also meet regularly. This is chaired by the Head of Resident Services. The Board takes a coordinated multi agency partnership

approach to Prevent and associated counter terrorism matters in Thurrock developing a strategy.

2.6 TCSP have a strategy which can be found at Appendix 1 to this report. The purpose of this strategy is to outline Thurrock's multi-agency response to tackle extremism building on our current Prevent action plan and including our response to the new duty placed on agencies within the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

2.7 The key deliverables of the Strategy are:

- Identify local threat
- Ensure activities in place to respond to it
- To ensure all agencies within Thurrock respond to the local duty

Enhanced Role of Local Councillors

2.8 As councils look to strengthen or establish processes to ensure that they are complying with the new duty there are clear roles for local councillors. Work to stop people from becoming terrorists and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and aspects of extremism may seem distant to the day-to-day role of local councillors - however, successful prevention strategies will only work when underpinned by the support of councillors' knowledge and relationships in a local area. Councillors involved in overview and scrutiny will also want to be assured about the nature of risk in their area and the work being done to address any identified risk. Councillors are well placed to listen to and understand constituents' concerns, and can share their understanding of sources of community tension with the local authority. Councillors can also use their authority and legitimacy to challenge the narratives of radicalisers and extremists and put forward positive alternatives, working with the wider community to condemn the activities of extremists who misrepresent local community views.

2.9 Full Council passed the following resolution at its meeting in July 2015, "Radicalisation of youths seems to be quite rampant, doing nothing is not an option as parents are losing their children to extremism. We call on Thurrock Council to create a member led committee to co-ordinate a multi-agency approach to tackle the threat of extremism and radicalisation in line with our Duty to Prevent." The meeting tasked the Constitution Working Group and the Monitoring Officer with drafting terms of reference for such a Member led body within the context of the existing Prevent provision and government guidance on the new statutory duty.

2.10 Full Council agreed at its meeting in November 2015 that a Working Group should be established to address the terms of reference which can be found at Appendix 2 of this report.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Constitution Working Group discussed the option for a Member led body – the Monitoring Officer advised that if the intent of the Motion was to capture the enhanced role of all Members, their local knowledge of their communities and wards, to provide a flexible and relatively informal forum and focus for local intelligence and policy development then such a vehicle appeared to fill a gap in existing Prevent provision and could allow Members to lead in the areas suggested in the terms of reference at Appendix 2 below.
- 3.2 With regards to the last bullet point of the terms of reference, To scrutinise spend of the £10k on implementing the duty ensuring value for money (providing this funding is agreed.) this will not be applicable for the financial year 2016/17, therefore will be removed from the terms of reference of the working group.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Board has approved and implemented the Prevent Strategy. Members should note the content of that Strategy which outline Thurrock's multi-agency response to tackle extremism.
- 4.2 Through Full Council members have requested a working group be set up on Prevent, this paper seeks to do that and to adopt the terms of reference which can be found at Appendix 2.

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

- 5.1 Full Council

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

- 6.1 Such a Members' led Group would contribute to the effective discharge of Prevent duties by the Council and capture the local knowledge and contribution of all Members to an increasing important issue.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Chief Accountant

Such a Members' led Prevent Group would be provided within existing budgets

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **David Lawson**
Monitoring Officer

The constitution allows for the setting up of Working Groups. The TCSP Strategy will ensure the discharge of the Council's responsibilities under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

A Members' led Prevent Group could make a significant contribution to understanding local communities and social cohesion.

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

The prevent strategy and a member led working group will help tackle crime and disorder in Thurrock.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report:

- Members' led body on Prevent duties and review of existing Prevent provision paper to Full Council November 2015.
<http://democracy.thurrock.gov.uk/documents/s6159/Members%20led%20body%20on%20Prevent%20duties%20and%20review%20of%20existing%20Prevent%20provision.pdf>
- TCSP Prevent terms of reference

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1 – TCSP Prevent Strategy
- Appendix 2 – Terms of Reference for Members Working Group on Prevent

Report Author:

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