

COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015 AND THE PREVENT PROGRAMME

Economic & Community Development Advisory Group - 24 September 2015

Report of Lesley Bowles, Chief Officer Communities and Business

Status: For Information

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary: To inform Members of the implications of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Prevent Duty. The report informs Members how this will be achieved at the Council, including the mechanisms for reporting concerns.

This report supports the Key Aim of Community Plan – Safe & Caring Environment

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Roddy Hogarth

Contact Officer(s) Kelly Webb – Ext 7474

Recommendation to Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee: That Members note the update and support the contents of the report.

Introduction and Background

Summary of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 Act

1. Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Securities Act 2015 (the Act) places a duty on certain bodies (“specified authorities” listed in Schedule 6 of the Act), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.
2. The Prevent strategy is one of four strands of the government’s counter-terrorism strategy, and aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. The Prevent Strategy was revised in 2011. The other three strands are:
 - Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;
 - pursue: to stop terrorist attacks;
 - protect: to strengthen our protection against terrorist attacks and
 - prepare: where an attack cannot be stopped, to mitigate its impact.
3. The 2011 Prevent strategy has three specific strategic objectives:
 - Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it;

- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they are given appropriate advice and support; and
 - Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.
4. The Prevent Strategy was revised in 2011 to deal with all forms of terrorism and non-violent extremism, which can create the atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit. The strategy also made it clear that preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism requires challenge to extremist ideas where they are used to legitimise terrorism and shared by terrorist groups.
5. In fulfilling the new duty, Local Authorities, including elected Members and senior officers (together with many of the other specified authorities set out within the Act) will be expected to be carrying out activity in the following 5 key areas:
- Partnership Working
 - Risk Assessment and Addressing Local Priorities
 - Action Plan Development
 - Staff Training
 - Use of Local Authority Resources

Sevenoaks District Prevent Action Plan provides a structured programme of work that aims to fulfil our local objectives whilst simultaneously taking on board recommendations made by Government.

Key Implications

Financial

It is anticipated that the Prevent duty can be undertaken by existing staff within current budget parameters.

While some training may be required for individual staff it is anticipated that these will come from within existing budgets

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The Act, places a duty upon local authorities to have a local plan and to look at Prevent. SDC will place this under their safeguarding Policy.

As the Council is a regulatory authority for the legislation given in the report there are no alternative options. Failure to update the Scheme of Delegations to reflect changes in legislation could mean that the Council may be subject to legal challenge if regulatory action is taken by unauthorised officers, or that any legal action taken under these regulations would be invalid.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults.

Prevent will be part of SDC Safeguarding Policy

Conclusions

That the Community Safety Partnership continue to lead on the Prevent Duty on behalf of the Council and that

- a) Members support the Districts Action Plan on Prevent.
- b) The Council will support Kent County Council with the Channel Panel and specifically support any cases that are identified as having a link to the District
- c) The Council give consideration to the use of its own building and resources to ensure that they do not promote extremist views.
- d) The mechanisms for reporting concerns as detailed are noted

Appendices

None

Background Papers:

Sevenoaks District Councils Prevent Action Plan.

Lesley Bowles

Chief Officer Communities and Business