



Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek the approval by Cabinet of the draft Venue Hire and External Speaker policy. The introduction of this policy will ensure the Council's continued compliance with the Prevent Duty.

Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. Approve the draft Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy for use across its public venues.**

Decision Information

Is this a Key Decision?	N
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	N
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting communities Effective council
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

1.1 There are no specific financial comments arising from this report.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report which are not already referenced in the body of the report.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

1.3 Putting in place a venue hire and external speaker policy will help to minimise risk in relation to use of properties owned and operated by the Council. By providing relevant training relating to awareness of Prevent the Council further mitigates risk by ensuring officers and elected Members are aware of responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance and Risk Officer

Health and Safety

1.4 The requirements placed upon the Council through the Prevent Duty strongly align with statutory obligations and responsibilities the Council holds under the Health and Safety at Work 1974 and relevant legislation associated with the Act. Putting in place an overarching Venue Hire Policy will ensure consistency across Council venues and improve safety measures for both staff and users of our facilities.

Completed by: Phil Swinton, Emergency Planning and Health & Safety Lead

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 Since its introduction in 2003, concerns have been raised within some communities that Prevent is sometimes implemented in ways which undermine fundamental rights and freedoms, stifle free speech, lead to discrimination, and stigmatise or alienate sections of the population.
- 1.6 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 1.7 The Prevent Duty, which was introduced in 2015, also places the duty of 'due regard' on public bodies to ensure actions relating to Prevent are delivered in an appropriate, proportionate and fair way. This would include actions related to the implementation of the Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Safeguarding

- 1.8 Prevent sits within the safeguarding arena and its processes ensure that those susceptible to grooming are protected from harm. Prevent forms part of SKDC's Safeguarding Policy and so is supported by the Council's Safeguarding officers and through training for officers and Members.

Completed by: Sarah McQueen, Head of Service (Housing) and Safeguarding Lead

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council has a clear commitment in its Corporate Plan 2024-2027 for its residents to have the opportunities to lead healthy and fulfilling lives, in safe neighbourhoods. This report highlights this commitment through work undertaken to deliver against the Prevent Duty.
- 2.2. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 created a statutory duty to have due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism. This duty applies to all public bodies (local authorities, police, the National Health Service (NHS), schools, further and higher education providers, probation, prisons and youth offending services). The duty also applies to private providers supplying public functions for example, in the education sector. Previously, the lead responsibility for

Prevent lay with the police, however since 2016, local authorities have had the lead as Prevent interventions are focused in the 'pre criminal space'. In Lincolnshire, the lead authority is the County Council, however, District Authorities are also required under law to meet the Prevent Duty.

- 2.3. The National Threat Level for the UK, assessed by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, has remained at Substantial since February 2022 (meaning an attack remains likely). Therefore, awareness of Prevent, the ability to recognise potential concerns and knowing when and to whom those concerns should be raised, are vital in the prevention of radicalisation and terrorism.
- 2.4. Under the Prevent Duty, local authorities are expected to ensure appropriate frontline staff, including those of its contractors, have a good understanding of Prevent, are trained to recognise where a person might be susceptible to becoming radicalised into terrorism, and are aware of available programmes to provide support. It is important, therefore, to ensure that community-facing officers keep up-to-date with the requirements to "notice, check and share" in relation to Prevent. The Council provides training for both officers and elected Members to raise awareness of Prevent, understand requirements for making referrals and outlines the support available through Channel.
- 2.5 Prevent has three objectives. They are:
 - to respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism and the threat faced from those who promote it
 - to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and ensure they receive appropriate advice and support
 - to work with sectors and institutions where there are risks of radicalisation which require addressing.
- 2.6 One way that Prevent seeks to tackle the ideological causes of terrorism is by limiting exposure to radicalising narratives, both online and offline, and to create an environment where radicalising ideologies are challenged and are not permitted to flourish. This is known under the Duty as "reducing permissive environments".

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The Duty requires the Council to have measures in place to ensure our facilities are not exploited by radicalisers. This includes ensuring that any event spaces, publicly-owned venues and resources or IT equipment are not being used to facilitate the spread of extremist narratives which can reasonably be linked to terrorism, such as narratives used to encourage people into participating in or supporting terrorism.
- 3.2 Section 134 of the Prevent Duty states that "Local authorities should have a policy, based on local risk assessments, that clearly articulates the activities and behaviours of a group or person which may make them subject to restrictions on

access to publicly-owned venues and resources. The policy should articulate relevant considerations for awarding contracts for the delivery of local authority services. It is important that the policy is embedded throughout the local authority”.

- 3.3 To this end, a Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy has been developed in collaboration with Lincolnshire County Council. A draft of the policy can be found at Appendix A.
- 3.4 The Policy is supported by an advice document which sets out responsible event booking guidance. This document can be found at Appendix B.
- 3.5 The adoption of this policy will provide additional assurance that the Council’s venue hire procedures are robust and will work to minimise the risk of allowing permissive environments within our own properties.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 The Council must meet statutory responsibilities under the Prevent Duty. Therefore, the do nothing option was discounted.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The recommendation for Cabinet to approve the Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy is made to ensure the Council meets the requirements placed upon it by the Prevent Duty 2023.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The draft Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy and the guidance document were shared with senior officers from relevant service areas for comment prior to being presented to Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October. Members of the Committee unanimously voted to recommend to Cabinet the approval of this policy.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 [Prevent duty guidance for England and Wales](#)
- 7.2 [Prevent duty toolkit for Local Authorities](#)
- 7.3 [South Kesteven District Council’s Safeguarding Policy and Procedure](#)

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Draft Venue Hire and External Speaker Policy
- 8.2 Appendix B – Draft Responsible Event Booking Advice Document