

To: Safer and Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board

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Report by:

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Counter Terrorism Prevent Strategy Progress Update

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides an update of progress made in understanding and responding to the threat posed by Terrorism and the role of Renfrewshire's Multi Agency CONTEST (Prevent) Group. It provides information on current threat levels and how they are determined.
- 1.2 Section 26 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a duty on certain bodies, listed in schedule 6 to the act, to have in the exercise of their functions, "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism" Scottish Local Authorities are listed under schedule 6 of the act.
- 1.3 Renfrewshire's Multi Agency CONTEST (Prevent) Group is now firmly established with consistent membership across all of the relevant agencies and partners involved in this work within Renfrewshire. The group acts as the multi agency joint tasking group for Counter Terrorism activity.
- 1.4 The role and remit of the group is to identify priorities and opportunities for tackling terrorism and organised crime across Renfrewshire. It undertakes high level assessments to identify a clear understanding of radicalisation, the levels of awareness across the Council and partners and the actions being taken to prevent people from being radicalised. Recent focus has been on raising awareness of Prevent training and exercising, and establishing effective monitoring and performance measures for the group. Also being considered is the potential impact of a change in the current threat level in the UK to CRITICAL – both in terms of impact on the community, but also the response of various agencies and the communications that will be required.
- 1.5 There are significant developments planned to coordinate training and awareness of Prevent across the area. These include a significant Contest (Prevent) Exercise and the development of a training Prospectus.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Safer & Stronger Renfrewshire Thematic Board:

- a) Note the progress achieved in understanding and responding to the threat posed by terrorism,
- b) Note the steps taken and future plans to raise awareness of prevent and prevent people from being drawn into terrorism,

- c) Request a further report on the work of Renfrewshire's Multi Agency Contest (Prevent) Group be brought back to a future meeting.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Counter Terrorism (CONTEST) Prevent strategy is driven nationally through the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Renfrewshire has worked hard to put in place the relevant governance and awareness raising structures and is well placed to respond effectively to this agenda.
- 3.2 Renfrewshire Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent Group, co-ordinates counter terrorism and organised crime intervention activity in Renfrewshire. The group ensures that relevant partners comply with the duties in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015.
- 3.3 The Group is chaired by the Head of Public Protection and acts as the multi-agency joint tasking group for CONTEST activity in Renfrewshire as required in the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. Police Scotland have contributed significantly to the development of the Group both at a divisional level and through support from national teams that provide specialist support, including the Scottish Preventing Violent Extremism Unit (SPVEU).
- 3.4 The group reports through the Community Safety and Public Protection Steering Group to the Chief Officers Group, with the Safer and Stronger Thematic Board acting as the multi agency joint tasking oversight group. The Housing and Community Safety Policy Board acts as an oversight tasking group for internal work within the Council.
- 3.5 The core membership of the group is:
- Renfrewshire Council's Single Point of Contact (Chair)
 - Police Scotland
 - Renfrewshire Council Services
 - Civil Contingencies Service
 - Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
 - NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde
 - Scottish Prison Service
 - Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership
 - Engage Renfrewshire
 - Higher & Further Education Establishments
- 3.6 The Renfrewshire Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent Group meets approximately every 2 months. Recent meetings have worked to develop a positional statement that members will use to outline their organisations levels of awareness of Counter Terrorism (CONTEST) Prevent, any relevant issues experienced and training undertaken. The positional statement will be used to ensure that relevant issues are regularly captured and support can be offered where required. As the positional statement is updated it will provide monitoring and performance information to demonstrate progress with training, awareness raising and preparation of organisational plans and strategies. Future reports to the Safer and Stronger Thematic Board will include this performance information. The strategic purpose of the group is to:
- Ensure appropriate action is being taken to protect Renfrewshire from the threats posed by terrorism
 - Share best practice and improve coordination by multi agency partners

- Identify and encourage innovative ways of working together to disrupt organised crime in Renfrewshire
- Mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack within Renfrewshire
- Address where there are risks of radicalisation
- Coordinate training and awareness of prevent

- 3.7 One key role that the Renfrewshire Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent Group has is that Police Scotland will use this group as a key communications and briefing group to partners in the event of a terrorism related incident, including a change in threat level.
- 3.8 If the threat level is raised to CRITICAL, the expectation will be on the Council and local service partners to comply with and facilitate in delivering services and facilities locally that are in line with the levels of expectation being set and communicated by the Government at a national level.
- 3.9 Current management, business continuity and civil contingencies arrangements prepare public agencies across Renfrewshire well to respond to an increase in the national threat level and to continue to deliver essential services and facilities in these circumstances.
- 3.10 To support this Police Scotland are currently finalising guidance for “non-blue light agencies” detailing actions to consider should the threat level rise to CRITICAL. The guidance will be circulated to local authorities in the near future. When available it will be considered by the Renfrewshire Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent group and will contribute to the action plan currently being developed.
- 3.11 Police Scotland are also leading on the development of a Contest (Prevent) multi agency training exercise that will test this group alongside Renfrewshire Council’s CMT and CRMT and the recently formed Grey Space group, which is a Police Scotland led group that monitors community tensions. The proposed training exercise would focus on the challenges and potential response of these groups in the event of a significant terrorism incident. Police Scotland and the Civil Contingencies Service will be involved in setting the parameters of the exercise.
- 3.12 A Prospectus for Contest (Prevent) training activity in Renfrewshire is also being developed. The purpose of this document will be to highlight the expected awareness and training events for officers of certain agencies to attend, whilst outlining the options available for delivery. This document would be similar to an existing one utilised by the Civil Contingencies Service for emergency planning purposes. The final version of the document will be regularly circulated to Group members to allow agencies and services to take control of their own awareness and training activity. From there, the Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent Group would become a reporting forum, as well as a place to highlight any collaboration opportunities.

4. Threat Levels

- 4.1 The current threat level for international terrorism in the UK is SEVERE
- 4.2 The threat level for Northern Ireland-related terrorism is set separately for Northern Ireland and Great Britain (England, Wales and Scotland).
- 4.3 The current threat level for Northern Ireland-related terrorism in Northern Ireland is SEVERE.
- 4.4 The current threat level for Northern Ireland-related terrorism in Britain is SUBSTANTIAL.

- 4.5 Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack.
- LOW means an attack is unlikely
 - MODERATE means an attack is possible, but not likely
 - SUBSTANTIAL means an attack is a strong possibility
 - SEVERE means an attack is highly likely
 - CRITICAL means an attack is expected imminently
- 4.6 The threat level for the UK from international terrorism is set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC). MI5 is responsible for setting the threat levels from Irish and other domestic terrorism both in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain.
- 4.7 If the threat level is raised to CRITICAL, the expectation will be on Renfrewshire Council and local service partners to comply with and facilitate in delivering services and facilities locally that are in line with the levels of expectation being set and communicated by the Government at a national level.
- 4.8 In reaching a judgement on the appropriate terrorism threat level in any given circumstance several factors need to be taken into account. These include:
- **Available intelligence.** It is rare that reliable specific threat information is available. More often, judgements about the threat will be based on a wide range of information, which is often fragmentary, including the level and nature of current terrorist activity, comparison with events in other countries and previous attacks. Intelligence is only ever likely to reveal part of the picture.
 - **Terrorist capability.** An examination of what is known about the capabilities of the terrorists in question and the method they may use based on previous attacks or from intelligence. This would analyse the potential scale of the attack.
 - **Terrorist intentions.** Using intelligence and publicly available information to examine the overall aims of the terrorists and the ways they may achieve them including what sort of targets they would consider attacking.
 - **Timescale.** The threat level expresses the likelihood of an attack in the near term. We know from past incidents that some attacks take years to plan, while others are put together more quickly. In the absence of specific intelligence, a judgement will be made about how close an attack might be to fruition. Threat levels do not have any set expiry date, but are regularly subject to review in order to ensure that they remain current.
- 4.9 Historically the UK Threat Level has only been raised to CRITICAL twice, once on 10th August 2006 (in response to a foiled airline attack plot to blow up 10 aircraft using liquid explosives) when it remained at this level for 3 days and once on 30th June 2007 (at the time of the Glasgow Airport attack) when it remained at this level for 4 days. In both cases the direct impact was on airports and air travel with the rest of the national infrastructure remaining relatively unaffected.
- 4.10 The threat level for Northern Ireland-related terrorism in Great Britain has also changed in the past – it was last raised from MODERATE to SUBSTANTIAL in 2010, then reduced back to MODERATE in 2012 before being raised back to SUBSTANTIAL in May this year. Despite the recent increase, the threat level remains lower than the threat to the UK from international terrorism. This change in threat level is about increasing awareness and encouraging vigilance but should not affect how we go about our daily lives
- 4.11 Conversely, following the recent Paris attacks when the threat level was increased in Belgium, the whole infrastructure of Brussels was put on lockdown for 5 days, with schools, hospitals and transport hubs being some of the services and infrastructure most impacted upon and residents being called on to stay at home for the duration of the event. A similar

response in the UK would have significant implications for the delivery of public services across Renfrewshire.

- 4.12 The nature of the incident giving rise to the threat level increase has a direct bearing on the type of services that will be impacted on and the nature of the expected response. Consequently, preparations for actions at CRITICAL level are difficult to plan for in detail. It is however, important to be aware of the potential for the declaration of this threat level and the potential consequences for business operations and staff security should this happen. Likewise it is important that plans and messages related to this are realistic and proportionate. Fundamentally it is the role of the Renfrewshire Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent group to support agencies to put these plans in place.
- 4.13 In the event of the threat level being increased to CRITICAL, key messages and instructions will be determined at a National level by either the Scottish or UK Governments. National broadcast and print media will actively communicate these messages to the wider public and expectations in terms of availability of services and facilities will be controlled in this manner.
- 4.14 It is important to note that if the threat level is raised to CRITICAL, the expectation will be on Renfrewshire Council and local service partners to comply with and facilitate in delivering services and facilities locally that are in line with the levels of expectation being set and communicated by the Government at a national level.
- 4.15 Our current management, business continuity and civil contingencies arrangements prepare local agencies well to respond to an increase in the national threat level and to continue to deliver essential services and facilities in these circumstances.
- Renfrewshire Council will get an immediate warning about changes to the Threat Level, with plans in place to inform the Chief Executive, and the Head of Public Protection as the Council Single Point of Contact immediately, allowing information to be cascaded to the wider CMT and Council Resilience Management Team (CRMT).
 - If the Threat Level is changed to CRITICAL, a meeting of: the Chief Executive and Police Divisional Commander with other relevant officers as appropriate would be held to discuss the specific nature of the threat and the immediate actions that arise. Police Scotland are the agency tasked with responsibility for co-ordinating an incident of this type.
 - The role of the Renfrewshire Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent group is key - it will be the group that the Police rely on to disseminate information and guidance to the local public sector and third sector agencies that need to respond.
 - The involvement of Communications will also be required. Very quickly messages will begin to appear in the media and will need to be addressed. This process will also be co-ordinated through the Renfrewshire Multi Agency CONTEST/Prevent group.

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