



SETTING STRATEGIC DIRECTION

COUNTER-TERRORISM OVERSIGHT

Background

The Government's counter-terrorism strategy, 'Contest', provides a clear framework to ensure the safety and security of the public against the current threat from International Terrorism. The strategy contains four key strands – Prevent, Pursue, Protect, Prepare – which have been adopted by the police service to brigade our response to the threat.

The Contest strategy is embedded within Sussex Police and cuts across all aspects of force delivery from Neighbourhood Policing through to Keeping People Safe. The Force has made significant efforts to mainstream its counter-terrorism response at a local level supported by specialists within Protective Services at Force level.

The counter-terrorism agenda is complex and far reaching and requires effective oversight of high risk areas of covert policing activity whilst at the same time ensuring other responses are effective and impact minimally on our communities.

The Authority have been determined to have effective oversight and awareness of the Force's capability and capacity to deal with such complex issues, ensuring the best use of resources, whilst, importantly, maintaining the confidence of the residents of Sussex.

The Authority adding value

The operational counter-terrorism response of the Force involves covert policing tactics and the management of information of the most sensitive nature. Access and knowledge of such information and tactics requires vetting to the highest levels to maintain the integrity of the information and the confidence of all parties. In addition, the Authority designed the Counter-Terrorism oversight template.

The Police Authority has identified the Lead Member for Counter-Terrorism and the Deputy Chief Executive as the dedicated points of contact for counter-terrorism matters. These two individuals have been security vetted to the highest level. A bespoke oversight document has been developed specifically for these two members which outlines key areas of counter-terrorism business upon which the Authority will focus.

In order to have an understanding of the levels of risk within the force area, the Lead Member and Deputy Chief Executive are in receipt of a regular cycle of briefings from senior manager leads within the Force covering organisational, strategic and operational matters.

In addition, the Authority considers it to be vitally important that the Police Authority is represented at the key strategic development meetings in the Force relating to

counter-terrorism. This connectivity and oversight is in place for all Force governance meetings that oversee the Contest agenda, in particular the Force Prevent Board.

Outcome

The aforementioned solutions are now fully embedded as part of the normal counter-terrorism response in Sussex. They have enabled the Authority to have an improved and enhanced awareness of the risk levels that exist in Sussex.

The knowledge of risk and its appropriate management are key areas where the Authority must ensure that delivery is proportionate. The availability of sufficient capability and capacity is crucial for this delivery and the Authority has been directly involved in ensuring the growth of dedicated assets to manage such risks. The corresponding evaluation of 'value for money' is integral to this relationship and is transparent via the processes mentioned earlier.

Any counter-terrorism arrest has the potential to impact negatively on the cohesion of our communities. The vetting of the identified counter-terrorism leads has enabled involvement at an appropriate stage in the community impact management plan for such activity.

The nature and complexity of this threat is likely to remain for the significant future. Therefore it is important that the police authority is appropriately engaged to ensure the force is suitably positioned to respond effectively to a rapidly evolving issue.

There has been significant recent growth in the national police counter-terrorism effort and it is important that the Force is suitably positioned to collaborate and connect appropriately. However the Force must be able to respond effectively to current and potential threats in the Force area. The oversight of the Police Authority is vital to ensure that such developments are effectively delivered and provide community reassurance that the proper checks and balances are in place.

The challenges of the current financial climate will necessitate difficult decisions in respect of police resources. The structures and relationships that currently exist within counter-terrorism will ensure that such decisions will be mindful of the risk within and against our local communities.

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