





**Terrorist attacks one year on -  
a personal letter from Sir David Veness**

Dear Private Sector Leader,

**Today marks the anniversary of the first of five terrorist attacks that impacted the UK in 2017.**

First and foremost, our thoughts are with those killed and injured, their families and friends and all those left behind. Particular sympathies must go to those who are still striving to cope with consequential harm and who merit continuing support from us all.

As we consider all five attacks – Westminster, Manchester Arena, London Bridge/Borough Market, Finsbury Park and Parsons Green – we are immensely grateful to our emergency services, individuals and the businesses in the areas at the time who demonstrated numerous acts of courage and generosity in their attempts to thwart attackers, tend to those caught up in the attacks and provide additional support during and in the aftermath of each incident.

**This first anniversary is an apt moment to reflect on the necessity of business engagement and the vital role of private sector leadership in safety and security, and to ponder where it fits into your organisation, ensuring that it is a board level issue.**

This week saw the launch of a new four week *Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) 2018* campaign, which provides a comprehensive suite of resources for businesses to use in order to support their own, and the UK's security by reporting suspicious activity and behaviour. [Click here](#) for further information about the campaign.

Business engagement and public/private partnerships in safety and security are labels that are commonly used, but not universally fully understood. The key to understanding begins with the profile of UK social and economic life. In 21<sup>st</sup> Century UK, the overwhelming mass of economic activity is in private hands and the task of protecting these assets falls mainly to the private sector. Central government contributes awareness and guidance for the critical national infrastructure (CNI) sectors (communications, emergency services, energy, finance, food, government and public service, health, transport and water) through excellent services such as the [Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure](#) (CPNI). However, this list underlines the point that private ownership predominates, and the rise in sectors such as cyber security highlights the future trajectory of safety and security in the UK.

Beyond the UK CNI is the vast spectrum of the private sector in all its varied forms. Amongst the five attack venues last year were crowded places that include tourism, leisure and entertainment venues, the night-time economy and a thriving market. In such locations and many others the role of private sector safety and security is indispensable.

**Business engagement is the practical response to this national reality.**

Public/private partnerships such as Project Griffin are specific initiatives which give operational and tactical meaning to the need for cohesive action.

Business engagement provides awareness of terrorism and other threats, and drives forward balanced and effective business continuity and resilience. Enhanced business engagement across diverse interests combines to produce greater public safety and security within individual enterprises and beyond.

High streets and shopping centres are good examples of these beneficial business-to-business (B2B) endeavours. The result of strategic, operational and tactical business engagement is greater corporate and SME resilience, a safer environment for the general public and improved national security.

**This past year has seen some important developments on this theme.**

1. Two *Step Change Summit* events were delivered, and a multi-themed programme of work involving aspects of private sector concern is being pursued.
2. The *Cross-sector Safety and Security Communications* (CSSC) project is being rolled out nationally through regional hubs with an emphasis on co-ordination between action addressing terrorism, business crime and cyber threats, and the Industry Sector Lead (ISL) network has been further developed.
3. An enhanced [CSSC website](#) is enabling access to valuable guidance and information, and the ability to sign up for CSSC messaging online.
4. The direct connection between public sector advice and private sector workforces has been positively evolved by accessible initiatives such as the *National Counter Terrorism Police Headquarters'* (NCTPHQ) '[Stay Safe: Run, Hide, Tell](#)' campaign and the *UK PROTECT* publication. CSSC has proved itself a successful information sharing platform between the public and private sectors. Funding for this charitable activity has been achieved on a modest scale to ensure basic operational continuity, but more could be done with more resources. Generous secondments from business to the central CSSC hub have greatly contributed to achievement of the core mission of providing timely, accurate and authoritative information.

Whilst this is all welcome and relevant reliable information is fundamental, there will be no major shift in corporate, public and national security without enduring and committed corporate leadership.

Shrinking police numbers and budgets inevitably impair local and community based policing with a reduction in street or ground floor intelligence. Local councils are financially restricted in their scope for local resilience and emergency planning. These unwanted dimensions ironically strengthen the case for greater business responsibility and self-help.

Examples of successful, local level safety developments include the involvement of valuable entities such as Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), Business Crime Reduction Partnerships and Community Safety Forums. The private sector is at the heart of these endeavours, and businesses large, medium and small are the winners.

The UK has an outstanding profession of private security specialists both "in house" and on contract. There is a world class tapestry of public/private safety and security partnerships and initiatives, perhaps needing greater cohesion to achieve maximum effectiveness.

However, the grim reality is that the present pattern of threats to UK business especially from terrorism is severe and persistent. This is the rationale for greater business engagement in the interests of all concerned.

An excellent short read on this theme is the "[Passport to Good Security for Senior Executives](#)" produced by the CPNI ([www.cpni.gov.uk](http://www.cpni.gov.uk)) which I recommend to you.

**As I commented at the beginning, this is the time to ponder where safety and security fits into your organisation and to ensure that it is a board level issue.**

I hope these thoughts are useful to you.

Yours sincerely,



**Sir David Veness, CBE, QPM  
Co-Chair, CSSC Consultative Board**