

ACT for Local Authorities

Protect & Prepare Groups



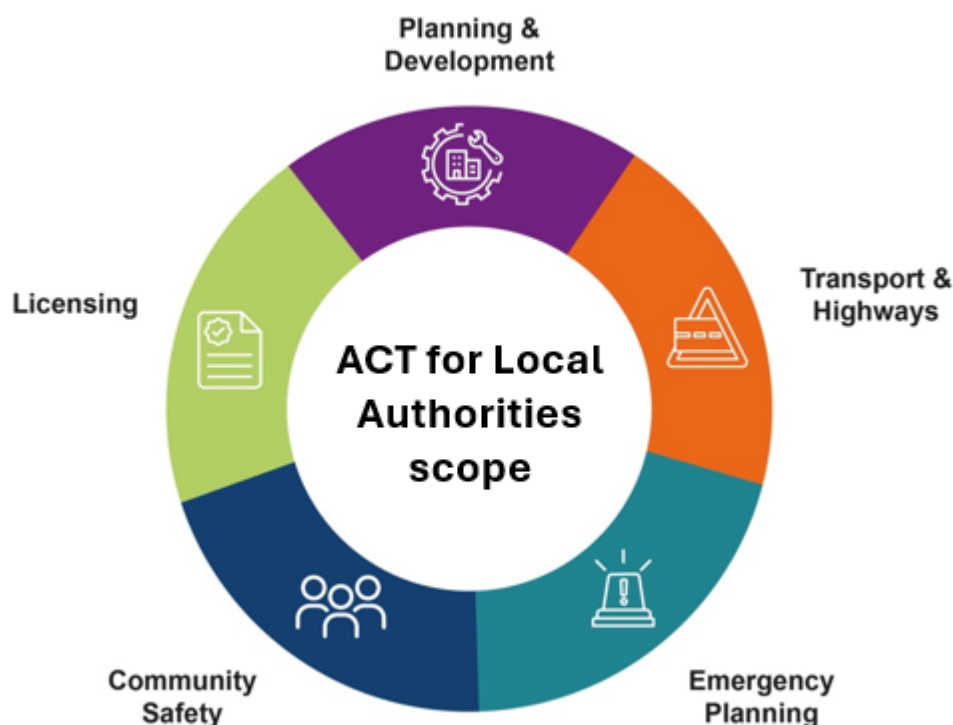
Introduction

Protect & Prepare Groups (PAPGs) bring together representatives of different local authority departments and relevant partners who have an interest in counter terrorism protective security and preparedness. This is to ensure the effective coordination of intelligence, resources, and activity.

Membership

Whilst many local authorities already engage in counter terrorism through their statutory responsibilities within Prevent, it is important to acknowledge that Protect & Prepare are very different strands of the counter terrorism structure. Protect & Prepare Groups will therefore require the involvement of multiple local authority departments and portfolios, most of which will not previously have been involved in Prevent workstreams. As such, it is not essential for a local authority Prevent Officer (or equivalent) to be included in a Protect & Prepare Group. Prevent Officers may be able to provide contextual awareness, such as about the local threat landscape, but this should only be for context necessary to inform Protect and Prepare matters.

Local authority membership in Protect & Prepare Groups should, at a minimum, involve representatives of the five key business areas:



Within these business areas, there may be multiple portfolios of work which should be represented. For example, engagement with Licensing is designed to ensure that Protect & Prepare is considered within the licensing of night-time economy venues, temporary events, and sports stadia - these portfolios of work may rest with different teams or individuals, and all should be represented, which may necessitate additional members of the group.

If the following activities within local authorities are not included within the five key areas listed above, they should also be invited due to their role in influencing activities within public spaces:

- CCTV control room managers
- Event officers/Safety Advisory Group (SAG) coordinators
- The local authority facilities/building management

Protect & Prepare Groups should also include stakeholders external to local authorities. This may include:

- Counter Terrorism Security Advisors (CTSAs)
- Counter Terrorism Prepare Officers (CTPOs)
- Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCOs, or local equivalents)
- CT Security Coordinators (CT SecCos)
- Neighbourhood Policing Teams
- Fire & Rescue Service
- Ambulance Service
- Representatives of Business Improvement Districts, Chambers of Commerce, or other business engagement forums.
- Representatives of local venues with whom the local authority would be expected to engage regarding protective security and preparedness

It is important to consider resilience and continuity in the membership of the Protect & Prepare Group, so it is recommended that deputies for each member are also identified.

The Protect & Prepare Group is owned by the local authority, so it is recommended that the Chair of the group is a local authority employee, preferably with sufficient seniority to compel attendance, ensure accountability and, where necessary, escalate matters.

The group may also wish to nominate a Deputy Chair. Good practice in other areas of partnership working suggests that this should be someone from a different organisation, to ensure appropriate representation across organisational boundaries and facilitate accountability between partners. In this case, the local police force may be appropriate, as they will also likely be contributing multiple members to the group, but each Protect & Prepare Group will be different.

Governance

The Protect & Prepare Group should be adopted into the local authority governance structures. Most local authorities have a Prevent Group, and it is recognised good practice that the Protect & Prepare Group sit at the same level, with both then potentially reporting into a senior local authority individual who takes on responsibility for all aspects of counter terrorism.

Another option may be for the two groups to report into different chains of command in recognition of the variance between the two portfolios of work and departments involved.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution but it is important to ensure that the governance in place ensures suitable oversight of the work being undertaken, the opportunity to escalate matters to appropriate levels of command and leadership, and recognition of the importance of Protect & Prepare work within local authority work streams.



Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference should be established and agreed by group members to ensure proper functioning of the group.

Considerations for inclusion in Terms of Reference (in addition to the above regarding membership and governance), could include:

1. Mission Statement

The Terms of Reference should state in explicit terms the aims and objectives of the group. The group's membership should be clear as to why they are part of the group, and what they are expected to contribute. Listing this in the Terms of Reference will also support broader understanding of each other's roles, remits, and responsibilities in the context of the Protect & Prepare Group.

The Terms of Reference may also highlight the role of the Protect & Prepare Group within the broader context of ACT for Local Authorities and related engagement between CTP and the local authority, and how it will function in relation to the identified parameters of Places, Sectors, and People.

2. Meeting Schedules

By ensuring meetings are scheduled at regular intervals, a cadence is established to ensure the proper progression of work. The members of the group are likely to be busy people with multiple conflicting demands on their time, so scheduling meetings well in advance can help ensure people's availability.

3. Subgroups

It may be beneficial to establish subgroups to focus on more specific matters which do not require the input of all members. This can help ensure that people's time and resources are managed effectively and efficiently. For example, a subgroup might be established to work on a Hostile Vehicle Mitigation project, or to embed ACT training as mandatory for all council staff.

4. Action Plans

It is recommended that an Action Plan be established to track and monitor the group's work. Meetings are an ideal opportunity to take stock of ongoing actions and ensure that they are progressing, or that they can be escalated where challenges are being encountered.

5. Minutes

For the purposes of audit, it should be agreed as to how the meetings will be recorded, and the audience for any minutes or data generated. Because of the sensitive nature of the work involved, it is strongly recommended that minutes are not publicly disclosed, as can be the standard practice for some local authority meetings.

6. Membership Etiquette

Given the potential sensitivity of meeting content, some basic etiquette should be followed. This should be outlined in the Terms of Reference to ensure that all members are informed of any restrictions.

7. Standing Agenda Items

By agreeing a standing agenda, members of the group can come prepared with relevant updates from their department or organisation. Consider the purpose of each person's membership of the group, their role and responsibilities, and what information or updates they are in a unique position to provide to others. Examples could include: an update on recent terrorist attacks, incidents, or threat levels to be provided by the CTSA; discussion of new protective security and preparedness guidance or resources relevant to the work of the group; horizon scanning of temporary events which may necessitate protective security and preparedness considerations; planning applications which may benefit from the input of CTSA and DOCOs; training of local authority staff in relevant counter terrorism packages.

8. The Maturity Matrix

The Local Authority Protective Security and Preparedness Maturity Matrix is available for local authorities to self-assess different aspects of their maturity in Protect & Prepare. These meetings provide an ideal forum to discuss progress and highlight areas for future focus.

An example Terms of Reference document can be found on ProtectUK.