

Lancashire County Council

Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, 23rd September, 2016 at 10.00 am in Cabinet Room 'B' - The Diamond Jubilee Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Bill Winlow (Chair)

County Councillors

A Barnes	J Shedwick
Ms L Collinge	R Shewan
C Crompton	V Taylor
G Dowding	D Watts
D O'Toole	B Yates

County Councillor Gina Dowding replaced County Councillor Liz Oades for this meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor George Wilkins.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Interests

None were disclosed

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 July

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2016 at 10:00am be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

4. Prevent

The Chair welcomed Saeed Sidat, Principal Manager – Equalities and Cohesion, and, Pam Smith, Equality and Cohesion Manager, to the meeting.

This item had been included on the work plan to enable the Committee to carry out its statutory duty to scrutinise crime and disorder issues. The wider Crime and Disorder Strategy was planned to be received by the Committee in April 2017

A report was presented to the Committee providing information on the implementation of the Prevent Duty, Section 26 of the Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 across the authority since its commencement in July 2015, and our partnership working arrangements with regard to Prevent.

The Government's Prevent Strategy, published in 2011, was part of their overall counter-terrorism strategy CONTEST and its Annual reports. Contest had four arms: Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare. The aim of the Prevent Strategy was to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The 2011 Prevent Strategy had three specific strategic objectives:

- Challenge the ideology that supports terrorism and the threats faced from those who promoted it;
- Prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure that they were given appropriate advice and support; and
- Work with sections and institutions where there were risks of radicalisation that needed to be addressed.

The Prevent Strategy was changed in 2011 to deal with all forms of terrorism and non-violent extremism, which can create an atmosphere conducive to terrorism and can popularise views which terrorists then exploit. It also made clear that preventing people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism required challenge to extremist ideology where they were used to legitimise terrorism and were shared by terrorist groups. This also meant intervening to stop people from extremist groups into terrorist related activity. The most significant threat was currently from Al Qaida (AQ) and Daesh (ISIL). However terrorists associated with the extreme right also posed a threat.

The Equality and Cohesion Team's work was monitored and scrutinised by Management Team and the Cabinet Fairness for All Working Group. The Team reported back to them on its developments. The Committee was informed that there was a Champion for the Prevent agenda who was County Councillor Azhar Ali.

A link to the Prevent training for Members is attached:

<http://lccintranet/corporate/c-first/holder.asp?id=2016/06/20/80633&news=798&page=pr&>

Questions and comments by the Committee in relation to the report were as follows:

- Regarding the Multi-Agency Channel Panel, Members were informed that this was a group of specialist safeguarding experts from the Adult Safeguarding and Children Safeguarding agenda as well as the police and

other local authority representatives. The Channel Panel took on cases of individuals who showed signs of being radicalised or extreme ideology beliefs. The Panel worked with these individuals to help them breakdown their extreme ideology beliefs. There was also a Pan-Lancashire Group with representatives from Lancashire, Blackpool, and Blackburn with Darwen who met monthly. It was a very closed group due to security and safeguarding reasons. This group took about 30 cases per year with good success. The cases were about 50% Daesh and 50% Far Right.

- On the subject of the internet it was explained to the Committee that BTLIS managed the local authority's internet arrangements. BTLIS had built in arrangements around flags and blocks. Members were reassured that robust blocking procedures were in place, If anything did flag up the ITC Service had arrangements for these to go directly to Lancashire Constabulary Special Branch IT staff.
- The Committee felt that Prevent as a concept and a strategy was still viewed with suspicion by some minority groups and enquired how LCC was addressing this suspicion. This was an issue and it was pointed out that a lot of work was being done around community cohesion with LCC and its partners. The route taken by LCC was educating people through safeguarding and making people safe. Primarily around young people and internet usage. On the whole this was working.
- Members asked what interventions were taken in dealing with adults. The Equality and Cohesion Team delivered training around the WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) agenda with scenarios and cases involving adults. These were about the mentoring with community leaders and youth leaders. It was about finding out why people were going down a certain route. It was finding them a hobby or interest that might make them feel as if they belonged and worthwhile.
- Regarding use of County resources, the Committee was informed that the prescribed group which was updated quarterly by the Home Office was around terrorist groups. There were policies and procedures in place with regard to monitoring which met the requirements of the Prevent Duty.
- On the topic of referrals to the Channel Panel, Members enquired how many a year there were and if there was a steady increase each year. Members would be provided with these figures in due course. The Committee was informed that there was a split between youth referrals and adult referrals. Once the cases were referred on to the Channel panel it was taken out of LCC's hands by safeguarding procedures.
- It was felt education was really important. It was vital to get children at a young age to understand each other's beliefs and traditions, and to work and live together.

- It was pointed out that extremism came from all different backgrounds and communities. The Prevent Duty was not about religion, it was about safeguarding the entire population.
- Regarding monitoring and enforcement Members enquired if there was specific training for practitioners in Early Years by LCC. The WRAP training was specifically delivered across the Early Years services to help them understand the Prevent Agenda.
- Councillors acknowledged the impact of budget decisions on children's services with less frontline staff to pick up referrals. The Equalities and Cohesion Team was assessing the impact of those decisions.
- Cohesion played a paramount role in the work done with the equality and Cohesion Team. It was vitally important that communities got on with each other.
- The Committee stated that our public services must reflect the communities they served.
- Members were informed that the Equalities and Cohesion Team ran two Bite Size Briefings a year on the Prevent Agenda.
- Referrals to the Channel Panel were with the consent of the individual or if it was a young person with the consent of his or her family.
- Members requested additional information on the demographics of the referrals.

Resolved:

1. The report be noted
2. The developments as set out in the report be noted
3. Updates on Prevent including the developing Prevent Strategy be presented at future meetings.

5. Hate Crime

The Committee was informed that Lancashire County Council had considered the following notice of motion at Full Council on 21 July 2016:

Lancashire County Council condemns racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes of any description have no place in our country or our county.

We are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society and note that a lot of good work is taking place across Lancashire:

- *The Lancashire Strategic Hate Crime Group is devising the hate crime strategy and there is a dedicated hate crime unit within Lancashire Constabulary.*
- *There are excellent examples of partnership working to tackle racism, xenophobia and hate crime between the County Council, Borough and District Councils, Lancashire Constabulary, the Office of the PCC and the voluntary, community and faith sectors across the County.*

This Council wants to assure all of the County's residents and visitors that they are valued members of our society and as elected representatives of the diverse communities across Lancashire, Full Council is asked to place on record that the County Council will not tolerate hate crime, racism or xenophobia in its communities.

This Council resolved to:

- Display the opening paragraph in this motion prominently on the county council website and that a press release is issued to publicise the motion.
- Ask the scrutiny committee to review the current measures taken to counter racism, xenophobia, and hate crime and report back to Full Council.
- Support and work with people who are victims of hate crime, racism or xenophobia to feel confident in coming forward and reporting it.

The report provided the Scrutiny Committee with information relating to the current measures in place and support available.

Questions and comments by the Committee in relation to the report were as follows:

- Members enquired how many crimes were reported around the night time economy and how many of these crimes were drink related. The Equalities and Cohesion Team along with Lancashire Constabulary were holding a conference in January 2017 for the taxi sector. It was vitally important to address the crimes affecting the night time economy.

It was commented that people with learning disabilities were one of the most vulnerable groups in the community and the Equalities and Cohesion Team was asked what it was doing to help people with learning disabilities as they were often the victims of low level abuse and more serious crimes.

- It was felt that the LCC could promote to its residents the skills required to deal with abuse and hate crime when it started. There were guidelines available for people witnessing abuse which suggested diverting attention

from the abuser and address the person who was being abused thus creating an environment of support.

- It was important that people working in the night time economy had the necessary skills for de-escalating dangerous situations to offer support for victims.
- Members commented that a lot of victims did not have the confidence to report their crimes to the police.
- The Equality and Cohesion Team were liaising with schools and organisations to educate children and teachers on what was a hate crime and talk about confidence in reporting the crime.
- Along with Lancashire Constabulary the Equality and Cohesion Team was looking to hold a Women's Conference to specifically address the issues around why women were often victims of hate crime.
- There was a Strategic Hate Crime Group set up that, at the end of the year, was looking at if there had been an increase in reporting hate crime, had there been an increase in prosecution, and, had there been satisfaction with the outcome.
- The Committee was informed that there would be a Bite Size Briefing on Hate Crime soon for Members which would provide more detail on the subject.
- The Hate Crime Strategy would soon be ready and then would go to the Chief Executives Group on 11th November 2016 to be presented and signed off.
- The Committee requested the dates for the Taxi Sector Conference and the Women's Conference when they were available.

Resolved:

1. The report be noted
2. The developments as set out in the report be noted.

6. Workplan and Task Group update

The Work Plan was presented to the Committee regarding upcoming topics and future topics not yet scheduled as well as an update on ongoing Task Groups.

Members agreed to cancel the Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for Friday 14th October 2016. The next meeting of the Committee would be on Friday 18th November 2016 at 10:00am.

It was agreed to hold a workshop with Scrutiny Members, hopefully before the next Scrutiny meeting in November, to discuss issues on Prevent and Hate Crime. It was suggested that representatives from the Equality and Cohesion Team, Lancashire Constabulary, NHS, the Chair of the Channel Panel, the Chair of Health Scrutiny, and, the Chair of Children Services Scrutiny would be invited to this meeting.

Resolved:

1. The work plan for 2016/17 be noted
2. Members agree to cancel the Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled for 14th October.
3. The Committee agree to hold a workshop to receive more detailed information on Prevent and Hate Crime.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will take place on Friday 18th November 2016 at 10.00am in Cabinet Room B (The Diamond Jubilee Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

I Young
Director of Governance, Finance
and Public Services

County Hall
Preston