



To: Safe Newcastle Board

From: Neil Denton, ARCH Co-ordinator and Supt. Frank Gallop

Subject: Delivering the Prevent Strategy - implications for Safe Newcastle

Date: 24 November 2008

1.0 Background

Since 2003, the United Kingdom has had a long term strategy for countering international terrorism. This is known as CONTEST. Its aim is to reduce the risk from international terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence. The strategy is divided into four principal strands;

- Pursue – “to stop terrorist attacks”
- Prepare – “where we cannot stop an attack, to mitigate its impact”
- Protect – “to strengthen our overall protection against terrorist attacks”
- Prevent – “to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting violent extremists”

2.0 Prevent

The Office of Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT) was created to co-ordinate and oversee all aspects of the CONTEST strategy and ensure a joined up approach by Government. This has resulted in a much stronger emphasis being placed on the Prevent strategy; designed “to stop people becoming or supporting violent extremists” and reflected by £45 million funding to Local Authorities (2008-11) and additional Prevent-related funding and strategy for the Police (for an additional 300 officers).

The Government assessment is that violent extremism is caused by a combination of interlocking factors:

- an **ideology** which justifies terrorism by manipulating theology as well as history and politics;
- **radicalisers and their networks** which promote violent extremism through a variety of places, institutions and media
- **individuals who are vulnerable** to the messages of violent extremists
- **communities**, which are sometimes poorly equipped to challenge and resist violent extremism
- **grievances**, some genuine and some perceived, and some of course directed very specifically against government

The Prevent strategy has five key strands aimed at addressing these causal factors and in support of the overall aim of stopping people becoming or supporting terrorists or violent extremists:

- **challenging** the violent extremist ideology and supporting mainstream voices
- **disrupting** those who promote violent extremism and supporting the institutions where they are active
- **supporting** individuals who are being targeted and recruited to the cause of violent extremism
- **increasing** the resilience of communities to violent extremism; and
- **addressing** the grievances that ideologues are exploiting

These are supported by two cross cutting work streams which are key enabling functions in delivering the strategy

- developing **understanding, analysis and information**; and
- strategic **communications**

3.0 Requirements at a local level

A working draft of the “practical steps for local partners” guide has now been issued and requires the application of a simple business model, the creation of a co-ordinating partnership at a local level and the production of a longer term programme of action that is jointly agreed and by January 2009 which will be assessed against NI 35/APACS 63.

Four steps are outlined in the guidance to help deliver the programme of action

- Establish and task a partnership
- Understand the challenge through strategic assessment
- Address the local challenge with a targeted programme of action
- Evaluation and review

4.0 Issues for Safe Newcastle

These requirements were discussed at the Responsible Authorities and the following action points were agreed.

An advisory and implementation group should be set up to report to the Responsible Authorities. This group should take the lead in coordinating and connecting existing and developing effective multi-agency arrangements to meet the specific objectives of the Prevent strategy.

A list of key tasks has been drafted for this group

- Map specific and contributory partnerships and programmes of work relevant to prevent
- Establish the prevent coordinating group
- Prepare a strategic assessment based on local risk and vulnerability
- Develop and oversee the delivery of an action plan which supports the Prevent strategy
- Develop a common process for the assessment of Prevent related projects

- Promote an in-depth understanding of the drivers and causes of violent extremism and the Prevent objectives across the wider partnership
- Review and update the action plan
- Support joint working arrangements and develop information sharing agreements where deemed necessary
- Provide effective governance
- Consider the security clearance for members
- Identify and share good practice

It is recommended that the Board note and approve the formation of this group.

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