

REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE – 20 MAY 2021

RISK & RESILIENCE ANNUAL AND FIRST QUARTER 2021 REPORT JANUARY 2020 – MARCH 2021

1 Reason for Report / Summary

- 1.1 The Council's Risk Management Policy & Procedures require the Risk and Resilience Manager to report to the Committee on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Due to the expanded remit of the Risk & Resilience Team this report includes not only an update on the Council's Risk Management (as per previous annual reports) but also covers:
 - EU Exit
 - Emergency Planning
 - Public Safety
 - CONTEST
 - Serious Organised Crime

2 Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the contents of the review; and**
- 2.2 Agree that a further report be provided in December 2021.**

3 Purpose and Decision-Making Route

- 3.1 The purpose of the Report is to provide an overview of the work conducted by the Risk and Resilience Team, covering the period January 2020 to March 2021. The aim is to ensure continually fulfillment of Aberdeenshire Council's Risk Management and Business Continuity Strategy, and compliance with the Risk, Business Continuity and Emergency Planning policies & procedures.
- 3.2 As well as the Audit Committee Reviews are also provided to the:
 - Strategic Leadership Team (quarterly)
 - Members of the Business Services Committee (quarterly via Ward Pages)
 - Corporate Risk Management Steering Group (each time it meets)

4 Discussion

4.1 To ensure consistency in reporting a Risk and Resilience Review is prepared by the Risk & Resilience Manager on a quarterly basis. However, due to the global pandemic this was not completed during 2020. This Report therefore provides a summary for the entirety of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021.

5 Council Priorities, Implications and Risk

5.1 This report helps deliver the Strategic Priority “Resilient Communities” within the Pillar “Our Environment”, by considering the key principles of human rights and public protection, having the right people, in the right place, at the right time and climate and sustainability.

5.2 This report helps deliver against Aberdeenshire Business Services Plan Priority – Business Services are effective and efficient (Right people, right places, right time & Responsible finances)

5.3

Subject	Yes	No	N/A
Financial		X	
Staffing		X	
Equalities		X	
Fairer Scotland Duty		X	
Town Centre First		X	
Sustainability		X	
Children and Young People’s Rights and Wellbeing		X	

5.4 An equality impact assessment is not required because this report is principally designed to update members on Risk Management and Resilience activities during the last year and does not have a differential impact on any of the protected characteristics.

5.5 The following Risks have been identified as relevant to this matter on a Corporate Level ([Corporate Risk Register](#)):

ACORP007 Social risk (e.g. population changes, poverty & social inequality, demographic changes, crime, antisocial behavior);

ACORP009 Operational Risk Management (including health & safety); and

ACORP010 Environmental challenges e.g. extreme weather events, climate change. (This includes localised risks around flooding and air pollution and the need for communities to display resilience)

6 Scheme of Governance

- 6.1 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report and are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.
- 6.2 The Committee is able to discuss this item in terms of Sections G.1.2.d and G.1.4 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance as the Committee is responsible for risk management and risk assessment arrangements and procedures.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Business Services

Report prepared by Mhairi McCowan, Risk & Resilience Manager
Date: 30/04/2021

APPENDIX 1
Risk & Resilience Annual and First Quarter 2021 report
January 2020 – March 2021

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Risk & Resilience Annual and First Quarter 2021 Report

January 2020 – March 2021

Mhairi McCowan
Risk and Resilience Manager
Business Services

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- It has been an extremely challenging year for all Services as a result of dealing with the response and impact of COVID-19.
- New Risk and Resilience Team established in January 2020 with a remit which covers Risk Management, Business Continuity, Emergency Planning, Emergency Response, Resilience, Serious Organised Crime, Counterterrorism, EU Exit and Public Safety.
- The Grampian Emergency Planning Unit disbanded in September 2019 has seen the responsibility of Emergency Planning and Response discharged to Aberdeenshire Council. A variety of processes and procedures are being implemented as part of the transition.
- Since the introduction of the new Risk and Resilience Team, a full review of all areas of the remit is in progress with proposed improvement plans to be produced throughout the course of 2021.
- A full Risk Management review has been completed and an improvement plan is currently being consulted with each Directorate Service.
- The Risk Management review is reviewing compliance with ISO Standards, best practice guidance and is looking at strategy, framework, policies, procedures, processes, assurance, accountability, risk appetite and risk registers.
- An EU Exit Risk Register was drafted and EU Exit daily reporting to the Scottish Multi Agency Coordination Centre was developed and commenced on 28th of December 2020. Agencies were required to monitor the impacts of EU Exit and all Concurrent Risks to their respective organisations and communities in order to provide a shared situational awareness and joint understanding of risks at a local, regional and national level. These reporting processes are likely to remain in place until 27 March 2021.
- There have been minimum events taking place in 2020 however the events process is being reviewed and the Events Oversight Group has been reinstated. Events are expected to resume in 2021.
- Aberdeenshire Council is re-energising its mechanisms for delivery of its Counterterrorism related activity through the CONTEST program. A Prioritisation Plan has been created with a supporting Action Plan drafted for delivery under the direction of the CONTEST Tactical Group with coordinated involvement of multiple Services.

- Activity to tackle Serious Organised Crime is ongoing in Aberdeenshire with recent multi-agency success to counter 'cuckooing' which continues to be delivered and co-ordinated locally through the Community Safety Team.
- -In October 2020, Heads of Service provided updates to the Serious Organised Crime and Corruption Risk Action Plan which was considered by the Corporate Integrity Group in January 2021, leading to approval for a Short Life Working Group to be created, with remit to further identify and define the threats and risks from Serious Organised Crime that are most relevant to Aberdeenshire.
- Aberdeenshire Council is considering the UK Government's PROTECT Duty Consultation, with input sought from relevant Heads of Services and a corporate response will be submitted by the Risk & Resilience Manager on behalf of Aberdeenshire ahead of the deadline of 2nd July 2021

INTRODUCTION

As a whole, 2020 has been an extremely challenging and unprecedented year for Aberdeenshire Council. The world has been faced with a global pandemic – COVID-19 – which has significant impacts on the operating of the Council. The Council, Services and Communities of Aberdeenshire have adapted remarkably well in the face of adversity and pulled together.

As a result, The Risk and Resilience Team have beyond operating at full capacity, with a rapid expansion of the team taking place throughout 2020. Following the disbanding of the Grampian Emergency Planning Unit in September 2019 and the retirement of the Risk Manager in December 2019, a new Risk and Resilience Manager was appointed in January 2020 with an increased remit. The remit of the team includes Risk Management, Business Continuity, Emergency Planning, Emergency Response, Resilience, Serious Organised Crime, Counterterrorism, EU Exit and Public Safety.

The Risk and Resilience Team has expanded to include an Emergency Planning Officer, a Resilience Officer, a Risk Officer, a Business Continuity Officer, and a part time Risk Officer, with a review of the permanent structure currently in progress. These posts are designed to help manage the increasing demands on the Service and provide governance and assurance around processes and plans within the remit areas for Aberdeenshire Council.

There has been considerable movement in the risk space in 2020 with the caveat that COVID-19 and a range of other incidents has placed the primary focus of the Risk and Resilience team on emergency response. A significant review of all areas of the remit is in progress with proposed improvement plans to be produced throughout the course of 2021. All members of the Risk and Resilience Team have now been trained as Civil Contingencies Advisors and operate on an on-call rota to provide support to the on-call Duty Emergency Response Co-Ordinator in the case of an emergency.

RISK MANAGEMENT REVIEW

Risk Management within Aberdeenshire Council is undergoing a thorough review to identify any gaps and vulnerabilities within the current processes, with an improvement plan created to implement required change. Meetings have taken place with Directors, Heads of Service and Area Managers as part of the review. The review is of significant importance and scope, with audit findings, risk management best practices and peer review with other local authorities in Scotland conducted as part of the assessment.

The review assesses the Councils' governance surrounding risk management activities, monitoring and reporting cycles, risk registers, the current risk policy, the current Risk Management and Business Continuity Strategy, supporting guides, tools and materials, training and the organisational culture towards risk management and service adoption of risk management activities.

Top line findings from the review so far suggest that there are a number of areas for improvement and equally a number of areas of strength.

An improvement plan is in development and is currently being discussed with Services and the following is a list of the areas that the Risk & Resilience Team seek to support Services consolidate and carry forward:

- An Assurance Framework
- A Risk Management Strategy
- A Risk Management Policy and Framework Document
- A Risk Appetite Statement
- A Training Plan
- Uniform templates and material to be mandatory across the Council
- Risk Champions Plan
- Updated guidance documents for all areas of Risk Management
- A new risk register process

The review has progressed and is currently going through the consultation process with Directorate Management Teams with the intention of being concluded in time to report to the Audit Committee at its meeting in July. The new Risk Management process is expected to go live in Autumn 2021. Assurance can be provided that in the interim, Services are continuing to manage their risks as per the current policy.

RISK REGISTERS

The Risk Register process is currently under review to identify any gaps or vulnerabilities in the current process. At present, Risk Registers are maintained at a Corporate, Directorate and Operational level. Services and the Risk & Resilience Team are working to update the process to reflect the changes in the Council structure, such as the transition of HR & OD to Legal and People. The proposed changes also link in with the risks identified in refreshed Service Business Plans and to reflect the refreshed Council Priorities. The review is exploring the possibility of expanding the category of risk monitored within the current Risk Management and Risk Register process.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

These risks are broadly similar to those faced by many public sector organisations. These Risks are regularly reviewed with any revisions being agreed by the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group.

Directorate Risk Registers

As part of the Service Planning (2017 – 2020) process, each Service identified risks associated with Council Priorities and Service Priorities. Directorate Risk Registers are currently being updated to take account of the refreshed Council Priorities.

Directorate Risk Registers are currently being updated to take account of the refreshed Council Priorities and Services are currently in the process of identifying the risks related to these refreshed priorities. Risks which no longer apply have been removed.

Aberdeenshire Health & Social Care Partnership have undertaken a Risk Identification exercise. The Council and NHS Grampian risk functions were actively involved in this process. The identified risks are held on the NHS Grampian Risk Management system and will be reported to the appropriate committees in both organisations.

Service Operational Risk Registers

The annual review of these Risk Registers took place during the quarter ended 31st December 2020 to ensure that any Risks contained within the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers were removed. The remaining risks were updated where required.

EU EXIT

A considerable amount of work was undertaken by the Council in the lead up to the end of the transition period and the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union on 31st December 2020, aimed at mitigating risks as far as possible.

Internally, an EU Exit specific risk register was developed containing identified potential risks each Service faced and the mitigations/controls put in place to mitigate these risks. As part of the wider Grampian Local Resilience Partnership, Aberdeenshire Council contributed to the Local Risk & Mitigation Planning Assumptions and associated Mitigations.

Daily EU Exit reporting commenced on a national basis on 28th of December 2020 and consists of any EU Exit and/or all other concurrent risks and occurrences which have an impact locally beyond the business-as-usual capability or capacity of Aberdeenshire Council as a single agency. Services provide updates which are collated by the on call Civil Contingencies Advisor and approved by the Duty Emergency Response Co-ordinator (DERC) for submission to the Scottish Multi-Agency Coordinating Centre, via Police Scotland on a regional basis. Reports have been submitted via Resilience Direct and help inform daily Situation Reports (SitReps) for Scottish Government. This reporting regime is in place until 27th March 2021 when it will be stepped-down due to impacts being managed in large within existing business as usual processes.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

Emergency Planning for Aberdeenshire Council - with the exception of Schools and Sheltered Housing Complexes - was previously conducted by the Grampian Emergency Planning Unit. The Grampian Emergency Planning Unit was a joint agreement which was in place between Aberdeenshire Council, Aberdeen City Council and Moray Council since 1996. In September 2019, the Grampian Emergency Planning Unit was disbanded and the responsibility for Emergency Planning and Emergency Response was transferred back into each individual Local Authority.

As such, an Emergency Planning Officer has been appointed in Aberdeenshire Council. Aberdeenshire Council very much remains in a period of transition in the reviewing of all Council Emergency Plans and processes. The Risk and Resilience Team are currently updating all Emergency Plans and Contact Lists to reflect the changes in these arrangements. This review includes the adaptation of plans and processes required as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whilst Aberdeenshire Council remains in a period of transition, assurance can be provided that the Council remains steady in a position to respond as required to a variety of emergency situations. This has been reflected in Aberdeenshire Council's response to the recent events of the 12th August 2020 in which the Council

simultaneously responded to wide spread flooding, a power outage, the COVID-0 pandemic and the train de-railment near Stonehaven in which there were sadly three fatalities.

Civil Contingencies Recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the Council and all Category 1 responders to review the way in which agencies discharge their emergency response duties. In response to the introduction of the Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020, and subsequent restrictions, the Risk and Resilience Team established the Civil Contingencies Recovery Group, consisting of representatives from services across the organisation.

The aim of the Group was to review Aberdeenshire Council's arrangements for establishing Reception Centres and ensure compliance to the new restrictions required as a result of COVID-19. Under the Civil Contingences Act 2004, Aberdeenshire Council as a Category 1 responder are responsible for establishing and running a number of types of reception centre types in response to any major incident. This typically takes the form of a Rest Centre which provides temporary shelter to individuals evacuated from their homes or displaced during an emergency, for example, during flooding.

Procedures were updated to account for PPE requirements, social distancing, and infection control, with guidance produced to account for Shielding or self-isolating individuals. Furthermore, a full review of the Rest Centre locations was conducted, with the intention of moving away from using educational establishments to prevent further disruption to school pupils.

Aberdeenshire Council have had several incidents in 2020/2021 which have provided an opportunity to test run the new procedures, putting into practise the excellent work conducted by the Group.

While the work of the Civil Contingencies Recovery Group has now been concluded, the overall review of our arrangements for emergency response is still ongoing with the intention of strengthening these procedures. This work is being supported by the Area Teams and other key services such as Housing and the AHSCP. A new training package for volunteers, specifically those undertaking the role of Rest Centre Manager, have been rolled out. The first new training sessions have been delivered with future events scheduled. This will be complimented by a recruitment drive to increase the pool of Council volunteers, and live training events and exercises, when the situation allows.

Care for People arrangements

Over the past 12 months, despite the challenging work environment, significant progress has been made regarding Aberdeenshire Council's 'Care for People' arrangements. These arrangements outline how Aberdeenshire Council's Services come together to effectively support individuals and communities during and after a major incident.

Recent examples of this work can be demonstrated by the Grampian COVID-19 Assistance Hub, the tragic Stonehaven train derailment, flooding events, and the recent mass gas outages experienced in Huntly. The 'Care for People' arrangements put both the practical and clinical wellbeing and support of our residents impacted by emergencies at the centre of all decision-making processes. These processes with joint working between agencies within the Grampian Local Resilience Partnership are have enabled continued support for people affected both during emergency response efforts, and throughout the long-term recovery phases to these incidents.

Loggist Training

As part of our continual review of our emergency response arrangements, an opportunity for improvement had been identified concerning the availability of trained Loggist staff to support during an incident. Loggists play a crucial role during emergencies by ensuring there is a clear audit trail of what decisions have been made, by whom, when the decision was made, and the information and advice which has been provided to inform and support these decisions. Loggists also ensure that actions, and their owners, are recorded accurately and shared to those involved in the response.

To strengthen our pre-existing administration, specific Loggist training has been arranged and provided through the Scottish Government's Learning & Development Coordinator. To date, 30 staff across Aberdeenshire Council and the AHSCP have completed this course, with further staff identified to attend future sessions. These staff will form a pool of expert Loggists who can be called on to support during any emergency response situation. A suite of documents to support this role have also been produced, with guidance on best practice for recording crucial information development. These trained Loggists will provided with further development opportunities through further training and exercising.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Business continuity is a core responsibility of Aberdeenshire Council a defined Category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Act defines Business Continuity as the "strategic and tactical capability of the organisation to plan for and respond to incidents and business disruptions in order to continue business operations at an acceptable predefined level".

Aberdeenshire Council's approach to Business Continuity is set out in the 'Risk Management and Business Continuity Strategy'. This is underpinned by the 'Business Continuity Policy and Procedures' and supported by additional 'Guidance Notes' for Services.

Our Business Continuity arrangements seek to enhance Aberdeenshire Council's resilience to disruption by allowing the Council to maintain its critical functions during a major incident, while also facilitating the return to "business as usual" as soon as possible. Business Continuity arrangements have been at the core of the Council's successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A full review of the current Business Continuity arrangements and the associated documentation is currently underway. This review is being conducted in consultation with representatives from each Service in order to ensure processes are fit for purpose across the entire organisation. This review could not be conducted during the height of our COVID-19 response as this would have introduced an unacceptable level of risk into an already incredibly challenging and complex situation. However, as restrictions ease and business operations return to something resembling “normal”, this work has now resumed.

While this review will present opportunities to improve on existing processes, it is important to note that the current arrangements have played a central role during the Council’s response to the pandemic. Each Service is responsible for producing and maintaining Business Continuity plans. These plans outline the Councils’ critical activities, and the resources required to deliver them, to an agreed acceptable level during times of adversity. These pre-existing arrangements helped inform the work of the Adapted Services Board by having pre-identified critical functions that required protecting, thereby allowing the most appropriate allocation of resources.

However, the pandemic has also highlighted some of the areas within our current arrangements which can be improved and strengthen organisational resilience. A key opportunity identified is to capture the best practice approach taken during the COVID-19 response in bringing Services together in a holistic manner to review activities, and their interdependencies across the organisation, rather than considering them in isolation.

To support this activity a ‘Business Continuity Working Group’ has been established, chaired by Philip McKay, Head of Roads, Waste and Landscape Services. This group seeks to understand the operational impacts for each Service as we move from the Response to the Recovery Phase of COVID-19, and how this affects the Councils’ critical activities. This should ensure the mass opening of cross-organisational services is conducted in a controlled manner.

Beyond the immediacy of the COVID-19 situation this group will also feed into the overall Business Continuity Review, seek to create Service champions and subject matter experts, provide a forum for testing plans collectively, and encouraging a long-term holistic approach to Business Continuity Planning by embedding it into the way Aberdeenshire Council delivers all its services.

Education & Children Services Business Continuity and Emergency Planning

A School Emergency Response & Business Continuity Plan is in place for all Academies, Primary Schools and Community Sports and Leisure Centres. These plans are updated at the start of the Academic Session then scrutinised. The scrutiny is followed by an on-line compliance protocol ensuring (i) they are up to date, (ii) that a table-top walk through has been undertaken, (iii) there is an identified place of safety to evacuate to and (iv) their data is secure. This is completed in partnership with the newly formed Education and Children Services Health and Safety and Risk Management Team. All schools are 100% up-to-date. Clarification

is currently underway for a very small number of Sport and Leisure Centres. Pre-COVID-19, this work was supported by presentations to School and Leisure staff. In addition, scenario planning exercises were undertaken on-site for establishments as well as to cluster and larger groups generically.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Public Safety

The current events process is under review and will be updated to ensure a clear, streamlined process is in place with all partner organisations and internal departments having clear roles and responsibilities. The aim of this review is to develop a process which will provide assurance that Public Safety at all events held within Aberdeenshire is of an appropriate standard.

As a result of the pandemic, there have been limited number of events in 2020 due to national and local restrictions. This has presented the opportunity for the events process to be reviewed and improved, with any COVID-19 related adjustments being implemented into the process. The Events Oversight Group has been re-established and is working with all Services within the Council and Grampian Local Resilience Partnership agencies to ensure there is a robust and suitable events and Public Safety approval and monitoring process in place. The process will ensure that any prospective events are compliant, safe and suitable in light of legislative requirements and COVID-19.

Scoping exercises have taken place within Aberdeenshire Council to identify all of the ways in which the organising of events is communicated to the Council. This exercise has determined that events are currently notified to Licensing, Roads, Landscaping Services, Transport, Economic Development, Live Life Aberdeenshire, Education, Environmental Health and the Risk and Resilience Team. This is due to the thriving and diverse events portfolio which takes place in Aberdeenshire which is a credit to our communities and beneficial for generating tourism. The review has identified these lines of communication and will now work across the various Services in order to achieve a joined-up process. When completed, this process will allow for a single view of all the events taking place in Aberdeenshire and the date and location of these events. This will provide greater governance and assurance as resources can be planned preventing strain on locations and resources. An insight and overview of all events will be achieved allowing for assurance that suitable systems are in place at each event to ensure public safety and wellbeing of attendees.

It is expected that events will resume in Summer 2021, though the scale, format and restrictions in place are yet to be determined.

CONTEST

Background

CONTEST is the United Kingdom's (UK) counter-terrorism strategy. CONTEST is split into four work streams that are known within the counter-terrorism community as the 'four P's': Prevent, Pursue, Protect, and Prepare:

- The purpose of Pursue is to stop terrorist attacks.
- The purpose of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.
- The purpose of Protect is to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack
- The purpose of Prepare is to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack

UK Threat Levels

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.

In reaching a judgement on the appropriate threat level in any given circumstance several factors which need to be considered.

These include:

- Available intelligence
- Terrorist capability
- Terrorist intentions
- Timescale

What the threat levels mean

Threat levels are designed to give a broad indication of the likelihood of a terrorist attack occurring:

- **LOW** means an attack is highly unlikely
- **MODERATE** means an attack is possible, but not likely
- **SUBSTANTIAL** means an attack is likely
- **SEVERE** means an attack is highly likely
- **CRITICAL** means an attack is highly likely in the near future

Threat levels do not have an expiry date. The threat level is reviewing regularly and can change at any time as different intelligence becomes available.

Current UK National Threat Level

Following the terrorist attacks in Europe (France and Austria), on 3 November 2020, the JTAC raised the threat level in the UK from **SUBSTANTIAL** to **SEVERE** as a precautionary measure in response to these attacks. The increase in the threat level moving to SEVERE meant it was highly likely that a terrorist attack could happen in the UK, notwithstanding, Counter Terrorism Policing were clear at the time of the increase in the threat level, the change was not based on any specific threat.

Subsequently, on 08 February 2021, the JTAC lowered the threat level to SUBSTANTIAL, meaning an attack is likely. This comes after the significant reduction in the momentum of attacks in Europe since those seen between September and November 2020.

Counter Terrorism Policing continue to urge the public to remain vigilant and to report any suspicious activity to the Police.

UK Government's 'PROTECT Duty' – Consultation

Early last year, the UK Government announced plans to introduce a law which would require owners and operators of public spaces and venues (publicly accessible locations) to put in place measures to keep the public safe from a terrorist attack.

The new 'Protect Duty' will take account of the lessons learned following the terrorist attacks in 2017, as well as more recent attacks. The proposals also follow discussions with victims' groups such as the Martyn's Law campaign, established after the Manchester Arena attack.

This new law would require owners and operators of public spaces and venues to consider the risk of a terrorist attack and take proportionate and reasonable measures to prepare for and protect the public from such an attack.

The consultation is open to the public, and is targeted at local authorities, venues, organisations, businesses, and public authorities and/or individuals who own or operate at publicly accessible locations, or others that a 'Protect Duty' would potentially affect. The consultation document covers four main themes; these are:

1. Who (or where) should legislation apply to?
2. What should the requirements be?
3. How should compliance work?
4. How should Government best support and work with partners?

The consultation acknowledges much excellent work is already done to improve security and preparedness measures by owners and operators, however this is undertaken on a voluntary basis and legislation would provide for a certainty of responsibility, and a greater consistency of measures and effect.

The consultation provides some illustrative examples of what would constitute reasonable and proportionate security measures for different types and sizes of

organisations. This could include increased physical security, having training in place, incident response plans and exercises for staff on what to do during an attack.

Given the potential broad spectrum of impact that may flow from this 'Protect Duty' on local authorities, Aberdeenshire Council is considering the full Consultation document which was launched on 26 February 2021, with input sought from relevant Heads of Services and a corporate response will be submitted by the Risk & Resilience Manager on behalf of Aberdeenshire ahead of the deadline of 2nd July 2021.

CONTEST DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

Aberdeenshire Council actively participate in and contributes to the North East Scotland Local CONTEST Delivery Group, chaired by Police Scotland. This is a multi-agency group focused on supporting the delivery of the CONTEST strategy at a local level taking cognisance of the Scottish Threat Overview and therein, the Threat Overview applicable to the North East of Scotland.

In November 2020, the Delivery Framework for the CONTEST Strategy in Scotland was shared by Police Scotland and the Scottish Government with partners.

The CONTEST Strategy Aim is: **'To reduce the risk to UK citizens and interests overseas from terrorism, so that people can go about their lives freely and with confidence'**.

The Scottish Aim aligned to this is: **'To deliver the CONTEST Strategy, within a Scottish landscape, to reduce the risk from terrorism to Scotland'**.

Internally, Aberdeenshire Council is re-energising its mechanisms for delivery of CONTEST related activity. Tactical Lead Officers have been identified to take responsibility for each of the 4 Pillars of the CONTEST Strategy, referred to as the '4Ps' – Prevent and Pursue (Head of Service, Housing & Building Standards); Protect (Head of Service, Property & Facilities); and Prepare (Risk & Resilience Manager). The following Prioritisation Plan has been constructed by the CONTEST Leads within Aberdeenshire Council and was ratified prior to ratification being sought through the Senior Leadership Team in February 2021. An associated Action Plan has now drafted for delivery through the CONTEST Tactical Group, with coordinated activity to be delivered across a range of Services.

Delivery Framework for the CONTEST Strategy in Scotland		
CONTEST- 4 PILLARS	THEMES	PRIORITIES

<p>PREVENT to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism</p>	<p>Tackle the Cause: Promote a community-led approach to building stronger communities and response to the issues that affect them</p>	<p>Refresh communications and information flow to heighten awareness of CONTEST/PREVENT to staff delivering front line community services</p>
	<p>Safeguard and Support: Engage with a wide range of sectors and institutions and ensure people who may be drawn into terrorism are safeguarded and offered appropriate advice and support</p>	<p>Within refreshed awareness raising clearly identify the Mental Health element that can increase vulnerabilities in individuals to become susceptible to radicalisation</p> <p>Refresh of Aberdeenshire Council CONTEST Strategy Implementation Group to include capability building across relevant services, including but not limited to Education & Children’s Services, Social Work, Health & Social Care and Housing</p> <p>As appropriate, adopt and maximise the Prevent focused Education Scotland training packages</p> <p>Review, and where appropriate, build upon existing arrangements to ensure delivery, with partners, of robust and effective Prevent Case management and PPC processes</p>
	<p>Enable Rehabilitation: Enable radicalised and high-risk individuals to reach their full potential and successfully reintegrate into society</p>	<p>Maintain and build on existing partnership working with the Scottish Prison Service and partners in support of Prison Rehabilitation programmes as appropriate.</p> <p>Through relevant Services maintain the intensive support provided to refugees relocated from Syria and Iraq.</p>
<p>PURSUE to stop terrorist attacks</p>	<p>Intelligence: Collection, analysis and use of information and intelligence</p>	<p>Seek to maintain the existing information/intelligence sharing process with Police Scotland and key CONTEST Partners and build upon this in relation to the CONTEST Prevent awareness info gathering / concerns/</p>
<p>PROTECT to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack</p>	<p>Physical protective security: Enhancing Critical Infrastructure, Crowded Places and Hazardous Sites protection to counter all identified threats</p>	<p>Work with internal and external partners to identify vulnerabilities and seek to counter areas of threat</p> <p>Seek to maintain, and where appropriate, enhance awareness of CONTEST and specifically Insider Threat aspects, and arrangements to counter these</p> <p>Seek to maintain and where appropriate enhance robust levels of</p>
	<p>Personnel security: Enhancing HR and vetting arrangements to counter Insider Threat</p>	
	<p>Cyber security: Enhancing cyber security and resilience to counter cyber threat</p>	

		cyber security and resilience through working closely with Government and Industry specialists.
PREPARE to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack	Understand: Understand the threat(s) to Scotland	Work collectively with relevant partners across sectors, responsible for delivery of multi-agency emergency response to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack in the Aberdeenshire area.
	Vision: Agree the vision for the capabilities and capacity required to mitigate the threat(s)	
	Identify: Identify the current mitigation capability and capacity within Scotland	
	Deliver: Deliver the improvements in the mitigation capability and capacity required to achieve the vision	
	Test & Maintain: Test and maintain the improved capability and capacity to ensure that it remains current, futureproofed and effective, through training, testing, and exercising	

SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME (SOC)

Background

The Scottish Government strategy (“Letting Our Communities Flourish”) set out four objectives aimed at reducing the impact of Serious Organised Crime in Scotland. The four objectives are:

- **DIVERT** – individuals (particularly young people) from engaging in or using the products of Serious Organised Crime;
- **DISRUPT** – the activities of Serious Organised Crime groups;
- **DETER** – through measures to protect communities, businesses, and the public sector from Serious Organised Crime; and
- **DETECT** – by boosting capacity and improving co-ordination to give Serious Organised Crime offenders no place to hide.

North East Multi-Agency Approach to Serious Organised Crime

The Council is a participant in the North East SOC Multi-Agency Group. Due to competing demands during 2020, this Police Scotland led group has not met, but is anticipated to re-convene in February 2021. At an operational level the Community Safety Manger represents Aberdeenshire Council in regular meetings with Police Scotland and other local partners to address the risks, threats and harms presented by Serious Organised Crime.

Liaison with Police Scotland, North East Division highlights the threats and harms presented continue to focus on drugs supply from England (emanating from London, West Midlands, and Merseyside areas predominantly). Associated to this is the potential risks to juveniles who are vulnerable to being exploited by these SOC Groups either as part of the supply chain or through exposure to the effects of illegal drugs.

Human Trafficking exploitation continues to require consideration at a local level due to the levels of migrant workers employed across various sectors in Aberdeenshire.

Cybercrime, in particular financial gain through SOC Groups exploiting the vulnerable online is a growing area of threat and harm, requiring coordinated response and support to those most susceptible to this type of targeted criminality.

Aberdeenshire Joint Cuckooing Initiative

'Cuckooing' is a term used to describe someone having their home taken over by a Serious Organised Crime Group for the purposes of using the premises, usually to deal or store drugs. This activity is a blight on our communities and brings with it significant harm to many. There has been significant multi-agency success to counter 'cuckooing' in Aberdeenshire which continues to be delivered, coordinated locally through the Community Justice Partnership. This involves services reaching out to suspected cuckooing victims and engaging them in support (Divert). Joint visits between Substance Misuse Services, Housing and Police take place weekly with the

working group meeting quarterly, chaired by the Service Manager for Criminal Justice Social Work.

Aberdeenshire SOC Partnership Intervention Group

The Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership has a priority of 'Safeguarding Communities' which relates to keeping communities safe from SOC. SOC related work under this priority is coordinated through the Partnership Intervention Group which meets every six weeks and is chaired by the Police Inspector for Partnerships. Aberdeenshire Council Community Safety Team support the perpetrator disruption element of this work and have been successful in delivery of disruptive interventions, including Antisocial Behavior Orders which prohibit known perpetrators from entering the Aberdeenshire Local Authority area, thus disrupting SOC group activity.

Aberdeenshire SOC and Corruption Risk Activity

As previously reported, under the Deter Sub-group of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce, SOLACE agreed that all 32 local authorities should undertake a high-level assessment of their readiness in relation to the risks posed by Serious Organised Crime and corruption.

The Corporate Integrity Group (CIG), Chaired by the Director, Business Services maintains overview of the multiple strands of activity in support of this. In October 2020, Heads of Service provided updates to the Serious Organised Crime and Corruption Risk Action Plan which formed part of a review undertaken by the Corporate Integrity Group. This led to approval for a Short Life Working Group to be created, under the Chair of the Community Safety Manager and Risk and Resilience Manager with a defined remit including to further identify and define the threats and risks from SOC that are most relevant to Aberdeenshire.