

Open Report on behalf of Keith Ireland, Chief Executive

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 October 2018
Subject:	Annual Prevent Review

Summary:

To present to Scrutiny Committee an update on Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during 2017/18, as a result of changes to the Counter-Terrorism Bill 2014 and the introduction of the Government Counter-Extremism Strategy 2015 and the updated CONTEST Strategy 2018, including the new responsibilities placed upon Local Authorities.

Actions Required:

Members of the Committee are invited to consider and comment on the report and highlight any recommendations or further actions for consideration.

1. Background

The Government response to counter-terrorism is built on an approach that unites the public and private sectors, communities, citizens and overseas partners around the single purpose to leave no safe space for terrorists to recruit or act. The strategy, CONTEST, is the framework that enables Government to organise this work to counter all forms of terrorism. CONTEST's overarching aim remains to reduce the risk to the UK and its citizens and interests overseas.

2. Strategic Context

The threat from terrorism, globally and in the UK, is higher than when the Government last published CONTEST in 2011. The UK is facing a number of different and enduring terrorist threats. The increased threat has mainly been caused by the rise of Daesh and the creation of its cult-like "Caliphate", combined with the persistent threat from Al Qa'ida.

Daesh has been constrained militarily by the actions of a global coalition in which the UK is playing a leading role, which has eroded most of its territory and severely degraded its central propaganda apparatus. But Daesh's ability to direct, enable and inspire attacks still represents the most significant global terrorist threat, including to the UK and its people and interests overseas. Daesh's methods are already being copied by new and established terror groups.

Using pernicious, divisive messaging and amplifying perceived grievances, Daesh and Al Qa'ida exploit the internet to promote warped alternative narratives, urging extremists within communities to subvert our way of life through simple, brutal violence. They deem anyone who does not share their rejectionist views as a legitimate target and any method of murder acceptable. They cynically groom the vulnerable and the young to join their movement, inspiring people within our own communities to commit senseless acts of violence. The recent attacks across Europe and the UK have also served to highlight the diversity and accessibility of methods by which individuals who are vulnerable to these radicalising messages can commit attacks.

This has had a profound effect on the threat to the UK, seen so starkly through the attacks in 2017. The current UK National Threat Level is SEVERE, meaning an attack is highly likely. Islamist terrorism is the foremost terrorist threat to the UK. Extreme right-wing terrorism is a growing threat. In December 2016, the then Home Secretary proscribed the first extreme right-wing group, National Action, under the Terrorism Act 2000. The Government took further action in September 2017, proscribing Scottish Dawn and National Socialist Anti-Capitalist Action as aliases of National Action. Northern Ireland related terrorism remains a serious threat, particularly in Northern Ireland itself.

In 2017, we saw a significant shift in the terrorist threat to the UK, with five attacks in London and Manchester that led to the deaths of 36 innocent people and injured many more. The Government responded decisively, rapidly adapting their priorities and capabilities, to break the momentum of these attacks. Since last year's Westminster attack, the police and the security and intelligence agencies have successfully foiled a further 12 Islamist plots, and since 2017, have disrupted four extreme right-wing plots.

However, government will not always be successful in stopping attacks. Most future terrorist plots in the UK will employ simple methods that can be developed with ease and at speed. Terrorists still have the intent to also mount complex, potentially more destructive attacks, probably targeting crowded places or the global aviation system. The general availability and use of encrypted communications allows terrorists to disguise their plans better.

3. Government response

The updated and strengthened CONTEST 2018 strategy reflects the findings of a fundamental review of all aspects of counter-terrorism, to ensure we have the best response to the heightened threat in coming years. The review found CONTEST to be well-organised and comprehensive and that the Government should update their approach within the tried and tested strategic framework of four 'P' work strands:

- Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks.
- Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack.
- Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.

However, the review concluded that a change in the approach within this framework would increase the ability to counter the shift in threat. This will include a step-change in domestic investigative capabilities through implementing the recommendations of MI5 and CT Policing's Operational Improvement Review.

New counter-terrorism legislation will underpin the Government's approach, ensuring the Police and Crown Prosecution Service have the powers they need to enable intervention at an earlier stage in investigations, leading to prosecutions for terrorism offences, backed up by longer prison sentences and stronger management of terrorist offenders after their release.

Last year's attacks in London and Manchester highlighted both the challenge of detecting individuals who may be inspired to commit terrorist acts in the UK, and the pace at which plots can move to acts of violence. This places a renewed importance on our understanding of those individuals who are vulnerable to radicalisation or who are (or have been) of interest to the police and the security and intelligence agencies due to their possible links to terrorist-related activities, but who are not currently the subject of any active investigations. The Government will share information more widely and support more local interventions with individuals in our own communities who are being groomed or incited to commit or support acts of terrorism.

New multi-agency approaches at the local level – initially in London, the West Midlands and Greater Manchester – will enable MI5 and Counter-Terrorism Policing to share more information with a broader range of partners, including government departments, Devolved Administrations, and local authorities. By alerting a greater number of agencies to individuals of potential concern, this will improve our ability to assess the risk they pose whilst also being able to bring to bear a broader, larger set of local interventions, including to safeguard those at risk of radicalisation or to ensure those who have supported or been involved in terrorist-related activities disengage.

The Government will seek a more integrated relationship with the private sector both to better protect our economic infrastructure and to scale our ability to tackle terrorism. They will jointly with industry improve security at venues in the UK, gain faster alerts to suspicious purchases and design out vulnerabilities in our infrastructure or in products that terrorists exploit. They will take robust action to ensure there are no safe places for terrorists online, and ensure we have the critical access we need to information on their communications.

The Government will prioritise strengthening the resilience of local communities to terrorism as they are at the forefront of our response, in particular those where the threat from terrorism and radicalisation is highest. The support to British citizens affected by terrorism at home and overseas remains a top priority.

The four 'P' national work strands will coalesce into a single local or overseas response as the government focus on improving frontline integration of our capabilities and people. Over the next three years the Government will take forward the following priorities under the Prevent work strand:

Prevent

- To safeguard and support those vulnerable to radicalisation, to stop them from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- Focus activity and resources in those locations where the threat from terrorism and radicalisation is highest.
- Expand our Desistance and Disengagement Programme with an immediate aim over the next 12 months to more than double the number of individuals receiving rehabilitative interventions.
- Develop a series of multi-agency pilots to trial methods to improve our understanding of those at risk of involvement in terrorism and enable earlier intervention.
- Focus our online activity on preventing the dissemination of terrorist material and building strong counter-terrorist narratives in order to ensure there are no safe places for terrorists online.
- Build stronger partnerships with communities, civil society groups, public sector institutions and industry to improve Prevent delivery.
- Re-enforce safeguarding at the heart of Prevent to ensure our communities and families are not exploited or groomed into following a path of violent extremism.

4. Project Dovetail

Project Dovetail is continuing to rollout in 2018/19. In addition to the nine initial Dovetail pilot sites (Blackburn with Darwen, Brighton & Hove, Croydon, Haringey, Kent, Kirklees, Luton, Oldham and Swansea), the second phase of the Dovetail pilot will roll out in the North West region in autumn 2018. Rollout to the South West and Wales will follow in 2019/20, with remaining regions following from 2020/21 onwards. This revised approach to Dovetail will allow greater transparency and oversight of the process via a Dovetail Governance Board, ultimately ensuring the proposed model is resilient as it rolls-out to the rest of England and Wales.

5. Channel

The Channel programme, part of the Prevent strategy, is a multi-agency programme co-ordinated by the Police to identify individuals vulnerable to radicalisation and direct them towards appropriate support. It was first piloted in 2007, and was rolled out across England and Wales in 2012. It focuses on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The latest Channel guidance states that the programme consists of three elements:

1. Identifying individuals at risk;
2. Assessing the nature and extent of that risk; and
3. Developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals involved.

In delivering the programme, the Local Authority and Police work with agencies including the NHS; Social Workers; Educational Institutions; Youth Offending Services; Immigration & Boarder Agency; Housing Services; Prisons; and Probation Services.

Following an initial referral, an assessment of vulnerability is made using a framework built around three criteria:

- Engagement with a group, cause or ideology;
- Intent to cause harm; and
- Capability to cause harm.

This assessment informs decisions on whether an individual needs support and what kind of support package might be appropriate. Channel aims to stop people moving from extremist groups, or from extremism, into terrorism. Association with organisations that are not proscribed and that espouse extremist ideology is not, on its own, reason enough to justify a referral to the Channel process. If professionals determine that someone attracted to the ideology of such groups also exhibits additional behavioural indicators that suggest they are moving towards terrorism then it would be appropriate to make a referral to Channel.

6. Lincolnshire Prevent

It is important to note that whilst the Prevent Duty outlines the requirements placed upon Local Authorities and its partners, it has allowed for the freedom to further develop individual processes appropriate to each geographical area, reflecting both risk and demographics. Local Authorities with their wide-ranging responsibilities and democratic accountability to their electorate, local authorities are vital to Prevent work. Effective local authorities will be working with their local partners to protect the public, prevent crime and to promote strong, integrated communities.

To ensure that Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) continues to deliver the Prevent Duty, it has put in place a robust framework for governance and leadership. LCC has responsibility to both Chair and provide the secretariat of the Prevent Steering Group.

- Partnership – To demonstrate effective compliance with the duty, specified authorities must be part of a coordinated approach to multi agency working. Lincolnshire therefore has an established and meaningful Prevent Steering Group which meets on a quarterly basis and directs Prevent activities through the established delivery plan.
- Delivery plan - With the support of co-ordinators and others as necessary, the delivery plan has been developed against an assessment of local risk and will drive activity where it is most needed and shape the work of the Prevent Steering Group.

Prevent Training & Development:

Training and briefings to frontline staff and the voluntary sector continues to be delivered in a rolling programme accessible (and free) to all agencies. The demands from schools for staff briefings has increased dramatically since the PREVENT Duty was introduced, and more latterly since recent attacks. The take up of Prevent awareness training since the introduction of new duty placed responsibility upon Local Authorities has increased enormously, with requests for

bookings from both statutory organisations, community groups and those groups not covered by the Duty, such as Town and Parish Councils, is now core business.

During the last twelve months, partners have worked collectively to create a suite of training and awareness courses, from brief online awareness to a more personalised approach, dependent upon the role and need of the organisation or individual.

Since January 2017, over 161 front facing Prevent Awareness briefing sessions have been delivered by the Local Authority Prevent Officer, which have included staff at schools and academies, local authorities and community groups.

There has been 1176 LCC staff who have received face to face training since January 2017. An on-line training session has also been developed for non-public facing Lincolnshire County Council staff and delivered via Lincs 2 Learn.

Prevent Conference

Lincolnshire hosted the East Midlands area Prevent Conference in November 2017, this event was entitled – The Importance of Community Engagement within Prevent.

We were fortunate to have two Key Note speakers on the day, Suleman Nagdi MBE DL who is from Leicester, a committed volunteer and an advocate in the Muslim community for over 25 years. He spoke about the importance of community engagement within Prevent. There was also a presentation from the Small Steps organisation, who are former members of far-right organisations who have rejected violence and far-right narratives and are now committed to exposing and eradicating far-right extremism in the UK.

There was a range of other community based speakers, such as Dr. Dominic Symonds, Reader & Director of Research, University of Lincoln speaking about 'Welcoming Voices' a project building social cohesion through the arts, which made the event very powerful, informative and interactive.

7. Lincolnshire, key projects

- **Engagement & Diversity Awareness**

The LCC Prevent Officer has developed and is delivering Prevent training which is linked to community cohesion and integration to town and parish councils, community groups and organisations, such as the Volunteer Centre Services workshops.

- **Community Integration Practitioner Group**

The group is made up of practitioners from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, NHS, Local Authority and 3rd sector organisations. It has been developed to enable these organisations to come together to share information and best working practices across Lincolnshire. It also aims to bring organisations together and seek joint working opportunities when working with communities.

- **Community Collaboration Project**

The Community Engagement Team is supporting the delivery of a three year, county wide, Community Collaboration Project (ending 31st March, 2020). Two team members (one covering the North of the county and one the South), will be working with partners and communities to develop and deliver collaborative activities; these may include supporting communities with emergency planning, facilitating the delivery of local community training or activity that will enable communities to develop inclusive projects. Building and maintaining strong relationships with and between organisations across the county (such as public sector bodies, Town & Parish Councils, charities and voluntary & community groups) will be critical to the success of the project.

8. Conclusion

The challenge the new legislation presents to Lincolnshire County Council still remain those of performance, training and awareness, and associated resources. Resources are being committed through existing staffing structures with demand absorbed by the Community Engagement Team who are developing a community integration approach. This team is currently exploring what Town and Parish Councils can offer in relation to delivering training and awareness alongside existing training delivery. Additionally, the team is working closely with the City of Lincoln Community Cohesion Steering Board and a number of third sector organisations, including Just Lincolnshire who is ideally placed to support this area of work. Work with District Councils to identify local forums with a similar remit and focus is also ongoing.

9. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Yes

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

10. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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