

OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 58

February 1, 2021

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Monday, 1 February 2021

(10.00 am)

MR GREANEY: Good morning, sir. We are now going to resume the hearing of evidence in chapter 10 of the inquiry oral evidence hearing. We'll begin with evidence from Mr Paul Argyle and I'll ask that he be sworn, please.

MR PAUL ARGYLE (affirmed)

Questions from MR GREANEY

MR GREANEY: Would you tell us your full name, please?

A. Paul Andrew Argyle.

Q. Mr Argyle, I believe in 2017 you had two connected roles. First, were you the Deputy County Fire Officer for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Otherwise known as the DCFO?

A. Yes.

Q. And as we are going to hear in due course in your evidence, were you effectively number 2 within GMFRS?

A. Yes.

Q. The second of those two connected roles, were you in 2017 also the chair of the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum?

A. Yes, I was.

Q. Otherwise known as the GMRF?

A. Yes.

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Q. As many will know and certainly, Mr Argyle, as you know, this is the first of two occasions on which you'll give evidence in chapter 10.

A. Yes.

Q. So I'm going to begin by dealing with what you will and what you will not be dealing with in your evidence today. First of all, as for matters that you will deal with today, we're going to deal with your background and experience, so your professional background and experience. Secondly, we'll deal with your own involvement with the GMRF, the resilience forum. Thirdly, and this will be most of your evidence, we'll deal with an overview of the resilience forum, the legal framework within which it operated, details of its membership, and a brief explanation of the plans and guidance held by the resilience forum for dealing with terrorist or mass casualty incidents. That will be the third topic. We'll also touch at that stage on exercises that were undertaken at the instigation of the resilience forum, although we'll deal with the learning of lessons from that exercising when you return to give your second phase of evidence.

Fourthly, we'll deal with the participation of certain organisations in the resilience forum, and by that I mean the number of occasions upon which they

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attended and the level at which they attended, so the level of seniority at which they attended.

And fifthly and finally, so far as today is concerned, we'll deal with your limited involvement on the night of the arena attack and the period immediately following.

Sir, I'm told that there is at the moment an issue with BlueJeans and I'm going to ask that we pause.

Mr Suter, do we need to pause the feed? Can we pause the feed and put the holding screen on for one moment, please?

(Pause)

Sir, whatever problem there was has been resolved, but it seems to us that the sensible course is just to recap where we had reached so that we can be certain no one has missed anything.

Mr Argyle is sworn and that does not need to be repeated.

Mr Argyle, what you had agreed was that in 2017 you had two connected professional roles. First, you were the deputy county fire officer, or DCFO, for Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service?

A. Yes.

Q. So essentially, you were the number 2, number 2 to the CFO for GMFRS?

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A. Correct.

Q. Secondly, you were the chair of the Greater Manchester resilience forum, often known as GMRF?

A. Yes.

Q. And you had told me that you were aware that this was the first of two occasions upon which you will be asked to give evidence in chapter 10, the second occasion coming later on in the chapter. I had indicated that it was therefore important to identify what you were dealing with today and what you were going to deal with not today but when you return.

As for what you will deal with today, first your professional background and experience. Second, your own involvement with the resilience forum. Third, you will help us with an overview of the resilience forum, that is to say the legal framework within which it operated, details of its membership, the plans and guidance held by the resilience forum for dealing with terrorist incidents, and we'll also deal with, to some limited extent, the exercises that were instigated by the resilience forum, albeit we will deal with the lessons that were or ought to have been learnt from that exercising once you return.

Fourth, the participation of certain organisations within the resilience forum and, fifth and finally, your

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1 own limited involvement on the night of the arena attack
2 and the period immediately following. But again, in
3 large part you will deal with the period following once
4 you return. So you were involved, were you not, in
5 a debrief process?

6 A. The multi-agency debrief, yes.
7 Q. And you will not be asked about that topic today by me
8 or anyone else; you will address that once you return.

9 That brings us up to date with where we were before
10 there was a problem. Let's just be clear about what
11 you will not deal with today, but instead deal with once
12 you return.

13 (1), you will not deal with your responsibility for
14 the strategic direction of the specialist MTFA
15 capability of GMFRS today. That will be for your
16 return.

17 (2), you will not deal with your role in the
18 development of North West Fire Control today.

19 (3), you will not deal with your involvement in the
20 multi-agency debrief process that you just mentioned.

21 (4), as I indicated already, you will not deal today
22 with the lessons learned from multi-agency exercises and
23 Exercise Winchester Accord in particular.

24 Does all of that make sense?
25 A. Yes, thank you.

1 Q. May we add that we expect that all core participants
2 will follow that approach, which is designed to ensure
3 that we receive your background and overview evidence
4 today but do not get into areas that are substantially
5 controversial at a time at which core participants and
6 their lawyers cannot be present in the room.

7 Finally, before we start to embark upon the topics
8 for today, I'll be clear that I'm going to be referring
9 to some extent to three witness statements that you've
10 given. I'll identify them because two have been
11 uploaded to Magnum only recently. The first statement,
12 your main statement so far as your evidence today is
13 concerned, is dated 20 August 2019 and has the reference
14 {INQ023876/1}.

15 The second statement is dated 28 January of this
16 year, so last Thursday, and has the reference
17 {INQ40037/1} (sic) and that was uploaded very recently
18 idea.

19 Third and finally, a statement, again dated
20 28 January, the same date as your second statement, with
21 the reference {INQ40038/1} (sic), and again that has
22 been necessarily uploaded very recently.

23 So Mr Argyle, let's move through your evidence as
24 efficiently as we can and deal first of all with your
25 background and experience. Did you start work with

1 GMFRS as a firefighter as long ago as 1986?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Did you spend a total of 31 years with the fire and
4 rescue service in a variety of roles?

5 A. Virtually, yes. Just short of.

6 Q. I'm just going to ask you to keep your voice up so that
7 I can hear.

8 Were you a leading firefighter, now known as a crew
9 manager?

10 A. I was.

11 Q. Then a sub-officer?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And following that, a station manager, which would now
14 be known as watch commander?

15 A. A watch manager.

16 Q. Watch manager, forgive me.

17 Did you then hold middle manager roles in health and
18 safety, operations, training, policy development,
19 station command, then fire safety and borough command?

20 A. I did, yes.

21 Q. In March 2011, were you promoted to the rank of
22 assistant chief fire officer or ACFO?

23 A. I was.

24 Q. And at that stage, having achieved that promotion, did
25 you also become the director of emergency response?

1 A. Yes, ACFO is the rank and the director of emergency
2 response was the role that I was given.

3 Q. So in a sense, those two terms or descriptions are
4 interchangeable?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. And could you explain in a few sentences what the job of
7 DER or director of emergency response involved, please?

8 A. Yes. It's a member of the corporate leadership team, so
9 you hold the responsibility of being on that top tier of
10 the organisation, so that would bring mutual roles with
11 other members of the corporate leadership team, but more
12 specifically I was the senior officer responsible for
13 operations, as in operational activity of all
14 firefighters, so their training, their learning, their
15 provision of equipment and their operational
16 performance.

17 Q. In September 2015, were you promoted to the rank of
18 deputy county fire officer?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Known, as I have indicated already, as DCFO?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Was it your job from that point to support the county
23 fire officer, or CFO, in terms of providing strategic
24 leadership to the fire and rescue service?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. And was I correct therefore to describe you earlier as
 2 effectively number 2 within GMFRS from September 2015?
 3 A. In terms of officers, yes, above the chief there is
 4 the — there was the Fire Authority, but in terms of
 5 operational officers, yes.
 6 Q. Was your immediate line manager from September 2015 the
 7 county fire officer?
 8 A. He was.
 9 Q. In May 2017, was that a man called Peter O'Reilly?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. I believe the material demonstrates, and perhaps you'll
 12 be able to confirm, that he had been appointed a CFO in
 13 March 2011?
 14 A. That sounds right, yes. I wouldn't know the exact date,
 15 but yes.
 16 Q. You'll maybe take that from me. And again, you'll
 17 perhaps take the date from me, although you'll probably
 18 know it in any event, he was appointed the CFO in April
 19 of 2015?
 20 A. That seems right.
 21 Q. And so certainly by the time of the arena attack, had
 22 you known him for a period of at least 6 years?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Were you and Mr O'Reilly just professional colleagues or
 25 were you also personal friends in May 2017?

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1 A. I'd say professional colleagues.
 2 Q. In May 2017, how would you describe your personal
 3 relationship with Mr O'Reilly?
 4 A. Sorry, what date?
 5 Q. May 2017.
 6 A. It was a normal professional relationship.
 7 Q. As I think you'll appreciate, when you come back to give
 8 evidence again we'll have some questions to ask you
 9 about the nature of that relationship.
 10 Did you give notice of your retirement from the fire
 11 and rescue service in February of 2017?
 12 A. I did.
 13 Q. So a small number of months before the arena attack?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Did you then formally retire from the fire and rescue
 16 service as DCFO on 31 July 2017?
 17 A. I did.
 18 Q. I think it would be fair to say that you returned to
 19 work very shortly thereafter; is that correct?
 20 A. I did, a month later.
 21 Q. For anyone following, I'm now turning to paragraph 27 of
 22 your third statement.
 23 Following your retirement from the fire and rescue
 24 service, were you employed by the Greater Manchester
 25 Combined Authority, GMCA, as the multi-agency strategic

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1 lead for a period of time?
 2 A. I was.
 3 Q. That, I think, involved you working in that capacity for
 4 GMCA 3 days each week?
 5 A. In that role, yes.
 6 Q. And that covered a period from 1 September 2017 to
 7 31 August 2019?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Did you also during some of that period also work as
 10 strategic adviser to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor
 11 in relation to resilience and fire?
 12 A. I did, yes.
 13 Q. Am I correct that that involved you working 2 days each
 14 week?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And that you did so from November 2017 until June 2018?
 17 A. That's right.
 18 Q. We know that you had been the chair of the resilience
 19 forum in May of 2017.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. In due course I'm going to look at when it was that you
 22 started. But as part of those two roles that you had
 23 from September and November 2017 respectively, and for
 24 the purposes of continuity, did you remain in your
 25 position as chair of the resilience forum?

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1 A. I did.
 2 Q. And did you remain in that role until August of 2019,
 3 when you retired?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Mr Argyle, that's what I wanted to ask you about your
 6 professional background and experience.
 7 Next I'm going to move on to the second topic,
 8 namely your own role within the resilience forum. This
 9 takes us to your second statement, paragraph 12.
 10 You've told us already that you were appointed the
 11 ACFO in March 2011. As part of that role, did you
 12 become the representative for the fire and rescue
 13 service on the resilience forum?
 14 A. Yes, I did, yes.
 15 Q. So a lot of acronyms here, some of them similar, but in
 16 other words you became the GMFRS representative for the
 17 GMRF?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Did you first attend a meeting of the resilience forum
 20 on 17 March 2011?
 21 A. Yes. That was in a shadowing capacity to take over the
 22 role of my predecessor.
 23 Q. At that time in 2011, who was the chair of the
 24 resilience forum?
 25 A. On that date, it was Assistant Chief Constable

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1 Dawn Copley.
 2 Q. You were shadowing at that point in time, but thereafter
 3 did you assume the role of representative --
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. -- and attend in that capacity meetings from
 6 30 June 2011?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. As the representative of the fire and rescue service on
 9 the resilience forum, what were your responsibilities?
 10 A. I was the -- well, the representative of
 11 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and it was my
 12 responsibility to ensure that Greater Manchester Fire
 13 and Rescue Service delivered its responsibilities as
 14 a category 1 responder under the Civil Contingencies
 15 Act. So I would be in that partnership, as all the
 16 other representatives were, to work together, for us all
 17 to mutually work to deliver our responsibilities and to
 18 better deliver them in a partnership rather than as
 19 individual agencies. That would involve attending
 20 meetings, assisting in development of plans, taking part
 21 in exercises, et cetera.
 22 Q. I suppose also jointly assessing risks with other
 23 category 1 and sometimes category 2 responders?
 24 A. That's right.
 25 Q. And we're going to come on shortly to look at what those

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1 terms, category 1 and category 2 responders mean.
 2 But in short, just to set a little of the scene at
 3 this stage, you've spoken about working jointly with
 4 other organisations. Am I right that really this is
 5 what the resilience forum was about, ensuring that
 6 category 1 responders, and to the extent relevant
 7 category 2 responders, coordinated with each other and
 8 worked together?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. So that in the event of an emergency or other major
 11 event they would equally be able to work together?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. On the basis that working together would be likely to
 14 create a better outcome?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. That's what it was all to do with. In your role as
 17 representative on the resilience forum, did you sit in
 18 what were called the top tier of meetings at the GMRF?
 19 A. We would call it the GMRF, but it is the top tier, yes.
 20 Q. And by using the term "top tier" should we understand
 21 that there were other tiers beneath it?
 22 A. Yes, other sub-groups and working groups.
 23 Q. So by way of example, was there a resilience development
 24 group?
 25 A. Yes, and that would be the most -- it's sort of the

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1 workhorse of the resilience forum.
 2 Q. And there was also, I think, a training and exercise
 3 coordination group?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. So the top tier or the GMRF, as you would describe it,
 6 would sit on top of these other sub-groups?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And did you personally sit on the sub-groups or would
 9 there be other fire and rescue service representatives
 10 on those?
 11 A. I wouldn't be on those, but yes, representatives from
 12 the different agencies would be on those sub-groups.
 13 Q. And did you routinely, as the fire and rescue service
 14 representative, meet with the representatives of your
 15 organisation who attended the sub-groups?
 16 A. Not in a routine structured basis. It was if somebody
 17 needed to raise something upwards or if we needed to
 18 pass information downwards, that could be facilitated.
 19 Q. So what was the system by which the sub-groups would
 20 communicate their views or questions to the top tier?
 21 How did that happen in practice?
 22 A. It could be individually, so an individual member of one
 23 organisation of course could talk to their
 24 representative on the GMRF. Also the chair of the
 25 resilience development group would usually attend the

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1 GMRF, so could bring forward issues from that group, and
 2 the resilience development group would routinely
 3 progress work and then that would be reported with
 4 a paper to the GMRF so they would report upwards and
 5 also receive work downwards.
 6 Q. In 2011, when you became the representative on the
 7 resilience forum, was the CFO of the fire and rescue
 8 service a man called Steve McGuirk?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. And in 2011 did he become the chair of the resilience
 11 forum?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Did he retire in June 2015?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. And as we have heard, that would have been shortly
 16 before your appointment as DCFO. At that point in time
 17 did you take over as chair of the resilience forum?
 18 A. I did.
 19 Q. Did a man called Dave Keelan, your successor as ACFO
 20 in the fire and rescue service, take over your role as
 21 the GMFRS representative on the GMRF?
 22 A. Yes, he did.
 23 Q. So from that summer of 2015, you were chair of the
 24 resilience forum and Dave Keelan was the fire and rescue
 25 service representative on the resilience forum?

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1 A. That's right.
 2 Q. Does it follow from all that you've told us so far that
 3 you were chair of the resilience forum for just short of
 4 2 years prior to the arena attack?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And indeed, you continued in that role for 2 years and
 7 3 months after the attack?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Next and thirdly, and this will be the bulk of your
 10 evidence today, Mr Argyle —
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just clarify something before we
 12 go on? You took over from another GMFRS person as
 13 chair.
 14 A. Yes.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that because the representative of
 16 the Fire Service was considered the most suitable person
 17 or is there any particular reason why someone from the
 18 same service followed on or just that you were the best
 19 person for the job?
 20 A. My understanding is typically, previously, at a slightly
 21 earlier stage across the country it was very common for
 22 a senior police officer to chair. It did start to
 23 become more common across the country in quite a few
 24 LRFs for fire to sometimes take on that role.
 25 I couldn't tell you exactly why my predecessor, Chief

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1 Fire Officer McGuirk — he became the chair and I was
 2 a very regular attendee at the forum, obviously, and it
 3 was felt by the forum at the time that I would be a good
 4 successor.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you were elected by the other members
 6 of the forum?
 7 A. There wasn't a formal election process but it was
 8 suggested to me and the group agreed.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So white smoke came out, essentially?
 10 A. Effectively, yes.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 12 MR GREANEY: And I think we know, sir, that in fact
 13 currently it is an officer of Greater Manchester Police
 14 who is the chair of the resilience forum.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 16 MR GREANEY: So sometimes it could be a fire officer,
 17 sometimes it could be a police officer. Was it always
 18 within your experience one of the two or might it
 19 sometimes be an officer of the Ambulance Service or even
 20 someone else?
 21 A. In Greater Manchester, in my history, it has been police
 22 or fire, but I would attend national meetings of our
 23 LRFs. I would say a decent proportion were police,
 24 a smaller proportion fire, some would be other
 25 organisations, for example a chief executive of a local

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1 authority.
 2 Q. I think you say when you attended other meetings around
 3 the country, you're referring to the fact that there are
 4 a significant number of resilience forums, which I think
 5 is the correct description, around the country. Indeed
 6 there are 42 in total; is that correct?
 7 A. That's my understanding, yes.
 8 Q. And in very simple terms the boundaries of a resilience
 9 forum will match the boundaries of a police area?
 10 A. That's right.
 11 Q. So as I indicated, we are turning next to your evidence
 12 about what a resilience forum does and then more
 13 specifically about what the Greater Manchester
 14 Resilience Forum does. Obviously, the chairman and the
 15 lawyers for all of the core participants can look at the
 16 legislative framework themselves and understand what it
 17 means, but I am just going to ask you to assist us with
 18 the very basic position whilst bearing in mind that
 19 you are not, at least as far as I know, a lawyer.
 20 The position is that part 1 of an act of Parliament
 21 that you have referred to already, the Civil
 22 Contingencies Act 2004, came into force on
 23 14 November 2005.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. And if this is the right way of putting it, that act is

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1 further explained by a set of regulations that are known
 2 as the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 Contingency Planning
 3 Regulations of 2005.
 4 A. Correct.
 5 Q. And moreover, there is guidance that is and has long
 6 been available in relation to the Civil Contingencies
 7 Act?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Including a Cabinet Office document, widely referred to
 10 and indeed often known as the reference document?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. And we'll look at some parts of that in due course.
 13 Does the act divide responders into two categories?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Category 1 and category 2 responders?
 16 A. That's right, yes.
 17 Q. When we use in this context the term responders, are we
 18 talking about organisations that respond to an
 19 emergency?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. I'm just going to summarise those that fall into those
 22 two categories so far as relevant to us.
 23 Category 1 responders include local authorities?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Emergency services?

20

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And NHS bodies, including ambulance services?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. They have, as you'll be able to confirm, the full set of
 5 civil protection duties?
 6 A. They do, yes.
 7 Q. So that by section 2 of the act, they, first responders,
 8 category 1 responders, are required, among other things,
 9 to assess the risk of an emergency occurring within
 10 their area?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. And maintain plans for the purpose of ensuring that if
 13 an emergency occurs, the responder is able to perform
 14 its functions so far as necessary or desirable?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And by "necessary or desirable", the act means:
 17 "For the purpose of reducing, controlling or
 18 mitigating the emergency's effects."
 19 Category 2 responders include a number of types of
 20 organisation, but include railway operators?
 21 A. That's right.
 22 Q. Do category 2 responders have a lesser set of
 23 responsibilities than category 1 responders?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Principally, at least so far as is relevant to us,

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1 requiring them to cooperate and share relevant
 2 information with category 1 and other category 2
 3 responders?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. I don't know if you have a bundle of statements in front
 6 of you.
 7 A. Yes, I do, thank you.
 8 Q. I'm going to take you to your first witness statement.
 9 I don't know behind which divider it is, probably
 10 divider 1. It's your statement from 2019 and I'm going
 11 to lead you through your statement from paragraph 1.3.
 12 We've summarised it already, but category 1
 13 responders, just to deal with it in a little more
 14 detail, are required to, as you've said, assess the risk
 15 of emergencies occurring and use that to inform
 16 contingency planning?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. To put in place emergency plans?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. To put in place business continuity management
 21 arrangements?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And what does that mean?
 24 A. To ensure that your service can continue to operate in
 25 certain circumstances so that, for example, say your

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1 organisation suffered a serious issue like your Fire
 2 Service headquarters suffered a fire, that your
 3 operation could still continue, that you had fallback
 4 arrangements, that you could continue to operate in
 5 emergency situations.
 6 Q. I see. Also required to put in place — these are the
 7 obligations of category 1 responders that we'll continue
 8 with — to put in place arrangements to make information
 9 available to the public about civil protection matters
 10 and make arrangements to warn, inform and advise the
 11 public in the event of an emergency?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. To share information with other local responders in
 14 order to enhance coordination?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And to cooperate with other local responders to enhance
 17 coordination and efficiency?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. I believe you've agreed already that a real focus of the
 20 Civil Contingencies Act and what it intends should occur
 21 is coordination between the emergency services?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And finally, to provide advice and assistance to
 24 businesses and voluntary organisations about business
 25 continuity management?

23

1 A. Yes, local authorities need to do that.
 2 Q. The act also defines what an emergency means for these
 3 purposes, does it not?
 4 A. It does, yes.
 5 Q. And it means, by reason of section 1, an event or
 6 situation which threatens serious damage to human
 7 welfare in a place in the United Kingdom?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. An event or situation which threatens serious damage to
 10 the environment of a place in the United Kingdom?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Or war or, particularly relevant for us, terrorism,
 13 which threatens serious damage to the security of the
 14 United Kingdom?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. So that there is no doubt that the events of 22 May 2017
 17 were an emergency within the meaning of the Civil
 18 Contingencies Act?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Is it the position that the act and the regulations
 21 provide that responders have a collective responsibility
 22 to plan, prepare and communicate in what you describe as
 23 a multi-agency environment?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. I mentioned earlier the Cabinet Office reference

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1 document. You'll be able to confirm that that is a 2013
 2 document?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. So had been in existence for a number of years by the
 5 time of the arena attack?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. Does that provide -- and in fact we'll have this on the
 8 screen, Mr Lopez, it's {INQ019376/1}.
 9 This is the full title of the document, a
 10 Cabinet Office document as we can see:
 11 "The Role of Local Resilience Forums: a Reference
 12 Document."
 13 Then it refers to the regulatory framework.
 14 Could we go to {INQ019376/3}, please?
 15 So the reference document identifies the regulatory
 16 framework and then effectively defines what a resilience
 17 forum is:
 18 "A local resilience forum (LRF) is not a legal
 19 entity, nor does a forum have powers to direct its
 20 members. Nevertheless, the CCA and the regulations
 21 provide that responders, through the forum, have
 22 a collective responsibility to plan, prepare and
 23 communicate in a multi-agency environment.
 24 "This responsibility is best fulfilled where the LRF
 25 is organised as a collaborative mechanism for delivery

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1 equipped to achieve the mutual aims and outcomes agreed
 2 by the member organisations (partners), able to monitor
 3 its own progress and strengths, and active in
 4 identifying and developing necessary improvements."
 5 And here we get the figures, paragraph 4:
 6 "A total of 42 LRFs have been established and serve
 7 communities defined by the boundaries of police areas
 8 across England and Wales. Many forums periodically
 9 consider the need for a systematic review to improve the
 10 way in which their forum operates."
 11 Is that correct?
 12 A. It is correct, yes.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just before we lose that, just looking
 14 at paragraph 2 for a moment, and you may want time to
 15 think about your answer to this, we can see there that
 16 the forums do not have the power to direct its members.
 17 Is that in your view a shortcoming in the act and in the
 18 way they operate? As I say, if you wanted to have time
 19 to think about that, by all means do and come back to me
 20 later.
 21 A. I suppose, sir, just first to say that the category 1
 22 and 2 responders have their duties, for example to
 23 communicate and share information, and I wouldn't want
 24 people to think that that is only through the resilience
 25 forum, they should be doing that at all times. All

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1 those partners are the resilience forum, whether they're
 2 in the resilience forum formally or out of it.
 3 My experience is of very collaborative working and
 4 I suppose, going to your question, if there were
 5 a difficulty that couldn't be resolved, say between two
 6 organisations in a view on responding or planning or
 7 preparing, they could bring that to the resilience forum
 8 to reach mutual agreement. But as is stated there and
 9 as you put the question to me, even so, if we failed to
 10 reach agreement, we could not direct an organisation to
 11 do something.
 12 I'm not sure if the resilience forum is the right
 13 forum to be able to direct. I guess the forum would
 14 then need to have a different constitution and legal
 15 background, which I suppose could be worked out. But
 16 yes, I suppose your question does lead me to think if
 17 you did reach an unsolvable problem, what would we have
 18 done to solve it. I suppose that does then lead me to
 19 say there could be a gap that could be filled.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you ever?
 21 A. Not that I recall.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 23 MR GREANEY: One can see how a problem of the sort the
 24 chairman has in mind might develop. So the resilience
 25 forum, as part of its planning and as part of the

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1 preparation of a plan, considers that one of the
 2 emergency services should do X in the event of an
 3 emergency and that emergency service might say, "No, we
 4 do not consider that that's what we ought to do". So
 5 that could happen, couldn't it?
 6 A. It's possible, yes.
 7 Q. Just thinking back to your time as the chair, if that
 8 situation had developed and discussion and agreement had
 9 not resolved it, how would that situation have been
 10 managed absent powers to direct?
 11 A. Sorry, what was your last -- I missed the last...
 12 Q. Given that there was no power of the resilience forum to
 13 direct, if that stand-off had developed, I presume this
 14 is hypothetical, but how would that situation have been
 15 managed by the resilience forum?
 16 A. As you say, it's hypothetical.
 17 Q. Can I just ask you to pause for a moment? It's
 18 hypothetical in the sense that you didn't have to deal
 19 with it whilst you were chair.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Whether it is entirely hypothetical is a different
 22 matter because in a different resilience forum or even
 23 in this resilience forum, now or in the future, that
 24 problem could develop and what I'm asking you, if you
 25 can answer this question now, and if you can't perhaps

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1 you can deal with it when you come back, if that kind of
 2 stand-off had developed when you were chair, how do you
 3 think it would have been managed and, I suppose,
 4 resolved?
 5 A. I feel we would have convened relevant parties of those
 6 organisations who may not just be the named
 7 representative or the attendee of the resilience forum
 8 and work with those, in this scenario, two agencies to
 9 mutually agree a resolution. Now, what if you still
 10 didn't reach a mutually agreed resolution?
 11 Q. Exactly.
 12 A. I cannot answer that now. I could try and seek
 13 a further answer.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You might and you might, if it's
 15 possible, communicate with other colleagues who you
 16 knew, who had other resilience forums, who might have
 17 actually faced this problem and might have some idea of
 18 whether there's a shortcoming. But obviously if
 19 you have the opportunity that would be helpful to me.
 20 A. Yes, and also resilience forums are supported by
 21 DCLG REDs, resilience and emergency directorates,
 22 you have got expert government support, who have got
 23 experience across all the resilience forums and contacts
 24 across that breadth and can seek support at higher
 25 levels through government departments, as we can

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1 ourselves, but you've always got that relationship with
 2 your DCLG RED representative, so there are routes to
 3 seek further guidance, broader guidance, national
 4 guidance or views.
 5 But again back to an employer of an organisation is
 6 the employer, so if you did encounter an unsolvable
 7 issue maybe I could go and seek some further advice.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's helpful and we might chase it up
 9 too.
 10 MR GREANEY: Indeed, thank you very much.
 11 The document we were just looking at, the reference
 12 document, at page 10, it goes on to provide:
 13 "The purpose of the resilience forum process is to
 14 ensure effective delivery of those duties under the act
 15 that need to be developed in a multi-agency environment
 16 and individually as a category 1 responder."
 17 So again, emphasising the need for joint working?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. In paragraph 2.5 of that first statement, you identify
 20 in list form the purpose of a local resilience forum.
 21 I'm going to go through each one of them and there will
 22 be a document we'll need to look at.
 23 To provide a local forum for local issues?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. So does that mean that the risk of a particular kind of

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1 emergency may exist in one area but not in another area
 2 or at least not to the same extent?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. So decisions need to be made and plans developed on an
 5 individual local basis?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. To help coordinate risk assessment through production of
 8 the Community Risk Register?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. And that the Community Risk Register is a formal
 11 document, is it not?
 12 A. It is, yes.
 13 Q. We'll perhaps just look on the screen at the one that
 14 you were concerned with. Mr Lopez, it's {INQ018888/1}.
 15 Greater Manchester Community Risk Register. Is the
 16 Community Risk Register, or CRR, an important document
 17 for the resilience forum?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. {INQ018888/2}, please. Contents. Then {INQ018888/3}.
 20 We can read what this document is:
 21 "Greater Manchester's Community Risk Register is
 22 designed to inform you about the key emergency risks
 23 that could occur in a county so you can think about how
 24 to be better prepared in your home, your business and
 25 your local community. Numerous emergencies occur in the

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1 UK every year but fortunately they don't happen often in
 2 Greater Manchester."
 3 So it's probably apparent from what I've just read
 4 out, as Mr Lopez has just enlarged and then reduced,
 5 that this is a document which is not just internal
 6 within the emergency services; is that correct?
 7 A. Just to clarify, from a national starting position of
 8 the national risk assessment, we produce the Community
 9 Risk Register and we produce two versions. Unhelpfully,
 10 we call them both the Community Risk Register.
 11 Q. I see. This is what we need to understand. So two
 12 versions, yes?
 13 A. Within the resilience forum arena and sub-groups
 14 particularly the resilience development group, we
 15 analyse and assess the risks in a restricted cohort of
 16 people and produce an internal Community Risk Register.
 17 Then from that, we produce a public-facing document and
 18 this is the public-facing version of the document.
 19 Q. So there are what in a different context might be
 20 described as a closed version and an open version?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Tell me if I've got this hopelessly wrong, but is the
 23 reason why there will be a closed version that the
 24 closed version will contain some matters that are
 25 operationally sensitive?

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1 A. Yes. Also, it would not be an easy read for a member of
 2 the public in any case if we produced the mass of data
 3 we have in our own risk register , but primarily the
 4 point you made, some of that information is sensitive,
 5 and we turn that into a digestible public document.
 6 Q. What is the purpose of publishing a risk register for
 7 the public? What are you seeking to achieve as
 8 a resilience forum in doing that?
 9 A. (1), to comply with the requirement to do so, but also
 10 to provide information to the public and to businesses
 11 and organisations in Greater Manchester about risks
 12 within Greater Manchester and to point them to what they
 13 may do about that and sources of information.
 14 Q. Is this the idea: that obviously the state has
 15 responsibilities to reduce and manage risk, the risks of
 16 an emergency and what eventuates if an emergency does
 17 happen, but individuals and individual businesses have
 18 their own responsibilities ?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. We were listing the purposes of a resilience forum.
 21 Does the purpose include to facilitate category 1 and 2
 22 responders in the delivery of their duties under the
 23 act?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. To help to deliver government policy by coordinating

1 responses to government initiatives?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. And to help to determine a procedure for the formation
 4 of a strategic coordinating group by the relevant local
 5 responders at the time of an emergency?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. So this is important to us to understand this. The
 8 strategic coordinating group is often known as the SCG;
 9 is that correct?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. What is an SCG or what should it be?
 12 A. An SCG is a formal structure set-up within the command
 13 structure, virtually always for a multi-agency incident,
 14 where the relevant invitees to that party are the
 15 strategic members of those relevant agencies who are
 16 needed to deal with an emergency or incident that is
 17 prevailing .
 18 Q. So this is the idea that where an emergency occurs,
 19 an SCG will be convened and its members will be those
 20 who are commanding the event from the point of view of
 21 the various emergency services?
 22 A. Commanding or supporting, yes. Yes, they will be
 23 a senior person from those organisations.
 24 Q. And we're perhaps going to look at this a little bit
 25 later in your evidence, but is it fair to say that one

1 of the purposes of the resilience forum is to bring
 2 together regularly those who, if there is an emergency,
 3 will form part of the SCG?
 4 A. I just make the point in a large county that the
 5 starting point would be yes, but bearing in mind there
 6 are a lot of officers and a lot of organisations, so you
 7 cannot guarantee that an SCG -- that person who normally
 8 attends the GMRF is ever going to be on duty and
 9 it would not necessarily be that person, it would be
 10 usually someone of a similar rank or role in the
 11 organisation, but you cannot say that people who
 12 routinely attend the GMRF will routinely be on the SCG.
 13 Q. No. But is it reasonable to suggest that generally
 14 those who attend the resilience forum, or the members of
 15 it, are within a category of person who would be
 16 expected to form part of an SCG?
 17 A. I think they would be in a cohort of people who, if they
 18 or the person on duty, would go to the SCG.
 19 Q. Exactly. As I say, we'll come back to that in due
 20 course.
 21 I'm now at paragraph 2.6 of your report and we'll
 22 need to pick up a bit of speed before taking a break in
 23 15 minutes or so.
 24 Is the fundamental role and first purpose of
 25 a resilience forum as a coordinating group for local

1 responders engaged in preparedness for emergencies at
 2 the police force area level?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. And should the resilience forum enable any of the
 5 members to bring issues forward for discussion and
 6 agreement on combined initiatives?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Is the aim that all responders should build up over time
 9 an understanding of the challenges and pressures faced
 10 by their partners and experience of working together?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Really what we were just talking about, it's the idea
 13 that the first time different people from different
 14 organisations work together, work jointly, that should
 15 not be when an emergency is taking place, should it?
 16 A. No, no.
 17 Q. A further purpose of the LRF, have I understood this
 18 correctly, reflects a strategic approach to preparing
 19 for emergencies?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. And the Community Risk Register that we've discussed is
 22 an important part of that, isn't it?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. An important part of the joint risk assessment by the
 25 partners?

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Another strategic purpose, you tell us, of a resilience
 3 forum is to support what you describe as the duty
 4 holders so that they perform their legal
 5 responsibilities better than they would if they were
 6 acting on their own. What do you mean by that?
 7 A. As mentioned earlier, each organisation has their own
 8 duty to deliver their organisation's responsibilities
 9 under the Civil Contingencies Act, but they may better
 10 do that by collaborating and cooperating.
 11 To take a simple example, the Fire Service has
 12 a responsibility to put out fires, but in dealing with
 13 that they may better resolve that incident by
 14 collaborating with other agencies and organisations and
 15 to do that at the incident it will have been better to
 16 plan and prepare together beforehand.
 17 Q. And for an incident like the arena attack of course,
 18 can you agree, is the perfect example of why that is
 19 important?
 20 A. (No audible answer).
 21 Q. Is the preparation of plans an important part of that
 22 strategic purpose you just described?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. And is the exercising of those plans also of critical
 25 importance?

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. We'll come on to exercising, as you'll appreciate, in
 3 due course.
 4 You go on to explain that a fourth purpose of the
 5 LRF is to take forward local level initiatives which
 6 need to be developed within a national framework.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And also to facilitate discussion between local
 9 responders and government and to report back?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. There are just a few further things about a resilience
 12 forum in general before we turn to GMRF. First, does
 13 a resilience forum, a local resilience forum, have an
 14 operational role?
 15 A. No.
 16 Q. By operational role, what are we talking about?
 17 A. They are not a responder, they would not respond to an
 18 incident as the GMRF. Of course, constituent members --
 19 and this is the thing, you know, it comes round that the
 20 GMRF is the organisations, the organisations
 21 collectively form the GMRF, but when they're responding,
 22 they are responding as those organisations.
 23 Q. And they are responding as those organisations, but have
 24 I correctly understood that they are also responding
 25 during an emergency through the strategic coordinating

1 group, the SCG?
 2 A. If a level of incident requires an SCG. For smaller
 3 incidents you would not create an SCG, but if an
 4 incident was of a magnitude where an SCG was required,
 5 those agencies would send their relevant representatives
 6 to the SCG.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Who decides that? Is it simply by
 8 declaring a major incident that an SCG comes into
 9 operation?
 10 A. Yes, if there was a major incident you would have an SCG
 11 (inaudible: distorted) incident, but people feel you
 12 should still have an SCG.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's one of the reasons why it's very
 14 important that if you're going to declare a major
 15 incident, that everybody knows it?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 MR GREANEY: I've understood the point you've made.
 18 Obviously there will be some incidents that will be
 19 emergency service specific, so only for the police to
 20 deal with, only for the Fire Service to deal with or
 21 only for the Ambulance Service to deal with.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. But the very mark of an emergency will often, if not
 24 always, be that it requires a multi-agency response.
 25 A. Most incidents are going to fringe over more than one

1 organisation, definitely.
 2 Q. And where that happens, you would expect the
 3 organisations not just to -- not to operate individually
 4 but to operate together, which is where the SCG comes
 5 in; is that right?
 6 A. I'd just like to -- the majority of incidents will not
 7 require an SCG.
 8 Q. By incidents, what do you --
 9 A. On a day-to-day basis, every road traffic collision,
 10 every fire, every burglary, small incidents would not
 11 require an SCG. We are talking about getting closer to
 12 a major incident before you have an SCG.
 13 Q. And where there is an SCG -- and let's be clear, there
 14 was obviously a need for an SCG in the context of the
 15 arena attack, was there not?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. Where there is an SCG, who would you expect to lead the
 18 SCG?
 19 A. For that specific incident?
 20 Q. Yes.
 21 A. The police, Greater Manchester Police.
 22 Q. And more generally, would it usually be the police or
 23 will it depend upon the type of incident it is?
 24 A. More generally, Greater Manchester Police will lead the
 25 first SCG but not necessarily. So if it is clear that

1 the incident — the majority of relevance to this
 2 incident is, for example, a large fire, a senior fire
 3 officer may chair the SCG or, if it's a health incident,
 4 somebody from the Health Service could chair. Usually,
 5 the police chair first. In this incident, it being
 6 terror related, I would 100% expect it to be Greater
 7 Manchester Police.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We will hear in due course that the
 9 plans for something like this is to call senior people
 10 from different organisations into the police
 11 headquarters, where the Gold Commander is, and the idea
 12 is they will be able to hear what each other are doing.
 13 Is that the same as an SCG or are they operating
 14 differently?

15 A. If there was a reasonably large incident and it hadn't
 16 been called a major incident and somebody hadn't
 17 initiated an SCG, they still may well do that because
 18 that is how we operate relatively routinely in
 19 Greater Manchester: senior officers from different
 20 organisations will go to force headquarters and might
 21 have what would be referred to as a Gold meeting or a
 22 Silver meeting. That's where sometimes we blur across
 23 one language in one scenario or into another scenario.
 24 It's only if they say, "We are now going to have
 25 an SCG", that becomes more formally a strategic

1 coordinating group.

2 But you could have four of five of the most senior
 3 officers relevant on duty meeting and saying, "We're
 4 having a Gold meeting", "I'm fire Gold for this
 5 incident", "I'm police Gold for this incident", "I'm
 6 local authority Gold", and they're having a Gold meeting
 7 because they're that level of officer, but it may not be
 8 that an SCG is being called.

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Suppose it has, how do those two
 10 functions blend in together?

11 A. When you call an SCG, it'll be, "We're having an SCG",
 12 and the time and location will be announced, and each
 13 organisation will determine who needs to go to the SCG.
 14 I would say it would be normal for the Gold officer to
 15 attend that SCG. Not always, but I'd say that would be
 16 the most normal thing.

17 MR GREANEY: I'm not going to draw you into the facts of the
 18 arena attack, you weren't even in the country on
 19 22 May 2017.

20 A. No.

21 Q. But what I believe we'll hear evidence occurred is that
 22 British Transport Police and the Ambulance Service
 23 declared a major incident at an early stage, Greater
 24 Manchester Police declared a major incident at some
 25 stage after midnight, and the fire and rescue service,

1 I don't believe, ever declared a major incident.
 2 I think you will be able to agree that where a major
 3 incident is declared, it's important that should be
 4 understood across all of the emergency services?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Just so there is a bit more context to what we're asking
 7 about, I think that the first time, sir, that there was
 8 a meeting of the SCG in the context of the arena attack
 9 was 4.15 on the morning of the 23rd, so going on for
 10 6 hours after the attack.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. I was aware, or this may be my
 12 memory so it might be entirely wrong, that 4.15 was the
 13 first time the police Gold Commander actually called for
 14 a meeting of those who were at the police headquarters
 15 rather than just information being dissipated around.
 16 But that may be the same as the SCG, it may be
 17 different.

18 MR GREANEY: We will need to check that. As Mr Laidlaw said
 19 last week, your recollection is normally accurate.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sorry, we're bringing you into the
 21 details of what happened, but from my point of view
 22 relating what you're saying to what actually happened on
 23 the night does have some significance, obviously.

24 A. Yes, sir. Having read, I understand what you're saying.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, thank you.

1 MR GREANEY: Just to get back to the theory, which will
 2 inform the specific, is the SCG's task, where one is
 3 convened, to coordinate the response to the emergency?

4 A. The strategic response, yes.

5 Q. And you go on to say in your statement:
 6 "The SCG is likely to take a role in the initial
 7 stages of the recovery."

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. And you add, and this may be an important point when we
 10 come to look at what GMRF did:
 11 "Local resilience forums must help plan how the
 12 formation of the SCG takes place to ensure that it
 13 happens smoothly and without misunderstandings."

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So that is an important role, do you agree, of
 16 a resilience forum?

17 A. I do, yes.

18 Q. Has it been reported widely that organisations which
 19 have worked together in a local resilience forum are
 20 more likely to respond coherently and with confidence to
 21 an emergency?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. I'm going to turn now to deal more specifically with the
 24 Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, GMRF. As will be
 25 obvious, is the GMRF Greater Manchester's resilience

1 forum?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. In your first statement you believe that it had been
 4 established in 2010, but you've checked, I think, and
 5 you can confirm it was established earlier than that?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. We can get the exact date, but it's likely, do you
 8 agree, that it was established in or around 2005 when
 9 the relevant legislation came into force?
 10 A. I would expect so, yes.
 11 Q. Is the purpose of GMRF defined within agreed terms of
 12 reference?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. I'm going to ask that those be placed on the screen.
 15 It's {INQ012418/1}.
 16 Could we enlarge that, please?
 17 "The resilience forum's specific objectives are ..."
 18 And they are then listed. They include, as we can
 19 see:
 20 "To ensure emergency plans are communicated
 21 appropriately"; is that correct?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And:
 24 "To coordinate the individual approaches and
 25 responsibilities of each organisation to ensure that

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1 they complement each other and dovetail with partners'
 2 arrangements."
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Those are two that I have picked out, I'm not suggesting
 5 the others aren't important.
 6 The terms of reference also include:
 7 "To direct and oversee the activities of working
 8 groups as they are established and allocate tasks to
 9 them as appropriate through the resilience development
 10 group."
 11 And we're not going to have it on the screen, but
 12 for the transcript, the terms of reference of the
 13 Resilience Development Group are {INQ012446/1}.
 14 What is the Resilience Development Group, please?
 15 A. The term I used earlier was the workhorse of the
 16 resilience forum, so they were the prime group that the
 17 Greater Manchester Resilience Forum would direct work to
 18 and through, although there would be other sub-groups or
 19 side groups more specifically on specific tasks to deal
 20 with. But they were a regular forum that progressed
 21 work for the resilience forum.
 22 Q. I'm going to move on to paragraph 3.6 and following of
 23 your first statement and just ask you a little about the
 24 administration of the GMRF.
 25 First of all, how is the GMRF funded?

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1 A. Different partners within the forum provide some
 2 funding, but my understanding is there is no consistent
 3 and guaranteed budget, for example, from the government.
 4 It is local partners who fund.
 5 Q. Who decides how much each partner funds?
 6 A. I do not know. My understanding is those organisations
 7 have agreed to fund to the level they do.
 8 Q. Is it in your view a problem or potential problem that
 9 there is no guaranteed government funding for
 10 a resilience forum?
 11 A. It is a potential problem. There is a reliance on
 12 organisations working together to deliver work. Now, of
 13 course, it is their duty to do that, but there can
 14 become a coordination effort to ensure that
 15 organisations are contributing sufficiently to progress
 16 work.
 17 Q. I'm sure we can agree that a resilience forum serves
 18 a critically important purpose, does it not, in civil
 19 protection terms?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. And on the face of it, therefore, it would seem
 22 important that a local resilience forum should be
 23 sufficiently funded, by which I mean funded sufficiently
 24 to perform that important role?
 25 A. Yes, it can be a challenge and I have heard those

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1 challenges expressed in the national forums I attend.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But it does sound like from your period
 3 as chairman it's not a problem you had to contend with.
 4 A. I didn't have a period where I thought, we cannot
 5 progress this work. I think an example, if it's
 6 helpful, actually comes after this, with Brexit, where
 7 the government started to rely heavily on local
 8 resilience forums to start to do new activities, and
 9 that was a challenge.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 11 MR GREANEY: When you say a challenge, I'm not sure if
 12 you're being diplomatic, you probably are. By challenge
 13 do you mean that you heard it said in other resilience
 14 forums around the country, "We just don't feel that we
 15 can do what we are being asked to do because the funding
 16 isn't available"?
 17 A. Yes, you'd have national telephone conferences with the
 18 centre and LRFs dialling in, being allocated significant
 19 tasks, and some LRFs expressing that they have not got
 20 the resource at that time to progress those tasks.
 21 Q. In terms of administration, as we were discussing, how
 22 many full-time employees did GMRF have during your
 23 period?
 24 A. One.
 25 Q. What was the role of that person?

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1 A. He was an administrator to support the GMRF.
 2 Q. The identity of that person or those people if it was
 3 more than one across the period?
 4 A. It was one person. Do you want me to name him?
 5 Q. Yes, if you don't mind.
 6 A. Richard Battersby.
 7 Q. Was one person a sufficient number in your view?
 8 A. What I'd say is we clearly used other people and their
 9 resources and their time to a large extent. That one
 10 person could not do the work required of the resilience
 11 forum, clearly.
 12 Q. During your period as chair, let's look at the period
 13 between 2015 and 2017, during that period how regularly
 14 did the resilience forum, by which I mean the top tier,
 15 meet?
 16 A. On a quarterly basis.
 17 Q. In your view, was that sufficiently regular, now you
 18 look back?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. From 2017, by which I mean in the period after the
 21 attack, until August 2019, when you retired as chair,
 22 did the resilience forum continue to meet on a quarterly
 23 basis or meet more or less regularly than that?
 24 A. From my memory, it continued quarterly.
 25 Q. As for the subgroups that you've told us about, did they

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1 meet with uniform regularity or not?
 2 A. Different for different groups. So for example, in my
 3 understanding, the Resilience Development Group had
 4 a regular schedule of meetings. Others sometimes were
 5 set up more on a specific task and finish, so would meet
 6 when required but less routinely. What I would say is
 7 the majority of work is done outside those four
 8 meetings. They are just four meetings.
 9 Q. Work to assess risk. Is that undertaken in accordance
 10 with national guidance?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. I'm now at paragraph 3.10 for anyone that's seeking to
 13 follow this.
 14 Does it involve members of the resilience forum,
 15 Greater Manchester Resilience Forum, contributing to and
 16 agreeing the assessment of about 70 different risks?
 17 A. Yes, the number could vary, yes.
 18 Q. And does assessment include using past experiences and
 19 scientific modelling --
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. -- in order to determine the likelihood and impact of
 22 emergencies occurring in Greater Manchester?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. As well as considering whether existing contingency
 25 plans and arrangements should be modified?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Does the GMRF record all assessments and results?
 3 A. They record all the risks and the assessment of those
 4 risks, yes.
 5 Q. And the place where they would be recorded, as we're now
 6 familiar with, is the closed, my word, Community Risk
 7 Register?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. You paused for a moment. Have I misdescribed the
 10 situation?
 11 A. No, it's just that I'm -- with my statement, you may
 12 come on to the next point and I didn't want to
 13 interrupt, but when you said all, there are risks and
 14 threats, and we sometimes dealt with those issues
 15 separately. You may come on to ask me that next.
 16 Q. I think the point you're making, and we won't go into
 17 any detail about this, is that terrorist incidents, the
 18 risk of those, would be handled slightly differently
 19 from other civil emergencies?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Partly due to the sensitive nature of the threat
 22 assessments and so on?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. But that doesn't mean that the resilience forum did not
 25 assess those risks; is that correct?

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1 A. No. We definitely assessed them, yes.
 2 Q. We've mentioned plans as part of preparation a number of
 3 times now. I'm talking about the GMRF plans because
 4 obviously individual services would have their own
 5 plans; is that correct?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. But so far as the resilience forum plans are concerned,
 8 were they based upon the risk assessments and what was
 9 learnt from the risk assessments?
 10 A. Yes, and other experiences, but yes.
 11 Q. In terms of the plans of the resilience forum, what
 12 would they tend to be focused upon?
 13 A. There are a broad number of plans, so the focus could
 14 vary. There would be common themes about command and
 15 control, communication, methods of operating, roles and
 16 responsibilities. Depending on the nature of the plan,
 17 they could be more or less specific about a particular
 18 hazard or threat.
 19 Q. This is really the point that I was driving at, although
 20 not that clearly: generally, and while appreciating that
 21 there are many plans, some dealing with very specific
 22 issues, some obviously dealing with very big issues, but
 23 generally I think you're agreeing it would be fair to
 24 say that the GMRF plans would be focused on arrangements
 25 for activation, command and control, and information

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1 sharing along with issues to be considered and
 2 responsibilities for individual organisations?
 3 A. Yes, and as you've already said helpfully, of course
 4 organisations had their own plans and it would not be
 5 helpful or useful to make those multi-agency plans
 6 repetitive of all the other agencies' plans and contain
 7 those, which would make those plans too large to be
 8 understandable and useful. So each agency might have
 9 their plan and this was a multi-agency plan to enhance
 10 the coordination.
 11 Q. You give an example, which is an important plan that
 12 we'll maybe look at after we've had a break, but the
 13 Greater Manchester multi-agency generic response plan
 14 details the procedure for forming a strategic
 15 coordination group, the SCG, in Greater Manchester.
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. We'll come back to that, but just before I invite the
 18 chairman to take a break, at paragraph 3.16 of your
 19 statement you identify a series of multi-agency plans
 20 that were in place and which had been jointly agreed by
 21 members of the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. You say "these include", but is this in fact a list of
 24 all such plans or just a number of plans that existed?
 25 A. To the best of my knowledge, this is a number of them.

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1 Q. I won't identify all of them, but as we've agreed
 2 already there was a multi-agency generic response plan?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. That set out the response arrangements of emergency
 5 responders to an emergency or other major incident
 6 within Greater Manchester that required multi-agency
 7 coordination?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. There was a Greater Manchester strategic recovery
 10 guidance plan; is that correct?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. There was a Greater Manchester multi-agency emergency
 13 communications and media plan, providing a strategic
 14 overview?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And which set out the principles and code of conduct for
 17 a communication and media response to a major incident
 18 requiring multi-agency coordination?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. And a series of plans dealing with excess deaths and
 21 mass casualties; is that correct?
 22 A. That's correct.
 23 Q. I'm simply trying to pick out those that seem of
 24 principal relevance to us. There was, as it was called,
 25 a resilience telecommunications plan; is that right?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Was the aim of that plan to ensure that the
 3 telecommunications systems of the various agencies
 4 actually worked during the course of an emergency?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. I hope I've been clear, but we shouldn't imagine that
 7 those are the only plans that the resilience forum had
 8 in place, there were many other plans dealing with other
 9 types of potential emergency or potential major
 10 incidents?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Let's just go to the Greater Manchester Multi-agency
 13 Generic Response Plan because I suspect this is a plan
 14 that we will look at during the course of the evidence
 15 of others during chapter 10. It's {INQ012487/1}. We'll
 16 just look at a few pages.
 17 Is this the plan that we've been speaking about?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. We can see version 4. Does it follow that this plan had
 20 been through various iterations?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Can we go to {INQ012487/2}, please. Here we see some
 23 further information about the strategic coordinating
 24 group:
 25 "Activation of a strategic coordinating group will

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1 take place where an integrated strategic effort will be
 2 beneficial in responding to the emergency or where the
 3 incident itself threatens to overwhelm an individual
 4 organisation's capacity to respond to it."
 5 Does that neatly summarise when an SCG should be
 6 brought into existence?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. "An SCG can be activated during any of the following
 9 conditions: GMP force duty officer or any GM responder
 10 requests an SCG to coordinate the response to a major
 11 incident. NB other agencies requesting an SCG should do
 12 this initially via the FDO who will in turn inform the
 13 GMP chief officer on duty."
 14 Is that correct?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. So any responder within Greater Manchester can request
 17 an SCG to be brought into existence?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Albeit that should normally be done via the GMP FDO?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. There will also be activation of an SCG where there has
 22 been a declaration of a catastrophic event occurring or
 23 imminent?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Or where the GMP force duty officer receives an

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1 appropriate request from a tactical coordinating group
 2 to form an SCG?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. So can I check whether my understanding of that is
 5 correct. There is going to be some evidence, I believe,
 6 that as the chairman indicated, generally an SCG will
 7 operate at Gold Command level, albeit that
 8 Gold commanders will not necessarily be the only
 9 members, and that a TCG, or tactical coordinating group,
 10 will generally be at the level of Silver commanders.
 11 Have I understood that correctly?
 12 A. Yes, I think that's broadly correct.
 13 Q. I'm not suggesting that that will always define who will
 14 be the members. So one situation where an SCG should be
 15 convened is where the tactical coordinating group has
 16 requested that should occur?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. I'm not going to read out the balance of that page,
 19 we'll go to {INQ012487/3}, which will deal with
 20 membership of an SCG --
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just before we do that, can we go back?
 22 Sorry, I should have interrupted earlier .
 23 MR GREANEY: {INQ012487/2}, Mr Lopez.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: "An SCG can be activated during any of
 25 the following conditions: GMP force duty officer...

1 requests [it] to coordinate the response to a major
 2 incident. GMP declaration of a catastrophic event
 3 occurring or imminent."
 4 What's the distinction between those two? Was the
 5 bomb a catastrophic incident or was it a major incident
 6 or doesn't it matter?
 7 A. I'm just trying to look at the distinction in language.
 8 I think the two do overlap. In the first point,
 9 responding to an incident, in the second point it does
 10 say occurring, which would be the same as the first
 11 point, really, or imminent. So sometimes you set up
 12 an SCG ahead of an event or activity.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you could, I'm sure that's
 14 appropriate.
 15 A. Yes, in particular you do plan SCGs for known events.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 17 MR GREANEY: So an interesting and potentially important
 18 question that arises out of that is: the stage at which
 19 an SCG ought to be convened. Obviously, here we are
 20 dealing with a bomb and obviously there needs to be
 21 coordination between the various emergency services
 22 because each of them will or may be required to perform
 23 a function. Is it reasonable to suggest that bearing in
 24 mind the SCG is there for strategic coordination that
 25 you would expect an SCG to be convened at an early

1 stage?
 2 A. I would expect that there should be consideration of
 3 that and, ideally, initiating an SCG as early as
 4 possible, recognising you'll need to allow time for
 5 people to attend. So the earlier you think about having
 6 an SCG, you can warn people to attend that SCG and to be
 7 prepared to contribute effectively at that SCG. But
 8 yes, as early as possible.
 9 Q. To be fair to you, I'm not going to ask you what "as
 10 early as possible" means in the context of the arena
 11 attack.
 12 What I was going to do, just before we take a break,
 13 is take you to {INQ012487/3}, where I think the
 14 membership or potential membership of an SCG -- it's the
 15 bottom half of that page, Mr Lopez -- is dealt with,
 16 although I may have misremembered this.
 17 "The plan identifies the following potential SCG
 18 members."
 19 And does that accommodate the fact that some of
 20 these people may not be relevant, depending upon the
 21 type of emergency?
 22 A. Yes, and I think from my memory there is a fuller list
 23 in an appendix or annex of further potential attendees.
 24 But exactly as you said, the relevant people are
 25 invited.

1 Q. We can all, including those following on YouTube, see
 2 those who are identified, and we'll look in due course
 3 for the appendix.
 4 I'm going to turn on next to deal with the
 5 membership of the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum
 6 before we look at training and exercising. But sir, for
 7 the benefit of the stenographer, this I think would be
 8 an appropriate time to break.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Quarter of an hour? 11.50. Thank you.
 10 (11.36 am)
 11 (A short break)
 12 (11.50 am)
 13 MR GREANEY: The next issue, Mr Argyle, still dealing with
 14 the third topic of the overview of resilience forums and
 15 the GMRF, is the membership of GMRF. So this is page 12
 16 of your first statement, and we're making good progress.
 17 You list there the membership of the resilience
 18 forum. Is that the membership as of May 2017 and the
 19 period before that?
 20 A. I feel it is, yes.
 21 Q. So far as category 1 responders are concerned, Public
 22 Health England, Greater Manchester Police, the North
 23 West Ambulance Service, NHS England, Greater Manchester
 24 local authorities, the Greater Manchester Fire and
 25 Rescue Service, the Animal and Plant Health Agency, the

1 Environment Agency and British Transport Police.
 2 Just before we turn to category 2 responders,
 3 you will be very familiar with North West Fire Control
 4 or NWFC?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Indeed, as we're going to learn when you return, you
 7 were part of the group that was behind NWFC?
 8 A. The development of it, yes, and overseeing the
 9 management, yes.
 10 Q. And everyone, I suspect, will know, but let me say it
 11 nonetheless, that NWFC is a company that was set up by
 12 fire services in the north—west to handle jointly all
 13 999 emergency calls and to be responsible for the
 14 mobilisation of firefighters and fire engines to
 15 emergencies?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. A question that may be asked is whether, and if not why
 18 not, NWFC was part of the membership of GMRF and,
 19 whether it was or wasn't, whether it attended its
 20 meetings. A lot of questions jumbled up in there, so
 21 let me break them down.
 22 First of all, was NWFC a category 1 responder?
 23 A. They are part of category 1 responders, as in the
 24 constituent fire and rescue services.
 25 Q. Did they —

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1 A. I don't know the legal position, whether that company
 2 that was then created is legally classed in its own
 3 entity as a category 1 responder. I viewed it as my
 4 control centre.
 5 Q. So you regarded it as being part of GMFRS, which was
 6 obviously a category 1 responder?
 7 A. Yes, and of course all the other three fire services
 8 similarly.
 9 Q. Exactly. Part 2 of my long question or questions: was
 10 North West Fire Control a member of the resilience forum
 11 in its own right?
 12 A. Not in its own right. I would say they are represented
 13 by the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service's
 14 representative. And of course, the GMRF actually covers
 15 Greater Manchester and North West Fire Control
 16 represented four counties.
 17 Q. You've probably answered the third part of my question
 18 along the way. Did any representative of NWFC, whilst
 19 you were chair of the resilience forum, attend the
 20 meetings of the resilience forum?
 21 A. Not that I'm aware of, no.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is it statutory who is a category 1
 23 responder?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.

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1 MR GREANEY: Sir, there is a schedule to the act that we can
 2 look at if needs be.
 3 Is there, in your view, perhaps even in your view
 4 looking back, an argument for saying that
 5 North West Fire Control, given the role that it had,
 6 should have attended the meetings of the resilience
 7 forum?
 8 A. If you don't mind, I'll just go slightly back.
 9 Q. Of course, yes.
 10 A. So before North West Fire Control was created, each of
 11 those fire services had their own control, so we in
 12 Greater Manchester had our own control located in the
 13 Fire Service headquarters building. They were
 14 a department within the operations department, so within
 15 one — for example, when I was the director of emergency
 16 response, I'll have had separate departments working
 17 under me, one of them being control. So they were
 18 a department and of course each department could not go
 19 to a resilience forum and they were represented by that
 20 strategic officer. So it would have seemed
 21 inappropriate for a senior officer in control to go to
 22 the resilience forum. They're at a different level of
 23 the hierarchy and they are one function of the Fire
 24 Service.
 25 Of course, when they become North West Fire Control

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1 and they become a company, that actual company takes on
 2 a different legal entity and has more senior management
 3 within it, but still the actual operation of control,
 4 the operational delivery of control, is a sub—section of
 5 the operation's function of the Fire Service. So I feel
 6 it would — and also it would be (inaudible: distorted)
 7 for example, the police control centre did not come to
 8 the resilience forum, the local authority control
 9 centres, the Ambulance Service control centres, they do
 10 not all come to the resilience forum; they're
 11 represented by their representatives.
 12 Q. So when the control room was within your building and
 13 directly within your remit, one can well understand that
 14 you, as the ACFO, would have direct control, and perhaps
 15 direct knowledge, of what was happening within the
 16 control room and indeed they would be your staff within
 17 the control room.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Would it be reasonable for someone to suggest that from
 20 the point in time at which that no longer applied, so
 21 that there was now this separate company that was
 22 performing that duty, there was no longer the same
 23 extent to which there was direct knowledge and direct
 24 control? It's a rather long question, but I think you
 25 know what I'm getting at.

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1 A. What I'd say is that company was wholly staffed by
 2 members of the four fire services , other than the odd
 3 new employee who then joined that workforce. So the
 4 finance director was from one of the fire services , the
 5 legal representative was from one of the fire services .
 6 The chief fire officers would meet --- officers at a
 7 lower level would meet from each of the four constituent
 8 fire services and the staff who made up the actual
 9 operational delivery , the operators and the line
 10 managers, came from the four fire and rescue services.
 11 So each of the four fire services then had that direct
 12 link in to there.
 13 It would be right to say that that direct line
 14 management role had changed. So me being the senior
 15 operations officer could direct the previous control,
 16 whereas with the North West Fire Control I would go to
 17 a group meeting and raise an issue for it to be
 18 resolved, but that would be then through a collaboration
 19 of the four fire services rather than one fire service
 20 saying, "This is my control or our control and this is
 21 what we want to do with it".
 22 Q. We'll return, I'm sure, to the question of what the
 23 consequences were, if any, of the creation of NWFC. I'm
 24 not going to press you any further at this stage, but
 25 nonetheless it's helpful to have your summary at any

1 rate of the position .
 2 Let's go back to what we were dealing with, namely
 3 the membership of the resilience forum. The category 2
 4 responder representatives: United Utilities , Electricity
 5 North-west, Transport for Greater Manchester, Highways
 6 England, Manchester Airport and also Network Rail;
 7 is that correct?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Were there some other bodies that whilst not category 1
 10 or 2 responders were also members of the resilience
 11 forum?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Namely, the Ministry of Defence?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. MHCLG, so I think that's the Ministry of Housing,
 16 Communities and Local Government?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. Greater Manchester Coroners?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. And also Manchester Metropolitan University?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. And from time to time would other organisations also
 23 attend by invitation ?
 24 A. Yes, they would, yes.
 25 Q. In the evidence we're going to hear about something,

1 probably the longest acronym we've had so far, known as
 2 AGMA CCRU or the Association of Greater Manchester
 3 Authorities Civil Contingencies and Resilience Unit. So
 4 what is or was that unit, please?
 5 A. Prior to its formation and continuing, each of the 10
 6 local authorities , as were, in Greater Manchester had
 7 their own individual responsibilities under the Civil
 8 Contingencies Act and would each deliver that and at
 9 a point in time it was felt that rather than each of the
 10 10 local authorities , for example, creating their own
 11 flood plan in each of those 10 local authorities , they
 12 would create a unit to support all 10 of those local
 13 authorities to deliver their civil contingency duties,
 14 so they created one unit rather than 10 separate units.
 15 That is the reason why they created the Civil
 16 Contingencies Resilience Unit, recognising that in each
 17 of those 10 local authorities there would still be
 18 people working for each individual one on resilience .
 19 This was a centralised team.
 20 Q. So the AGMA CCRU is something separate from GMRF. But
 21 is it the position that so as to ensure that they fed in
 22 and that there was consistency, the CCRU would also
 23 attend the meetings of GMRF or at least was able to?
 24 A. Yes. As you've pointed out for me, local authorities
 25 are a category 1 responder, and again, rather than

1 having a representative from all 10 at the meeting, one
 2 representative would attend --- well, sometimes two,
 3 actually, the leader and the chief executive of the
 4 nominated local authority --- to represent the other 10,
 5 but also typically the head of the AGMA CCRU would
 6 attend as they support the local authorities . They are
 7 working for those 10 local authorities so would attend
 8 as well and/or could deputise for them.
 9 Q. I suspect I have probably made this more complicated
 10 than it needed to be. Is the point ultimately that
 11 AGMA CCRU was a member of the resilience forum?
 12 A. They always attended. Yes, I think they are a member.
 13 Q. That's all I wanted to ask you about the membership of
 14 the resilience forum. We're going to turn next, still
 15 dealing with this third topic, to training and
 16 exercising .
 17 You make the point that it should be realised that
 18 the resilience forum, GMRF, is a broad partnership and
 19 that the individual organisations within it have their
 20 own statutory duties. What is the significance of that
 21 to this issue we're now looking at, training and
 22 exercising ?
 23 A. As we've listed the amount of organisations, some very
 24 large organisations, they each have their own duties and
 25 they also have other statutory duties outside of the

1 Civil Contingencies Act for which they must deliver. So
 2 they are organisations who must deliver their core
 3 responsibilities and must train for, prepare for, plan
 4 for and deliver, but they must also train for, plan for
 5 and deliver their responsibilities with other agencies.
 6 So they will train and exercise individually, they will
 7 train and exercise --- as an example, two agencies may
 8 train and exercise together, or three, or sometimes
 9 a more broad training exercise may be undertaken.
 10 Q. So sometimes the individual organisations will do their
 11 own organisation-specific training, sometimes across
 12 a number of agencies there will be some joint training
 13 but not through GMRF. I believe an example of that
 14 would be that when MTFA training first started, that was
 15 not conducted through the resilience forum but instead
 16 between the police, fire and ambulance, along with the
 17 military?
 18 A. That's correct.
 19 Q. But nonetheless, GMRF does, and between 2012 and 2017
 20 did, provide some multi-agency training and exercising?
 21 A. Yes. I think it's helpful to say that, for example,
 22 where you've mentioned the MTFA, those responders, those
 23 category 1 responders, have a duty to train and exercise
 24 with each other, and that doesn't necessarily mean
 25 through the resilience forum; they need to in any case

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1 to deliver their function. So yes, as you've put to me,
 2 they would train together, not necessarily under the
 3 auspices or direct auspices of the GMRF but to deliver
 4 their functions they may just exercise together.
 5 Q. I want to look at some training and exercising delivered
 6 prior to the arena attack that I believe was at the
 7 instigation of GMRF. We're going to look at a list in
 8 a moment, some of those we are already fairly familiar
 9 with. But is it the position that where training was
 10 conducted at the instigation of GMRF, sometimes it would
 11 be delivered or facilitated by members of the resilience
 12 forum, but sometimes by external providers?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. But that events delivered or facilitated by members were
 15 also generally designed by members of the resilience
 16 forum?
 17 A. Yes, and to be helpful, because obviously I'm aware of
 18 the statement I've given, lots of exercises are not
 19 instigated by GMRF.
 20 Q. Yes.
 21 A. Sometimes --- often, or even more often, they are
 22 instigated elsewhere and come to the attention of GMRF,
 23 always recognising GMRF is the partners, and therefore
 24 GMRF may become involved to a greater or lesser degree.
 25 But what I have put in my statement, I wouldn't want you

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1 to feel is all those exercises were instigated by GMRF,
 2 they weren't.
 3 Q. So the exercises before between 2012 and 2017 that
 4 we are going to be looking at, is what you're saying
 5 that they were not, at least not all of them, instigated
 6 by GMRF?
 7 A. Definitely not all instigated, no.
 8 Q. But were all of them conducted under the auspices of
 9 GMRF?
 10 A. These exercises --- I was assisted to provide this list .
 11 These exercises that GMRF have been involved in, a few
 12 will have been instigated in a more obvious sense by
 13 GMRF, many come to the attention of a member or
 14 different members of the GMRF partnership, who bring
 15 that to attention and say, "We can assist with this
 16 exercise to make sure the relevant partners are involved
 17 to get the maximum benefit from the exercise", or to
 18 attend but to ensure relevant attendees. So the
 19 ownership wouldn't necessarily often be with GMRF of the
 20 exercise.
 21 Q. The most important aspect of it may not be who
 22 instigated them but this: the exercises we're going to
 23 be looking at are all exercises which were designed to
 24 test and train for a coordinated response to an
 25 emergency.

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And obviously that's what the resilience forum was all
 3 about, making sure that that's what worked. So would it
 4 be fair to say that whether instigated or not by the
 5 resilience forum, GMRF ought to have understood what the
 6 learning points were from each of these exercises?
 7 A. One of the values the GMRF could add when becoming aware
 8 of an exercise instigated elsewhere would be to assist
 9 in looking at --- an exercise will have aims and
 10 objectives and will have invitees to that exercise. But
 11 often it doesn't reflect the full gamut of a real
 12 incident as in mobilisation, the different tiers of
 13 command and control... The length of an exercise could
 14 be started to cover only the first hour of an incident
 15 and you could say, "I see you're exercising something
 16 here", let's say a flooding, "and it looks from the aims
 17 and objectives you are going to exercise dealing with
 18 the 2 hours of a flooding, could you extend that
 19 exercise to look at the 4 days after a flooding so
 20 we can engage other agencies who would deal with
 21 things?" And that may or may not happen, but lots of
 22 exercises are run that deal with a specific part of an
 23 incident.
 24 Q. Of course, yes. I've understood that. My question
 25 really had a narrower focus. You're no doubt entirely

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1 appropriately drawing our attention to the fact that not
 2 all of these exercises were the work of GMRF, that's my
 3 phrase. What I'm inviting you to accept, if you think
 4 it's fair and reasonable, is that bearing in mind that
 5 these exercises were focused upon coordinated working
 6 amongst the emergency services and bearing in mind the
 7 remit of GMRF, that where there were learning points
 8 from these exercises they ought to have come to the
 9 attention of GMRF. Is that fair?
 10 A. When there is a learning exercise and learning points
 11 come out -- there are masses of exercises. If you go
 12 down to it, I know for certain the Fire Service train
 13 every single day, every single day of the year they do
 14 training. It is at what point is a learning point about
 15 multi-agency working. So if the learning point was
 16 something that should be something the GMRF should be
 17 aware of, then yes they should.
 18 Q. Yes.
 19 A. If something was very tactical and really a one-off
 20 aspect or very single agency specific, the GMRF does not
 21 have the capacity to be aware of all learning points of
 22 all exercises.
 23 Q. That, I have no doubt, is a very fair observation. If
 24 an exercise revealed no more than that you should send
 25 a particular type of fire engine or a particular type of

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1 police vehicle to an emergency, that really isn't
 2 something that the resilience forum should be expected
 3 to know about. But if an exercise were to reveal
 4 a major problem, or any problem, with multi-agency
 5 working in an emergency situation, that is certainly
 6 something, is it not, that the resilience forum ought to
 7 be aware of?
 8 A. Two levels of the answer. If there is an issue, quite
 9 significant, the partners involved in that exercise are
 10 part of the resilience forum, and if they know they can
 11 resolve that issue clearly, an issue happened, we can
 12 resolve it, they may deal with it together. But if it
 13 was a broad issue of learning about multi-agency
 14 response, cooperation, then yes, that should be brought
 15 to the attention of the wider group.
 16 Q. Let's go right to it, a little earlier than I was --
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you're going to go to an individual
 18 exercise, can I ask a general question. This really is
 19 more generic maybe than the questions being asked at the
 20 moment. Presumably on an annual basis or over a period
 21 of time you'd be planning what training and exercises
 22 were necessary from GMRF's point of view.
 23 A. Yes.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is there any coordination in that with
 25 the other category 1 responders? So would you know in

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1 advance, well in advance, when they're planning it and
 2 what they're going to do, which may be something that
 3 relates to what you're going to do so that on your
 4 planning you actually know what individual people are
 5 doing and you can plan accordingly?
 6 A. When we talked earlier about producing the Community
 7 Risk Register, starting from the national risk
 8 assessment, you do your different risk assessments, use
 9 your Community Risk Register and your internal one, and
 10 you look at the capabilities you have got in place and
 11 your experience, and you determine from that what
 12 exercising do we need to do and you produce a training
 13 and exercising plan. So yes.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you're doing that, do you know what
 15 the individual agencies are going to be doing by way of
 16 training, which may involve other agencies as well?
 17 A. No, because that is such a large scope of -- the amount
 18 of training some organisations do is huge and it will be
 19 for the relevant representative to bring relevant things
 20 to the attention of the rest of the GMRF. So
 21 if we identified we had a capability gap, something we
 22 needed to improve, say some learning like when Ebola
 23 happened, the Health Agency would be the key partner to
 24 say to us, "This is everything the Health Service is
 25 going to be doing, training and exercising, you could be

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1 involved in that, you could add to that or we could
 2 bring something specific for you that we think the rest
 3 of you partners need to train this year on".
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that an informal process at
 5 meetings --
 6 A. No.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- or is there a formality about it?
 8 A. There is a formality at that stage of producing the
 9 Community Risk Register, analysing the threats, which
 10 has a lifespan subservient to the national risk
 11 assessment. So if that comes out with a 2-year lifespan
 12 we do a 2-year lifespan threat assessment, risk
 13 assessment and training plan to address that because
 14 that of course is dynamic because new learning happens
 15 usually from incidents or something that's happened
 16 elsewhere in the world or new legislation, et cetera.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, but you would expect individual
 18 responders, once you have put this out or decided what
 19 you're going to do, to say, "Actually, we are going to
 20 do something on this as well which is going to involve
 21 other organisations"?
 22 A. They could do, but the volume of training --
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I know that -- sorry, I'm really sorry
 24 to cut across you -- but we're only talking about
 25 training which involves more than one individual

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1 responder, so that must be more limited.
 2 A. It is more limited. It's still very significant in its
 3 volume and magnitude. I would say that, yes, if they
 4 felt something significant was happening that would be
 5 brought to the attention -- say if there is work
 6 ongoing, there is activity ongoing that's going to
 7 support us all dealing with this capability issue.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 9 MR GREANEY: I just want you to hold in your head for
 10 a moment that question I asked about the extent to which
 11 the resilience forum ought to become aware of a learning
 12 point that revealed a major problem with multi-agency
 13 working. We'll come to the actual example I was going
 14 to ask you about in order.
 15 What I'm going to ask you to help us with next is
 16 the list of training exercises that starts at page 14 of
 17 your first statement. Let's just provide a little
 18 context first of all. By May 2017, obviously the Civil
 19 Contingencies Act had been in force for many years, more
 20 than a decade, and the resilience forum had been in
 21 existence and in operation, again, probably for more
 22 than a decade.
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. The resilience forum had been involved in training
 25 exercises for a substantial period of time. We can see

1 that this list goes back to 2012, can we not?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. So that's just a little context. So let's run through
 4 the exercises and just summarise them very briefly. As
 5 I've said, it's when you come back that we will ask you
 6 about and others may well ask you about the extent to
 7 which there should have been learning from these
 8 exercises. That's subject to one exception that's now
 9 arisen.
 10 So on 22 May 2012, so literally 5 years before the
 11 Manchester attack, an exercise known as Joint Enterprise
 12 was carried out, was it not?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. This was before your time as chair, although you were
 15 a member at this stage. Can you say whether the
 16 resilience forum instigated this exercise? If you
 17 can't, you can check and tell us in due course.
 18 A. I can't tell you. Reading that, it was an exercise held
 19 in Cumbria. It may well not have been, we may have been
 20 invited.
 21 Q. In any event, as you've said, this was
 22 a counter-terrorism desktop exercise; is that correct?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. And it was to test critically and improve
 25 Greater Manchester's firearms, North West Ambulance

1 Service and Greater Manchester Fire Service capability
 2 in relation to an initial response to what you've
 3 described as a coordinated Operation Plato incident.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Then in 2013, on several dates, there was another
 6 tabletop exercise known as Mars; is that right?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. With the aim being to raise awareness of tactical
 9 commanders who may be required to respond to a major
 10 incident and emergency in a multi-agency partnership
 11 environment. The observation you make is that it was
 12 key to ensure that they, so tactical commanders,
 13 understood the practicalities around coordinating
 14 a tactical coordination group.
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. So we've sometimes used the term "tactical commander"
 17 and Silver commander interchangeably and you'll
 18 understand what I mean by that?
 19 A. I do, yes.
 20 Q. There was in 2014 an operation known as Throng. That
 21 was to test evacuation plans at Victoria Station.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. Again in 2014, Trident, which was plans for the
 24 evacuation of another major location in Manchester --
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- known as operation Trident.
 2 Then in 2014, at various stages, a live exercise to
 3 test the response to a marauding terrorist attack;
 4 is that right?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. No one should give the name of that particular exercise,
 7 I'm told that it is sensitive.
 8 Was the aim of the exercise to test deployment and
 9 movement of firearms officers --
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. -- at a particular location in Greater Manchester?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. On one of the occasions was there a larger exercise that
 14 involved the HART team from NWS and the staff of
 15 GMFRS --
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. -- and a forensic team entering a warm zone?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Greaney, I am sure it's absolutely
 20 right that those matters are sensitive. I would just
 21 quite like to know why at some stage.
 22 MR GREANEY: Where the location is given in the exercise,
 23 I haven't been told there's any particular operational
 24 sensitivity about that, I just haven't judged it
 25 necessary to identify where it was. Where I do think

1 it's necessary, I will, but in relation to the various
 2 exercises in 2014, in the third box up, I have been told
 3 that that exercise name is sensitive because it
 4 describes something in particular.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 6 MR GREANEY: So Lion Heart in 2015. Were they on a number
 7 of occasions live exercises to allow GMP firearms and
 8 regional support with multiple agency partners to be
 9 tested?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. And to test the response to a terrorist attack on an
 12 iconic site within Manchester?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. In 2015, Operation Thunder Wave, another tabletop
 15 exercise to test the north-west's preparedness for
 16 a Paris-style attack.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. This is the Bataclan and Stade de France attacks?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It pre-dates Bataclan, doesn't it, or
 21 am I wrong? It's 2014, Bataclan, isn't it?
 22 MR GREANEY: I'll be put right about that. It may pre-date
 23 Bataclan, yes. But at all events, preparedness for
 24 a Paris-style attack, including the exploration of
 25 command and control protocols to such incidents and

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1 their developing nature.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Operation Triton II in 2015 was a major multi-agency
 4 exercise, albeit this was focused not upon a terrorist
 5 incident but upon a flood scenario?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. And to give us an idea of the scale of this, it involved
 8 36 different agencies, over 600 participants, and tested
 9 three different levels of command?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. And lasted over a substantial period of time?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. 2015, November of that year, another operation Trident,
 14 which was focused upon dealing with another multi-agency
 15 incident, on this occasion a rail crash?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. Still in 2015, in fact a little earlier,
 18 Exercise Lawman, which was a tabletop exercise held in
 19 Merseyside testing the multi-agency response to an MTFA?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Including the wider consequence management and
 22 communication issues associated with an MTFA incident?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. 2016, Exercise Valley Oak, a live exercise to test the
 25 formation and operation of a multi-agency forward

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1 command post in response to a terrorist incident?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. So we can see that even before we reach Exercise
 4 Winchester Accord in May of 2016, that there has been
 5 considerable training in relation to multi-agency
 6 issues?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And many of the exercises are focused upon,
 9 understandably, a terrorist incident?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Then between 9 and 11 May 2016, Exercise
 12 Winchester Accord took place?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. That is an exercise that we have looked at to some
 15 extent during the course of chapter 7 of the inquiry's
 16 oral evidence hearing. So I'll simply summarise it by
 17 indicating that that exercise was a live exercise, as
 18 opposed to a tabletop exercise, that took place
 19 overnight on 9 May with the scenario of a marauding
 20 terrorist firearms attack on the Trafford Centre.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Requiring a response from specialised military units,
 23 and that multi-agency exercise formed part of a national
 24 programme that again I am told we shouldn't name, the
 25 purpose of which was to test and evaluate the emergency

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1 response to a major terrorist attack.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. So it was very much focused, sadly, upon events which
 4 were to eventuate in May 2017?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. I'm just going to pause for a moment to ask you to help
 7 with one issue in relation to Exercise
 8 Winchester Accord, although, as I've indicated,
 9 generally we will look at what was to be learned from
 10 these exercises when you return.
 11 But the evidence may reveal, the evidence we're
 12 going to hear, that this exercise revealed significant
 13 issues of the application of the Joint Emergency Service
 14 Interoperability Principles, JESIP, with which you'll be
 15 very familiar, and that it identified weaknesses in
 16 shared situational awareness and poor inter-agency
 17 communication. The evidence may also identify that
 18 there was a serious overload of the GMP force duty
 19 officer to the point at which the FDO was unable
 20 adequately to fulfil his role to the detriment of the
 21 GMP response and indeed the multi-agency response.
 22 Obviously, we're going to get to the question of
 23 whether the evidence does reveal those things about
 24 Exercise Winchester Accord when you return, but I do
 25 want to be clear, please, about one thing that we may

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1 wish to keep in mind as we move forward. This takes us
2 to your most recent statement, or one of them, namely
3 the third statement of last Thursday, and paragraphs 24
4 and 25. I'm simply going to read those out and ask you
5 to confirm that they're correct.

6 Let's bear in mind what the evidence may reveal
7 about Exercise Winchester Accord and what that exercise,
8 moreover, revealed. You say:

9 "The extent of my knowledge of Exercise
10 Winchester Accord and the lessons learned is the
11 discussion during the GMRF meeting on
12 16 September 2016."

13 That we'll come back to, as I have said, a number of
14 times. You then say:

15 "It was certainly not the case that anybody was
16 suggesting there were significant issues, areas of
17 concern, arising out of the exercise. To that end,
18 other than the debrief report contents, I was not aware
19 of any delays being encountered in the deployment of
20 resources or of widespread multi-agency communication
21 problems. These are matters which have only come to my
22 attention after May 2017 and subsequently as a result of
23 material that I have been asked to consider in the
24 course of this inquiry."

25 And no doubt it is bearing in mind how recent this

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1 statement is, but I'll ask: is the content of that
2 paragraph correct?

3 A. To the best of my knowledge, yes.

4 Q. You then add:

5 "I have been asked why these matters were not drawn
6 to GMRF's attention. In my experience the debrief
7 process is of course only as good as the information
8 that is fed into it. I do think that there may be
9 a reluctance during the debrief process for criticism to
10 be made of other agencies for fear of appearing to be
11 rude. However, I reiterate that no significant issues
12 were brought to my attention following the
13 Winchester Accord exercise."

14 Again, is that, to the best of your knowledge,
15 correct?

16 A. Yes, but I know you don't want to go into this now —

17 Q. If it needs to be qualified in some way, you need to
18 tell us.

19 A. My knowledge now, not at the time, so this exercise was
20 organised, as you said, by an organisation we're not
21 mentioning at the moment, and that was to exercise the
22 emergency response, as you said. It was known of by
23 those agencies involved, of course all of whom are part
24 of GMRF but don't always operate — they're operating as
25 those agencies to do some training and exercising.

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1 It then came — it was brought to the attention of
2 GMRF as an opportunity to run a second or additional
3 part of that exercise to run — stand up and run
4 a strategic coordinating centre. That is what GMRF was
5 involved in, that part of the exercise only.

6 My knowledge now is two debriefs were run, one of
7 the emergency response and one of the strategic
8 coordinating centre. So for the meeting of the GMRF you
9 mentioned, the only debrief and learning points came
10 from the multi-agency debrief of the SCC. The points
11 in the different debrief were not brought to the
12 attention of GMRF, so I was not sighted on them, nor
13 were other members of the GMRF unless they happened to
14 be involved in both. So the pure GMRF meeting was only
15 provided with the debrief and learning of one part of
16 the exercise.

17 Q. This isn't intended to be a criticism of you personally,
18 certainly not, but at the time we're concerned with,
19 2016, you are the chair of GMRF, and GMRF is all
20 about — maybe that's not the right way of putting it,
21 but one of its purposes is to ensure that there is
22 a coordinated response by the emergency services when
23 there is an emergency such as a terrorist attack. And
24 here there is a major exercise that is taking place and
25 let's just assume for the moment that it identifies real

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1 problems with the application of JESIP and that it
2 identifies real problems with the overloading of the
3 FDO.

4 I fully understand that the individual organisations
5 have their own responsibility to learn those lessons and
6 to make sure that those problems don't eventuate in real
7 life, and I take that point, but can we agree that it's
8 reasonable or it may be reasonable for someone to
9 suggest that that information about weaknesses in the
10 application of JESIP and about the overloading of the
11 FDO is something which should have come to the attention
12 of GMRF as a body?

13 A. I think that would have been the right thing to do, to
14 bring that forward. I had two roles, in the same way
15 I was the deputy chief fire officer, and if the people
16 involved in that exercise from the Fire Service had
17 concerns they could have escalated it to me as the
18 deputy chief fire officer.

19 In the same way as you're putting your question, if
20 people at that exercise, senior people at that exercise,
21 felt there was an issue, and it was of such magnitude,
22 that could be brought to the GMRF for a broader approach
23 to solve that issue.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: My recollection, and it may well be
25 faulty, is that Winchester Accord had a similar problem

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1 in the Fire Service actually attending quite late in the
 2 day. I think it took a similar time, a couple of hours,
 3 for them to actually attend. Wouldn't that, in your
 4 position as deputy chief fire officer, have come to your
 5 attention?
 6 A. I think in my previous role as the director of emergency
 7 response I would have had a closer proximity to that and
 8 people would have reported to me on a far more normal
 9 basis. Once you become the deputy chief fire officer
 10 you have a much broader portfolio. If somebody had
 11 a serious concern, they had every right to escalate it
 12 to me and/or the — and I could escalate it to the chief
 13 fire officer if I needed their assistance, but that
 14 wasn't the case.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did I get that right?
 16 MR GREANEY: You did.
 17 The point is, and I don't want to stray too much
 18 into areas that you'll be covering when you return
 19 because then it'll make it difficult for me to stop
 20 other people doing that today, but the point that may
 21 emerge through the evidence in chapter 10 is that the
 22 very things that were identified as going wrong during
 23 Exercise Winchester Accord then went wrong in real life
 24 on 22 May 2017. If that proves to be right, I'm sure
 25 you'll agree that it is a matter of regret that the GMRF

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1 were not informed of those problems.
 2 A. Yes. I wouldn't want to qualify with things I have now
 3 read and seen and now make a position of knowledge that
 4 I didn't have at the time.
 5 Q. That I understand. As I hope I've made clear, you could
 6 only be as good at the time as the information that you
 7 were being provided with, and by "you" I mean GMRF.
 8 All that may be a reasonable thing to say. We will
 9 see in due course.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This may highlight the problem I was
 11 touching on, which is the coordination of training
 12 between you all and that you'd actually know about the
 13 training that was going on before it happens in detail
 14 and you'd automatically be led into any lessons learnt.
 15 It seems odd that that wasn't the way it was done.
 16 A. I think to be helpful, even in the list which I have
 17 been led through, there are lots and lots of exercises
 18 and not every one of those exercises will have had
 19 a multi-agency debrief.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that.
 21 A. Or they'd have had one but they're not all brought to
 22 the attention of the GMRF. There is a need to identify
 23 the strategic issues that cannot be resolved elsewhere
 24 and bring those forward.
 25 MR GREANEY: I'll just suggest this to you and then we will

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1 move back to the list: the purpose of training and
 2 exercising is to learn lessons if there are lessons to
 3 be learned; is that correct?
 4 A. That's one of the main points, yes.
 5 Q. And learning lessons doesn't occur just for the sake of
 6 it. The whole point of learning lessons is to make
 7 changes to reflect what went well and what went badly?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. So let's just go back and complete this list. As I have
 10 suggested already —
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sorry. Would the debriefs be done
 12 by individual forces, ie fire do one, police do one, or
 13 is it a coordinated one, all of them together?
 14 A. My experience, and I think it's often the case, in
 15 a multi-agency exercise, even if that's two or three
 16 agencies, the individual agency will do their own
 17 debrief so the representatives can then say, "That's the
 18 10 things we feel happened and we're going to take that
 19 into the multi-agency debrief", so they come together on
 20 an informed basis and say what have we all learned here.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 22 MR GREANEY: I'm now at the top of page 16 of your
 23 statement. I expect that I will conclude my questions
 24 before lunch.
 25 On 8 June 2016, Exercise Knotweed 3 took place;

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1 is that correct?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Which again was an exercise that was focused on
 4 multi-agency response to a major incident?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Then on 26 July 2016, again an exercise that we
 7 encountered in chapter 7 of our oral evidence hearing,
 8 Exercise Sherman?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Which was a multi-agency tabletop exercise relating to
 11 an MTFA, which took place on a number of occasions
 12 across all ten boroughs of Greater Manchester?
 13 A. That's right.
 14 Q. In November 2016, Exercise Hornbeam, another exercise
 15 focused on multi-agency working?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. We're then into 2017, and on 1 March of that year, so
 18 just a short period before the attack,
 19 Exercise Hawk River, a multi-agency tabletop exercise
 20 focused upon the response to an MTFA.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. The attendees including regional representatives as well
 23 as GMP, GMFRS, NWAS, the local authority in the form of
 24 AGMA CCRU, CTU and the military?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. That was intended to provide an opportunity to apply the
 2 key principles of what was then the latest edition of
 3 the MTFA joint operating principles or JOPs?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. A little later in March 2017, Exercise Labyrinth, a live
 6 exercise to test the evacuation plan at a major location
 7 in Manchester?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. 28 March 2017, Exercise Scarlet Oak, a scenario based on
 10 a counter-terrorism disaster victim identification
 11 exercise?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. And then 29 March 2017, Exercise Socrates, the aim of
 14 which was to test and train the trauma network in
 15 response to a mass casualty incident involving traumatic
 16 injuries in the Greater Manchester health system.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. So over those 5 years, many occasions on which there was
 19 multi-agency training and exercising?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Mr Argyle, that's all I want to ask you about the third
 22 topic, your overview of the resilience forum. Topic 4,
 23 you may recall, relates to the engagement of some
 24 category 1 responders.
 25 I believe you'll be able to agree that the

1 Cabinet Office document, the reference document to which
 2 we referred earlier, provides guidance as to the
 3 seniority of the representatives of category 1 responder
 4 organisations attending LRF meetings.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Mr Lopez, could we have on the screen, please, the
 7 reference document, which is {INQ019376/12}.
 8 (Pause)
 9 There may be a problem, Mr Argyle. I do have a note
 10 about what it says on that page and I do hope I'm going
 11 to be reading out verbatim two points:
 12 "First, the LRF itself [the reference document
 13 provides] is a strategic group and should attract
 14 a sufficiently senior level of representation. The
 15 local authority representative, for example, should be
 16 the chief executive or deputy chief executive and the
 17 post representative should be the area Chief Constable
 18 or Deputy Chief Constable."
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Then point 2:
 21 "The LRF should ensure that participants at its
 22 routine meetings reflect the membership of the strategic
 23 coordinating group (SCG) which will be called in in
 24 response to any emergency in the LRF."
 25 A. Yes. In level, yes.

1 Q. In level. So there are perhaps two key points that
 2 emerge, although we'll bear in mind your qualification.
 3 Representation should be at a high level in terms of
 4 seniority?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. So indeed, a chief officer level?
 7 A. By chief officer, the top rank, so for police, fire,
 8 it'd be chief, deputy ACFO.
 9 Q. And to be fair to GMFRS, during your time on the
 10 resilience forum, GMFRS achieved that?
 11 A. Usually.
 12 Q. That's the first key point, high level representation:
 13 "Secondly, membership should involve those who will
 14 actually form part of the SCG."
 15 Whilst fully understanding your point that you can't
 16 be certain that the members will necessarily be on duty
 17 at the time of an emergency, but there ought to be
 18 representation of people who fall within that cadre of
 19 people?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. The policing experts have observed, and I'll ask you
 22 whether you agree with this, the reason for the second
 23 of those key points is that the senior leaders should
 24 know each other and should know the high level
 25 multi-agency plans and arrangements agreed by the LRF

1 for serious emergencies and will have exercised together
 2 to prepare for their strategic emergency role; does that
 3 seem fair?
 4 A. It does.
 5 Q. Against that background, I hope we're going to be able
 6 to look at a chart which sets out who attended the
 7 meetings from GMP and BTP, the meetings of the
 8 resilience forum I'm talking about, in the 2 years or so
 9 prior to the arena attack. This chart is taken from the
 10 report of the policing experts, but I know that you've
 11 seen it. {INQ032363/52}. The internal page is 49.
 12 Mr Lopez, you should be looking for {INQ032363/52}.
 13 (Pause)
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do we know if we've lost communication
 15 with Mr Lopez? No doubt we'll find out in a minute.
 16 Mr Suter may be making enquiries.
 17 MR GREANEY: I'll just bear with Mr Suter for a moment
 18 because it is better that we have the document on the
 19 screen rather than people listening to me read it out.
 20 (Pause)
 21 I'll give the reference again. The document, I'll
 22 give that reference and then the page reference, the
 23 reference is INQ032363, and I know this is the correct
 24 reference because I'm looking at the document itself,
 25 INQ032363, page 52, by which I mean the INQ page 52 of

1 that {INQ032363/52}.

2 (Pause)

3 Sir, I'm satisfied that I can deal with this without

4 causing you to rise. We'll look at the actual document

5 in due course, but you know what I'm talking about,

6 don't you, Mr Argyle?

7 A. Yes, I do.

8 Q. And really what I wanted your comment about was not GMP

9 attendance, although I know the experts will have

10 something to say about that, it's really your

11 contribution to the attendance of BTP.

12 In the 2 years or so before the arena attack there

13 were meetings of the top tier on the following

14 occasions: 13 March 2015, 19 June 2015,

15 23 September 2015, 11 December 2015, 10 March 2016,

16 21 July 2016, 16 September 2016, 9 December 2016 and

17 most proximately to the arena attack, 27 March 2017. So

18 we can see that the meetings are indeed quarterly, as

19 you described.

20 As for British Transport Police, they attended only

21 three of those meetings.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Out of eight?

23 MR GREANEY: Is it eight or nine? There are nine meetings.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

25 MR GREANEY: They attended three of the nine meetings.

1 There we are, it's on the screen, so people will be

2 able to check what I'm saying.

3 They attended three of the meetings. On

4 23 September 2015, they attended by Chief Inspector

5 Andrea Graham. On 10 March by Inspector Michelle

6 Wedderburn, 2016. And on 21 July 2016, by Graham Fair

7 and Inspector Peter Cooper. So it appears to be the

8 case that having attended three of nine meetings, on

9 only one occasion did an officer above the rank of

10 inspector attend, and that was a chief inspector.

11 So on no occasion did the chief officer attend,

12 which may, let me say immediately, have been explicable

13 because BTP is a national force and one could see it

14 would be too much to ask a chief officer to attend every

15 meeting of every local resilience forum. But the local

16 superintendent of BTP did not attend, it appears, on any

17 of those three of nine occasions.

18 At the time, you were chair, so would you have been

19 present at all or most of these meetings?

20 A. The screen's just gone half blank. Could you tell me

21 that date of the first meeting you're referencing?

22 Q. 13 March 2015, so that would be just before you became

23 chair.

24 A. I'd have attended that one and -- sorry, just remind me.

25 It's difficult not seeing the screen. Remind me of the

1 dates, sorry.

2 Q. March 2015, June 2015 --

3 A. Yes. From June 2015 onwards I was the chair.

4 Q. You were the chair. So as chair would you inevitably

5 have been at those meetings?

6 A. Yes, I think I attended every meeting where I was chair,

7 where I was due to be chair, and I attended all of them.

8 Q. At the time did it strike you that BTP did not attend on

9 the majority of the occasions that there were meetings?

10 A. From memory, we did always seek attendance and would be

11 disappointed if people didn't attend. Looking at that

12 now, clearly I would have been disappointed and wanted

13 attendance from BTP.

14 Q. Would it be reasonable for someone to suggest that not

15 only would you have been disappointed that there was not

16 regular attendance, indeed there was irregular

17 attendance, but also where there was regular attendance,

18 that was not at what might be described as a very senior

19 level?

20 A. Yes, just from your point as a national organisation,

21 I wouldn't fully understand the rank structure.

22 Of course I've got a good understanding of uniformed

23 organisations and, taking NWS as an example, in the

24 same vein the chief of NWS wouldn't attend, but the

25 most senior officer responsible for the

1 Greater Manchester part of NWS would, and that would

2 seem reasonable. So similarly, I would expect a senior

3 GMP representative in terms of the Greater Manchester

4 context to attend.

5 Q. BTP I think.

6 A. Sorry, BTP, yes.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And did you express your disappointment

8 to anyone at a more senior level in BTP or did you keep

9 your disappointment to yourself?

10 A. Personally, I did not contact BTP. At the end of the

11 meeting we would check whether there were -- during the

12 meeting, apologies or no--shows. We always sent the

13 papers and then the minutes to the nominated person, not

14 the person who attended, the nominated senior person,

15 and intermittently, if it came to a point, we would

16 encourage attendance. I can't remember specifically.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think there aren't apologies at all of

18 them. There's the odd no--show. In the majority I think

19 there were apologies. The list has now gone.

20 A. This is generic. Of course with an operational officer,

21 if I was the attendee -- when I was the attendee not the

22 chair, and if I'd got deployed to an incident, I could

23 not attend. But even in that scenario you would ring up

24 and say, "Look, I can't go, get somebody to go on my

25 behalf". That would be reasonable, but that routine

1 regularity would seem coincidental.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 3 MR GREANEY: We have dealt with your feeling of
 4 disappointment about the attendance of BTP. There are
 5 two other features I'll ask you about.
 6 The first of those is that I think, and having said
 7 that inevitably I'll be wrong, but I think that of those
 8 who attended the meetings over that period of 2 or so
 9 years, none of the people from GMP and BTP who attended
 10 formed any part of the command structure, by which
 11 I mean Gold, Silver or Bronze, on the night of the arena
 12 attack, although Chief Inspector Andrea Graham was there
 13 at some stage. And if that's correct, would it be fair
 14 to say that that doesn't really accord with what was
 15 anticipated about the resilience forum?
 16 A. To a lesser or greater degree. So if it was in front of
 17 me, it would help me. But for example, I know Assistant
 18 Chief Constable O'Hare attended some of those meetings.
 19 Q. Yes, two of them.
 20 A. I don't know when he retired, but he would be the right
 21 level of person to (a) attend the GMRF, that would be
 22 appropriate.
 23 Q. Yes, I quite accept that.
 24 A. And he could have been the police Gold on the night and
 25 could have been — if he had been rostered, he could

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1 have been the Gold officer for policing that night.
 2 Q. I do understand what you are saying. It may be just be
 3 pure happenchance that in fact no person who attended
 4 from the police at any of these meetings formed part of
 5 the command structure, but would it be fair to put it
 6 this way, that that seems rather unfortunate?
 7 A. Put it this way, hopefully I'm being helpful. At the
 8 time I was in the Fire Service, at that time we had
 9 four, I'd say, Gold officers, and I was the
 10 representative — and when I was the representative
 11 rather than the chair of the Fire Service, there was
 12 a 1:4 chance that I would be on the SCG if there was
 13 a major incident in the immediacy. The police are
 14 a bigger organisation so they'll have more Gold
 15 officers, so if they had the luxury of one regular
 16 attendee at the GMRF that might be a 1:6 or 1:7 chance
 17 that they would be the immediate Gold officer.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And the point of your meetings was, no
 19 doubt, when you went to a meeting, something was
 20 decided, you'd make sure that the people in a similar
 21 position to you were well aware of anything so they
 22 could implement it if they were the one that had the 25%
 23 chance?
 24 A. (No audible answer).
 25 MR GREANEY: Sir, thank you for your help in relation to

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1 that first question I had.
 2 The second question — and you may have covered some
 3 of this ground earlier. In fact I think you have. NWFC
 4 didn't attend any of these meetings during that period
 5 of time?
 6 A. No.
 7 Q. The reason for that, no doubt, is the reason that you
 8 gave earlier, namely that they were effectively
 9 represented by the presence of a GMFRS representative?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Thank you. That's all of the questions I wanted to ask
 12 you about that fourth topic, the attendance of
 13 organisations.
 14 Fifth and finally, and we'll finish this in five or
 15 so minutes, your involvement on the night of the attack.
 16 On 22 May 2017, you in fact were on leave and out of the
 17 country; is that correct?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Although you were taking part in a conference that was
 20 related to your work?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Where you were at the time — I don't think there's any
 23 problem with saying this, you were in Mexico at the
 24 time?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What a nice place for a conference.
 2 A. It was a global summit, sir.
 3 MR GREANEY: You and I tried to work out how far behind
 4 Mexico was at that time and it was somewhere in the
 5 region of 5 or 6 hours.
 6 A. Yes, I believe they had different time zones, so we were
 7 in the region of Cancún.
 8 Q. So it was about 4.30 in the afternoon or 5.30 in the
 9 afternoon, your time in Mexico, when the arena attack
 10 occurred?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. You're looking doubtful at my mathematics.
 13 A. I think I've said — I think it was 5 hours, so it would
 14 have been about 5.30, but I accept it could have been
 15 an hour either way.
 16 Q. It really doesn't matter, I don't suppose, but about
 17 5.30. Anyway, you did become aware of the fact that the
 18 attack had taken place, did you not?
 19 A. Yes, at some stage, yes.
 20 Q. Did you then become engaged in messaging with senior
 21 colleagues at GMFRS via a WhatsApp group?
 22 A. Just to help, that was the first official day of the
 23 conference. We would be taken to the conference and
 24 when we were in the conference facility, there may have
 25 been Wi-Fi, and about that time would seem to me the

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1 time the conference would end, you'd get on a bus and be
 2 taken round eventually to your hotel. So there would be
 3 gaps when I will have not had access to Wi-Fi. Yes,
 4 I did engage in some WhatsApp messages.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was it the WhatsApp message that alerted
 6 you to the fact that the attack had taken place?
 7 A. I honestly can't remember if either it was a WhatsApp
 8 message or I saw something on social media, I really
 9 don't know.
 10 MR GREANEY: We'll look at the messages in more detail when
 11 you return. But just to identify this fact so we can
 12 have it in mind when we look at certain other events:
 13 what we can say is that in the messages that you were
 14 involved in, at 00.57 hours -- so would that be 00.57 UK
 15 time?
 16 A. I believe so.
 17 Q. You sent a message in which you suggested that
 18 a strategic coordinating group should be initiated?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. You received a response from CFO Peter O'Reilly at
 21 01.26 hours to say that an SCG had been arranged for
 22 2.30 in the morning?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. And shortly before that, at 01.57 hours, you sent
 25 a further message to suggest who you thought should be

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1 involved in the SCG?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. In due course, I think you were asked to cut short your
 4 trip to Mexico to come back in order to assist with the
 5 aftermath of the attack.
 6 A. Yes.
 7 MR GREANEY: And we'll turn to deal with all of that when
 8 you return. Mr Argyle, thank you very much indeed for
 9 helping by answering my questions. There will be
 10 further questions, but I suspect after lunch.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: 2.05.
 12 MR GREANEY: Thank you, sir.
 13 (1.03 pm)
 14 (The lunch adjournment)
 15 (2.05 pm)
 16 MR GREANEY: Sir, thank you very much. First of all, before
 17 we start with the questions of core participants, I'm
 18 asked just to ask Mr Lopez whether he can hear us within
 19 the hearing room and to indicate one way or another if
 20 he can, please.
 21 (Pause)
 22 Mr Suter will check via the internet what the
 23 position is, but in the meantime --
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it must be my fault. This
 25 worked perfectly when I was working remotely, but now

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1 I'm here, it seems to have developed a glitch.
 2 MR GREANEY: I wouldn't say it worked perfectly, but it
 3 worked better. Mr Suter has popped out of the room, I'm
 4 not going to take up any more time. We will turn to the
 5 questioning of core participants. I'm going to identify
 6 those who submitted Rule 10 documents and our current
 7 understanding of the position.
 8 Greater Manchester Police submitted such a document,
 9 but Mr Horwell has indicated that he has no questions at
 10 this stage. But when the witness returns, he may have
 11 a question or questions.
 12 NWS also submitted a Rule 10 document, but again my
 13 understanding is that they have no questions of the
 14 witness at this stage.
 15 North West Fire Control submitted a very full and
 16 helpful Rule 10 request and I'm told that they do have
 17 questions on one particular topic. So if Mr Smith is
 18 with us, I'm going to ask him to ask his questions at
 19 this stage, please.
 20 Questions from MR SMITH
 21 MR SMITH: Thank you. May I ask one aspect by way of
 22 clarification of the question that Mr Greaney asked of
 23 you, Mr Argyle, and that relates to the contractual
 24 arrangements with North West Fire Control.
 25 I don't want in any way to assume that you have

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1 knowledge of the agreement, but could you just confirm,
 2 please, that in terms of the arrangement that was set up
 3 in May 2014, when North West Fire Control went live, you
 4 had been involved, hadn't you, for some time in making
 5 preparations for that stage?
 6 A. Yes, that's right.
 7 Q. Were you aware that there was brought into being
 8 a contract for the services that North West Fire Control
 9 were going to provide to the various fire authorities?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. I'm just going to read to you, because this document is
 12 not listed, but for the chairman's purposes I'm only
 13 going to identify the inquiry reference number. So
 14 I simply want to read two sentences, but I don't need
 15 you to look at the document. The reference number is
 16 {INQ000933/1}.
 17 One of the provisions of the agreement read as
 18 follows:
 19 "The company shall deal with authority resource
 20 mobilisation and incident support in accordance with the
 21 mobilising policies and procedures supplied to it from
 22 time to time by the authority."
 23 I don't know whether that is familiar to you at this
 24 distance in time, Mr Argyle.
 25 A. It makes sense.

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1 Q. The practical effect of it was this, wasn't it, that the
 2 individual fire authorities would supply to North West
 3 Fire Control their mobilising procedures and policies,
 4 and North West Fire Control was contractually obliged to
 5 apply those policies and procedures in accordance with
 6 the material provided to them by the fire authority?
 7 MR GREANEY: Just before Mr Argyle answers that question,
 8 Mr Smith, I'm extremely sorry to interrupt you, but
 9 I have heard that there is a problem with at least one
 10 person who wishes to and is entitled to view the
 11 proceedings gaining access. So with our apologies,
 12 Mr Smith, we're going to ask you to pause for as long as
 13 it takes to resolve that problem.
 14 (Pause)
 15 MR SMITH: I will take that again, Mr Argyle, if I may,
 16 because I appreciate that this may not be entirely
 17 expected by you. As I say, I just seek clarification .
 18 Did you understand therefore that the position was that
 19 North West Fire Control was contractually required to
 20 mobilise GMFRS resources and provide incident support in
 21 accordance with GMFRS' mobilising policies and
 22 procedures?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Just two more matters arising out of your evidence on
 25 this. You explained to the inquiry that in 2014 the

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1 company was staffed by members of the fire services or
 2 former members of the fire services, and that control
 3 room operators and other members of staff had come from
 4 the four fire and rescue authorities; is that correct?
 5 A. A large amount did and I believe they also needed to
 6 recruit some new staff to be operators.
 7 Q. Of course. But was it your understanding that the
 8 senior operations manager, the operations manager, the
 9 team leaders and many of the control room staff had
 10 already been employed within fire authority control
 11 rooms?
 12 A. Yes, specifically the four who made up the partnership.
 13 Q. And the four who made up the partnership, just for
 14 clarity, obviously GMFRS, but also Cheshire Fire
 15 Authority?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. Lancashire Combined Fire Authority?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And Cumbria County Council?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Was it your understanding that Merseyside was an
 22 exception and operated and continued to operate its own
 23 control room with the police?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Thank you for that.

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1 All that remains is for me to ask you one or two
 2 questions about Exercise Winchester Accord and the role
 3 of GMRF. I think you've explained in your first
 4 statement that the partners within GMRF come together to
 5 form what is known as the Training and Exercising
 6 Coordination Group; is that correct?
 7 A. They will do when required, yes.
 8 Q. And the purpose, you explained, of that group is to
 9 ensure that multi-agency exercises are developed to
 10 promote the principles of interoperability ?
 11 A. Yes, and that will emanate from discussions that the
 12 Resilience Development Group — and they will then
 13 specifically ask the Training and Exercising
 14 Coordinating Group to run exercises.
 15 Q. As far as Exercise Winchester Accord is concerned,
 16 I wonder if Mr Lopez could put on the screen for you to
 17 be reminded of {INQ001250/2}.
 18 This is the corporate exercise schedule for Exercise
 19 Winchester Accord. It's the very first paragraph that
 20 I would like to draw your attention to. It reads as
 21 follows:
 22 "NWFC will not be required to mobilise any GMFRS
 23 resources to this exercise or undertake any liaison with
 24 MFRS Fire Control. All resources (GMFRS and MFRS)
 25 allocated to this exercise have previously been

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1 nominated and will be prepositioned at the exercise
 2 briefing location."
 3 Mr Argyle, I fully appreciate that you were not
 4 aware of the preparation for Exercise Winchester Accord.
 5 I think that's correct, isn't it?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. But it follows, doesn't it, that the obvious reason why
 8 the Fire control room at North West Fire Control was not
 9 involved in this exercise was because all the resources
 10 were prepositioned for the purposes of the exercise?
 11 A. It seems to me from what you've just shown me, they were
 12 prepositioned at a location where they were going to get
 13 a briefing, so yes, they would not have been — well,
 14 would not have been at their normal location.
 15 Q. Would there be no scope for the involvement of
 16 North West Fire Control in those circumstances?
 17 A. I can only answer generically. North West Fire Control
 18 could be involved or not be involved. So I could think
 19 of two scenarios in what I have just read for the first
 20 time. One that the fire engines, et cetera, are at
 21 a predetermined briefing point and they could be
 22 mobilised from there to the incident and a control room
 23 could act, as in real life, to take messages, pass
 24 messages, or, as I am having to infer from what I've
 25 read there, they were not involved.

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1 Q. Well, the result would be, do you agree, that in that
2 exercise what would not be tested was how the control
3 room would respond to such an emergency?
4 A. From what you've just shown me, that would seem to be
5 the case for North West Fire Control and I don't know if
6 they used Merseyside Fire Control or not.
7 Q. Do you consider that control room response, control room
8 preparedness and effectiveness in a multi-agency context
9 is an important part, and was an important part at that
10 time, of training and exercising?
11 A. Yes, and it always is, and I think I've tried to
12 describe there -- clearly, as I have been led through
13 this morning, there's a whole range of exercises over
14 a period of time and whoever designs those exercises
15 designs what the aims and objectives are and then
16 designs the exercise to deliver that. Something else
17 I alluded to that sometimes would be a benefit of more
18 formally contacting the GMRF would be for the GMRF to
19 offer advice on widening the scope and assisting in
20 inviting other participants in a training event.
21 So sometimes Control may be involved in an exercise
22 and sometimes they might not, but it is clear that they
23 do need exercising to the required amount.
24 Q. And it is not just a question, is it, of Fire Control
25 from the control room simply deploying resources? Can

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1 I explain to you why I ask that question.
2 A. Please.
3 Q. If problems arise in terms of communication between
4 GMFRS officers on the ground, North West Fire Control is
5 one route available to try to iron out those
6 communication problems; do you agree?
7 A. It is.
8 Q. Therefore would you agree for that reason it's important
9 that any fire authority works to ensure that its fire
10 control room does appropriate and engages in appropriate
11 training and exercising in conjunction with multi-agency
12 operations?
13 A. Yes. That may not be on every exercise, but they should
14 be involved in an appropriate amount of exercises in the
15 full scope of their remit.
16 MR SMITH: Thank you very much, Mr Argyle. Thank you, sir.
17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much, Mr Smith.
18 At the moment I think you hold the record for the
19 most books!
20 MR SMITH: I hold the record for?
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Most books behind you.
22 MR SMITH: Thank you. I thought that's what you said and
23 I just sought clarification. I probably do, yes.
24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I hope you've read them all!
25 Mr Argyle, I do understand that some of that was

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1 a document that you hadn't seen before. By all means,
2 when you've left, do check up on any documentation
3 relating to Winchester Accord and if there's any more
4 information you can supply to us about that, feel
5 entirely free to do so.
6 A. Thank you, sir.
7 MR GREANEY: We're turning now to questions on behalf of the
8 families. Mr Atkinson is going to take the lead
9 in relation to Mr Argyle, and can I just indicate,
10 before he starts his questions, for the benefit of
11 Mr Lopez, I do know that Mr Atkinson has a number of
12 documents that he wishes to be shown on the screen.
13 Mr Atkinson.
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A very poor number of books for you,
15 Mr Atkinson.
16 Questions from MR ATKINSON
17 MR ATKINSON: I could move my camera to show more, sir.
18 Mr Argyle, can you both hear and see me and my
19 inadequate library?
20 A. Yes, thank you.
21 Q. As you will understand, Mr Argyle, first, I ask
22 questions on behalf of the bereaved families and,
23 second, that at this stage I'm going to be asking for
24 your help on their behalf in relation to how GMRF was
25 operating at the time you were its chairman rather than

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1 looking at lessons that could be learned looking back,
2 particularly at its training exercises. All right?
3 A. Yes.
4 Q. I wonder if, to test if it's working, Mr Lopez, we could
5 have {INQ018894/1} back up, please.
6 Is this right, this is the version of the
7 Cabinet Office's guidance as to the role of a local
8 resilience forum that was in place at the time that
9 you were the chairman of one?
10 A. To the best of my knowledge, yes.
11 Q. You were taken to page 3, and just so that we get our
12 bearings, I wonder, Mr Lopez, if we could go to page 3,
13 please, and to paragraph 3 {INQ018894/3}.
14 We can there see "Responsibilities of an LRF":
15 "Best fulfilled where the LRF is organised as
16 a collaborative mechanism for delivery equipped to
17 achieve the mutual aims and outcomes agreed by the
18 member organisations, able to monitor its own progress
19 and strengths, and active in identifying and developing
20 necessary improvements."
21 Breaking that down, does it follow, Mr Argyle, that
22 you saw it as the role of the GMRF when you were its
23 chair to bring these organisations together so that they
24 could talk to each other and collaborate with each other
25 first?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. To encourage training exercises between them and, where
 3 necessary, facilitate those and also the learning from
 4 them?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And that the GMRF very much had a role in identifying
 7 things that could be done better?
 8 A. As a resilience forum, yes.
 9 Q. So looking at what particularly the primary responders
 10 were dealing with and areas where they would need to
 11 work with each other and work out if they could do it,
 12 with their cooperation, of course, better?
 13 A. Could you just say that again, please?
 14 Q. Yes, of course. Identifying what they were doing and,
 15 where they were doing it with each other, how they could
 16 do it better, if they could?
 17 A. I'd just qualify that. It is not possible for that
 18 forum to fully monitor the approaches, policies,
 19 procedures and strategies of all those organisations.
 20 What it would do is bring people together to have that
 21 combined assessment of risk and understanding and to
 22 operate together and to try to identify where better
 23 cooperation and coordination could deliver an improved
 24 response. It wouldn't go into the detail of analysing
 25 the tactical approaches of an organisation.

1 Q. In that regard did the GMRF operate on the basis that
 2 where there was a necessary sharing of expertise
 3 in relation to such tactical issues, that would be
 4 happening as well as whatever you were doing?
 5 A. Yes. The duty, of course, lies with each organisation
 6 and it is for those organisations to share information
 7 with each other in lots of other ways, not specifically
 8 through the resilience forum, but to be able to operate
 9 together in any case. So it is a duty under the Civil
 10 Contingencies Act that they do that. They don't have to
 11 come to the resilience forum to do that, and we couldn't
 12 cope with every agency telling us everything they need
 13 to do together in every way. It is at a higher level of
 14 cooperation and coordination.
 15 Q. So does it follow that a lot of the multi-agency
 16 planning that needed to happen for particular types of
 17 situation inevitably happened outside the GMRF?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And without the GMRF knowing one way or the other
 20 whether that was in fact happening or not?
 21 A. Of course the agencies and organisations are the GMRF,
 22 so the agency that knows something is part of the GMRF
 23 and, if necessary, brings that to the attention of other
 24 partners of the GMRF, but the formal top tier meeting
 25 that meets four times a year and the sub-groups do not

1 monitor or audit all the activities that go on in all
 2 those huge organisations.
 3 Q. In that regard, the same document, Mr Lopez,
 4 {INQ018894/10}, please.
 5 It's the top paragraph on this page, please.
 6 There it says:
 7 "It is important that the LRF monitors success in
 8 achieving meaningful collaboration identifying
 9 exceptions and, where necessary, taking action to
 10 resolve the issue."
 11 Do we understand that that again comes with the
 12 caveat that there will be any number of areas,
 13 particularly tactical situations, where the GMRF would
 14 in fact have no role in achieving meaningful
 15 collaboration, identifying exceptions or taking action
 16 to resolve issues?
 17 A. Unless they were resorted to, no, they would not be
 18 aware of a vast array of issues in different
 19 organisations that were being dealt with at those
 20 levels.
 21 Q. Or identifying issues that were not being dealt with at
 22 those levels but needed to be?
 23 A. Not in what one might consider an auditing sense.
 24 It would be if they became apparent either through an
 25 incident or an exercise or in the preparation of a plan

1 or process or if an agency felt they needed to raise
 2 something.
 3 Q. So the onus in each of those situations, is this right,
 4 would be on an agency that identified an issue
 5 in relation to its collaboration with another agency,
 6 raising that with the GMRF as an issue that needed to be
 7 dealt with?
 8 A. I suppose coming from two angles, the GMRF in each
 9 relevant cycle will start from the national planning
 10 assumptions and national risk assessment, analyse those
 11 risks, and mutually agree if we have the plans,
 12 processes and capabilities to address those risks. If
 13 in that top-down sense we identify a gap or something
 14 new or a new need, that would inspire a top-down
 15 decision to fill that gap. That is built on that
 16 national risk assessment, but it's built on years and
 17 years of experience and existing plans and procedures
 18 that have been used in numerous incidents as well as
 19 exercises.
 20 If something new occurred that was discovered, let's
 21 call it from the bottom up or from within an
 22 organisation rather than that top tier looking down,
 23 I would assume they would aim to resolve it themselves
 24 if they could.
 25 If it was in that sense two organisations who

1 develop, they're working together and they come across
 2 a problem, they have a duty to share and cooperate and
 3 try to resolve that issue, and I would hope that they
 4 would resolve it or, if it became apparent that that
 5 issue was not being resolved and could affect
 6 a coordinated response to an emergency or incident or
 7 major incident, then that needs to be escalated to the
 8 GMRF.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do you mind if I interrupt you,
 10 Mr Atkinson, just for a moment?
 11 MR ATKINSON: Not at all, sir.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It may come as a bit of a surprise to
 13 some of us that the lessons learnt and the discussions
 14 from Winchester Accord were not shared with your
 15 organisation. One of your functions must be, mustn't
 16 it, where someone's identified collaboration not working
 17 properly, as Winchester Accord did, that you are the
 18 people who have to make — if people had come to you and
 19 said, "It's not working properly, please sort it out",
 20 surely it must be down to you to be saying, if you knew
 21 them, "There were these problems with Winchester Accord,
 22 have you started sorting them out"?
 23 A. Yes. If I could just expand.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Please.
 25 A. As I mentioned earlier, as I understand it, and I have

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1 seen, there were two debriefs. The debrief we were
 2 sighted on about the strategic coordinating centre,
 3 there were learning points issued, learning points and
 4 issues that went well and then recommendations to
 5 resolve the issues. Those are then passed, normally,
 6 through to the RDG to say, "Do we agree these are the
 7 learning points? We now need to design a solution which
 8 is the recommendation and delivery of the
 9 recommendation", and that is allocated to someone. So
 10 that is fully sighted to GMRF. They've seen the
 11 debrief, they've seen the learning point, it is put into
 12 a learning loop and that is progressed.
 13 With the other debrief, which was of the emergency
 14 response, that was not visible to GMRF. Of course they
 15 knew the exercise was going on because they chose — it
 16 was instigated by GMP but GMRF chose to add on to the
 17 exercise to test the SCC. So they knew an exercise was
 18 operating, they knew that they wanted to test an SCC so
 19 added that into the exercise and said, "We will debrief
 20 that because that is our aims and objective of this, to
 21 test an SCC".
 22 If that hadn't come to the attention of the GMRF and
 23 they hadn't added that part of the exercise on, that
 24 exercise would have still gone ahead and the GMRF, and
 25 I know I keep saying the GMRF is all the agencies, but

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1 let's say the members who attended the top tier may not
 2 have known that exercise had run and only if somebody
 3 alerted either an individual, probably escalating within
 4 their own organisation or feeling they needed to
 5 escalate that to the GMRF to say, "This exercise ran
 6 over here, you weren't formally engaged in that but we
 7 think there's a significant learning point that needs
 8 the GMRF's assistance to resolve" —
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. It's a learning point about
 10 collaboration; that's the important point, isn't it?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which you are the people responsible
 13 for?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, Mr Atkinson.
 16 MR ATKINSON: Not at all.
 17 We'll come on to learning points from, for example,
 18 Winchester Accord, when we next see you, but did it
 19 strike you at the time that it was a bit pot luck as to
 20 whether issues got referred to the GMRF that had come up
 21 from training exercises or not?
 22 A. It's hard to know because you don't know what
 23 you haven't been told. The GMRF, as the actual top tier
 24 meeting, met four times a year with strategic partners
 25 with a broad agenda. All the exercises that I was

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1 walked through earlier as part of my statement — what
 2 I would be fairly confident to say is that all of those
 3 exercises will have had learning points and
 4 recommendations. If all of those learning points and
 5 recommendations were put on to the agenda of the GMRF,
 6 then there would be no other business, there would be no
 7 time for any other business, and in fact that would
 8 become a very senior training exercising meeting only,
 9 and there is a very broad agenda to deal with, which is
 10 why it's really important that the relevant and
 11 strategic points are brought out to debriefs to put them
 12 in the appropriate focus and to ensure that the learning
 13 point from a debrief is triangulated and understood,
 14 agreed so that a good solution can be made.
 15 But from your question, it could be that that is
 16 relying on people in those debriefs or analysing those
 17 debriefs or receiving those reports to do something with
 18 that and bring that forward if that is what is
 19 necessary.
 20 Q. There are a number of points in that answer that we'll
 21 just explore briefly, if we may, Mr Argyle. In terms of
 22 the results of debriefs, would they go, if they went to
 23 the GMRF at all, would they go direct to the first tier
 24 group or would they go to the training and exercises
 25 coordination working group in the first instance?

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1 A. To the best of my knowledge, often those two groups
2 overlapped and the majority of the work would go into
3 the Resilience and Development Group. It may go on both
4 agendas but the work would go to the Resilience
5 Development Group to say, here's the debrief, have we
6 got the right people in the room to agree the actions to
7 resolve the learning points, and they would typically
8 allocate actions and owners would take those actions
9 away to report back, to deliver and report back, and
10 then the Resilience Development Group would report that
11 back to the GMRF and say, here's the debrief, here are
12 the learning points, these actions are being progressed
13 this way.

14 Q. In relation to that, you told us this morning that when
15 you were the Fire Service's representative on the GMRF
16 you would not routinely meet with the representative of
17 the Fire Service that was on the RDG. Was that, as you
18 gathered at the time, unusual to the Fire Service or was
19 that normal that there would be a potential disconnect
20 between the first tier and the subgroup membership of
21 a service?

22 A. I don't think I can comment how other organisations did
23 that because I genuinely wouldn't know. What I would
24 say is the people who attended those meetings I would
25 meet with regularly but not to say, "We're now having

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1 a meeting about your work on the RDG". They would be
2 officers who I would often meet with or they could bring
3 issues to me.

4 Q. The second thing flowing from what you said a moment or
5 two ago in relation to attendance at the first tier
6 meetings.

7 Mr Lopez, I wonder if we can try and show Mr Argyle
8 the document that Mr Greaney was hoping to show him this
9 morning, {INQ018894/11}.

10 This is that Cabinet Office document on the role of
11 the LRF again, all right? If we enlarge the lower half
12 of the page, this is a list of requirements, Mr Argyle,
13 which were divided into different coloured categories.
14 The red category is those that are mandated by the
15 regulations under the Civil Contingencies Act and then
16 we'll move on to some yellow ones, which are thought to
17 be best practice. All right?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. So we can see that the first of these mandatory
20 requirements is something you've alluded to a number of
21 times, which is that:

22 "Category 1 responders must cooperate with each
23 other in connection with the performance of their duties
24 under the Civil Contingencies Act."

25 That is what you have been telling us. Whether they

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1 were taking it to the GMRF or not, they had
2 an obligation to cooperate with each other?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. If we can go on to the next page, please,
5 {INQ018894/12}, and if we can enlarge probably
6 two-thirds of the way down the page, we can see this is
7 under the yellow heading, these are best practice, and
8 we can see five boxes up from the bottom — five down
9 from the top, the LRF itself is a strategic group.

10 A. Yes. I can see that, yes.

11 Q. Excellent. So the LRF itself is a strategic group and
12 should attract a sufficiently senior level of
13 representation. That's the point that Mr Greaney was
14 seeking to take you to before. The reality is that
15 under the regulations and under the guidance, each
16 category 1 agency within the GMRF had to attend its
17 meetings, it was a mandatory requirement that it attend
18 its meetings and that it do so at a sufficiently senior
19 level.

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. And that is what you expected when you joined as
22 a representative of the Fire Service and certainly what
23 you expected when you were its chair?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. It has been touched on already, but the BTP missed more

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1 meetings than it hit in terms of the GMRF in the time
2 that you were its chair before the events of May 2017,
3 didn't it?

4 A. Yes, from what I've been shown, yes.

5 Q. And it was recognised, and I can take you to it if
6 it would help, under the GMRF's multi-agency generic
7 response plan, it was recognised that the BTP had a role
8 akin to the GMP, depending on where an incident
9 happened?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. So it had as much of a role to play in addressing
12 multi-agency issues as anyone else?

13 A. Yes, as you've said, if it's an incident where they
14 would be a responder, yes.

15 Q. So given it was a requirement that they attend, should
16 not more have been done about the fact that they weren't
17 coming?

18 A. Attendance is sought, issues are chased up to encourage
19 attendance, agendas are set to encourage attendance, and
20 if there is a lack of attendance, I suppose it is fair
21 to say that you could always do more to try and force
22 a better level of attendance.

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Were BTP the worst offenders in not
24 coming or can't you remember?

25 A. I can't remember. I'd have to analyse the minutes.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 2 MR ATKINSON: And equally, both in relation to that force
 3 and the GMP, more often than not if there was someone
 4 there, they were not of an SCG level of seniority, were
 5 they?
 6 A. When we use — although it does say in what we've got on
 7 there chief constable, deputy chief constable, I would
 8 think it appropriate for there to be a chief constable,
 9 deputy chief or assistant chief, but you're right, on
 10 a few occasions or several occasions a lower ranking
 11 officer attended.
 12 Q. In fact, of those meetings that are on the list that
 13 you were taken to by Mr Greaney this morning, GMP only
 14 fielded an assistant chief constable on three out of the
 15 nine meetings. And in some instances they managed
 16 a superintendent and in some they didn't. Isn't the
 17 potential difficulty with that, Mr Argyle, that not only
 18 do you want the people who are attending your tier 1
 19 meetings to be people who could be part of an SCG if an
 20 incident arose but also people of a seniority where they
 21 can make sure that others in their organisation act on
 22 things that are identified by the GMRF?
 23 A. Yes. It is ideal if somebody can speak authoritatively
 24 and ensure that they take action into their organisation
 25 at the appropriate level to take the necessary action.

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1 Q. You were explaining this morning that it wasn't — the
 2 GMRF could not force one of its members to do something,
 3 but if a member of the group that was considering that
 4 at the GMRF was an assistant chief constable, they would
 5 have a good chance of making sure that it did happen.
 6 A. I think that's true, yes.
 7 Q. The third point arising from your answer, which I know
 8 was some little time ago now, with apologies. In terms
 9 of the workload of the GMRF, it'd be fair to say that it
 10 covered a good range of other things than the
 11 multi-agency planning for a particular incident?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Just to illustrate that, I wonder, Mr Lopez, if we could
 14 have {INQ012422/1}, please.
 15 This is the strategy and work programme for the GMRF
 16 for the period 2015 to 2017, and if we go to
 17 {INQ012422/2}, we can see that it was at a time when you
 18 had become chair because we have your smiling face on
 19 the foreword to the document.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. It's the next page I want to take you to, {INQ012422/3}.
 22 This is the contents. I wonder if we could slightly
 23 enlarge it so we can see it. You explained — in the
 24 foreword to this document, it set out the things that
 25 the GMRF was seeking to achieve over the next couple of

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1 years, the first 2 years of your chairmanship. We can
 2 see, can we not, a list of the areas that were the
 3 primary goals of GMRF in that period?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Mandated in part by, for example, material from the
 6 United Nations in relation to disaster resilience?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. We can see a whole series of things listed: making
 9 resilience, urban areas and disaster responses, and
 10 matters of that sort. Those were things that you and
 11 the GMRF were having to deal with in the 2015 to 2017
 12 period?
 13 A. The resilience agenda is very broad and this was our
 14 strategy to try to address that broad agenda.
 15 Q. So you had spent, and this is not a criticism, but you
 16 did in reality — your minutes show — spend a lot of
 17 time talking about things like resilience city agendas
 18 and disaster resilience and matters of that sort?
 19 A. Of course one of the whole points of a resilience forum
 20 is to develop a resilience city region and to be
 21 prepared for dealing with a disaster. That is one of
 22 the key points.
 23 Q. And to deal with issues like flooding, being another
 24 example?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Was one of the consequences of that, do you feel, that
 2 areas where the individual agencies within the GMRF
 3 would be accepted to be making their own plans, like
 4 emergency planning, were left to them so that GMRF could
 5 focus more on these national or international issues
 6 that were being put on your to-do list?
 7 A. No, I think two things are the same and overlap —
 8 aiming to have a resilient city region may sound like
 9 a national or international approach, but it's bringing
 10 that to make Greater Manchester a resilient city.
 11 There's not a distraction there, there's not
 12 a difference, it is just using language that is in
 13 different approaches and different views and then
 14 looking at learning — for example, learning from the
 15 terrorist attacks in Paris or Belgium or Africa — and
 16 saying, what is the learning there that we need to bring
 17 here, or look at the floodings in other places of the
 18 country or in other parts of the world where there is
 19 learning to make sure that we can work to make
 20 Greater Manchester the most resilient city region it
 21 could be dealing with all those complex issues.
 22 Q. But in terms of ensuring that the individual components
 23 of the GMRF, the various agencies that, as you've told
 24 us, you would expect to be carrying out collaborative
 25 work independently of you, was the reality that there

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1 was simply not enough time for the GMRF to monitor how
 2 they were doing that on top of the work that was coming
 3 into the meetings such as is listed on the screen in
 4 front of us?
 5 A. I slightly missed one word. Was it enough time?
 6 Q. Yes.
 7 A. I feel the way you're putting that to me is that they
 8 are two different things, but they are the same thing.
 9 Q. They're aspects of the same thing and you can focus on
 10 some rather than others is what I'm exploring with you.
 11 A. In a meeting you will not cover every aspect of the
 12 resilience agenda. That cannot be done. So different
 13 aspects are brought at different times.
 14 Q. Did you feel that to make it more effective in terms of
 15 genuinely achieving a multi-agency approach, the tier 1
 16 GMRF ought to meet more often?
 17 A. I think, as I said earlier, I wouldn't want people to
 18 get the impression that the majority of work is done at
 19 those meetings. The vast, vast, vast majority of work
 20 is done outside of those meetings, in between meetings,
 21 and by all the partner agencies, either individually or
 22 working collaboratively, and the agendas are brought
 23 forward at those meetings. As you've seen in that
 24 guidance, there's a minimum requirement of two a year.
 25 It is relatively normal practice to have four meetings

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1 a year. And there is a balance of — and I know you've
 2 already pointed out to me we didn't always get senior
 3 attendance from some agencies.
 4 If you have two regular meetings, you cannot get
 5 those senior officers necessarily to come to meetings
 6 far more often. You know, those officers had senior
 7 roles in other organisations and had to run those
 8 organisations. So it is a proportionate approach to
 9 have a structure that deals with work in between
 10 meetings and brings forward accounts of that work and
 11 pre-plan and looking forward to other work at those
 12 meetings.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How much would it help if you had the
 14 same people attending?
 15 A. I would say in my time as not chair and chair, you
 16 clearly saw more consistency in some organisations, and
 17 that's not necessarily a criticism of the others because
 18 they just rotate staff. It is helpful just to be
 19 familiar with people, it is helpful if they have a —
 20 they build up a greater background in some of those
 21 issues, which otherwise, if they're newly in post,
 22 of course they've got a background in partnership
 23 working, but they will be less experienced in some
 24 aspects than somebody who's attended those forums for
 25 a long time.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How long did these meetings take on
 2 average and how long were they diarised to take?
 3 A. Typically half a day, so a full morning or full
 4 afternoon.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 6 MR ATKINSON: Can I turn, Mr Argyle, to the question of risk
 7 assessments and the risk register. I wonder if we could
 8 have {INQ019168/1}, please.
 9 This is another Cabinet Office document. Is this
 10 the National Risk Register to which you were referring
 11 this morning or an iteration of it?
 12 A. (Overspeaking) at some of the other pages that this is
 13 the National Risk Register, which is — I'd have to look
 14 at it. I think it's the public-facing National Risk
 15 Register. Before that is the National Risk Assessment,
 16 which is the — it's had different classifications at
 17 different times: secret, classified document. This
 18 emanates from that, which would be the public-facing
 19 National Risk Register — in fact, if I could look at
 20 page 2 or 3, I think it would make that clear.
 21 Q. Yes. I was going to take you to page 42, but let's look
 22 at page 2 first to see if that helps {INQ019168/2}. And
 23 perhaps on another one {INQ019168/3}. Not the most
 24 helpful. One more {INQ019168/4}. There's the contents.
 25 I don't know if that helps you, Mr Argyle. Certainly

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1 this reads as a public-facing document.
 2 A. I think this is the public-facing document, yes.
 3 Q. So in the same way that GMRF were doing for Manchester,
 4 the Government nationally would be producing a document
 5 for its own purposes that would have more sensitive
 6 material in it and then a public-facing document that
 7 would tell the public, businesses and the like what were
 8 assessed as being the risks in a whole variety of areas
 9 and how they might be dealt with?
 10 A. Yes, and ours would tend to follow in a similar
 11 chronology, but after.
 12 Q. Yes. So if we could go, please, to {INQ019168/42}.
 13 This is within the context of a section on crowded
 14 places and on group gatherings. We can see on the
 15 left-hand side, "Terrorist attacks on crowded places".
 16 I'm not going to ask you to read it all, it's a section
 17 of the document that flags up as an issue, as a risk,
 18 the risk of a terrorist attack on a crowded place, what
 19 the risks are identified as being, and it goes on to
 20 deal with measures and places that people can find
 21 advice about dealing with those risks. All right?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. If we could then go to the GMRF counter-document just to
 24 see if we are talking about the same thing.
 25 {INQ008459/1}.

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1 Is this, Mr Argyle, the public-facing or the
 2 internal-looking version of the risk register?
 3 A. I can't quite tell from the cover.
 4 Q. Fair enough. Let's have a look a page or two on.
 5 {INQ008459/2}. Perhaps if we could enlarge the top of
 6 the page, that might help you. We can see it's marked
 7 "official and sensitive" at the bottom.
 8 A. Yes, that's making me feel this may be the internal
 9 document, but... I'd have to scroll down it to see,
 10 really.
 11 Q. If it helps you, the public-facing document Mr Greaney
 12 took you to this morning, the one that has lots of
 13 pictures in, is a different document to this but for the
 14 same time period. Does this look like it's the document
 15 produced by the GMRF to inform itself and its members as
 16 opposed to the general public?
 17 A. I think so, yes.
 18 Q. If we could go to {INQ008459/17} of this document,
 19 please. The two rows that aren't irrelevant and
 20 sensitive are both rows dealing with mass gatherings
 21 and, unless your eyes are much better than mine, you
 22 won't be able to see very much at the moment. I wonder
 23 if we could get it any larger.
 24 Doing my best to help you, the two rows that aren't
 25 redacted are dealing with mass gatherings, the first

1 in relation to festivals and sporting events where
 2 something happens at such an event and the second,
 3 public disorder, a riot, for example, and the risks that
 4 attend those.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. What this document from the GMRF doesn't deal with but
 7 the Government one had was terrorism. Is that dealt
 8 with separately or was that not dealt with as part of
 9 the Greater Manchester local register?
 10 A. Yes, I partly covered this this morning, but I think
 11 it's helpful if I recount that and, if necessary,
 12 expand. Starting from the national document, previous
 13 national documents actually tended to have a higher
 14 sensitivity marking, but actually still usually came in
 15 two parts: risks and hazards and, separately, threats.
 16 So terrorism would come under a threat. That would
 17 always tend to have a higher protective marking, would
 18 be kept in a locked safe at police headquarters, for
 19 example, and then relevant officers would get that out
 20 and do planning.
 21 So this created a subservient process of creating
 22 a risk register and the public-facing risk register that
 23 you showed, the national one, it is my understanding
 24 again used to be more silent on terrorism.
 25 In the document you've shown me, that approach

1 changed and in the national community risk -- in the
 2 risk register they started to include terrorism, both
 3 catastrophic and domestic terrorism.
 4 GMRF would receive those documents and react to
 5 them, do the local risk assessments, apply local
 6 knowledge and situations to those national risks and
 7 produce the community risk register, both the internal
 8 and external document, and it took us an extra iteration
 9 before we combined risks and threats into one
 10 public-facing document.
 11 Back to your point, this iteration still stuck with
 12 risks and hazards but didn't publicly address terrorism.
 13 But that isn't to say it wasn't assessed, it was.
 14 Still, as we always had done, we went through the risk
 15 assessment process of threats, that was led by Greater
 16 Manchester Police, because they had access to the
 17 sensitive information, understood the threats,
 18 understood the responses, and they would risk assess
 19 with other partners in a select group, analyse those
 20 threats, like terrorism, and analyse whether we have the
 21 capabilities necessary to address the threats.
 22 That would actually then still come to the
 23 Resilience Development Group and then GMRF to say,
 24 "We've done our threat assessments and do we agree that
 25 we can now move forward, that we've done our risk

1 assessments and we've done our threat assessments". As
 2 I've said, it took a couple of years for that combined
 3 approach to produce a public-facing document that has
 4 both in. Current iterations do, later ones than you've
 5 shown me. But that was a lag of catching up with that
 6 methodology, not of doing the risk assessment and threat
 7 assessment, but of publicly publishing some of that. So
 8 there had been a history of not publishing it, a period
 9 where we still didn't publish it, and now it is
 10 published.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. This is the inward-facing
 12 document, isn't it?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And it's not in there either.
 15 A. It is the risk assessment of the threats -- sorry,
 16 that's wrong. The risks and hazards -- it was
 17 separately done -- was the threat assessment, led by
 18 Greater Manchester Police.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 20 MR ATKINSON: Thank you, I'm going to move on again.
 21 In relation to a generic multi-agency response to an
 22 emergency or a major incident, GMRF did produce its
 23 generic response document and you were taken to it by
 24 Mr Greaney this morning.
 25 A. Yes.

1 Q. How much time at GMRF meetings was spent on going
 2 through that or was that all done at subgroup level?
 3 A. I don't think we would have gone through it at the
 4 meetings. That plan in particular, as I was asked this
 5 morning, developed over time with various versions added
 6 to, improved, et cetera. So it was developed in
 7 a multi-agency approach and the first iteration would
 8 have been signed off. When a new version is produced,
 9 that would be sent to the GMRF. The expectation would
 10 be that you would pre-read it and then the group would
 11 be asked to sign it off, ideally that you've pre-read it
 12 and only if you have points to raise, ie concerns, would
 13 you raise it and that would be fine and you would raise
 14 points.

15 But people should -- it's been developed in
 16 a subservient group, the Resilience and Development
 17 Group, where all the partners have been involved. It's
 18 pre-circulated, you read it, and if you were happy with
 19 that, you signed it off at that meeting.

20 So that will happen with each version if -- it's
 21 updated when it needs to be.

22 Q. Can you help us as to roughly how often it was updated?

23 A. Not really, no. It would be reviewed, but significant
 24 updates, I couldn't tell you when that would happen or
 25 why.

1 Q. By way of example, the threat of terrorism and the
 2 nature of that threat is a constantly evolving one.
 3 Would the GMRF go back to this plan as new threats or
 4 new modes of terrorism are identified to see what it
 5 could do, whether it needed to change its plan in the
 6 light of that?

7 A. Yes. Hopefully it's helpful for me to say -- and
 8 that is why it's called the generic plan -- is this is
 9 my belief, and I think this is accurate, the most
 10 commonly used. This is the plan. It is the bedrock of
 11 most responses and you open and use other specific plans
 12 depending on the incident. So this should be the plan
 13 that you're most familiar with and use the most. So you
 14 might amend it from a learning point, but if something
 15 significant and new came you would review: does this
 16 need to be in a generic plan or does the new thing need
 17 to go into a new specific plan?

18 For example, the generic response plan does have
 19 a section about terrorism. So whatever date that part
 20 was put into the plan, that would be an amendment to the
 21 plan that then would be agreed.

22 Q. In terms of the bedrock of the multi-agency plan that
 23 GMRF produced, its key component was the SCG, was it
 24 not?

25 A. There is significant guidance and support for the

1 development of an SCG. I feel a reader would feel that
 2 it is heavily helpful in helping you manage a large
 3 emergency, a major incident or an emergency requiring
 4 a multi-agency approach, and it would very often in any
 5 of those three scenarios I just said -- you would
 6 require to set up a command structure, which includes
 7 operational, tactical and strategic, so within that
 8 an SCG and a TCG. And as I've said earlier, incidents
 9 happen all day, every day, and although it's not rare,
 10 it is far rarer for a major incident to happen to
 11 require an SCG. And as I've said, whoever's the
 12 relevant officer in the relevant organisation could be
 13 the officer who's required to go to that SCG. So there
 14 is a focus on supporting SCGs and TCGs. There's a good
 15 focus on supporting SCGs and command structures.

16 Q. In that vein, if we could just look at the document
 17 {INQ012487/1}, please. If we go to {INQ012487/2}, which
 18 Mr Greaney has already taken you to, we can see that
 19 right at the very front of the plan, so anyone picking
 20 this up and opening it, the first thing they'd see is an
 21 aide-memoire that gives them the key facts about setting
 22 up an SCG.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. If we go down the page, please, we can see that in bold
 25 type, right at the bottom of the page:

1 "GMRF has agreed that Greater Manchester Police are
 2 the only agency authorised to activate the SCG."

3 You told us earlier today that it would be usual
 4 that at least the first meeting of an SCG would be
 5 chaired by GMP. Is this one of the reasons why that
 6 would be the case, because they would be the ones who
 7 would have initiated it being set up?

8 A. I'm going to have to sort of infer from my previous
 9 experience and knowledge and say a default position for
 10 an SCG and command facility was at the police
 11 headquarters. So I think, but I do not know, that they
 12 would be the hosting organisation, so we would be using
 13 their facilities. So I think that may have contributed
 14 to saying -- may have given a greater reason why GMP
 15 would have that authorisation of setting up an SCG
 16 because we're going to use their, effectively,
 17 facilities, although we all use them as multi-agency
 18 facilities.

19 Yes, it is, I think I would say, reasonable to say
 20 across the country the highest percentage of SCGs
 21 reacting to a happening incident will be chaired by the
 22 police but not always and they don't have to.

23 Q. But under the GMRF plan they were the only agency that
 24 could activate one?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. If we go on, please, to {INQ012487/13}. We can see
2 that — the second paragraph down under SCG formation,
3 going back to something that the chair raised with you
4 this morning, Mr Argyle:

5 "Early formation of an SCG may enable mitigation of
6 risks and potential consequences. There are advantages
7 to an early activation of the required command, control
8 and coordination structures, including the establishment
9 of precautionary strategic command in advance of
10 a predicted event or in the early stages of a developing
11 situation."

12 So the message that was being put out by your
13 document and by "your" I mean the GMRF, was that early
14 establishment of an SCG when it was going to be needed
15 was the optimum approach.

16 A. Yes, unless there was a specific reason not to, ie
17 a sensible reason to say it would be sensible to have it
18 at a certain time. But in general my answer to you
19 would be: arrange the SCG as early as possible.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So this by definition happens in an
21 emergency, so what sort of timescale are we talking
22 about that you would expect to elapse before you could
23 actually have an SCG up and running? Obviously,
24 different circumstances can make that different, but in
25 the normal run of things how long?

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1 A. I'm aware that the guidance indicates you should aim —
2 there would be an ambition to set a SCG up within
3 2 hours. Ideally, if it seemed obvious this was going
4 to be a major or a large incident requiring cooperation
5 of multi-agencies, you would want to give thought to
6 that and notice of that earlier because it's no use
7 telling them we're having an SCG in 5 minutes because
8 people may have to travel or at least dial into that
9 conference.

10 So what I would say is, it is difficult, it can be
11 difficult, time can pass quickly in an event, in an
12 incident, and there may be less value in holding an SCG
13 if people aren't briefed. So again, give people warning
14 there's going to be an SCG so they can start to think,
15 "I need to understand what I need to do to go to this
16 strategic meeting and add value to deal with this
17 incident".

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In an emergency like this, the bomb went
19 off at 10.31. Two hours is 12.31. Quite a lot had
20 happened by then. Would it not be feasible to do it
21 more quickly?

22 A. It depends where — how you want to run that SCG. My
23 experience is people in the room is usually far more
24 effective than dialling in. Of course, if the
25 facilities are adequate, dialling in could be set up

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1 quicker.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And we're getting better at it nowadays.

3 A. Yes, we're all getting better. Sorry, just remind me of
4 your question.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The 2 hours seems quite a long time for
6 an incident like this when quite a lot has happened
7 between 10.31 and 12.31.

8 A. Yes. What I would say is that we used that facility
9 a lot at police headquarters. It doesn't have to be
10 there, but it really often is, and people are aware and
11 if you're going to have an SCG, you wouldn't necessarily
12 think that the first officer to enter that building was
13 entering to go to the SCG. People would be resorting to
14 that location to co-locate sooner. So when you hear
15 things like there was a Gold huddle, that is not a —
16 you know, that is, "Okay, who's here, right, us three
17 organisations are here, we've got an SCG in an hour and
18 a half, but what are we all doing now?" You start to
19 share information by being co-located at a location,
20 whether that is at the incident ground, at a nominated
21 place for a tactical meeting or a nominated place for a
22 strategic meeting.

23 But that facility supports both tactical and
24 operational — and I want to say the word routinely —
25 regularly and well understood that it is.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. But Gold huddle is different from
2 an SCG?

3 A. I would say it is. It is Gold commanders talking to
4 each other, and you could say, let's have a three-way
5 telephone conversation —

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Atkinson, sorry for interrupting
7 again.

8 MR ATKINSON: Not at all.

9 Is the underlying point, Mr Argyle, that you need to
10 set up a proper coordinating group as soon as you can
11 but you need to be coordinating in the meantime?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And in terms of the memory that you would want someone
14 reading this document or attending a GMRF meeting to
15 come away with — is that coordination and cooperation
16 are essential?

17 A. Yes, as it is with every incident of smaller magnitude
18 too.

19 Q. And just staying with this document and down a paragraph
20 or two, 2.2:

21 "SCG activation."

22 This is the point that we were covering a moment or
23 two ago by reference to the aide-memoire but we can see
24 it now rather more clearly:

25 "Activation of a strategic coordinating group will

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1 take place where an integrated strategic effort will be
 2 beneficial in responding to the emergency or where the
 3 incident itself threatens to overwhelm an individual
 4 organisation's capacity to respond to it."
 5 And to understand who would make that decision:
 6 "An SCG can be activated under any of the following
 7 conditions. First, GMP force duty officer (FDO) or any
 8 GM responder requests an SCG to coordinate the response
 9 to a major incident."
 10 And we can see that other agencies would do that via
 11 the FDO. So is the situation really that an incident
 12 happens, assuming that the FDO is notified of that
 13 incident fairly quickly, they would either make the
 14 decision themselves, we're going to need an SCG here, or
 15 someone else reporting in to the FDO saying, we're going
 16 to need an SCG here?
 17 A. Yes, there is a point of contact there through the force
 18 duty officer. So if I use an example to help, if we had
 19 a huge moorland fire and it really had limited
 20 consequences for other people in the start of that
 21 incident, the Fire Service might say, "This is beyond
 22 our normal capacity, we know we're going to have to call
 23 in other fire services to help us", it will then start
 24 to have consequences for the watercourse and for the
 25 public, the Fire Service would say, "We want an SCG,"

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1 and would request an SCG.
 2 My expectation is that the force duty officer
 3 wouldn't say no, he would be the person who would be
 4 able to commence that activation process because the
 5 Fire Service have requested an SCG.
 6 Q. Finally, so far as this document for now is concerned,
 7 {INQ012487/19}.
 8 We can see at the top half of the page the
 9 objectives of an SCG -- and I flag them up just for your
 10 note, sir -- being there set out, including
 11 communication between agencies. Just on that point,
 12 Mr Argyle, were any issues raised as to inter-agency
 13 communication and problems in relation to that? For
 14 example by use of Airwave. Was that an issue that was
 15 flagged up that you can remember?
 16 A. Do you mean just generally over a period of time?
 17 Q. Yes.
 18 A. What I'd say is I would have to think about the
 19 chronology of time. It's my understanding the police
 20 used Airwave before the Fire Service, and as the
 21 national project rolled out, the Fire Service started to
 22 use Airwave, and I don't know the same timescales when
 23 NWS started to use Airwave. They will use them in
 24 slightly different ways. So daily point to point or
 25 between, for example, a unit and the Fire Control.

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1 Every organisation in the whole used Airwave slightly
 2 differently and used different capacities of it to suit
 3 the needs of their organisation. But then there was
 4 inter-agency channels and the use of Airwave to
 5 communicate between agencies.
 6 Other than thinking back to the development as a new
 7 organisation, for example when the Fire Service started
 8 using Airwave, of course that was a developmental
 9 progress moving from our previous radio system to using
 10 Airwave. But in this regard, I don't recall any
 11 particular specifics being raised as a problem with
 12 Airwave. There would be at times -- for example, I do
 13 remember an incident where when you are using Airwave
 14 radios, you're going through the nearest repeater, and
 15 if there are a mass of people using Airwave, that
 16 repeater can get overloaded. That was a previous
 17 incident, that's the only thing that comes to mind.
 18 Nothing that I could think helpful or relevant.
 19 Q. The bottom of that page, paragraph 2.9. A word that
 20 I have problems pronouncing, but I'll give it a go:
 21 interoperability :
 22 "This plan is intended to support an integrated
 23 co-ordinated multi-agency approach."
 24 And clearly, JESIP, the I of JESIP is
 25 interoperability, so the implementation of JESIP very

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1 much hand-in-hand with this plan and its operation,
 2 would you agree?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. To what extent did the GMRF monitor the extent of the
 5 implementation of JESIP by its category 1 agencies?
 6 A. I think it's perhaps helpful to say when JESIP was being
 7 launched nationally it was aimed at the three blue light
 8 services. I recall a national JESIP lead and we invited
 9 him to the GMRF because we proactively wanted to engage
 10 with this, very supportive of JESIP, and I actually
 11 said, "We actually think right in those early stages
 12 JESIP is perhaps limiting itself", because they were
 13 very clear this is for the three blue lights and we were
 14 saying, "No, this should be for all agencies". That
 15 developed over a period of years and it did become all
 16 agencies.
 17 I wouldn't say the approach was for GMRF to look
 18 into other organisations and examine how they were
 19 delivering JESIP. It was an approach of organisations
 20 adopting JESIP, first the three blue lights, so they
 21 were ahead of all the other agencies because they were
 22 trained in JESIP and given JESIP for them, not for other
 23 agencies, and then that started to develop into the
 24 multi-agency arena, so we would start to build JESIP
 25 into policies and procedures and approaches and

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1 learning.

2 So it wasn't -- it was if something became

3 apparent -- and what I would say, another thing to say

4 is JESIP isn't -- wasn't necessarily to me, my view,

5 a whole new concept that was "Throw everything away and

6 start using JESIP". If you looked at JESIP and you were

7 already operating in a cooperative and collaborative

8 way, you looked at JESIP and thought, yes, this is

9 codifying what we already do, it's helpful, it's trying

10 to bring together a mutual approach, and you may already

11 be doing all of those things to a lesser or greater

12 degree. One specific was starting to use the joint

13 decision-making model and METHANE messages.

14 We all had our major incident messages and this was

15 saying instead of each different agency having slightly

16 different messages, let's start to use the same

17 template. So it was built into exercises, it was built

18 into plans, written into plans and procedures, and

19 organically becoming the norm.

20 Q. In terms, though, of ensuring that the agencies that

21 were a part of the GMRF were taking the learning of

22 JESIP on board, did you consider that the GMRF had

23 a role in monitoring that?

24 A. I suppose I wouldn't have described it as "We need to

25 make sure we are using all the JESIP principles", but as

1 I've said, JESIP hopefully codified the way we work. So

2 it would be to ensure we're collaborating, sharing

3 information, planning and preparing together and jointly

4 delivering our responsibilities under the CCA and under

5 agencies under other relevant legislation. But what is

6 useful is we're all using now this extra layer of

7 language of JESIP, so it just became the norm, but

8 I wouldn't say I proactively went out to say, "Has that

9 organisation fully embedded JESIP", but what would

10 become apparent is at an incident or an exercise, if

11 there seemed to be a lack of awareness or understanding

12 or use of JESIP. But it wasn't at the forefront of how

13 you thought about things.

14 Q. By way of example, the inquiry will, I anticipate, in

15 due course hear that both the GMP major incident

16 (inaudible: distorted) and the BTP major incident manual

17 lacked JESIP focus to one extent or another. Would GMRF

18 have had any role in looking at that kind of document

19 and seeing whether it was doing what it should do in

20 terms of a multi-agency approach?

21 A. No. I would say before JESIP, it would still have been

22 our duty to work together to ensure we co-locate,

23 communicate, we jointly assessed risk, jointly develop

24 plans and to review those. So this was a language that

25 was describing what we were already required to do, so

1 if we had failed in one of those issues previously the

2 fact that JESIP hadn't been invented as an acronym or a

3 methodology or a process, there would already be a

4 failing. Those things were already required. This was

5 a way of trying to develop joint languages and

6 approaches. As I said earlier, we don't have an

7 auditing role and we could not proactively look at all

8 the policies and procedures, plans and systems of

9 a myriad of large organisations.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Before you go on, Mr Atkinson,

11 Mr Greaney, we've been going for an hour and 25 minutes;

12 will there be a requirement for a break?

13 MR GREANEY: There will. I had picked up that Mr Atkinson

14 was very nearly at the end of this particular topic and

15 I was going to invite him to consider, once he concluded

16 this topic, whether this would be a good moment for

17 a break.

18 MR ATKINSON: I wonder if I could finish off this topic.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely. That's what Mr Greaney

20 suggested and I'm perfectly happy with that.

21 MR ATKINSON: Just two points flowing from what you just

22 said, Mr Argyle, in terms of the agencies planning

23 together with a view to cooperating together. Did the

24 GMRF, given it was a Greater Manchester resilience

25 organisation, encourage its component parts to look at

1 planning for particular locations or sites within

2 Greater Manchester where multi-agency working was either

3 more likely or more necessary?

4 A. Each agency took a different approach and a need to plan

5 generically or specifically. Through all that

6 experience and risk assessments, the GMRF would look at

7 the capacities and capabilities they have to deliver

8 responses. In the main, they are by topic -- either

9 generic or by topic than by specific location. Clearly,

10 there are a myriad of locations in Greater Manchester

11 and also to say that the risks that could be posed at

12 one of those locations is multiple. So to have

13 a specific plan for a premises to address all the

14 multiple risks and threats that could occur at that was

15 not an approach that GMRF could undertake to say, "We

16 want a specific response plan for every building in

17 Greater Manchester".

18 The one thing I'd say that perhaps where it gets

19 slightly more specific might be, for example,

20 if we looked at something like dam inundation. We would

21 of course think about, because there is a limited

22 number, to say, "We have this many reservoirs in and

23 around Greater Manchester and we can look at those",

24 I don't know the number off the top of my head, "We can

25 look at those 10 reservoirs and if one of them flooded,

1 we can look at the consequences of those". But when
 2 I say we, the relevant partners would do that work for
 3 us in the main, supported by other partners.
 4 But for all of the other buildings, there was the
 5 multiplicity of approaches, so licensing, fire risk
 6 assessments, CTSA assessments, environmental health
 7 assessments, all those assessments are done by
 8 individual organisations. The GMRF does not in general
 9 take an approach of trying to develop a specific site
 10 plan.
 11 Q. A final question before we have our break. In relation
 12 to one particular location, which clearly is where
 13 we are focused, namely the arena, one of the issues
 14 in relation to the arena was its location above
 15 a railway station, which gave rise to issues of primacy
 16 between BTP and GMP, so two of the component parts of
 17 the GMRF that needed to resolve an issue as to who had
 18 primacy in relation to a particular location within
 19 Manchester. Was that not a topic that GMRF had a role
 20 in resolving?
 21 A. I think if you talk about the primacy between two
 22 organisations, particularly two police forces, they are
 23 the key partners to resolve that issue. If they felt
 24 that they couldn't resolve it and needed wider views,
 25 I suppose that could be brought to a wider audience.

1 Q. But certainly in your time as chair, it wasn't?
 2 A. No.
 3 MR ATKINSON: Thank you, sir, that would be a convenient
 4 moment. I can reassure Mr Argyle, I haven't got much
 5 more after the break.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 7 Mr Greaney, have we other people asking questions as
 8 well?
 9 MR GREANEY: We do, but only a very small number of
 10 questions.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It just gives me some idea of when we're
 12 aiming to finish.
 13 MR GREANEY: If we resume at 3.50, I'm confident that
 14 we will have finished by 4.30.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We obviously need to get your evidence
 16 completed today. It's been a long time, I know.
 17 Thank you.
 18 (3.36 pm)
 19 (A short break)
 20 (3.50 pm)
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Atkinson.
 22 MR ATKINSON: Mr Argyle, almost done so far as I'm
 23 concerned, if that encourages you.
 24 One of the areas that we know that there was a good
 25 deal of planning about in the terrorist context was

1 a marauding terrorist firearms attack and planning for
 2 that kind of incident. We know that the GMRF was shown
 3 a film about MTFAs at one of its meetings at the end of
 4 2015 because it's recorded in the minutes that that
 5 happened. But how much involvement thereafter did
 6 the GMRF have in terms of the multi-agency planning to
 7 deal with such an incident?
 8 A. If somebody could remind me of the date of that meeting
 9 that would be helpful. But in general --
 10 Q. December 2015.
 11 A. I have to try and think about the time frame. As has
 12 been suggested, MTFA capabilities started to develop --
 13 to my awareness there clearly was some capability in
 14 London before this but from 2011 onwards and it was very
 15 clear it was the blue light services with military. And
 16 as that developed and became normal -- not normal. As
 17 that became established in those agencies, similarly
 18 with the -- there was a thought that we need to think
 19 about the wider consequences of an MTFA attack and not
 20 just the immediate response to dealing with the
 21 immediate threat.
 22 I remember there were some original films that were
 23 designed only to be shown to 999 responders. But this
 24 started from a national perspective to be: we now need
 25 to start to bring other agencies into that wider

1 understanding.
 2 And I have talked to in a different context, the
 3 national risk assessment came in two parts, the risks
 4 and hazards and then the threats, and at a point in time
 5 MTFA will have gone on to the threats assessment. So
 6 certain -- well, of course police, fire and ambulance
 7 are part of the GMRF. People analysing those threats
 8 will look at those threats and start to say: have we got
 9 the capabilities to deal with this and react to this?
 10 So even if some agencies at a point in time were not
 11 particularly aware of what an MTFA exactly was, it was
 12 appropriate to plan and say, we have all these response
 13 capabilities -- and actually when you're doing
 14 contingency planning, you usually design a capability
 15 and often the cause of the incident often leads to
 16 similar consequences. So there might be casualties,
 17 there might be dislocated people, there might be
 18 a breakdown in X, Y and Z systems, and you've already
 19 designed capabilities to deal with that.
 20 So local authorities will have already had
 21 capabilities in place to deal with displaced people, as
 22 will other agencies. The Ambulance Service will already
 23 have plans in place for mass casualties. But with the
 24 new threat and new understanding and new risk assessment
 25 you reassess that and say: have we got the capabilities

1 to address these threats? But then it started to become
 2 more nationally acceptable to bring other partners into
 3 the more explicit conversation about MTFA and the
 4 consequences of that, and that will have facilitated the
 5 production of this film that we could then show to other
 6 agencies who previously were not specifically included
 7 in such conversations.

8 Q. Just so we can understand that, if we could, Mr Lopez,
 9 go back to the Cabinet Office, so it's {INQ018894/12}.
 10 Right at the top of the page, if you would, Mr Lopez,
 11 please.

12 This, just to get your bearings, Mr Argyle, is
 13 within that same list of mandatory requirements that we
 14 looked at earlier this morning, so this is the red list,
 15 and the top of those:

16 "Category 1 responders with lead responsibility for
 17 a particular duty must ensure that other responders are
 18 kept informed of how the lead responder is performing
 19 the duty and must cooperate with non-lead responders."

20 In the context of an MTFA, clearly the police would
 21 have a leading role to play in dealing with such an
 22 incident, but as you've recognised in your answer just
 23 now, other agencies would almost inevitably have to play
 24 a part in dealing with one.

25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. So to what extent did the GMP, by way of example, bring
 2 its plans in relation to dealing with an MTFA to the
 3 GMRF to explain through that medium what the other
 4 agencies needed to know and needed to do?

5 A. It's hard for me to specifically say how GMP did, but
 6 I would have better confidence in talking about how the
 7 three blue lights did that if that is okay, if it does
 8 answer the question; obviously come back to me if it
 9 doesn't.

10 Q. Thank you.

11 A. I can see how reading that top paragraph with the duty
 12 that other responders are kept informed, it could be
 13 perceived that there is a challenge there when you are
 14 shown a national risk that you are told it is classed as
 15 secret and you must not reveal some of that content to
 16 other agencies. So we had to develop a capability to
 17 respond to that threat but we were limited in some of
 18 the detail we could pass on to other agencies. I'm
 19 talking now in periods from 2011 onwards and that
 20 gradually eased.

21 So to fulfil that responsibility, those agencies, so
 22 let's say police, fire and ambulance, who were aware of
 23 this threat and could see that document, would need to
 24 do that risk assessment and determine whether
 25 Greater Manchester had the capabilities to respond to

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1 the threat and what could come from that threat. So it
 2 may be the case that, of course, you look at with your
 3 other agencies all the existing plans, procedures and
 4 processes and you analyse whether there is a gap in that
 5 and of course it would be feasible to talk to another
 6 agency or other agencies and say, "Have we got the
 7 capability to respond to 100 casualties in a location?
 8 How would we deal with 100 casualties? How would we
 9 deal with 200 displaced people? How would we deal with
 10 these?"

11 It may be at those early times some of the
 12 discussions had a slight degree of removal of some
 13 detail about why we needed the capabilities, but you
 14 would do that risk assessment to ensure that
 15 Greater Manchester had the capability to respond. As
 16 I say, I am talking sort of from 2011 and it is hard to
 17 me to recall how that eased in terms of the national
 18 comfort with starting to allow other agencies to start
 19 to understand some of the language around MTFA and
 20 Operation Plato, et cetera.

21 Q. Do you recall a stage arising at which the GMP provided
 22 everybody in a meeting or for a meeting with their
 23 Operation Plato plan and talked through what the other
 24 agencies needed to know and needed to do to make that
 25 plan work?

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1 A. No.

2 Q. Clearly, there were a lot of training exercises that
 3 touched on MTFAs. We looked at some of them earlier
 4 today. We can see the third box down on the screen in
 5 front of you:

6 "Through the LRF, category 1 responders must
 7 collectively exercise plans and learn and implement
 8 lessons from exercises, emergencies and emergency
 9 policy."

10 So this is learning from exercises through the LRF,
 11 that is one of the mandatory requirements. Do we
 12 understand that in relation to these training exercises,
 13 the LRF would not necessarily have a role in learning
 14 from them at all?

15 A. As that capability grew organically in a planned
 16 approach, the initial development was focused on the
 17 operational and tactical overseeing by strategic.
 18 Running alongside that there would be the local risk
 19 assessment to say what are the consequences if this
 20 happens here. If I used another scenario and hopefully
 21 that may be helpful. If we were looking, say, at
 22 a normal... sort of an accidental chemical explosion in
 23 a venue, and the only agency -- I'm not saying they
 24 would, but let's say the only agency who would work in
 25 the hot zone was the Fire Service, it would not

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1 necessarily be required to explain to everybody how the
 2 Fire Service would operate in that hot zone. What they
 3 would all need to know is: what do we need to do outside
 4 the hot zone to help you do your job or to do our job.
 5 So you may only be withholding certain parts of
 6 an issue, but you need to make sure that the rest of the
 7 partnership can do what they need to do.
 8 Q. Is that not where the GMRF should come in to facilitate
 9 that level of understanding across the agencies
 10 in relation to whether it be a chemical issue or
 11 a firearms issue?
 12 A. Yes, definitely, because they — the single agency, you
 13 could say, has that duty, and they will of course
 14 communicate with who they deem necessary and appropriate
 15 to meet their duties. Actually, through a resilience
 16 forum, you get more people considering that and
 17 broadening and adding and adding value to ensure
 18 you have actually delivered your duties and help you,
 19 you may have — they may point you to other sources of
 20 assistance or sharing of information. So yes, it is
 21 clearly a very important forum to do that.
 22 Q. Does that depend on the agency that has identified
 23 an issue bringing it to the GMRF for it to be discussed
 24 in that way?
 25 A. Although I said when you asked me do I recall GMP

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1 bringing their plan to the GMRF, what will have happened
 2 is the blue light services and the military will have
 3 developed their mutual way of working and will have
 4 shared that with each other. Whether that is by sharing
 5 the full document or whether that is by sharing
 6 information that's necessary to understand each other's
 7 approaches to work together. Then that, as I say, that
 8 then broadened with national support to start to involve
 9 other agencies into having a greater understanding about
 10 MTFA. But there is still a limit of actually the value
 11 of telling other agencies the full tactical details of
 12 an approach. So the Health Service have a myriad of
 13 tactical approaches that I would not understand if they
 14 chose to tell me about them.
 15 Q. Going back to my question, if we may, Mr Argyle — and
 16 this is my final point — does it not depend on the
 17 individual agencies identifying a need to discuss
 18 multi-agency response and bringing it to the GMRF for
 19 the GMRF to do anything about learning from exercises
 20 and developing joint policies?
 21 A. Yes, I'd say a starting point would be working with the
 22 most apt agencies, but to bring in that full GM ability
 23 to plan and prepare and risk assess then into the GMRF
 24 forum.
 25 MR ATKINSON: Thank you very much indeed. Those are all my

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1 questions, I'm grateful.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Before you go, Mr Atkinson, I wonder
 3 whether you or your team can do me a favour. During the
 4 course of your early — can you hear me all right?
 5 MR ATKINSON: Yes, I can, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You seemed to be looking a little
 7 alarmed, that's all.
 8 MR ATKINSON: It's my natural expression.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry. At an early stage you referred
 10 to a Government document which on a page, and you didn't
 11 refer to this, but it's something I would quite like to
 12 look at again, there was a risk assessment which used
 13 the numerical risk assessment, which we've seen in other
 14 documents. I just wonder if one of your team could
 15 possibly identify it and just tell me which it is.
 16 I don't need it for asking questions at the moment, but
 17 it would help me at a later stage. You don't need to do
 18 it this minute. As I say, one of your team could do it
 19 if that would be helpful.
 20 MR ATKINSON: Yes. I'm pretty sure it's the Cabinet Office
 21 risk assessment document, risk register, which is
 22 {INQ018894/1}, but I will double-check that and
 23 communicate.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The document indicates number of deaths
 25 which may occur, you give 5.4, and things like that, and

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1 it's a way of doing risk assessment which I am — no
 2 doubt because I don't understand it properly — somewhat
 3 concerned to learn more about.
 4 MR ATKINSON: Of course, sir, we'll deal with that.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.
 6 MR GREANEY: Mr Weatherby has been good enough to inform us
 7 that he has no questions. The small issue he was going
 8 to ask about has been covered by Mr Atkinson. Mr Gozem,
 9 we believe, doesn't have any questions. He'll no doubt
 10 indicate if we are wrong about that. I know that
 11 Mr Cooper, until a short time ago, did have a small
 12 number of questions about one topic by way of
 13 clarification. I can see that he is on the screen, so
 14 I presume he does have those questions.
 15 Questions from MR COOPER
 16 MR COOPER: Thank you, sir. It's a very small point of
 17 clarification, if I can, Mr Argyle, because obviously
 18 I have been listening with interest to your evidence
 19 today. I realise you are coming back on a second
 20 occasion to deal with lessons learned from various
 21 exercises, so I'm not going to stray into that at all,
 22 save just to clarify, if I can — and I'm just looking
 23 at the [draft] LiveNote note that I have got in front of
 24 me now — some evidence you gave this morning. It'll be
 25 terribly unfair of me to not read the small aspect of it

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1 out of it given the welter of evidence you have given
2 today.

3 It occurred toward the end of the morning and this
4 was the passage of evidence. You were asked about the
5 resilience forum, obviously, and about exercises. You
6 were asked:

7 "But if an exercise were to reveal a major problem
8 or any problem within multi-agency working in an
9 emergency situation, that is something, is it not, the
10 resilience forum ought to be aware of?"

11 And you said this:

12 "Two levels of the answer. If there is an issue
13 quite significant, the partners involved in that
14 exercise are part of the resilience forum, and if they
15 know they can resolve the issue clearly, an issue
16 happened, we can resolve it, then they deal with it
17 together. But if it was a broad issue of learning about
18 a multi-agency response to operation, then yes, that
19 should be brought to the attention of the wider group."

20 It's that little tranche or block of evidence that
21 I want to ask you a short question, probably only one
22 question, just to clarify. Do I understand what you
23 were saying there, Mr Argyle, that if there was an issue
24 which is quite significant, partners involved in the
25 exercise, as part of the resilience forum, can resolve

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1 that issue together, and it doesn't necessarily get
2 passed on to the wider group, even though it was
3 a significant issue?

4 In short, my question is: if the issue is
5 significant but only between, say, two partners, does
6 that mean it doesn't get passed on for the consideration
7 of other partners in the resilience forum?

8 A. Of course a word like significant can be used on
9 a whole scale. Trying to be helpful, let's say two
10 organisations were exercising on an important issue and
11 something didn't go well on that exercise, they would
12 debrief that, look at what the issue was, but they may
13 feel that they could resolve it.

14 I will give an example. If there was a process for
15 passage of information at a certain point in an incident
16 and that information didn't pass, it may be, was there
17 a problem with the system or did somebody forget to do
18 something or was there an unusual situation, was the
19 exercise realistic?

20 So it may be that they look at the situation,
21 analyse what went wrong, and feel that isn't an issue
22 that we perceive should recur. It happened but we have
23 run so many exercises, there will always be things which
24 don't go perfectly on large exercises.

25 Q. I do understand that, and of course if every single

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1 thing that went wrong might need comment on, that would
2 be ludicrous. I do understand that. But for instance
3 there may be things on the border or the threshold of
4 decision-making. Is there no form of third view, as it
5 were, to ensure that if two parties come to a view it
6 should not be referred, that is the correct decision?
7 Is there not some form of oversight of that
8 decision-making phase?

9 A. I don't think it's possible to have oversight of every
10 time two organisations -- and I know that's only one
11 scenario you and I are using as an example -- do an
12 exercise together. Exercises are happening all the time
13 to different scales. So there is not a comprehensive
14 oversight of every exercise or every piece of training
15 or every incident. I think we should realise a lot of
16 learning is at incidents because incidents are
17 replicated -- clearly the real scenario. Sometimes
18 exercises have unfortunately some unrealistic parameters
19 put around them.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Let's just be completely -- if
21 you don't mind me interrupting, Mr Cooper. Talking
22 about Winchester Accord, two major issues, it may be
23 thought, turned up out of that. On a debriefing,
24 someone would have actually recorded them. What I think
25 Mr Cooper is getting at is: it's not that difficult, is

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1 it, to having this list of issues which has turned up
2 and someone just checking through later and saying,
3 "Have you resolved it"?

4 A. That could be done.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It should be done, shouldn't it?

6 A. The owners of that debrief should have a system to make
7 sure that happens, yes.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If we look at the Government document,
9 it rather suggests and -- I'm not talking personally,
10 but the resilience organisations should be doing that.
11 That's what they are concerned to do to make sure that
12 learning from exercises is dealt with, it's put right.

13 A. And it is dependent on the capacity and the size and
14 number of exercises across a whole county, across
15 a whole year, how many of those exercises are brought to
16 the attention of the Greater Manchester Resilience
17 Forum.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you have the list there anyway. All
19 they need to do is produce you a list of learning issues
20 that came out of it and at some stage you at a meeting
21 could be saying, "Have you resolved these?"

22 A. I was obviously asked to produce that list of exercises.
23 I am certain that there are far more exercises in
24 Greater Manchester in a year than that. Many, many
25 more.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Maybe. Sorry, but a list of learning
2 points from an exercise at your quarterly meetings
3 simply going through these and saying, "These turned up,
4 have you sorted it?"
5 A. For the multi-agency debriefs we have that process, but
6 I accept we don't have that for all exercises that
7 happen, not in the sight of the Greater Manchester
8 Resilience Forum.
9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So Winchester Accord? I'm sorry,
10 Mr Cooper, I seem to be taking over. I do apologise.
11 MR COOPER: You're asking the questions that I would like to
12 go to and I'm grateful, thank you.
13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So Winchester Accord, a major exercise,
14 you must have been sighted on that, presumably.
15 A. I wasn't sighted on it at the time.
16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was the resilience forum?
17 A. As I understand, the exercise was formed through the
18 route it was, with a limited amount of participants, and
19 GMP alerted the resilience forum to say an exercise is
20 happening where we could add on to that to take the
21 opportunity to test --
22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, sorry, you've explained that,
23 sorry.
24 A. But they didn't bring it to us to say, "You should be
25 taking part in this exercise".

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, but you're aware of the exercise
2 taking place, you were aware that there may be learning
3 points which came out of it, not concerned with your
4 particular part of it, and the question is simply: just
5 for the future, that a list of learning points is handed
6 on to you and it can be run through or done by the
7 secretariat or something. I know your secretariat is
8 one, but someone just sending the thing out, saying,
9 "Have you resolved it?"
10 A. I think it's feasible to say that every exercise and
11 every incident that we know has been debriefed and we're
12 aware of has been debriefed. You could ask for a list
13 of those to be created and for a progress check on all
14 those issues. A caution would be whether that debrief
15 listed a mass of tactical issues as well as more
16 significant strategic issues and keeping track of those
17 because you would go into the thousands of issues.
18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you. Mr Cooper.
19 MR COOPER: Sir, I have nothing further to add, I'm
20 grateful. Thank you.
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: One of the advantages of me acting
22 remotely rather than being here is it is less difficult
23 to intervene.
24 MR COOPER: And easier to switch me off as well, sir, no
25 doubt!

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1 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much, Mr Cooper.
2 Sir, Mr Warnock, who represents GMCA, of course,
3 represents the interests of Mr Argyle. A short time ago
4 he indicated to me he had no questions as matters then
5 stood. I'm going to ask him, if he does have questions,
6 to appear on our screen. If he doesn't, he doesn't need
7 to.
8 MR WARNOCK: I don't have any questions, sir.
9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much for that,
10 Mr Warnock.
11 MR GREANEY: Sir, I don't have any further questions at this
12 stage. I'll reserve them for when Mr Argyle returns.
13 Could I just ask him to bear with us for a few
14 moments? That's as far as we can go with the evidence
15 today. Tomorrow we will hear from Assistant
16 Commissioner Neil Basu who, at the time of the arena
17 attack, was the deputy assistant commissioner special
18 operations, so the DACSO. He will be dealing in general
19 terms tomorrow with his own professional background,
20 with the scheme for counter-terrorism policing and his
21 actions on the night of 22 and 23 May. What we will not
22 be dealing with tomorrow, but will return to address,
23 are issues such as the lessons that have been learned as
24 a result of the 22 May events.
25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much. I'm very grateful.

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1 I know these must be a long day for you having to answer
2 questions, so thank you for your patience and for
3 answering all the questions.
4 (4.17 pm)
5 (The inquiry adjourned until 10.00 am on
6 Tuesday, 2 February 2021)
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1 I N D E X

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3 MR PAUL ARGYLE (affirmed)1

4 Questions from MR GREANEY1

5 Questions from MR SMITH107

6 Questions from MR ATKINSON115

7 Questions from MR COOPER168

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