

Thame Town Council

Terrorism Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy / Advice Note has been prepared in light of the evolving security threat within the UK. It sets out clear guidelines for staff and members to follow in the event of a terrorism-related incident and outlines prevention, reporting, and response measures to help safeguard the Council, staff, and the community. **This policy runs in conjunction with Business Continuity & In the Event of Emergency Policies.**

2. Letter Bombs

2.1 These may appear as substantial envelopes or parcels containing paper-backed books delivered through normal postal services. They are often in the form of a flat letter weighing up to four ounces or in a package the size of a conventional library book. The following indicators may raise suspicion:

- The postmark – if foreign and not familiar.
- The writing – which may have a questionable appearance, lack literacy, or be crudely printed.
- Name and address of sender (if known) – if address differs from area of postmark.
- 'Personal' or 'Private' letters addressed to the Town Clerk under the wrong job title, e.g. Managing Director.
- Weight – if excessive for size and apparent contents.
- Weight distribution – if uneven, may indicate presence of batteries inside.
- Grease marks – showing on the exterior of the wrapping from inside, may include 'sweating' explosive.
- Smell – some explosives have a smell of marzipan or almonds.
- General – damaged envelopes which give sight of wire, batteries or fluid, filled plastic sachets should be left strictly alone. Those that rattle or feel springy should be treated with caution, and naturally, any ticking noise should be treated as a 'red alert'.
- Where a conventional paper-back book has been used in the making of a letter bomb, it is likely to be noticeably softer in the centre than at the edges.

2.2 **Actions:** - Do not open or tamper with the item. - Do not place in water or under any object. - Isolate the item and evacuate the immediate area. - Notify the Town Clerk and police immediately.

3. Bomb Threats

3.1 If a bomb threat is received by phone: - Stay calm and complete the Bomb Threat checklist in point 3.3. - Try to keep the caller talking; gather as much detail as possible. - Inform the Town Clerk and police immediately. - Evacuate only if directed by the Town Clerk or police.

Key questions: -

- Where is the bomb?
- When will it go off?
- What does it look like?
- Why was it placed?
- Who placed it?

3.2 Action to be taken on receipt of a Bomb Threat

- Immediately alert someone else if possible (so that the Town Clerk may be informed) **but do not put down the handset or cut off conversation**;
- Obtain as much information as you can.
- Try to keep the caller talking (apologise for bad line, ask them to speak up etc);
- Write down the exact message.

3.3 Bomb Threats – What to Do

- Stay Calm – 90% of bomb threats are hoaxes – but take them seriously
- Complete the Bomb Threat Checklist

Record all details, including caller characteristics and background noises.

Bomb Threat Checklist - Describe details of call (tick any that are appropriate)

Caller	Male	Female	Adult	Juvenile
Accent	Local	Regional	Foreign	Disguised
Voice	Loud Rough	Soft Educated	High Pitched	Deep
Speech	Fast Blurred	Slow Distinct	Normal Obscene	Stutter
Manner	Calm Rational Coherent	Nervous Irrational Incoherent	Deliberate Angry	Hysterical Humorous
Background	Quiet Office	Music Party Noise	Road Traffic Voices	Factory
Any other relevant information				

5. Firearms or Weapon Attack / Intruder

Follow national Counter Terrorism Policing advice:

RUN – To a place of safety if possible.

HIDE – If escape is not possible, barricade yourself and silence phones.

TELL – Call 999 when it is safe to do so.

See the video [here](#).

6. Digital and Emerging Threats

6.1 The Council recognises the growing risk of cyber-enabled terrorism, misinformation, and digital disruption.

- If a staff member believes their computer has been hacked or there is a security virus threat, they should turn off their computer immediately
- Staff must report suspicious emails, hacking attempts, or online threats to the IT Lead and Town Clerk.
- Maintain strong passwords and follow cyber hygiene practices.
- Drones or remote-controlled devices near Council buildings or events must be reported to police.

7. Prevent Duty and Reporting Radicalisation

7.1 Under the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, the Council has a duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism (“Prevent Duty”).

- Staff must report concerns about individuals at risk of radicalisation to the Town Clerk, who will liaise with Thames Valley Police Prevent officers.
- Training on Prevent and recognising signs of radicalisation will be provided annually.

8. Communication and Coordination During Incidents

8.1 The Town Clerk will coordinate communication during an incident.

- Use designated internal communication channels (email, phone, Teams) for staff alerts.
- Do not post unverified information on social media.
- Liaise with the Police

9. Dealing with an Incident

9.1 Suspicious Packages

- do not open it, do not pass it around –
- Evacuate the building;
- Dial 999 for the police

9.2 Device Outside the Building

- Close all fire doors in the building, close all windows in the building.
- Move all occupants located on the ground floor and below, up the building to the first floor and above and await instructions from the emergency services.
- Dial 999 for the police, making sure you state you believe chemical or biological materials are involved.

9.3 Contaminated Persons

The following action should be taken for any person suspected of being in contact with a suspected chemical or biological device, prior to the arrival of the emergency services:

- Wash hands in a weak bleach solution (one teaspoonful of domestic bleach to one litre of water) and then rinse with ordinary soap and water.
- Keep the person separate from others and make them available for immediate attention from the emergency services.
- Try to ascertain how many other people may have been exposed to the material – complete a detailed list and keep all suspected contaminated people separate from others and send to A&E as quickly as possible.

10. Post-Incident Recovery and Support

10.1 Following any terrorism-related incident:

- Conduct a debrief with emergency services.
- Provide psychological and wellbeing support to affected staff.
- Review procedures and update the policy if necessary.
- Resume operations through the Council's Business Continuity Plan.

11. Training and Review

11.1 All staff and councillors should complete annual **ACT (Action Counters Terrorism)** and **Prevent** awareness training available free of charge <https://www.protectuk.police.uk/learning> .

11.2 This policy will be reviewed every four years or sooner following a change in national threat level or new guidance.