

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE PARTNERSHIPS AND GOVERNANCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2016

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR- OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

WALES EXTREMISM AND COUNTER TERRORISM UNIT (WECTU) AND COUNTER-TERRORISM AND SECURITY ACT 2015

1. Purpose of Report.

- 1.1 To inform Scrutiny of how the Authority is responding to the duties under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and to provide an update of the current threat of extremism and terrorism in a local context.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The Strategic Equality Plan (SEP) is a cross cutting, statutory plan that impacts on the whole of the council. Within the SEP are various strategic equality objectives that are linked to fostering good relations and community cohesion. Additionally, the following Corporate Plan Priorities are supported:

- Priority 1. Supporting a successful economy
- Priority 2. Helping people to be more self-reliant
- Priority 3. Smarter use of resources

3. Background.

- 3.1 On 14 January 2016 Cabinet Committee – Equalities received a report from the Corporate Director – Resources on the South Wales Police Wales Extremism and Counter Terrorism Unit (WECTU), informing Committee of the current threat level existing across the United Kingdom which stands at ‘Severe’ whilst providing local context. .
- 3.2 As summarised in that report, WECTU was established in 2006 and created one Special Branch for the whole of Wales. Its remit covers international terrorism and domestic extremism and it is governed by the UK Government’s Counter Terrorism Strategy known as CONTEST.
- 3.3 There is separate Western-Bay CONTEST Board that was established in 2013, the Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix A, which has WECTU officers represent on it and is currently chaired (for 1 year) by an officer from Neath Port Talbot Council. The agenda covers the following key elements of the UK Governments CONTEST Strategy namely, Prepare; Protect and Prevent; along with Counter Terrorism Local Profiles (CTLP’s) and updates from each of the Channel panel chairs (see paragraphs 3.4-3.6 below for information regarding Channel). Below is the current list of agencies and BCBC staff represented on the Western-Bay CONTEST Board;

- Head of Corporate Strategy & Democratic Services, NPTCBC; **CHAIR**
- Community Safety Manager, NPTCBC
- Principal Community Safety Officer/Prevent – Channel Chair (BCBC)
- Corporate Director, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC)
- Community Cohesion Coordinator, Western Bay Region
- Prevent Coordinator, Director Student Services Swansea University
- Counter Terrorism Security Adviser – Protect/Prepare, WECTU
- Intelligence Analyst, WECTU
- DCI Prevent & Prepare WECTU
- Prevent Deputy, WECTU
- Community Safety Superintendent, South Wales Police
- Emergency Planning Officer, NPTCBC & C&C Swansea
- Emergency Planning ABMUHB
- Probation CT Lead, National Probation Service
- Head of Participation, NPT Education & Lifelong Learning
- Events and Prevent Officer, - Channel Chair, City & County of Swansea
- Corporate Director, City & County of Swansea
- HE/FE Prevent, Wales Coordinator;
- ABMU Health Board (Estates);
- Co-ordinator, National Offender Management Service
- Head of Poverty & Prevention City & County of Swansea

3.4 Channel is a multi-agency safeguarding programme run in every local authority area in Wales and England. It works to support vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism and provides a range of support such as mentoring, counselling, assistance with employment, etc. Channel is about early interventions to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into committing terrorist-related activity and addresses all types of extremism.

3.5 A local Channel Panel was established in Bridgend in 2013, the Terms of Reference are attached at Appendix B. The Panel is chaired by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Principle Community Safety Officer and currently meets quarterly. The Channel Chair attends the Western-Bay CONTEST Board meetings to represent Channel. At a local level a prevent officer from WECTU has established working links with the Chair of the Channel panel. Below is the current list of agencies and BCBC staff represented on the local Bridgend Channel Panel:

- **BCBC** Principle Community Safety Officer (Chair);
- **BCBC** Children and Adult and Safeguarding Services;
- Youth Offender Service Officers;
- Community Safety Partnership;
- **BCBC** Community Mental Health Team;
- South Wales Police – Central BCU (West);
- South Wales Police Mental Health Liaison Officer;
- Health Bridgend Locality ABMU;
- National Probation Service;
- Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC);
- Bridgend College; and
- Wales Extremist Counter Terrorist Unit (WECTU).

- 3.6 There are further Channel Panels across the region covering Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. Recently the UK Government has enacted the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (“the Act”) to make certain provisions related to terrorism. Although Channel Panels were in existence prior to the Act, under section 36 of the Act as set out in para 4.6 below, Channel was placed on a statutory footing and the functions and membership of the Panel confirmed.
- 3.7 Through working collaboratively with Welsh Government officers; the Western-Bay CONTEST Board; and members of the Local Prevent and Emergency Planning, the WECTU aims to work more effectively in its response to the threat from national and international terrorism and extremism. It seeks to keep the people of Wales safer by building confidence and trust in our communities by working with the public and partners to identify, target and disrupt terrorists and extremists.
- 3.8 The Council has a legal duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to carry out all its various functions with due regard to the need to prevent Crime and Disorder in its area. The new duties under the Act complement the existing duty.
- 3.9 On the 10 May 2016 Cabinet Members received a second report from the Corporate Director- Operational and Partnership Services. The report related to the new duties and responsibilities applied to local authorities following the enactment of the Act and to ask Cabinet to note the steps being taken to comply with them.
- 3.10 The report was duly noted by members.

4. Current situation / proposal.

- 4.1 Under Section 26 of the Act a new duty came into force on 1 July 2015 for Local Authorities to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism in the exercise of their functions (“the s.26 Duty”). This means that Local Authorities, including BCBC, must place an appropriate weight on the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism when they consider all the other factors relevant to how they carry out their usual functions. The s.26 Duty does not confer new functions on any specified authority.
- 4.2 In order to comply with the s.26 Duty a few separate steps are being taken:
- A Home Office one-off ring fenced grant of £10,000 has been allocated to BCBC specifically to deliver prevent training and awareness of the new duties across the Authority’s workforce, including wider agencies contracted to the authority. In accordance with the conditions of the grant, the money is being used to:
 - a) support a rolling interactive programme of prevent awareness training for frontline staff which will continue into 2016 providing an improved understanding of the process so that all staff can make a prevent referral.
 - b) purchase new IT equipment to increase capacity for training as described above, which is being coordinated by the authorities’ principle training officer.
 - c) publish improved Restorative Justice and mediation information folders and leaflets for the Restorative Approaches by the Education Lead officer with the Youth Offender Service in schools and communities and by BCBC’s

Community Safety and Welfare officer for mediation purposes working with agencies such as the police to increase awareness of the new law

- 4.3 Commencing in 2014 when it was agreed to form a regional CONTEST Board, officers of BCBC have been working with officers from Swansea and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Councils to develop a Gap Guidance to set out compliance with the s.26 Duty and the Statutory Guidance. This has been carried out through the Western Bay Regional CONTEST Board and Adult and Children Safeguarding Board. Members agreed to develop a gap analysis template for use across Swansea, Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend to monitor how each area is progressing.
- 4.4 If a Local Authority fails to discharge the s.26 Duty section 30 sets out the ability of the Secretary of State to give directions which can then be enforced by a mandatory order. Other legislation provides other enforcement powers available to the Secretary of State and Welsh Minister, such as the Local Government Act 1999 and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.
- 4.5 The Act has a staggered implementation date from the 12 February 2015 onwards. Part 5 is made up of two Chapters: the first deals with Preventing People Being Drawn into Terrorism and the second with Supporting People Vulnerable to Being Drawn into Terrorism. BCBC must have in place methods to comply with the new statutory duties. Since the implementation of the Act compliance by BCBC has been achieved by establishing its Channel Panel and representation on the Western-Bay CONTEST Board and is further outlined below.
- 4.6 Section 29 of the Act provides a power to the Home Secretary to issue statutory guidance to Local Authorities as to how the s.26 Duty should be carried out. Under current statutory guidance all specified authorities should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the risk of radicalisation in their area. There are three themes through the Statutory Guidance: effective leadership; working in partnership and appropriate capabilities.
- 4.7 Section 36 of the Act makes provision to protect vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism. There is specific statutory guidance for schools and child care providers to assess the risk of children being drawn into terrorism found in "Prevent Duty Guidance: for further education institutions in England and Wales". It deals with:
- Partnership
 - Risk Assessment
 - Action plan
 - Staff training
 - Use of Local Authority resources
 - Collaboration between areas
 - Prevent priority areas
 - Other agencies and organisations
 - Out of school settings supporting children
- 4.8 The Act also:

- requires each local authority to establish and chair a local multi-agency Panel for this purpose;
- details out when the police may refer people considered vulnerable to the Panel;
- sets out the functions of the Panel to include the carrying out an assessment of risk and to establish appropriate plans to support people identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and then to keep those plans under review;
- prescribes the core membership of the Panel to be the police and the Local Authority and confirms the chairing of the Panel to be the relevant Local Authority's responsibility; and
- requires that the partners of a Panel must, so far as is appropriate, and reasonably practical, act in co-operation with the Panel.

4.9 In order to comply with section 36 a few separate steps are being taken, including:

Establishing a Channel Panel in Bridgend which meets quarterly with the ability to meet at short notice on the authority of the Chair and ensuring that;

- All panel meetings are recorded;
- All members are required to sign a confidentiality statement before each meeting and;
- All panel members have undertaken Home office approved Wrap prevent training course.
- Setting up secure emails for relevant employees to allow for sharing confidential information

4.10 Section 37 of the Act provides a power to local authorities to determine procedures for conducting the business of the Channel Panel.

4.11 In order to comply generally with the spirit of the Act, BCBC's Corporate Director Communities and BCBC's Principle Community Safety Officer attend the Western Bay CONTEST Board meetings where officers from WECTU provide national and local threat and risk context through the Counter Terrorism and Local Profile (CTLP's). BCBC' Community Safety Officer has established working links with WECTU's prevent officer regarding local Channel referrals.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

5.1 The report has no direct effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules but is required to effectively implement the Council's statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken as there are no implications in relation to age; disability; gender and transgender; race; religion or belief and non-belief; sexual orientation on this matter.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 The financial implications of the new duties & powers to BCBC (such as staff training and IT infrastructure) will be fully met from the Home Office grant award outlined in paragraph 4.2.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to consider and provide comment on the work being undertaken.

Andrew Jolley

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