

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Preventing Violent Extremism – End of Year Update

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### Summary

Preventing Violent Extremism is one of the four key elements of the national Counter Terrorism Strategy. The report provides Committee with an update in relation to the forthcoming Counter Terrorism Local Profile, a summary of the key activity we have carried out in the last twelve-months as well as the details of referral and support processes we have established. It builds on the regular updates provided to Committee following its review of Prevent – which ended in March 2016.

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides the Committee with an update on the work/activity that has taken place in relation to the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda as well an update in relation to the forthcoming Counter Terrorism Local Profile for Gateshead.

## 2 Background / Context

- 2.1 As a reminder, the Office for Security and Counter-Terrorism has responsibility for the strategic direction of the activity undertaken to disrupt international terrorism. The Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy was initially published in April 2011 and refreshed in 2018 and highlights actions connected to:
- **Pursue** aims to stop terrorist attacks both in the UK and against interests overseas. Northumbria Police are responsible for activities conducted under this work stream (with no direct involvement from Gateshead Council).
  - **Protect** aims to strengthen our protection against terrorist attacks in the UK or against our interests overseas, and reduce the vulnerability of targets, through improving protective security arrangements for crowded places.
  - **Prepare** aims to mitigate the impact of a terrorist incident where it cannot be stopped. This includes work to bring a terrorist attack to an end, and to recover from subsequent aftermath. From a Council perspective, Resilience and Emergency Planning co-ordinates activity around these workstreams.
  - **Prevent** aims to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. This includes challenging extremist ideas that are conducive to terrorism or are shared by terrorist groups, countering extremist ideology and helping to build more cohesive communities. From a Council perspective, Community Safety function co-ordinates the activity linked with this work stream.

- 2.2 Under Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, specified authorities (including the local authority) in the exercise of their functions, are expected to have “*due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism*”. To support in this duty, the Home Office published a series of self-assessment toolkits and guidance to help share best practice and ideas to help comply with the legislation – with the latest publication being released in September 2018.

### **3 Progress**

- 3.1 There continues to be a wide range of actions carried in Gateshead in relation to the Prevent agenda in the last 12 months. Some of the key activities include:

- Formal Preventing Violent Extremism (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) training continues to take place but attendance remains relatively low, despite being promoted regularly. Community Safety are exploring options to identify alternative ways to improve Prevent awareness within the Local Authority.
- A short Prevent Awareness session will now be delivered at all Corporate Induction training for new employees of Gateshead Council, the first of which took place on the 16th January 2019.
- Two Officers from Community Safety attended the Channel Hydra training in October 2018 with the North-East Counter Terrorism Unit and are now appropriately trained to chair multi-agency Channel Panel meetings. Adam Lindridge, Community Safety Manager is the nominated Channel Panel Chair for Gateshead – and Steven Kelly, Community Safety Co-ordinator will deputise.
- Delivered three bespoke Preventing Violent Extremism sessions for Councillors with 17 Councillors attending. A two-day Local Government Association training event has been planned to take place in March 2019 for Councillors.
- A Northumbria wide CONTEST Board has been re-established from October 2018 and is chaired by ACC Helen McMillan from Northumbria Police.
- The Home Office Prevent Duty Toolkit for Local Authorities has now been fully completed by Community Safety and actions identified by Community Safety have now been completed or are being progressed accordingly.
- Prevent Awareness Sessions have been delivered to staff within Adult Social Care Direct, who are the first point of contact for Adult Prevent referrals and several teams within Children’s Services. Further sessions are planned with frontline officers from the Gateshead Housing Company.
- Community Safety have provided information from a Gateshead perspective to colleagues in Special Branch to inform the 2019 Counter Terrorism Local

Profile (CTLP) which will be shared with each Local Authority Chief Executive in early May 2019. These profiles will be used to produce a tailored Action Plan for Gateshead for 2019/20 to address any identified gaps in provision.

- Community Safety have attended several Home Office Conferences in recent weeks, which has led to Community Safety re-assessing our current approaches in relation to Prevent:
  - Channel Panel Chairs Network
  - Self-Assessment Framework
  - Referral Process
  - Safeguarding & Prevent
- Implemented an informal approach to record and monitor cases of interest in relation to Prevent within Community Safety.
- Commissioned voluntary sector organisation to deliver bespoke Prevent Awareness sessions to Governors and Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools across Gateshead. Two sessions for Designated Safeguarding Leads have taken place to date and feedback has been extremely positive.
- Working with the Web and Digital Team to create a webpage on Gateshead Council's website to include information on the Prevent agenda, reporting a Prevent concern and Preventing Violent Extremism training.

#### **4. Recommendations**

4.1 The Committee is asked to:

- (i) Discuss and comment on the contents of the report;
- (ii) Identify if there any issues/areas linked to Prevent that OSC would like to scrutinise in greater detail at a future Committee meeting.

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