



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2022-23

**COMMUNITY AND CHILDRENS
SERVICES - CRIME & DISORDER
COMMITTEE**

24th April 2023

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC
HEALTH, PROTECTION & COMMUNITY
SERVICES**

Agenda Item No.

3

Counter Terrorism overview and
scrutiny of Council preparedness in
context of new duties

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update Elected Members on the Council's implementation of Counter Terrorism duties, and the Council's preparedness in the context of new duties.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Scrutinise the content of the report and express their views on the Council's implementation of current Counter Terrorism duties, and our preparedness for new duties.
- 2.2 Scrutinise the Prevent Duty action plan and progress to date.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Counter Terrorism and Security Act contains powers to help the UK respond to the threat of terrorism. The Act received Royal Assent on the 12th of February 2015.
- 3.2 The Act places a duty on Local Authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism. The Act also placed Channel (the Government's voluntary programme for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism) on a statutory basis. Channel is the responsibility of each Local Authority.

3.3 The Contest Strategy underpins the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Contest is split into four work streams, that are known as the 4 P's – **Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare.**

Prevent – aims to prevent people from becoming terrorists and / or supporting terrorist activities.

Pursue – the aim is to stop terrorist attacks happening.

Protect – the aim is to keep the public safe by strengthening our protection against a terrorist attack.

Prepare – the aim is to save lives, reduce harm and aid recovery quickly in the event of a terrorist attack.

3.4 While much of the Counter Terrorism policy agenda is non-devolved, there is an impact on devolved policy areas and functions, particularly in relation to Local Authorities and Community Safety Partnerships.

3.5 In April 2021, the new Contest Cymru Strategy was launched. This work was a collaboration between the Welsh Government and Counter Terrorism Policing Wales. The strategy has been developed to improve the delivery of Contest in Wales, and the approach is built upon uniting the public sector, private sector, statutory partners, and national colleagues across Wales to deliver on the four areas of Contest.

3.6 The Contest Cymru Governance map is attached as Appendix (i).

4. **CURRENT THREAT**

4.1 The terrorism threat level indicates the likelihood of a terrorist attack in the UK. There are 5 levels of threat:

- Low – an attack is highly unlikely.
- Moderate – an attack is possible but not likely.
- Substantial – an attack is likely.
- Severe – an attack is highly likely.
- Critical – an attack is highly likely in the near future.

4.2 The level is set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre and the Security Service (MI5).

4.3 The threat level to the UK is currently **substantial.**

4.4 The current threat facing Rhondda Cynon Taf is indicative of the threat facing the rest of the UK.

4.5 Islamist Terrorism remains the larger problem and equates to approximately three quarters of the MI5 terrorist caseload. Much of the volume is self-radicalised terrorists

seeking to conduct low-sophistication attacks. However, low sophistication does not mean low impact as we have seen in recent attacks.

- 4.6 Detecting self-initiated terrorists, who often don't reveal their plans to anyone, and can move quickly and sometimes spontaneously from intent to violence, is an inherently difficult challenge. A challenge which is compounded by the complex mix of extremist ideology with personal grievance and individual vulnerability such as mental ill-health.
- 4.7 The same issues are strongly present in the other major threat, Extreme Right-Wing Terrorism. The Extreme Right-Wing landscape has continued to evolve away from structured, real world groups such as National Action, to more of an online threat. This means individuals are easily able to access right-wing extremist spaces, network with each other and move towards a radical mindset. There are growing numbers of right-wing extremist influencers, operating globally, who fuel grievances and amplify conspiracy theories.

5. PREVENT DUTY

- 5.1 Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies ("specified authorities" listed in Schedule 6 to the Act), in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".
- 5.2 Section 36 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 sets out the duty on local authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.
- 5.3 The Prevent strategy, published by the Government in 2011, is part of the overall counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. The aim of the Prevent strategy is to reduce the threat to the UK from terrorism by stopping people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. In the Act this has simply been expressed as the need to "prevent people from being drawn into terrorism".

Rhondda Cynon Taf Compliance With The Prevent Duty

5.4 Cwm Taf Channel Panel

- 5.4.1 Channel Panels are a multi-agency partnership focussing on providing support at an early stage to people who are identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. Channel was placed on a statutory footing in 2015.
- 5.4.2 Cwm Taf Channel Panel meets monthly and uses a multi-agency approach to identify individuals at risk, assess the nature and extent of that risk and develop the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned.
- 5.4.3 Channel provides early support for anyone who is vulnerable to being drawn into any form of terrorism or supporting terrorist organisations, regardless of age, faith, ethnicity,

or background. Individuals can receive support before their vulnerabilities are exploited by those who want them to embrace terrorism, and before they become involved in

criminal terrorist-related activity. Cases adopted onto Channel should have a vulnerability to being drawn into terrorism. Cases should not be held in Channel where no such vulnerability exists.

5.4.4 The Cwm Taf Channel Panel is successful due to the cooperation and coordinated activity of partners. The local authority coordinates activity by requesting relevant information from panel partners about a referred individual. They will use this information to make an initial assessment of the nature and extent of the vulnerability the person has. The information will then be presented to a Channel panel.

5.4.5 The governance arrangements in place for the Cwm Taf Channel Panel mean that any concerns or issues are escalated to the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Contest Board and ultimately the Contest Cymru Board.

5.5 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Prevent Delivery Group

5.5.1 The Cwm Taf Morgannwg Prevent Delivery Group was established to ensure a consistent approach across the region and that shared resources were utilised.

5.5.2 The purpose of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Prevent Delivery Group is to co-ordinate and encourage prevent activity, and develop and enhance relationships across Cwm Taf Morgannwg to:

- Meet our legal obligations under the Counter Terrorism Security Act 2015.
- Tackle the causes of radicalisation and respond to the ideological challenge of terrorism.
- Safeguard and support those most at risk of radicalisation through early intervention, identifying them and offering support.
- Enable those who have already engaged in terrorism to disengage and rehabilitate.

5.5.3 The vision of the delivery group is to be class leading in our collaborative approach to tackling radicalisation and utilise methods that will unite the public sector, private sector and statutory agencies and organisations.

5.5.4 We also aim to build trust and confidence in Prevent across Cwm Taf Morgannwg and protect the most vulnerable within our communities.

5.6 Training

5.6.1 Home Office on-line Prevent Training is available to all staff within the Local Authority via the RCT Source. The training is mandatory and forms part of the induction process for new employees.

5.6.2 Face to face training is provided by the Local Authority Prevent Co-ordinator and is available to all departments if there is a need identified. The training is prioritised and

based around intelligence and the age range of the most at-risk groups, identified via our annual counter terrorism local profile.

5.6.3 Conferences are held throughout the year for dedicated staff. These were suspended during the pandemic but returned in November 2022 as part of Safeguarding Week. Two sessions were held in November, at the University of South Wales, and we engaged with one hundred and eighty staff. Further conferences are planned for 2023.

5.6.4 All school staff in Rhondda Cynon Taf undertake Prevent Training and an annual audit is conducted to ensure compliance. The understanding of Prevent within schools is also an integral part of the Estyn inspection process.

5.7 Risk Assessment

5.7.1 Counter Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLTP) are produced annually. A CTLTP is a strategic document that outlines the threat and vulnerability from terrorism related activity within a specific area.

5.7.2 Our CTLTP is produced as a Cwm Taf Morgannwg document and we utilise it for the following reasons:

- To develop a joint understanding amongst local partners of the threats, vulnerabilities and risks relating to terrorism and non-violent extremism where it creates an environment conducive to terrorism.
- Use the information contained within the CTLTP to develop Prevent programmes and action plans.
- Allow a targeted and proportionate use of shared resources.

5.7.3 The CTLTP is shared with staff who are part of appropriate strategic groups (i.e., Community Safety Partnership Board) and shared with partners who are members of multi-agency counter terrorism related groups.

5.8 Use of Local Authority Resources

5.8.1 In Rhondda Cynon Taf we ensure that our publicly owned venues and resources do not provide a platform for extremists and are not used to disseminate extremist views. All our venue hire policies include a section on counter terrorism measures and all appropriate staff are aware of the process to follow when individuals or organisations request to hire one of our Local Authority venues.

5.8.2 Our IT equipment has appropriate security filters installed to ensure that access to terrorist and extremist material is prohibited.

5.9 Regional Prevent Co-ordinators

5.9.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf is identified as a non-priority area, therefore we do not receive any dedicated funding for Prevent delivery or any aspects of our counter terrorism

responsibilities. As a result, the Home Office have recently employed Regional Prevent Co-ordinators to advise non-funded areas like ourselves.

- 5.9.2 We have conducted a benchmarking exercise with our nominated Regional Prevent Co-ordinator and are working through an action plan to ensure we are complying with our responsibilities under the Prevent Duty.
- 5.9.3 The Prevent Duty action plan and the improvements being undertaken are attached as Appendix (ii)

6. PREPAREDNESS FOR PROTECT DUTY (MARTYN'S LAW)

6.1 Background of Protect Duty

- 6.1.1 The Protect Duty – known widely as 'Martyn's Law' – comes in the wake of several terrorist attacks in public spaces across the UK – most notably, the Manchester Arena bombing. The purpose of Martyn's Law is to improve security in public spaces, protecting and enhancing the safety of both visitors and staff.
- 6.1.2 The Government is proposing to introduce Martyn's Law during 2023. This legislation will enhance the protection of the United Kingdom's publicly accessible locations (PALs) from terrorist attacks and ensure that organisations and businesses are prepared to deal with incidents.
- 6.1.3 As we've seen in recent years, there has been an increase in terrorist attacks in PALs – anywhere that people visit, congregate in, or pass through. One of the main features of these attacks is the targeting of people.
- 6.1.4 Any PAL is a potential target - it is essential that owners and operators of all such locations understand the risks faced and consider appropriate mitigations. The key initial steps to understanding this threat and risk are:
 - Understanding the terrorist threat – understanding that motivations, targets, and attack methods vary, and change over time.
 - Understanding the specific risks the threat poses to your site and/or organisation, and how and why your site or organisation might be affected – either by being targeted directly, or indirectly because of its proximity to neighbouring sites, businesses or organisations.

6.2 Who will Martyn's Law apply to?

- 6.2.1 Premises will fall within the scope of the Duty where “qualifying activities” take place. This will include locations for purposes such as entertainment and leisure, retail, food and drink, museums and galleries, sports grounds, public areas of local and central Government buildings (e.g., town halls), visitor attractions, temporary events, Places of Worship, health, and education.

6.2.2 It is proposed that the Duty will apply to eligible locations which are either: a building (including collections of buildings used for the same purposes, e.g., a campus); or location/event (including a temporary event) that has a defined boundary, allowing capacity to be known. Eligible locations whose maximum occupancy meets the above specified thresholds will be then drawn into the relevant tier.

6.2.3 Therefore, premises will be drawn into the scope of the Duty if they meet the following three tests:

- That the premises is an eligible one – i.e. building or event with a defined boundary.
- That a qualifying activity takes place at the location; and
- That the maximum occupancy of the premises meets a specified threshold – either 100+ (standard tier) or 800+ (enhanced tier).

6.2.4 The Government considers that the owners and operators of large public venues and large organisations (enhanced tier) should be required to:

- Use available information and guidance provided by the Government and the police to consider terrorist threats to the public and staff at locations they own or operate.
- Assess the potential impact of these risks across their functions and estate, and through their systems and processes.
- Consider and implement ‘reasonably practicable’ protective security and organisational preparedness measures (e.g. developing a strategy that ensures you have assessed your site and its use, including suitable mitigation measures to protect staff, as well as staff training, and plans for how to react in the event of an attack).
- Develop a robust plan on how to deal with or act as a result of a terrorist attack.

6.2.5 For smaller organisations and venues (standard tier), this would involve simple low-cost (or no-cost) preparedness measures, such as ensuring that:

- Staff are trained and aware of threats, likely attack methods and how to respond.
- Staff are trained to identify the signs of hostile reconnaissance and to take appropriate action.
- The organisation’s response to different attack types is regularly updated and exercised.

6.2.6 For multi-occupancy sites a “lead accountable person” must be agreed by all parties who will then co-ordinate all security functions alongside a lead responsible person.

6.3 Protective Security Preparedness Group

6.3.1 In preparation for the Protect Duty, in RCT we have formed a Protective Security Preparedness Group (PSPG). This group has a key role in assessing the current risk and vulnerabilities and ensure the provision of effective mitigation in a proportionate manner. The PSPG will also ensure our corporate responsibilities under the new Protect Duty are discharged on behalf of the Local Authority. The purpose of the PSPG is to:

- To deliver an integrated security approach that is consistent with the national guidance and standards to ensure local communities are safe.
- To enhance and support protective security and preparedness at public accessible locations within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

6.3.2 The roles and responsibilities of the PSPG are:

- To deliver against the Protect & Prepare Strategy for Wales and focus on the priorities within Rhondda Cynon Taf to reduce the threat of Terrorism.
- To identify and assess threats, risks and vulnerabilities to public accessible locations within Rhondda Cynon Taf and manage them in a proportionate and responsible manner.
- To support local businesses, organisers, and communities on Protective Security Issues in accordance with national guidance and best practice.
- To deliver an integrated security approach to reduce costs and improve efficiency.
- To coordinate and promote a security culture within the Rhondda Cynon Taf to ensure colleagues are considering designing in protective security arrangements at the earliest opportunities.
- To meet the legislative corporate responsibilities of the Protect Duty.
- To raise and promote awareness of preparedness across Rhondda Cynon Taf, by ensuring people understand how to respond to a terrorist incident.

6.3.3 Workshops have also been held with Senior Managers and Directors of all departments within the Local Authority, to raise awareness of the Protect Duty and the implications for the relevant departments and Authority as a whole. These workshops have assisted in us developing an enhanced security culture within our organisation.

7. CONTEST REFRESH

7.1 On 31st October 2022, the Home Office announced its intention to refresh and update the UK's counter terrorism strategy, CONTEST, which covers all four elements of the UK's counterterrorism approach: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare.

7.2 Over the coming months, the government will be seeking a diverse range of views and engaging security experts from across the UK and overseas, to ensure that CONTEST continues to robustly protect the British public from terrorism and reflects the increasingly diverse and fragmented tactics and methodologies used by terrorists.

7.3 The updated strategy is expected to be published in the Autumn of 2023 and will consider findings from a series of important reviews, including the Manchester Arena Inquiry and Independent Review of Prevent.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

8.1 An Equality and Impact Assessment is not required as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

9. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no Welsh Language implications as the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

10. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

10.1 Ongoing consultation and involvement takes place between ourselves, Welsh Government, Counter Terrorism Policing Wales and the Home Office. Effective partnership working is essential in ensuring that all parts of the United Kingdom have effective strategies in place to mitigate all forms of terrorism.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

11.1 There are no financial implications as the content of this report are for information purposes only.

12. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

12.1 Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies (“specified authorities” listed in Schedule 6 to the Act), in the exercise of their functions, to have “due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism”.

12.2 Section 36 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 sets out the duty on local authorities and partners of local panels to provide support for people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

12.3 Martyn’s Law is expected to become a legislative duty in 2023.

13. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

13.1 Effective counter terrorism strategies are key in ensuring the Council achieves the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 “Making a Difference”.

13.2 The work outlined in this report is directly aligned to the “Places” priority within the Corporate Plan – *ensuring the County Borough is one of the safest places in Wales, where people from all backgrounds get along with each other and feel safe.*

13.3 Effective counter terrorism strategies play a vital role in ensuring that Wales remains a safe, attractive and welcoming place for its residents and visitors. Therefore, I feel that the work that has been highlighted within this report contributes to the seven elements that The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is aiming to achieve:

1. A prosperous Wales.
2. A resilient Wales.
3. A more equal Wales.

4. A healthier Wales.
5. A Wales of cohesive communities.
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and Welsh language.
7. A globally responsible Wales.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 The threat of terrorism is a huge challenge and something all Local Authorities throughout the UK need to prioritise. The MI5 Director General, Ken McCallum recently announced the current threats facing the UK and stated that since 2017 the MI5 and the Police have together disrupted 37 late-stage attack plots.
- 14.2 In Rhondda Cynon Taf, we are doing everything possible to keep our area safe from Terrorism and all forms of extremism, as well as having processes in place to safeguard individuals from radicalising influences.
- 14.3 We are committed to ensure there is a security culture within our Local Authority which is conducive to the UK Counter Terrorism strategy, therefore contributing to make Rhondda Cynon Taf, and the United Kingdom, a safe place for all.

APPENDICES

- Appendix (i) – Contest Cymru Governance Map**
- Appendix (ii) – RCT Prevent Duty Action Plan**

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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**COUNTER TERRORISM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY OF COUNCIL
PREPAREDNESS IN CONTEXT OF NEW DUTIES**

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