

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

31 October 2024



**Counter Terrorism & Security Act 2015 –
Prevent Update**

Report of John Hewitt, Chief Executive, Durham County Council.

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update of the Safe Durham Partnership's progress in meeting the statutory duties contained within the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and an update on partnership working.
- 2 A presentation will be provided at the meeting.

Executive summary

- 3 There is a statutory responsibility to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This report provides an update on the latest government strategy and guidance alongside highlighted areas of Prevent activity directly linked to Durham County Council and the Safe Durham Partnership.

Recommendation

- 4 Members of the Committee are asked to note information contained within this report and presentation.

Background

- 5 At its meeting in July 2024, the Committee agreed its work programme to include an item on Counter Terrorism.
- 6 Regular updates have been provided to the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee since new statutory duties were placed on local authorities in 2015 in relation to Prevent. The most recent update was in November 2023.
- 7 Reports have outlined the UK Counter Terrorism Strategy (Contest) 2023, and its objectives, which are:
 - (a) **Prevent:** Stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism
 - (b) **Pursue:** Stop terrorist attacks happening in this county or against UK interests overseas
 - (c) **Protect:** Strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack
 - (d) **Prepare:** Minimise the impact of an attack and reduce the likelihood of further attacks.
- 8 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 placed Prevent on a statutory footing and requires all specified authorities to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”. Local Authorities and their partners therefore have a core role to play in countering terrorism at a local level and helping to safeguard individuals at risk of radicalisation.
- 9 The current threat level for the UK is Substantial as of 22 February 2022 meaning that an attack is likely.
- 10 The three Prevent objectives as required in Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 are:
 - (a) Respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat we face from those who promote it.
 - (b) Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they are given appropriate advice and support.
 - (c) Work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation that we need to address.
- 11 The presentation attached in Appendix 2 will provide members with further information on activity at a National, Regional and Local Level and will be delivered by Andy Bailey, Partnerships Team Leader,

Durham County Council and a representative from Counter Terrorism Police North East.

Main implications

Crime and Disorder

- 12 Information within this report aims to contribute to the strategic objective of “Hate Crime and Building Community Cohesion within the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy 2024-29.

Conclusion

- 13 The attached presentation provides an update on activity by the Safe Durham Partnership in meeting the requirements of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.

- 14 Background papers

- None

Other useful documents

- Counter Terrorism and Security Act – Prevent Update – Safer and Stronger Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Nov 2023
- Contest Strategy 2023

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places Prevent on a statutory footing and requires Durham County Council to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

Finance

None.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

A Policy Equality Statement has been prepared by the Home Office. It has been assessed that the policy is compliant, where relevant, with Section 149 of the Equality Act, and that due regard has been made to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

Countering terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism is a strategic objective of the Safe Durham Partnership and therefore, crime and disorder is the main focus of the report.

Staffing

The local authority has provided training for practitioners to become familiar with the statutory requirements in terms of recognising and referring those vulnerable to radicalisation. It has also set up single points of contact for a multi-agency Channel Panel.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

Corporate Procurement has been briefed on the implications of the duty.