

## **Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Monday 24 October 2022**

### **Prevent Activity**

#### **Recommendation**

- a. I recommend that the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews and comments on the report that relates to Prevent activity within Staffordshire.

#### **Report of Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**

#### **Summary**

The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to review the Report relating to Prevent activity within Staffordshire.

It has been prepared at the request of the Chair of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee to provide assurance that Staffordshire County Council is carrying out the required activity to ensure that the organisation is meeting its duties in terms of the statutory Prevent Duty.

#### **Background**

1. The UK faces a continuing threat from both international and domestic terrorism as well as violent extremism, which can emerge from any community and can be inspired by a wide range of causes. Nationally, the threat to the UK and our interests from international terrorism at the time of writing this Report, is rated as 'substantial.' This means that a terrorist attack is likely.
2. The Prevent Duty is part of the Government's overall counter-terrorism strategy known as CONTEST. The Home Office Prevent Duty Guidance can be found at [Prevent duty guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612217/Prevent_duty_guidance_-_GOV.UK.pdf). The Prevent Duty was introduced into law by the Government in 2015 via the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Section 26(1) of the CTSA imposes a duty on specified authorities to have due regard to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. The Act introduces a range of measures aimed at countering the risk of terrorism and radicalisation; the Prevent Duty is a statutory requirement for Staffordshire County Council.

#### **Staffordshire Prevent Board**

3. As part of the Prevent duty Staffordshire County Council has a co-ordinating role. Within Staffordshire, the implementation of Prevent is overseen by a multi-agency Prevent Board, which is chaired by the County Commissioner for Regulatory Services and Community Safety at Staffordshire County Council.
4. This board sits quarterly and during the last 12 months has received input and guidance from the Home Office Regional Advisor for Prevent. Regional Advisor roles have recently been introduced for local authorities who do not receive funding from the Home Office. The Regional Advisor acts as a critical friend to the Staffordshire Prevent Board.
5. The Prevent Board reports into the Staffordshire Contest Board, which oversees all the counter-terrorism strands of activity and is chaired by Staffordshire Police. The Prevent Board also provides updates to every Staffordshire Safer & Stronger Communities Strategy Group which is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture.
6. The priorities for the Prevent Board are informed by the annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP), presented by West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) and completion of the Home Office Self-Assessment Tool Kit.
7. The Delivery Plan sets out how partners are working together to meet the requirements of the Prevent Duty and are responding to and managing risk. Progress against the Prevent Delivery Plan is reported to the Prevent Board on a quarterly basis. The Prevent Board provides appropriate challenge and holds partners to account
8. The partnership priorities contained in the delivery plan for 2022/2023 are:
  - a. training,
  - b. venue hire,
  - c. situational risk assessment
  - d. communication/engagement
9. The training framework is currently being updated for the County Council, to ensure that all staff have received the appropriate level of training relevant to their role in the organisation and is refreshed at regular intervals.
10. Terms for venue hire have also been identified as a priority for this year to ensure that any County Council buildings have rules to prevent them being used for inappropriate activity.

## **Schools**

11. The Education Safeguarding Lead is a key member of the Prevent Board and provides updates and reassurance to the Board in terms of Prevent activity in schools. Schools are monitored for their delivery of Prevent and specific Prevent-related questions are included in the mandatory audit of schools (S157 arrangements) which is undertaken by the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children's Board.
12. In 2022, 366 schools out of 402 completed the survey. High level initial findings were shared at the last Prevent Board and further analysis is currently being undertaken. The results of the survey inform where actions are required to improve Prevent activity for the coming school terms and these findings and actions will be shared with the Prevent Board.

## **Staffordshire Channel Panel**

13. Channel is part of the Prevent strategy. The Channel process is a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
14. Channel is a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by:
  - a. identifying individuals at risk
  - b. assessing the nature and extent of that risk
15. The recently updated Channel Duty Home Office guidance has increased the areas of responsibility for the County Council. The guidance has stipulated that the County Council have an additional duty to hold, co-ordinate, provide a chair and deputy chair from within the organisation for Channel Panel.
16. An annual assurance statement also must be completed and signed off by the Chief Executive to ensure that the relevant requirements are being addressed. The Home Office also support the development of the Channel panel and they assess the panel against the completed Annual Assurance statement.
17. The Assurance statement requires the County Council to rate itself using RAG (Red, Amber, Green) ratings against a number of criteria in

each of five sections, covering legal requirements, strategic governance, chairing skills, panel function and data protection.

18. The Prevent Partnership Board receives quarterly analytical data relating to Prevent activity including the numbers of referrals received for Staffordshire. This data is provided by the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) and is a standing agenda item considered at each meeting. The data is discussed, and appropriate actions are then taken from these discussions.
19. The data indicates that many different organisations are engaged with the process. Data is also shared regarding Channel referrals. The breakdown of the data assists in identifying where the referrals are being received from and helps indicate where there may be training needs and for actions to be taken to cover any potential gaps.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

This activity supports the County Council vision that everyone has the opportunity to prosper, be happy and healthy.

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee have received a Report regarding the lessons learned from the Fishmonger Hall terror attack at the meeting on 24 October 2022.

### **Community Impact**

Not applicable for this Report

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

None

### **Contact Details**

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