

Open Report on behalf of Debbie Barnes OBE, Head of Paid Service

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	29 October 2019
Subject:	Annual Prevent Review

Summary:

To present to Scrutiny Committee an update on Prevent activity in Lincolnshire during 2018/19, 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, 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.

Daesh and Al Qa'ida continue to exploit the internet to promote harmful alternative narratives, urging extremists within communities to undermine our way of life through violent acts. They deem anyone who does not share their rejectionist views as a legitimate target. They attempt to groom the vulnerable and the young to join their movement, inspiring people within our own communities to commit 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 that 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.

MI5 and the security services have undergone major changes in response to the development of the terrorist threat. The resources of all three of the UK's intelligence agencies have been significantly increased since 2001 and have nearly doubled the number of staff over the last decade. This allows the security services to do much more work on a range of issues and they have shifted extra resources into investigating international terrorism. This has greatly improved their ability to work at both national and regional level by setting up a network of stations around the country. In addition, the UK security and law enforcement agencies, including all of the various regional police forces, maintain a close working relationship. This has enabled them to prevent a significant majority of major terrorist plots and regularly disrupt on-going terrorist activity.

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.

The Review however, 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 Counter Terrorism (CT) Policing's Operational Improvement Review. New counter-terrorism legislation will underpin the

Government's approach, in 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.

The 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 that we have the critical access we need to information on their communications.

Generally Speaking, this comes in two parts:

- Getting the private sector to invest in CONTEST objectives – generally online, but not exclusively
- Working with private sector organisations to get them to consider Prevent in their general operations as and when appropriate. An example might be up-skilling airport staff to help them identify the signs of safety amongst staff members who may be vulnerable to radicalisation and helping them to refer them

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 two 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. Prevent Programme Review

On 22 January 2019, the Government agreed to an amendment to the Counter Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019, which committed them to making arrangements for an independent review and report on Prevent, the Government Strategy for supporting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Prevent is one of the four strands of the Government's Counter-Terrorism Strategy, CONTEST, and is therefore a critical part of our approach to reducing the risk we face from terrorism. These arrangements were to be made within six months of that Act receiving Royal Assent on 12 February 2019.

The government has recently announced (12th August 2019) that Lord Carlile had been appointed as the Independent Reviewer of the Prevent programme. The review will focus on the current national delivery of the Prevent programme and make recommendations for the future and is expected to report to Parliament by August 2020. The terms of reference for the Review will be published shortly once Lord Carlile has had an opportunity to consider and recommend amendments to them.

5. Project Dovetail

Project Dovetail is a Home Office project around Local Government delivery of Channel. Currently Channel coordination and case management is led by police practitioners, including case management, vulnerability assessment and commissioning of intervention providers.

In areas where Dovetail is operating, much of this responsibility has moved from the Counter Terrorism Unit (CTU) to Local Authority Channel Coordinators (CC). The coordination and case management of this activity does not require the unique skillsets of a warranted Police Officer, and by embedding the role in the Local Authority we have seen better buy-in and engagement from the local authority practitioners who so often provide the tailored interventions to support these vulnerable individuals.

There are currently seven live 'single-site' pilot sites across England and Wales, being, Kirklees, Swansea, Luton, Croydon, Haringey, Kent and Brighton. OSCT are now expanding this pilot to the North West on a regional basis. Rather than allocating resource to 'single-sites', e.g. a single Local Authority, OSCT are piloting the expansion of this pilot across regions.

Starting in January 2019, Liverpool City Council, Manchester City Council and Blackburn with Darwen became responsible for Channel delivery in Merseyside & Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Lancashire & Cumbria respectively. This will allow greater resilience for these Local Authority CCs, so that resource can flex across entire regions rather than across a single site. A Dovetail Governance Board provides oversight for the rollout in the North West, engaging senior managers and directors from across local authorities in the region.

There are now three Channel Supervisors, who are responsible for quality assurance and consistency for the panels within their hub. Supervisors are also responsible for managing the Channel Coordinators. There is a total of 8 Channel Coordinators case managing across the three hubs. The North West pilot went live on 1 April 2019, and evaluation will follow in a few months.

6. 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 or supporting 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.

7. 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 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 commissioned services continue 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 the 2017 attacks. The take up of Prevent awareness training, since the introduction of the new duty placed responsibility upon local authorities, has increased enormously. 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 2018, over 166 front facing Prevent Awareness briefing sessions have been delivered by the local authority Prevent Officer, which have included staff at schools and academies, district authorities, commissioned services and community groups. There have been 1,097 attendance certificates (PDF) sent to organisations that have received training (District authorities have their own attendance reporting).

Since January 2018, there have been 1488 LCC staff who have received face to face Prevent awareness sessions and a further 1920 non-facing staff who have completed the Prevent E-learning package via Lincs 2 Learn.

8. Lincolnshire, key projects

- **Engagement & Diversity Awareness Workshops**

The LCC Prevent Officer has designed and implemented a bespoke workshop which is designed to explore people's experiences of diversity and cohesion within their own communities and how integration and difference can be valued in order to provide resilience and strengthen community collaboration. The sessions are delivered to town and parish councils, community groups, faith groups and third sector organisations, such as the Volunteer Centre Services networking meetings. Examples of the topics covered are nationality, culture, tradition and faith. This opens genuine discussion within a safe environment and leads to a greater understanding between different constituents of the communities in Lincolnshire.

- **Let's Talk (About Hate) Workshop**

This workshop is a two year project funded by the Building a Stronger Britain Together initiative, delivered by Lincolnshire Community and Voluntary Service. It explores the importance of identity and belonging for young people in Lincolnshire. It provides an overview of the extreme far right narrative and how social media and propaganda can fuel hate within communities. The focus is self-identifying and countering local grievances and prejudices through an interactive workshop, which aims to provide a safe space to explore personal prejudices that young people may have been exposed to. The project aims to increase awareness of the issues around Far Right Extremism and radicalisation, to help young people recognise

vulnerabilities in others and to provide a better understanding to enable the rejection of extremist narratives.

The workshop is delivered free to educational settings for year 9 and above. It is predominantly delivered in the east of the county and demand has seen it expand county wide. It is designed to be frank and transparent, to empower young people to explore their own identity and belonging, strengthening their resilience against Far-Right extreme views and to create a safe space to have very difficult conversations without bias or fear. Feedback from the presentation has evidenced the lack of understanding by young people about counter extremism.

- **Women's Engagement Event**

The Lincolnshire Police Prevent Team recently hosted a Women's Engagement Event 'Our families, Our future' at Bishop Grosseteste University. The event was aimed at raising awareness of the important role that women play in safeguarding others around them from being drawn towards extremism. It was an opportunity for women to come together in a safe space to talk about prejudice, discrimination and racism and how they can manifest and create suspicion, division and hatred.

The event was attended by a combination of female practitioners working with women in the community and female members of the local community living in the Lincoln area. The feedback was excellent and as a result further events are being organised across other areas of Lincolnshire.

- **Community Collaboration Project**

The Communities 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), are 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.

9. Conclusion

The challenges that the new legislation presents to Lincolnshire County Council still remain those of performance, training, awareness and associated resources. Resources are being committed through existing staffing structures with demand absorbed by the Communities Team which has developed a community integration approach. This team is currently exploring what the third sector and 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 Interfaith Forum and other community organisations, including Just Lincolnshire which is ideally placed to support this area of work. Work with District Councils to identify local community forums with a similar remit and focus is also on-going.

10. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Yes

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

N/A

11. 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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