

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference: C-014-2015/16**

**Date of meeting: 23 July 2015**



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Safer, Greener and Transport**

**Subject: The Epping Forest District Council Prevent Policy**

**Responsible Officer: Julie Chandler (01992 564214).**

**Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).**

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**(1) That Cabinet notes the contents of the Epping Forest District Council Prevent Policy, attached as an Appendix, which has been developed as part of the new requirements for District, City and Borough Councils and adopts the policy on behalf of the Council.**

### **Executive Summary:**

All Councils are now required to produce and adopt a Prevent Policy and related Action Plan as part of their duties in respect of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable people from harm. This is in response to the current level of threat from Terrorism and Extremism in the United Kingdom, which is severe, and can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children, in order to involve them in extremist activity.

Early intervention is at the heart of Prevent in diverting people away from being drawn into terrorist activity. Prevent happens before any criminal activity takes place. It is about recognising, supporting and protecting people who might be susceptible to radicalisation.

This Policy is therefore intended to provide guidance on the national Prevent agenda and how the Council will implement it locally. It sets out the Council's local obligations, proposed actions, statutory duties and responsibilities, which include a priority to support vulnerable individuals in our local communities to help reduce the threat from radicalisation, terrorism and violent extremism.

Prevent is also a key part of the CONTEST strategy, led by the Home Office, which is the Government's national counter terrorism strategy. CONTEST aims to reduce the risk to the United Kingdom and its interests overseas from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence.

The Prevent Policy applies to all staff employed within the Council, either directly or indirectly, Council Members and to any other person or organisation that uses the Council's premises for any purpose.

Cabinet is therefore asked to note the contents of the Prevent Policy and agree adoption of the policy on behalf of the Council.

## **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 seeks to place a duty on specified authorities (listed in Schedule 6 to the Act) and says it must 'in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. In complying with the duty, all specified authorities, as a starting point, should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area, institution or body.

With wide ranging responsibilities and democratic accountability to their electorate, local authorities are vital to Prevent work. Effective local authorities will be working with their local partners to protect the public, prevent crime and to promote strong, integrated communities.

The risk of terrorism and radicalisation will vary greatly and can change rapidly; no area, institution or body is therefore risk free. Whilst the type and scale of activity that will address the risk will vary, all specified authorities will need to give due consideration to it.

## **Other Options for Action:**

None

## **Report:**

1. All Councils are now required to produce and adopt a Prevent Policy and related Action Plan as part of their duties in respect of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable people from harm. This is in response to the current level of threat from Terrorism and Extremism in the United Kingdom, which is severe, and can involve the exploitation of vulnerable people, including children in order to involve them in extremist activity.
2. Prevent work depends on effective partnerships. To demonstrate effective compliance with the duty, authorities must therefore demonstrate evidence of productive co-operation, in particular with local Prevent co-ordinators, the police and local authorities, and co-ordination through existing multi-agency forums. For the Epping Forest District, the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) has been identified as the appropriate forum to lead on Prevent work and will make arrangements to effectively monitor the impact of this work.
3. It should be stressed that there is no expectation that the Council or Community Safety Partnership will take on a surveillance or enforcement role as a result of Prevent. Rather, they must work together and with partner organisations to contribute to the prevention of terrorism by safeguarding and protecting vulnerable individuals and making safety a shared endeavour.
4. In complying with the duty, district councils should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area. This includes using the existing counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLPs) produced for every region by the police, to begin to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism. This should include both violent and non-violent extremism which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit.
5. Local authorities are expected to incorporate the duty into existing policies and procedures, so it becomes part of the day-to-day work of the authority. Therefore, this duty has been incorporated into the Epping Forest District Council's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adult Policy to ensure there are clear and robust safeguarding policies to identify children and vulnerable adults at risk. A copy of the Prevent Policy is attached as an Appendix.
6. We are additionally expected to ensure that publicly-owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. This

includes considering whether IT equipment available to the general public should use filtering solutions that limit access to terrorist and extremist material. It is also expected that the Council will ensure that organisations who work with us on Prevent are not engaged in any extremist activity or support extremist views.

7. A county-wide 'Channel Panel' provides a Multi-Agency process, which provides support to those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Representatives from Epping Forest District Council are required to attend Channel Panel Meetings where any individuals referred are linked to the district. Channel uses existing collaboration between partners to support individuals and protect them from being drawn into terrorism. Examples of support provided could include mentoring, diversionary activities such as sport, signposting to mainstream services such as education, employment or housing. The Channel process can access the use of an 'intervention provider'. This is Home Office funded and uses those on an approved list to work with individuals around their individual ideologies.

8. All frontline staff and Council Members are therefore required to have a good understanding of Prevent in order to respond to vulnerable individuals who are in danger of being radicalised and being drawn into terrorism. They should understand what radicalisation means and why people may be vulnerable to it and what is meant by the term 'extremism' and the relationship between extremism and terrorism.

9. Staff, as well as Council Members also need to know what measures are available to prevent people from becoming drawn into terrorism and how to challenge the extremist ideology that can be associated with it. They need to understand how to obtain support for people who may be being exploited by radicalising influences.

10. The Council's Safeguarding Team will therefore organise training for relevant staff to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP) that will be rolled out as part of the overall Safeguard Training Programme.

### **Resource Implications:**

The main financial consideration around the Prevent agenda will be to provide additional training that is required for staff. The Council has been notified that it will receive a one-off payment from the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism of £10,000 to implement the Prevent Duty.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 seeks to place a duty on specified authorities (listed in Schedule 6 to the Act) and says it must 'in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.' In complying with the duty all specified authorities, as a starting point, should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area, institution or body.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Epping Forest District Council has a duty to ensure safe environments where extremists are unable to operate. In complying with the duty, district councils should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area. This includes using the existing counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLPs) produced for every region by the police, to begin to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism.

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

The Council is represented on the Essex Prevent Strategy Board by the Community Safety

Manager. The aim of the Board is to set the overall partnership policy and strategy for Prevent in Essex and consultation has taken place at this forum with all District, City and Borough Councils in Essex.

**Background Papers:**

Epping Forest District Council Prevent Policy, as included with this report.

**Risk Management:**

As stated, the Council should use the existing counter-terrorism local profiles (CTLPs) produced for every region by the police, to begin to assess the risk of individuals being drawn into terrorism. This should include both violent and non-violent extremism which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists exploit. Local authorities are expected to incorporate the duty into existing policies and procedures, so it becomes part of the day-to-day work of the authority.

# Due Regard Record

This page shows **which groups of people are affected** by the subject of this report. It sets out **how they are affected** and how any **unlawful discrimination** they experience can be eliminated. It also includes information about how **access to the service(s)** subject to this report can be improved for the different groups of people; and how they can be assisted to **understand each other better** as a result of the subject of this report.

S149 Equality Act 2010 requires that due regard must be paid to this information when considering the subject of this report.

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The Prevent agenda aims to work specifically with vulnerable people. This is through the Channel Panel which is a Multi-Agency process, which provides support to those who may be vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Representatives from Epping Forest District Council are required to attend Channel Panel Meetings where any individuals referred, are linked to the district. Channel uses existing collaboration between partners to support individuals and protect them from being drawn into terrorism. Examples of support provided could include mentoring, diversionary activities such as sport, signposting to mainstream services such as education, employment or housing.