

Report to: Governance Committee

Date of meeting: 29 June 2021

By: Director of Adult Social Care

Title: East Sussex Channel Panel

Purpose: To propose an amendment to the County Council Constitution to ensure compliance with the requirements laid out under sections 36 – 41 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA) (as amended by the Counter Terrorism Border Security Act 2019) relating to Channel panels.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Governance Committee is recommended to recommend the County Council to agree to the Constitution being amended as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report in order to reflect the Council's duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA)

1 Background Information

- 1.1. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. Delivery of Prevent is grounded in early intervention and safeguarding.
- 1.2. Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies including local authorities in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". In fulfilling the duty there is an expectation that East Sussex County Council participates fully in work to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.
- 1.3. The Channel process forms a key part of Prevent and adopts a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who are at risk of being drawn into terrorism. Section 36 of the Act sets out a specific duty on local authorities and other partners to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.
- 1.4. In England and Wales, this duty is met through Channel Panels. There is a legal requirement for Panels to be chaired and coordinated by the local authority. The East Sussex Channel Panel is chaired and coordinated by County Council officers and comprises a number of agencies and authorities relevant to each individual being discussed or supported.

2 Supporting Information

- 2.1. The refreshed Channel Duty guidance published in 2020 outlined a number of changes to that will impact on local authorities and on Channel panels. The revised guidance aims to remove inconsistencies in Channel delivery nationally and is supported by a new Channel Panel Annual Assurance Statement (Appendix 1) which will be used to set a baseline for all local authorities' Channel practice from the financial year 2021/22 in England and Wales.
- 2.2. The statement forms part of the strengthened quality assurance framework to support the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) business assurance arrangements.

- 2.3. The assurance statement relates to standards to be achieved and options for assessment. Each local authority is asked to state the extent to which they believe their authority meets each of these standards and indicate the relevant RAG rating based on the definitions.

3. Inspection and Compliance

- 3.1. There are 36 standards to meet and ESCC is compliant with 35 standards. The completed assurance statement is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.2. In order to meet all of the requirements of the annual assurance statement it is necessary that the Channel Panel be referred to in the Council's Constitution. It is proposed that the following be added to Part 3 Table 5 (Other Committees and Panels) of the Constitution:

Channel Panels

Under its statutory duties set out in Section 36 and 38 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, East Sussex County Council will lead Channel Panels for East Sussex covering the needs of adults and children. It will provide a Chair and Deputy Chair, appointed by the Director of Adult Social Care. These will be senior officers considered to have the required skills and experience and the appropriate authority to facilitate the engagement of multi-agency partners and the direction of their resources.

The Panel will develop a support plan for individuals who are adopted as Channel cases because they are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. It will ensure accurate records are kept detailing the support plan, agreed actions and decision-making. Governance arrangements for Channel will be through the statutory multi-agency East Sussex Community Safety Partnership.

4 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The East Sussex Channel Panel Assurance Statement provides an accurate assessment of compliance with Channel panel requirements for the financial year 2020/21, as detailed within the CTSA 2015 and Channel Duty guidance 2020.
- 4.2 In order to be fully compliant with the guidance it is necessary to amend the County Council Constitution to reflect the duties set out under the Act.

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

[Channel Duty Guidance](#): Protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism statutory guidance for Channel panel members and partners of local panels