

110. THE 'PREVENT' STRATEGY & PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM ACTION PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety & Transport presented a report regarding the "Prevent" Strategy and Preventing Violent Extremism Action Plan.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the "Prevent" agenda was a key part of the Government's approach to managing violent extremism within communities, and was part of the overarching "Contest" policy which dealt with all types of extremism and terrorist activities. A summary of the Contest strategy had been attached to the agenda. Background information to the "Prevent" agenda had been provided and a local Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) Action Plan had set out how the Council would seek to address the "Prevent" agenda.

It was pointed out that, despite being mentioned within the report, the Multi-Faith Forum had not been directly consulted with. It was also enquired as to whether Members would be invited to the presentations identified within the Action Plan. The Director of Environment & Street Scene responded that the issue of presentations for Members would be investigated, possibly via the Local Strategic Partnership. In respect of Action 6, it was highlighted that the Council should not be delivering messages of violent extremism and that perhaps the wording required reviewing; the Cabinet concurred.

Decision:

(1) That the content and intent of the Government's "Contest" and "Prevent" strategies be noted;

(2) That the "Prevent" Action Plan be adopted, subject to a review of the wording for item (6) within the Action Plan, regarding the delivery of balanced messages of violent extremism with mainstream messages; and

(3) That the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership ("One Epping Forest") be requested to establish a "Prevent" Partnership Group to oversee the delivery of the Action Plan and to arrange presentations for elected Members.

Reasons for Decision:

National Indicator 35, "Building Resilience to Violent Extremism" was one of the new suite of indicators which came into effect from March 2009. All local authorities were required to report upon it and this recommended action plan had set out how the Council would address the key issues.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

Whilst all local authorities had to report, it was possible for authorities in two tier areas to develop joint action plans, subject to Government consent. However, there had been no clear indication that this approach was deliverable within Essex and therefore the Council had to develop an action plan of its own. Therefore, at this time, there were no alternatives available.