

OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 119

June 21, 2021

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1 Monday, 21 June 2021
 2 (9.30 am)
 3 MR NEIL GASKELL (continued)
 4 Questions from MR SMITH (continued)
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr de la Poer.
 6 MR DE LA POER: Good morning, sir. We resume today with
 7 Mr Neil Gaskell and continue with the questioning of
 8 Mr Smith QC, who today is able to join us in the hearing
 9 room.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Welcome back.
 11 MR SMITH: Mr Gaskell, I would just like to clarify one
 12 matter that was raised on Thursday of last week. I did
 13 ask you in the course of your evidence whether the MTFA
 14 mobilisation emergency response document, which is
 15 {INQ004213/1}, was in fact a draft. I think you studied
 16 it at the time on Thursday and concluded that it was in
 17 fact published guidance. Do you remember?
 18 A. I remember having that conversation with you, sir, on
 19 Wednesday.
 20 Q. May I just remind you, because Mr Warnock has been in
 21 touch with me, and in fact it appears that it is a draft
 22 certainly. Would you be prepared to accept that?
 23 A. If that's what you are saying, sir, absolutely.
 24 Q. The situation is that there was a version 1 on
 25 3 December of 2015, which Mr Fletcher was responsible

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1 for, a version 2, which is the one that came after the
 2 incident, 15 November 2017, but the version which
 3 I asked you about, which was also said to be version 1,
 4 was dated 27 February 2017 and was in fact a draft that
 5 Mr Fletcher had prepared.
 6 A. I accept that, sir. I didn't know that, but I accept
 7 that.
 8 Q. It has been a long time since you were looking at these
 9 documents no doubt.
 10 A. That's correct.
 11 Q. Mr Gaskell, what I would like to do is to, in the
 12 interests of efficiency, just draw together the threads
 13 in relation to the action plans by way of summary, if
 14 I may, and to ask for your agreement, if you do agree,
 15 with a number of small points that I would like to ask
 16 you about.
 17 The first is that the "Bomb -- general" action plan
 18 required North West Fire Control, is this correct, to
 19 inform the duty NILO and to seek advice effectively?
 20 A. That's correct, sir.
 21 Q. The understanding is that the "Bomb -- general" action
 22 plan, as far as Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue
 23 Service are concerned, was intended for use for bomb
 24 threats and matters of that sort rather than an exploded
 25 bomb.

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1 A. That's correct.
 2 Q. The "Explosion" action plan, {INQ004404/1}, required the
 3 control room, is this correct, to send to the incident
 4 the TRU, the tactical rescue unit, but not the special
 5 rescue team, the tactical rescue unit; is that correct?
 6 A. That is correct.
 7 Q. A specified number of pumps, but not to notify the duty
 8 group manager?
 9 A. That's correct, sir. As I explained, that's because of
 10 the command support room and the duty GM would have the
 11 responsibility to initiate that room to be stood up
 12 should the incident require it.
 13 Q. That action plan, the "Explosion" action plan, was said
 14 on the face of the document to cover chemicals; is that
 15 correct?
 16 A. As in what's termed as a dirty bomb, so an explosion
 17 that includes a chemical dispersal device.
 18 Q. Gas cylinders?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Would it include a gas main?
 21 A. If there's an explosion, absolutely, sir.
 22 Q. And would it include, if there had been an explosion,
 23 a gas explosion in domestic property?
 24 A. That's correct, sir.
 25 Q. Thirdly, the "Operation Plato -- standby phase" action

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1 plan -- this is {INQ004447/1} -- required the control
 2 room, is this correct, to inform the duty NILO and seek
 3 advice prior to mobilisation?
 4 A. That's correct, sir, because if that action card was
 5 being utilised, then there is a suspicion of a terrorist
 6 attack taking place.
 7 Q. And it also required the control room to inform the duty
 8 group manager; is that correct?
 9 A. That's correct, sir.
 10 Q. Could I ask you, please, about the risks which were
 11 underlying these three action plans. As far as the
 12 "Bomb -- general" action plan is concerned, was the risk
 13 or perceived risk for which the plan was designed to
 14 cater the risk that if the bomb had not exploded but was
 15 a bomb threat, it might be real and it could explode
 16 when crews arrived at the incident?
 17 A. That is correct, sir, and I think further down the
 18 action card it talks about the cordons to be
 19 implemented.
 20 Q. So that's why it was important, wasn't it, that in the
 21 case of the "Bomb -- general" action plan, the first
 22 step was to inform the duty NILO and to seek advice and
 23 not mobilise to the incident?
 24 A. That's correct, sir.
 25 Q. As far as the "Explosion" action plan is concerned, was

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1 the view of the Fire and Rescue Service that the risk
 2 had eventuated, in other words the explosion had
 3 occurred, and therefore crews could be deployed at the
 4 scene to deal with the incident?
 5 A. Two parts of that answer, sir. Yes, I agree with the
 6 first part, that the "Explosion" action card would tell
 7 North West Fire Control to mobilise resources to scene.
 8 However, on the back of that, you would have the duty
 9 NILO making telephone calls into GMP and obviously the
 10 crews proceeding en route, if the intelligence stated
 11 that there was a potential for a further attack or
 12 a secondary device, then the crews en route would be
 13 informed of that and potentially told to go to
 14 a separate RVP.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just interrupt? It's not directly
 16 relevant, but this would include a chemical explosion?
 17 A. So a chemical explosion, sir, would depend on -- the
 18 nature of the chemical would dictate a completely
 19 different response. Part of the Fire Service role is to
 20 have hazardous materials officers who would go and work
 21 with other private agencies who supply them with
 22 chemical expertise to look at the effects -- they are
 23 looking at not just the chemical itself but the toxic
 24 plume and the warning form(?) that would be required for
 25 local residents if it was in a populated area. So it is

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1 a much more --
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It would be different?
 3 A. Yes, sir.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Thank you, Mr Smith.
 5 MR SMITH: It may be helpful just to deal with the
 6 chairman's question. If we ask Mr Lopez to put on to
 7 the screen {INQ004404/1}.
 8 We can see, can't we, immediately, this is the
 9 version current at 12 February 2016, and therefore the
 10 version in place at the time? And if we look at the top
 11 of the page:
 12 "Send TRU. Send [a specified number] of pumps.
 13 Send station manager B and send the duty NILO."
 14 And there's an obligation to inform the duty fire
 15 investigation officer. Then if we go down the page and
 16 see "Triggers":
 17 "Cause of explosion could trigger different ITAPs:
 18 gas, bomb, cylinders, chemicals, impact."
 19 And even impact is there, isn't it?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. So it's a wide-ranging series of potential triggers that
 22 the Fire and Rescue Service had put into this document;
 23 is that correct?
 24 A. It is, sir, and on Wednesday we spoke about how
 25 difficult it is to write an action plan to deal with

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1 every single eventuality. And again, when it says,
 2 "Send the duty NILO", they wouldn't just be proceeding
 3 to scene, they would be contacting relevant sources to
 4 get additional information, if possible, relevant to the
 5 incident.
 6 Q. The perceived risk in respect, obviously, of the
 7 "Operation Plato -- standby" action plan is the risk of
 8 injury, serious injury or fatality occurring to fire
 9 crews who aren't specialised and deployed to the
 10 incident?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. That's why they should not be deployed to the incident
 13 following that action plan; is that correct?
 14 A. Certainly not deliberately, sir. We've seen from
 15 evidence that that could happen -- unaware of the actual
 16 incident type, but certainly not as a deliberate action,
 17 sir.
 18 Q. So moving on from there, it is correct, isn't it, that
 19 there was no specific action plan for an exploded bomb
 20 caused by terrorist or malicious action? No specific
 21 action plan?
 22 A. No, it's the "Explosion" action card.
 23 Q. Next, do you agree that the control room had no
 24 authority to deploy the special rescue team and crews to
 25 any incident without the authority of a NILO?

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1 A. I would agree with that statement, yes.
 2 Q. And there is guidance information, the reference is
 3 {INQ040652/1}, issued by the Fire Service, isn't there,
 4 which makes that clear to the control room?
 5 A. Could I see that document? I don't know which document
 6 you're referring to.
 7 Q. It is {INQ040652}. I'll ask Mr Lopez to put it on the
 8 screen.
 9 This is headed "Mobilisation of special response
 10 vehicle (SRV)."
 11 Do you have it in front of you?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. "Any request for the attendance of this vehicle should
 14 only be in response to a call from the police via the
 15 duty NILO. If the SRV is to be mobilised by NWFC to
 16 location nominated by the duty NILO (sic)."
 17 And then there follows a series of instructions?
 18 A. Yes, and I think on Wednesday when I gave evidence
 19 I should have been clearer about this document. This is
 20 a GMFRS guidance document, part of a suite of guidance
 21 documents that the Fire Service has for a range of
 22 different incidents. The main purpose of these guidance
 23 documents is to assist operational personnel,
 24 commanders, including North West Fire Control, to
 25 supplement the action card, but it is as a guidance

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1 document for operational personnel predominantly.
 2 Q. And although there's no date on this, it was in fact
 3 issued in 2015?
 4 A. I believe so, yes.
 5 Q. Yes, thank you. So that, do you agree, clearly sets out
 6 the various action plans and actions required of the
 7 control room in the circumstances which you have
 8 specified on behalf of the Fire and Rescue Service?
 9 A. What I would say is that that document reflects the
 10 action plans in North West Fire Control as a guidance
 11 document for operational personnel, if that -- I'm
 12 trying to be helpful but that isn't the actual
 13 instruction given to North West Fire Control, sir,
 14 that's the action plan; this is a guidance document for
 15 the wider workforce.
 16 Q. Of course. That's the guidance information that goes
 17 through to the control room, to North West Fire Control,
 18 to guide their operators?
 19 A. Yes, sir, but ultimately the action plan is the plan to
 20 be followed. I'm not trying to be --
 21 Q. I understand that.
 22 A. I just think that the action plan is a very clear, as we
 23 talked about, cast-iron guidance, I feel that that's
 24 what the action plan does. The guidance document is
 25 more of an information document for the wider workforce

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1 to assist with the knowledge and management of an MTFA.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, but NWFC get this guidance?
 3 A. Of course, sir, yes.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So if they get the guidance you would
 5 expect them to follow it?
 6 A. I would expect them to be aware of it and obviously have
 7 it as a reference document but I would -- my personal
 8 opinion, sir, is the action plan is the primary
 9 document. That is a supplementary document --
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So if the guidance is not consistent
 11 with the action plan you say the action plan is the one
 12 to be followed?
 13 A. I would say that's the primary document, sir, and I'm
 14 not aware that the guidance document didn't marry up
 15 with the action plan.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So they do marry up?
 17 A. That's my understanding, yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It'd quite difficult if they don't.
 19 A. Absolutely.
 20 MR SMITH: They do marry up, sir.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 22 MR SMITH: Was any such guidance information issued to North
 23 West Fire Control to deal with circumstances in which
 24 the control room operators believed that they were
 25 examining or experiencing an unfolding Operation Plato

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1 potentially, where there had been no firearms response
 2 necessary and none reported, but where the control room
 3 believed that this could be a terrorist incident and
 4 might lead to an MTFA? Was any such guidance ever
 5 issued by the Fire Service to the control room in the
 6 same or similar form to that which we've just been
 7 looking at?
 8 A. Guidance, I would say not, sir, in my knowledge.
 9 However, the training that's delivered, you have seen
 10 the presentation that was delivered to North West Fire
 11 Control, which included reference to the MTFA JOPs 3,
 12 which clearly states the precursors, potential
 13 precursors, to an unfolding MTFA-type incident.
 14 Q. Would you like to specify those, Mr Gaskell?
 15 A. You'll get calls in from the public, you would get
 16 reports of gunshots -- without looking at the document,
 17 it's quite a short list, which has been expanded upon --
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I remember "bomb exploded" was one of
 19 them.
 20 A. As a potential.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So that's one which is quite important
 22 in this case?
 23 A. It is, but on its own, and we spoke about this on
 24 Wednesday -- on its own it has to be part -- yes, it's
 25 a consideration. Could I... On reflection, sir, and

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1 obviously ...
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's fine, you're allowed to think
 3 about things.
 4 A. I've had that opportunity, sir. As you're aware, sir,
 5 I didn't form any part of the initial response to the
 6 arena incident and I made a conscious decision not to
 7 get sort of familiar with the actions of GMFRS on
 8 22 May. That included any actions and communications
 9 between North West Fire Control and the other emergency
 10 services, as I stated to Mr de la Poer.
 11 As the MTFA training exercising lead, I obviously
 12 expected to get questions contained within my evidence
 13 proposal on the preparedness of GMFRS to respond to
 14 a terrorist incident. What I will say is there was no
 15 reference in my evidence proposal that I was going to be
 16 asked questions on the communications on 22 May between
 17 North West Fire Control, between GMP, and between the
 18 duty NILO and all the subsequent actions carried out by
 19 North West Fire Control, which I felt put me at
 20 a significant disadvantage on the questioning, sir.
 21 Subsequently, I've now looked at the -- managed to
 22 look at the transcript of the calls made into North West
 23 Fire Control between the team leader and GMP and the
 24 subsequent telephone calls between the North West Fire
 25 Control team leader and the duty NILO, so I feel I'm in

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1 a better position to answer your questions because
 2 I wasn't trying to be difficult on Wednesday, sir,
 3 I just didn't have the information. I felt at
 4 a disadvantage because it wasn't in my evidence
 5 proposal, but I feel I'm better suited to answer that
 6 now, sir.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sorry that has happened. The idea
 8 is that people should have a proper opportunity to
 9 prepare themselves and not be ambushed by questions and
 10 you should have said that last week so then we would
 11 have taken that into account. But you're now in
 12 a better position to answer questions about those
 13 things?
 14 A. I am, sir. There are two specific questions which
 15 Mr Smith asked me which I'd be prepared to answer, or if
 16 it comes out in your questions, sir, that's fine.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If there are things that you, having had
 18 the opportunity to see other material, wish to correct
 19 or explain in your evidence more than please take the
 20 opportunity to do so. Mr Smith can then ask you further
 21 questions about it if he wishes.
 22 A. Thank you, sir.
 23 Mr Smith, you asked me a question about my opinions
 24 about the explosion action card being selected in North
 25 West Fire Control.

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1 MR SMITH: Yes.
 2 A. I believe that happened with a phone call at 22.35 and
 3 then at 22.38 the action card was selected. Based on
 4 that evidence, it is still my opinion that at 22.38 the
 5 appliances should have been dispatched without delay
 6 immediately. However, that didn't happen, as we know,
 7 and I'm now know there was a telephone call between the
 8 team leader at North West Fire Control and the duty NILO
 9 at 22.40 that lasted for a few minutes. During that
 10 conversation, I now understand that information was
 11 coming in to North West Fire Control that affected the
 12 decision-making process and your words, sir -- you asked
 13 me a question: was it reasonable and appropriate for the
 14 North West Fire Control team leader and the duty NILO to
 15 consider and apply the requirements of the action plan
 16 without having a clear understanding of the nature of
 17 the incident that they were attending?
 18 Given the information I now have, I do think it was
 19 very much reasonable and appropriate for the North West
 20 Fire Control team leader and the duty NILO to have that
 21 conversation about where to deploy the appliances and
 22 think about a separate RVP, as the conversation
 23 unfolded. I'm sorry if I came across as being stubborn
 24 on Wednesday but I didn't have that information, sir,
 25 and that second part of my answer now I feel is an

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1 informed answer which I think reflects what you were
 2 trying to question me about last week.
 3 Q. Thank you, Mr Gaskell. That's, if I may say so, very
 4 helpful and I would like to apologise if any of my
 5 questions in providing information to you put you at
 6 a disadvantage.
 7 A. Thank you, sir.
 8 Q. As I said to you earlier today, I just wanted to
 9 summarise the situation for the assistance of the
 10 chairman. Could you then just confirm that after the
 11 attack, the "Bomb" action plan was amended on
 12 21 June 2017 to introduce into that plan a clear
 13 requirement that if the bomb had exploded, the control
 14 room was to use the "Explosion" action plan?
 15 A. I believe that is true, sir, yes.
 16 Q. And that amended plan, the reference is {INQ004369/1}.
 17 What was done was to provide an action plan under "Bomb
 18 -- general", which was intended to make it clear to the
 19 control room, is this correct, that if they received
 20 information that a bomb had exploded, they must use the
 21 "Explosion" action plan?
 22 A. I believe that's true, yes.
 23 Q. Was that amendment because it was considered at the Fire
 24 and Rescue Service that perhaps, I put it no higher than
 25 that for these purposes, perhaps the "Bomb -- general"

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1 action plan in the form in which it appeared at the time
 2 of the attack, and the "Explosion" action plan, did not
 3 put that position clearly enough for the control room?
 4 A. I think that's a reasonable statement, sir, yes.
 5 Q. I would like to turn, if I may, to the training of North
 6 West Fire Control, and as I said on Wednesday, to ask
 7 you some questions about Janine Carden, the operations
 8 manager, who you knew; is that correct?
 9 A. I knew Janine in a professional way very well, yes, sir.
 10 Q. You had worked with her, hadn't you, on a number of
 11 action plans and amendments to them?
 12 A. That's correct, yes.
 13 Q. And was she involved in the preparation of the
 14 Operation Plato standby phase action plan, updated on
 15 21 December of 2015, with Group Manager Ben Levy and
 16 yourself and, no doubt, Mr Fletcher?
 17 A. Yes, sir, Janine would have been involved in all three
 18 aspects of the action cards for MTFA.
 19 Q. So the Operation Plato, we know there were three action
 20 plans, she was involved in the preparation and amendment
 21 to them and was therefore involved in the form in which
 22 they appeared at the time of the attack?
 23 A. Yes. To be clear, we would draft the action plan so
 24 that it sort of reflected the JOPs 3, which was the
 25 documentation, national documentation, and then we would

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1 sit down with Janine because she would have to, for use
 2 of a better word, make it North West Fire Control
 3 friendly. So the information remained the same but it
 4 was put into a format that fitted in with North West
 5 Fire Control, that they understood the documentation
 6 that we sort of had written, and obviously that also
 7 tallied in with the MTFA mobilisation guidance as well.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The phrase "Operation Plato -- standby"
 9 plan, is that a term understood by GMP and coming from
 10 GMP and agreed with GMP or is it something that the Fire
 11 and Rescue Service have?
 12 A. It's Fire Service specific, sir. So if you consider the
 13 different actions of the police and Fire Service for an
 14 Operation Plato declaration, GMP would go straight to
 15 scene with firearms officers to deal with the threat
 16 immediately.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, I need to understand. Is the
 18 "Operation Plato -- standby", that phrase, is that
 19 something that GMP would understand as a term that all
 20 the emergency services use?
 21 A. No, sir. I don't think it's relevant to GMP because the
 22 standby phase for GMFRS would be when we get the initial
 23 notification to get the resources because they're not
 24 crewed 24/7 per se. They have got crews there, for
 25 example the specialist crews at one location could be

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1 dealing with an RTC so they need to then get snatched
 2 from that.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Wouldn't it help, if GMP have formed the
 4 view at an early stage, "This may be Operation Plato but
 5 we can't actually say at the moment", would that not be
 6 helpful if they could, when ringing North West Fire
 7 Control, say, "We are on Operation Plato standby"?
 8 A. I don't think they'd use that terminology.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's my worry.
 10 A. If they said that, "We have potentially an
 11 Operation Plato incident in progress, we are making our
 12 way to scene", then I would expect North West Fire
 13 Control to implement the standby phase of the action
 14 card to actually get those resources just stood up at
 15 station ready to go to the RVP or whatever.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 17 MR SMITH: I think the point is that the description or
 18 title of the action plan was "standby phase", wasn't it?
 19 A. Correct, and the content sort of reflected that.
 20 Q. Of course, but just looking at the title, "standby
 21 phase", the issue is whether that is an expression that
 22 was shared between yourself and, for example, GMP. In
 23 other words, did the Fire and Rescue Service understand
 24 that GMP would use that expression or not?
 25 A. I don't see the relevance of GMP knowing about a standby

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1 phase for GMFRS. They would inform us of an
 2 Operation Plato; what the actions of GMP are completely
 3 different to the actions of the Fire Service and
 4 Ambulance Service. So I don't know what the phase is
 5 called for the Ambulance Service, but the standby phase
 6 for GMFRS is purely meant to get the appliances stood up
 7 and ready for deployment.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you need to get them stood up, if GMP
 9 ring you and say, "We are in a situation where we think
 10 there may be an Operation Plato but we can't say", ie
 11 they are in a standby phase, wouldn't that help to make
 12 clear everything for North West Fire Control, they need
 13 to go on to that particular card? It just seems if
 14 you're going to link up together to do the same things,
 15 it might be a good idea if you used the same
 16 expressions.
 17 A. I take on board what you're saying, sir.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But you don't think it's right?
 19 A. I don't think it's achievable, sir. I don't think
 20 they'd use that phrase. The police force would
 21 purely --
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You don't think it's possible?
 23 A. No, they're just deploying to scene, sir, to deal with
 24 the threat. We may get a phone call to say, "We've got
 25 a suspected Plato", and given the training that North

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1 West Fire Control have been given and the information
 2 then I would expect "Plato -- standby" card to be
 3 implemented.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 5 MR SMITH: Before leaving that, subsequently did
 6 the expression "standby phase" go, and did North West
 7 Fire Control, were they provided with an action plan for
 8 "Operation Plato -- activation phase"? Mr Fletcher
 9 knows about this.
 10 A. Okay.
 11 Q. You're looking as if you may not be able to answer the
 12 question.
 13 A. Is this post--August 2017, sir?
 14 Q. Post, yes.
 15 A. That's when I was in the Home Office, sir.
 16 Q. If necessary you can check it.
 17 MR SMITH: I have flagged the point up, sir, and there we
 18 are.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 20 MR SMITH: Returning to Janine Carden then, is it correct
 21 that she was not, however, involved with the Fire and
 22 Rescue Service in the preparation of the "Explosion" and
 23 "Bomb -- general" action plans, only the Operation Plato
 24 plans?
 25 A. I cannot remember the detail but I would find that

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1 extremely surprising if she wasn't. The common thread
 2 throughout the action plans was to go and sit down at
 3 North West Fire Control and discuss with a team leader
 4 the content. Because ultimately, these action plans are
 5 not being forced upon North West Fire Control, they are
 6 there to be utilised by them, so they have to be
 7 user-friendly. I would be very surprised if there was
 8 no North West Fire Control input.
 9 Q. She will be giving evidence in due course and will be
 10 able to assist the chairman.
 11 A. Thank you.
 12 Q. Moving on from there, therefore, as far as Janine Carden
 13 is concerned, is it correct that she was also involved
 14 at your request in the MTFA commander training in
 15 January 2017 and in February 2017?
 16 A. That's correct, because of the nature of the training
 17 and it was focusing around the command and control of
 18 an MTFA, I wanted to give Janine the opportunity for her
 19 and other staff to attend because it was so relevant to
 20 the actions of North West Fire Control.
 21 Q. And of course, one of the issues arising in respect of
 22 the MTFA commander training was the importance of the
 23 Airwave and multi-agency working, isn't that correct?
 24 A. Yes, sir, and that's sort of where the interoperability
 25 channel was sort of -- that was, if you like, the

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1 catalyst to get that work.
 2 Q. For that training?
 3 A. Yes, the training in January/February was the catalyst
 4 to get the interoperability channel up and running.
 5 Q. And she was involved in that?
 6 A. Yes, sir.
 7 Q. Also, was she involved in a Silver tabletop exercise at
 8 Manchester Airport at your invitation?
 9 A. Again, that was a tabletop mobilisation document that
 10 was the first part of a two part -- the second part was
 11 going to be live play. So yes, I invited Janine and
 12 other North West Fire Control operators to that, yes,
 13 sir.
 14 Q. In summary, is the position that, going back to your
 15 presentation in December 2015, the last presentation you
 16 did in relation to MTFA --
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. -- that was very well attended and very well received,
 19 wasn't it, by the staff of North West Fire Control?
 20 A. Yes, sir. So the format was that we would deliver the
 21 training twice a year -- sorry, 2 days every 6 months to
 22 get as many people to attend the training but there was
 23 also an opportunity -- that presentation was on the
 24 system. So if people were on leave or they weren't on
 25 station -- not at North West Fire Control, sorry, then

22

1 there was a potential for cascade training as well
 2 within North West Fire Control, but to answer your
 3 question sir, yes they were well attended.
 4 Q. You'd have an attentive audience; is that right?
 5 A. I would hope so, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's always quite difficult to judge
 7 that, isn't it?
 8 MR SMITH: So in summary, do you agree that Janine Carden,
 9 in her role as operations manager, had extensive
 10 knowledge of the requirements of the Fire and Rescue
 11 Service in relation to mobilising to an MTFA?
 12 A. I would agree with that unanimously, sir.
 13 Q. And finally, she attended, didn't she, the MTFA
 14 assurance visit on 11 February 2016, something in which
 15 I believe you were closely involved?
 16 A. Yes, sir. Part of the -- there were eight key lines of
 17 enquiry. One of those was communications, so obviously
 18 that led us to North West Fire Control and, yes, Janine
 19 was key to the North West Fire Control element of that
 20 piece of work.
 21 Q. Without revisiting the email correspondence, the
 22 correspondence at that time, do you agree, included
 23 reference to her clear knowledge of mobilising
 24 procedures?
 25 A. Absolutely sir, yes.

23

1 Q. So in summary, there's no doubt, is there, that the
 2 operations manager at North West Fire Control had a full
 3 understanding of mobilising procedures at the time of
 4 the attack?
 5 A. That's correct.
 6 MR SMITH: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Gaskell.
 7 MR DE LA POER: Next, can I invite questions from
 8 Mr Horwell QC on behalf of Greater Manchester Police.
 9 Questions from MR HORWELL
 10 MR HORWELL: Mr Gaskell, two matters, please. There's an
 11 email, it's been referred to before, it concerns you,
 12 and I just have a few questions for you, please. If it
 13 could be put on the screen. If you have it in hard
 14 copy, please turn it up. {INQ017957/1}.
 15 It's the email concerning the tri-service
 16 communication between the control rooms, Mr Gaskell.
 17 I'm sure you're aware of it.
 18 A. I am aware of that, sir, yes.
 19 Q. As always, we have to start with the last page,
 20 {INQ017957/4}, please.
 21 Mr Gaskell, you're not involved at this stage. This
 22 is an email sent from David Whittle to, amongst others,
 23 Laura Lewis and Jo Hoyte, and it is hoping that what
 24 we're calling the tactical multi-agency Talk Group
 25 channel is the channel that is to be used for this

24

1 dedicated purpose and it is there hoped that there will
 2 be a switchover date of 30 April; yes?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Just to follow these emails through as quickly as
 5 we can, Mr Gaskell.
 6 A. I understand that, sir, but just to put context on that,
 7 yes, the commander training on 4 and 18 January and
 8 22 February highlighted the need for that
 9 interoperability channel. On 1 March, we had Exercise
 10 Hawk River, which further highlighted that fact. So
 11 this email on 30 March from David is in relation to
 12 those two key factors.
 13 Q. Thank you. If we continue this chain of emails,
 14 {INQ017957/3}, please. Again, I am going to summarise.
 15 If you wish to add any detail, Mr Gaskell, please do.
 16 But the email at the bottom of that page is from
 17 Laura Lewis and again you are not involved at this
 18 stage. It relates to a visit by Laura Lewis and
 19 Jo Hoyte to the fire and NNAS control rooms on 10 April.
 20 If we then move to the top of the page, please, this
 21 is the first time you become involved in the chain.
 22 Dave Whittle is asking how the visit to the control
 23 rooms on 10 April went and Mr Whittle says in the main
 24 body of the email:
 25 "Do you think it's feasible for 28 April as the date

25

1 for this to be used or should we hang on to another
 2 channel in the meantime?"
 3 And Mr Gaskell, if we could now go to {INQ017957/2},
 4 please, at the bottom of the page, this is the first
 5 time you become directly involved in this email chain.
 6 You send an email on 20 April 2017 to Dave Whittle,
 7 Laura Lewis, Jo Hoyte and others, and you say in that
 8 email:
 9 "I think with timescales it may be worth postponing
 10 slightly so that we can agree everything and make sure
 11 we get this right."
 12 You were aware of the amount of work that
 13 Laura Lewis and Jo Hoyte were doing, weren't you,
 14 Mr Gaskell?
 15 A. I was aware that they had visited our control room on
 16 10 April. As with any new policy — new process, sorry,
 17 there has to be a SOP written and it needs to be tested.
 18 So the reason for that email there is that we had — we
 19 tried to get a go-live date at the end of April. As you
 20 can see with the emails, we're now looking at 20 April
 21 and we still haven't got the process in place. So
 22 I think the key bit to my message is that we've got to
 23 get this right, it was a really important piece of work
 24 going forward for the three emergency services to deal
 25 with multi-agency incidents.

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1 Q. That's exactly the question I was going to put to you:
 2 it was vital to get this right. Can I just ask you
 3 this: there were, of course, other channels available
 4 for use for control rooms to communicate with each
 5 other?
 6 A. At the time, sir, yes, there was. But I don't think
 7 there was a formal procedure written down for that to
 8 take place. That was the reason for this piece of work.
 9 Q. Yes. We all agree that this was the first time there
 10 was to be a dedicated channel for communication between
 11 the control rooms, but communication nonetheless was
 12 still possible?
 13 A. Oh yes, sir, definitely.
 14 Q. Mr Gaskell, if I could move beyond that email, please,
 15 and ask you about the circumstances in which some
 16 further evidence has been placed before you. How did
 17 that arise, please? You have told the chairman that
 18 since you last gave evidence, some further evidence has
 19 been placed before you, some further documents. How did
 20 that arise?
 21 A. I requested that from a colleague. Without discussing
 22 my evidence, I requested a — and I know he has done
 23 some work on that, on the early stages of the response
 24 to the incident, so I requested a transcript of the
 25 communication, sir.

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1 Q. Mr Gaskell, let me make it clear, I'm not suggesting
 2 anything untoward has happened. The colleague was?
 3 A. That was a colleague of mine, Michael Lawlor.
 4 Q. Thank you. What documents were you given, Mr Gaskell?
 5 A. It's not an official document, sir, it's a document that
 6 has been prepared by Mr Lawlor purely to be able to
 7 evaluate the initial response by GMFRS.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would it be a good idea if we asked for
 9 copies of that, Mr Horwell?
 10 MR HORWELL: I think it would, sir, yes.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So would you be good enough to supply
 12 that to us?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 15 MR HORWELL: Mr Gaskell, in terms of information,
 16 information is vital to deployment, I'm sure you would
 17 agree.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Would you expect information concerning the attendance
 20 at the scene of category 1 responders to be vital in the
 21 assessment of deployment?
 22 A. Sorry, could you say that again, please, sir?
 23 Q. The attendance of category 1 responders at the scene of
 24 an incident, that is vital to know, is it not, in
 25 determining whether or not to deploy?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. For example, Mr Gaskell, if you know that there is
 3 a PCSO at the scene, if you know that BTP are in
 4 attendance, if you know that all ambulances are being
 5 sent to the scene, that would be very helpful to know,
 6 would it not?
 7 A. That would absolutely be important in the
 8 decision-making process, yes, sir.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But does it feed into the action cards
 10 at all? Does that appear anywhere on the action cards?
 11 A. The action cards talk about additional information
 12 sources, which I --
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You'd put it under that category?
 14 A. Which would be the control rooms speaking together, sir.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Thank you, Mr Horwell.
 16 MR HORWELL: You've made a point of saying, Mr Gaskell, that
 17 action cards aren't there to deal with every single
 18 eventuality and point that may arise. Common sense must
 19 dictate what is important in many circumstances, must it
 20 not, Mr Gaskell?
 21 A. Common sense and, I would say, operational knowledge and
 22 experience, yes, sir.
 23 Q. Yes, I would certainly agree with that. Would you not
 24 agree that if the Ambulance Service, regular ambulance
 25 crews, regular police officers, unarmed police officers,

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1 BTP officers, PCSOs, once it is known that they are
 2 at the scene, fire should attend; do you not agree?
 3 A. If they have that information, sir, I would expect --
 4 from one of those agencies you've just listed, I would
 5 expect a very early METHANE message into their
 6 respective control rooms, which would then be shared by
 7 the other control rooms. So absolutely, once they get
 8 that information, I would say that, yes, they would find
 9 it very important and attend.
 10 Q. Yes. But knowledge of attendance at the scene, once
 11 fire know that ambulance crews, unarmed police officers,
 12 BTP officers, PCSOs, are at the scene, it is time for
 13 fire to attend, would you not agree?
 14 A. Absolutely, sir, but the point I'm making is that
 15 information would be made available to the Fire Service,
 16 most likely by a METHANE message.
 17 Q. Yes, but if it came in another way through a report from
 18 GMP, it's time for fire to attend, is it not?
 19 A. Yes, sir.
 20 MR HORWELL: Thank you. That's all I ask, sir.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much, Mr Horwell.
 22 MR DE LA POER: Next can I please turn to Mr Cooper QC,
 23 who's taking the lead on behalf of the bereaved
 24 families.
 25

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1 Questions from MR COOPER
 2 MR COOPER: As you heard, Mr Gaskell, I ask questions on
 3 behalf of the bereaved on this matter.
 4 I just want to understand, before we begin my
 5 questions, where we are with you at the moment and where
 6 perhaps we may move to later.
 7 Would you accept, as a number of witnesses seemed to
 8 do, that on this night, on this day, the Fire Service
 9 didn't respond and didn't do their jobs to make
 10 a difference? Would you accept that general
 11 proposition?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Thank you. I know it's difficult to accept that.
 14 A. It is.
 15 Q. I do understand that, so please take that with you as we
 16 go on. Thank you.
 17 Have your statement in front of you if you can
 18 because it will assist you. That's {INQ033910/1}. I'm
 19 going to take you to a number of paragraphs in it and it
 20 will help you to corral your thoughts.
 21 I want to start very early, if I can, in that
 22 statement about your work in the Contingency Planning
 23 Unit. Because you were working in the Contingency
 24 Planning Unit, were you not, at the time of this
 25 atrocity?

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1 A. Yes, sir.
 2 Q. This may be a very basic question, but remind me if
 3 you will, what's the general ethos of the Contingency
 4 Planning Unit? What sort of contingencies is it
 5 planning for?
 6 A. The Contingency Planning Unit, working under the Civil
 7 Contingencies Act, working with the Local Resilience
 8 Forum over a very wide number of subjects, so for
 9 example they have responsibility for business continuity
 10 management for the whole of the Fire Service, they look
 11 at the control of major accident hazards, which is
 12 COMAH, so the large sites around Trafford Park which
 13 have to be exercised every 3 years --
 14 Q. You're speaking very fast.
 15 A. Sorry.
 16 Q. I can hear you but there are others taking notes, so
 17 slow down a little if you will. I'm particularly
 18 focused, if it helps you, on the role of the Contingency
 19 Planning Unit for planning for contingencies that
 20 occurred, for instance, on 22 May, if that helps you
 21 focus your thoughts.
 22 A. So two levels of that, sir. If I talk about, first of
 23 all, the more strategic element of that. So planning
 24 with the Local Resilience Forum, that would have been
 25 part of my line manager's attendance at the Local

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1 Resilience Forum, the training and exercise group.
 2 I can't remember who chaired that, to be honest with
 3 you, but also looking at the JESIP group as well, so
 4 that would be the more strategic oversight of the
 5 events.
 6 Q. What contingencies were you planning for around the time
 7 of 22 May 2017?
 8 A. My role was the training lead for the MTFA response
 9 element. So that was my, if you like, area of
 10 responsibility, and obviously the contingencies are the
 11 different types of attack that could be envisaged.
 12 Q. That's what I wanted to develop, if I can, the
 13 consideration by the Contingency Planning Unit of the
 14 different types of attack that were anticipated around
 15 about the time of 22 May 2017.
 16 What sort of types of attack were the Contingency
 17 Planning Unit focused on?
 18 A. If we look at that very specific subject, we were
 19 looking at --- it was a time where we were --- certainly
 20 from my perspective, I was on national working groups
 21 for MTFA and at the time we were focused on certain
 22 types of attack, which was a large-scale, potentially
 23 multi-seated, multi-faceted attack type. Obviously, the
 24 attack methodologies have evolved over time to reflect
 25 much simpler, less sophisticated, but at the time

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1 we were looking at, for example, the Paris-type event.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you're saying since then, 22 May, it
 3 has changed somewhat, the type of attack, but at this
 4 stage you're concerned with Mumbai, Paris ---
 5 A. Correct, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: --- Bataclan? Yes.
 7 MR COOPER: So all contingency planning was perhaps focused
 8 on a different sort of event than that which afflicted
 9 the arena on the 22nd?
 10 A. Yes. It's still --- the preparedness was for, if you
 11 like, the aftermath that was caused by an attack such as
 12 the arena. However, that specific attack methodology
 13 was certainly not at the forefront based on the
 14 international experiences that we'd had across Europe.
 15 Q. So in other words, the attack, as it has been referred
 16 to, as a lone wolf terror attack, for instance, that
 17 wasn't part of the Contingency Planning Unit's thinking
 18 around and about the time of the 22nd?
 19 A. What I would say is that that was under consideration
 20 that that could happen but the focus in my recollection
 21 was much more on that MTFA, multi-attackers, potentially
 22 multi-seated, so the worst-case scenario.
 23 Q. Just briefly, I want to drill down on this. I can
 24 understand maybe the prevailing information about those
 25 that commit these atrocities was of that nature. But

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1 did that mean then that other methods such as lone wolf
 2 attacks were not just not considered or shelved?
 3 A. I wouldn't say they wasn't considered, sir, and if you
 4 look at the MTFA version 3 JOPs, I believe there is
 5 reference in there as well to the lower sophisticated
 6 type of attacks. So I think it's unfair to say it
 7 wasn't considered, sir, but I would say it wasn't the
 8 primary focus of the training that we held.
 9 Q. What are the resources of the Contingency Planning Unit?
 10 I'm just trying to understand why these decisions had to
 11 be made, one or the other. Were the resources
 12 sufficient within the Contingency Planning Unit to
 13 consider both? Why were these decisions being made?
 14 A. Sorry, sir, I don't think I said it's one or the other,
 15 I said it's a consideration that the smaller type,
 16 lone-wolf attack could take place as per JOPs 3.
 17 However, what I would say is the primary focus was on,
 18 certainly from a testing and exercising perspective,
 19 multi-agency testing and exercising was on the sort of
 20 assumption that there would be a larger, potentially
 21 multi-seated attack.
 22 Q. Some may be concerned, and I know some are concerned,
 23 that effectively the Contingency Planning Unit took
 24 their eye off the ball and, whilst focusing on these
 25 other methods that you describe of terrorist attacks,

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1 their eye was taken off the ball in relation to lone
 2 wolf attacks.
 3 A. I completely disagree with that, sir. We were one of
 4 the best capability providers. We had an audit in 2016
 5 and I think it's unfair to say that we took our eye off
 6 the ball because I really don't think, certainly from
 7 a testing and exercising perspective --- I've produced
 8 a document that has an INQ number that shows the amount
 9 of training we did and to answer your question, we
 10 didn't train purposely for a lone wolf attack, but the
 11 fact that we were training for this multi-faceted,
 12 potentially multi-seated attack, which was the
 13 worst-case scenario, then the capability that we had in
 14 place was more than capable to deal with a lone
 15 wolf/single type attack.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think the point that I'm looking at
 17 is that perhaps all this training for the Bataclan-type
 18 attack and the multi-sited ones may have led people to
 19 more readily think that this was happening in the arena
 20 attack than was actually true. So the problem is we
 21 don't want to be reactive to terrorist attacks changing,
 22 so you have to rely, if possible, on intelligence, and
 23 were you getting the intelligence, the input, from those
 24 who deal with the intelligence about attacks generally,
 25 as to the likelihood of different types of attacks

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1 happening or are you just doing it, "I've read about
 2 Mumbai, I've read about Bataclan, that's what's
 3 happening there and what's what we need to look for",
 4 rather than perhaps getting intelligence in advance,
 5 saying, "We've got to really look out, this may be where
 6 they are going next?"
 7 A. To answer your question, sir, I was not privy to any
 8 information or intelligence to say that a lone wolf type
 9 attack was the sort of ...
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Might happen?
 11 A. Might happen. Yes, we had had... We had learning from
 12 the attacks in Europe, as you just said, the Bataclan,
 13 but to answer your question, I didn't have any specific
 14 intel to say that that attack methodology, the lone
 15 wolf, may be the most prevalent in the future.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just the other side of it, do you think
 17 there was a risk that the emergency services were
 18 overexpecting a multi-sited type attack rather than
 19 considering the possibility of a lone wolf attack?
 20 A. For the Fire and Rescue Service, obviously the police
 21 have primacy on this kind of incident, I would expect
 22 that would be a really relevant question to ask police.
 23 From an FRS perspective, sir, our procedures, whether it
 24 be a single lone wolf attacker or a multi-seated attack,
 25 our procedures wouldn't actually differ that much

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1 because our response is as it is with the SRT vehicle,
 2 sir.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 4 MR COOPER: Thank you. Can I take you on to a slightly
 5 different matter, please, and look at paragraph 14 of
 6 your statement. I just want to ask one question for
 7 clarification, please.
 8 You're dealing with MTFA matters and you say in the
 9 previous paragraph you became MTFA lead for GMFRS
 10 in February 2011. You say:
 11 "The position in February 2011 was that myself and
 12 my counterparts were essentially tasked with devising an
 13 alternative to the capability utilising fewer
 14 resources."
 15 What do you mean by "utilising fewer resources",
 16 please?
 17 A. That statement is in relation to the resources which
 18 were available to the London Fire Brigade, which is the
 19 biggest brigade by far in the country. It also has the
 20 highest perceived risk, being in the capital, of iconic
 21 sites. So we went to see London Fire Brigade, how they
 22 tested and exercised their capability, but we -- West
 23 Yorkshire and West Midlands, very similar sized
 24 brigades, we realised we could not have the same
 25 resources to replicate the London Fire Brigade MTFA

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1 response capability. That isn't to say that the
 2 capabilities that we put in place in those three regions
 3 was not as effective as the London Fire Brigade
 4 capability.
 5 Q. Just so we can understand that answer, what resources
 6 didn't, for instance, Greater Manchester have that
 7 London did have?
 8 A. It's not the fact that... It's fewer personnel.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's numbers rather than --
 10 A. It's personnel, sir. The equipment and the response
 11 capability -- the difference was the number of
 12 personnel.
 13 MR COOPER: So the chair helpfully clarified and you agreed,
 14 it's people, not equipment?
 15 A. Correct, sir.
 16 Q. There's no limitation in resources as far as equipment
 17 is concerned?
 18 A. No, and as I referred to earlier, the national groups
 19 tended to be held in London where we discussed each
 20 capability. Certainly in the early stages there was not
 21 as much uniformity as there is now --
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Your view is if GMFRS's resources had
 23 turned up on the night, they would have been able to do
 24 the job they would be required to do?
 25 A. I have no doubt whatsoever, sir.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 2 MR COOPER: On the subject of resources let me take you to
 3 your paragraph 31. Much has been asked about you
 4 in relation to stretchers and Skeds but I want to
 5 clarify one matter in that paragraph:
 6 "NWAS were of great assistance in identifying Skeds
 7 and specialist medical equipment for use in MTFA. We
 8 purchased high-end Skeds that could be used multiple
 9 times. The Skeds can be dragged across uneven ground to
 10 carry injured casualties to a place of safety."
 11 So these were the Skeds that would have been
 12 provided by the Fire Service; is that right?
 13 A. Yes, sir.
 14 Q. And what do you mean by high end? You give a little
 15 description there, but I just want to understand what
 16 you mean by "high-end Skeds". What sort of help could
 17 these pieces of equipment have provided to casualties?
 18 A. My reference there to high end relates to the quality of
 19 the equipment that we bought. Like anything, you can
 20 buy cheap or you can buy expensive. We were in
 21 a fortunate position, we had had a grant from government
 22 and we were able to buy high-end, good quality Skeds.
 23 We obviously had discussions with North West Ambulance
 24 Service about the Skeds that they already had. So what
 25 I mean by that is that the Skeds that we bought were

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1 able to be used multiple times without having to buy
 2 replacements. They were very durable and hard — you
 3 could work hard with them.
 4 Q. Were they the same pieces of equipment, for instance, as
 5 NWAS had?
 6 A. I believe so, yes.
 7 Q. In terms of medical equipment, can I take you to
 8 paragraph 33, please, and you deal with the Prometheus
 9 packs in the MTFA vans and you go on to refer in that
 10 paragraph to a utility belt being worn by crews.
 11 A question there on tourniquets, please. You refer
 12 to a tourniquet. Is that still the position, that it's
 13 a single tourniquet provided within those utility belts
 14 or has that changed in any way?
 15 A. The utility belts, sir, for use on the individual
 16 wearing that belt is so that if they get injured then
 17 that kit would be used on that individual. There were
 18 bags on the SRT vehicle, first aid bags, that contained
 19 numerous tourniquets and dressings.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, there were enough tourniquets for
 21 most situations?
 22 A. Yes, sir.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 24 MR COOPER: To bring this together, your paragraph 27 says:
 25 "The intention of training was to ensure that with

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1 suitable training and direction, we could utilise NWAS
 2 and GMFRS specialist medical equipment in assisting NWAS
 3 in responding to a real life MTFA."
 4 So effectively, your role at these events would be
 5 to provide crucial assistance to NWAS?
 6 A. Yes, sir. So the training that we'd had, we had an
 7 enhanced trauma training programme throughout the year
 8 for the special operatives to enable them to be familiar
 9 with the dressings and tourniquets used by North West
 10 Ambulance Service. But the role of the Fire and Rescue
 11 Service was also to transport casualties via the Skeds
 12 from one place to — from a point of danger to a point
 13 of safety.
 14 Q. Was that assistance provided in any way whatsoever on
 15 the night of the 22nd?
 16 A. Not to my knowledge, no.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In your discussions with NWAS about
 18 dealing with these sort of attacks, do you think that
 19 at the level you were dealing with them, that they
 20 appreciated what the Fire Service could bring to an
 21 incident like this?
 22 A. Absolutely sir, yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Most of the NWAS people said they didn't
 24 even notice the fact that the Fire Service were not
 25 there, which doesn't actually look like they had a great

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1 expectation of getting much assistance.
 2 A. I would ask the question of the NWAS — I think you're
 3 probably referring to — I know we've used this term
 4 before for the Fire Service, sorry, it's not meant to be
 5 disrespectful, but I think you're talking about ordinary
 6 NWAS responders. The training that we held was with the
 7 HART teams.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So do you think ordinary NWAS responders
 9 ought to have had that sort of knowledge?
 10 A. I think they should have an awareness, sir, absolutely.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 12 MR COOPER: The fact — and I will spend just a little time
 13 going through the amount of training and the equipment
 14 that the Fire Service had at their disposal and could
 15 have been deployed and was not on the 22nd May. This
 16 was a significant lack of provision to help casualties,
 17 wasn't it, because it wasn't there and that was
 18 a significant loss, wasn't it, to emergency service
 19 personnel and the public in trying to care for these
 20 people?
 21 A. The fact that the GMFRS special response teams did not
 22 attend would have had a detrimental effect on the
 23 response, the multi-agency response, sir.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think anyone is questioning
 25 that.

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1 MR COOPER: I would like to take you now, please, to another
 2 document for the moment. It's {INQ040915/1}. This is
 3 identifying MTFA — a Home Office questionnaire, and
 4 some of the responses are from you, Mr Gaskell, that
 5 I just want to deal with and clarify. I'm not taking
 6 you through the whole document.
 7 Can I take you, please, immediately then to
 8 {INQ040915/7}. Is this something that you were involved
 9 in authoring?
 10 A. Yes, sir.
 11 Q. A few of your answers I want to deal with on
 12 {INQ040915/7} in terms of identifying that an incident
 13 is an MTFA:
 14 "What indicators, signs, are used by control room
 15 staff to judge an MTFA might be taking place? Multiple
 16 calls, incidents reported at iconic sites/crowded
 17 places, reports of gunfire/explosions. Sound of
 18 automatic weapons, quick fire as opposed to single shot.
 19 Sighting of individuals carrying weapons. Message from
 20 initial responders on the site, if applicable. Reports
 21 of multi incident sites. Large scale panic disorder.
 22 Initial METHANE messages."
 23 Would you accept that in terms of identifying
 24 indicators for an MTFA, when looking at the events of
 25 22 May, there weren't many of those indicators existing

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1 at the time?
 2 A. Sorry?
 3 Q. Looking at the list of triggers, which triggers would
 4 you say were existing at the time on 22 May?
 5 A. So looking at that, I would say multiple calls, it's an
 6 iconic site, crowded place, explosion.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not sure explosion appears there,
 8 oddly enough.
 9 A. In paragraph 1, sir.
 10 MR COOPER: "Reports of gunfire/explosion."
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're entirely right. I was reading
 12 too quickly.
 13 A. I've put on there about the large scale panic disorder
 14 and the initial METHANE message, which I believe wasn't
 15 distributed. I think there's some indicators there,
 16 sir.
 17 MR COOPER: I'm not disputing there aren't some, but in
 18 terms of automatic weapons, quick fire, sighting of
 19 individuals carrying weapons --
 20 A. That's a direct reference to the training that is given
 21 to all our operational personnel, not just the
 22 specialists, that... I'm not sure if I'm going to say
 23 something...
 24 Q. Okay.
 25 A. I don't want to say something that is operationally

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1 sensitive.
 2 Q. You must not. On paragraph 2:
 3 "Are these indicators the right ones and are there
 4 others that may give a quicker, more accurate indication
 5 that an MTFA might have taken place? If emergency
 6 services personnel present on the scene..."
 7 So again in terms of verification on 22 May, that
 8 form of verification, "Emergency services personnel
 9 present on the scene", that was extremely limited,
 10 wasn't it, would you accept?
 11 A. I believe certainly from a Fire and Rescue Service, sir,
 12 but I'm aware that BTP and NWS were on scene.
 13 Q. We heard that evidence. I won't deal with that with
 14 you:
 15 "Operation Plato suspected message."
 16 What is an "Operation Plato suspected" message?
 17 Is that like a standby or what? Is that the same thing?
 18 A. The JOPs 3, MTFA JOPs 3 at the time, clearly state that
 19 the police are the only agency who are able to formally
 20 declare Operation Plato. However, it does say that the
 21 other agencies may declare an Operation Plato suspected.
 22 Obviously that, as you say, ties into the standby phase,
 23 if you like, from an FRS perspective. It also gives the
 24 other services a very early indicator.
 25 Q. Well, so an "Operation Plato suspected" message, is that

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1 the same as an "Operation Plato standby" message?
 2 A. So "Operation Plato suspected" would be a message that
 3 comes from scene. The "Operation Plato -- standby
 4 phase" is an action card in North West Fire Control.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't want to look it up now, but
 6 could we have some time the reference in JOPs 3 to the
 7 fact that I know police are the only ones who can
 8 declare it. Don't bother looking at it now, just if at
 9 some time we could see where that reference is to others
 10 on the scene can say --
 11 A. It's in that same paragraph, sir, where it clearly
 12 states police are only available to formally able to
 13 declare it.
 14 MR COOPER: Is this "Operation Plato suspected" message
 15 generic (sic) to fire, police, ambulance or is it
 16 a general?
 17 A. I think from my knowledge that that would be a fire and
 18 ambulance message because if police were on scene, then
 19 they would be able to formally declare that. So as we
 20 spoke earlier, sir, if police were on scene and they had
 21 indicators they may contact Control to say, "We've got
 22 a potential terrorist attack, a potential MTFA", then
 23 that would invoke the standby card within Control. But
 24 this is written from a -- this whole document here is
 25 written from an FRS perspective. If I remember rightly,

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1 it was a Chief Fire Officers' Association sort of issue
 2 that had returned and we had to provide --
 3 Q. Isn't the terminology, and here's the other aspect of
 4 terminology, "Operation Plato suspected message", isn't
 5 this just adding to more confusion as to what these
 6 messages and standbys mean?
 7 A. I'm failing to understand how "Operation Plato
 8 suspected" could be confused with anything else.
 9 Q. On what basis, as you have posited the question to me,
 10 for instance, is suspicion qualified? Suspected by
 11 whom?
 12 A. By the personnel on the scene, sir --
 13 Q. On what basis?
 14 A. Based on the information they see in front of them. It
 15 depends. There's a range of precursors or there is a
 16 range of indicators, sir. What it's saying is that if
 17 you see someone running around -- it could even be
 18 someone with a bladed weapon, sir, but they may ring
 19 into Fire Service Control. The purpose of that message
 20 would be to alert non-specialist crews, fire safety
 21 crews, people in that area, to make them aware that
 22 there's a potential threat and they need to move away
 23 from the area, the site where the attack is taking
 24 place.
 25 Q. Reading on from paragraph 2:

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1 "City centre CCTV operators will have access to
2 cameras, so will be in a more informed position to
3 identify an MTFA incident."
4 I presume that means that if the incident is taking
5 place in a street or something like that? Not, for
6 instance, in the context of the City Room.
7 A. Is there no CCTV in the City Room? I don't know that,
8 sir.
9 Q. All right:
10 "GMP force duty officer (FDO) direct call into North
11 West Fire Control."
12 I know what that says, but what does it mean in the
13 context of an MTFA?
14 A. That's saying that the indicator, so it's more than an
15 indicator actually, but if Greater Manchester Police are
16 aware that an MTFA is taking place, the GMP force duty
17 officer, in their role as the initial tactical firearms
18 commander, would have that information at hand and he
19 would inform not just North West Fire Control but also
20 ambulance and the other blue lights that we have an
21 incident of this type unfolding.
22 Q. So has that got the status of virtually a clear
23 directive, that the GMP force duty officer makes
24 a direct call in to North West Fire Control?
25 A. That would be the ideal situation, sir. I'm not saying

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1 that's going to happen every time, but if we get the
2 information direct from the force duty officer, then
3 that information is credible and we'd act upon it
4 appropriately.
5 Q. Can I suggest to you, it's the ideal situation, it's the
6 desired position, isn't it, that the force duty officer
7 should be communicating this directly to North West Fire
8 Control?
9 A. It is, but I think you'd have to also take into account
10 that personnel on scene, emergency personnel on scene,
11 may also be giving those calls in as well. But I agree
12 with that statement, ideal.
13 Q. I'll push it one more time: it should be the required
14 situation, shouldn't it, in such an important
15 development concerning Operation Plato?
16 A. And that is the reason for the interoperability channel
17 that's now in place. I don't think at the time of
18 writing that that could be guaranteed, sir. The
19 procedure that we have in place now with the
20 interoperability channel addresses that significant
21 piece of information.
22 Q. And that was resolved after the 22nd, wasn't it?
23 A. That's correct, sir.
24 Q. So again, I'm pressing in terms of what was happening on
25 the 22nd. I will be dealing with it, but let's leave

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1 for a moment what happened post 22nd.
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We know that the force duty officer, if
3 it's going to be Plato, he needs to declare it to all
4 the other services. Right?
5 A. Yes.
6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that what we're talking about here,
7 a declaration of Operation Plato?
8 A. So this talks about the indicators, but yes, the force
9 duty officer would be the first person who would
10 actually be declaring Operation Plato.
11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would you expect him to ring up and say,
12 "This may be a Plato, I haven't just quite decided yet",
13 or would you expect him to actually say it's Plato?
14 A. I'd expect him or her to say, "It's a Plato, this is the
15 address, this is the RVP".
16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So that's the system which should have
17 taken place, which we know didn't take place on the
18 night?
19 MR COOPER: Could you scroll down {INQ040915/7}, Mr Lopez?
20 There we have paragraph 3 and we see:
21 "What systems are in place to aid decision—making?"
22 And we have dealt with action cards:
23 "Standby implementation and stand down, annual
24 training."
25 {INQ040915/8}:

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1 "Advisers contacting duty NILO for further
2 information."
3 So effectively within this document, would you
4 agree, there's clear direction as to how things should
5 be done, it wasn't a mystery, in terms of MTFA?
6 A. No, that is — obviously I wrote this response, sir, and
7 that is my perception of how things should have gone.
8 Q. And there really is, would you accept, no excuse for
9 those involved in an incident such as the 22 May not to
10 know this and to behave in accordance with it?
11 A. I would say not, sir.
12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let me identify about this document,
13 rough date, any idea?
14 A. This document here?
15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Someone can find it for me no
16 doubt, but if you had a rough idea.
17 A. I think it is post the January assurance assessment.
18 MR COOPER: I think it's February 2016.
19 A. February or March 2016 I was going to say.
20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And this is government saying, "Are you
21 ready, what do you do in this situation?", and you have
22 set out what you're doing?
23 A. I think this, sir, was the Chief Fire Officers'
24 Association. It wasn't a multi-agency document. This
25 was very much fire specific.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you get any response back from the
 2 chief fire officers saying, "What you're doing is not
 3 the right thing", or, "Consider doing A, B, C, and D
 4 extra"?

5 A. It was about getting an information picture across the
 6 UK of what the MTFA response capabilities looked like.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Certainly no criticism of yours?

8 A. No, sir.

9 MR COOPER: Just one more page, maybe two. One more page
 10 certainly. {INQ040915/11}, please, Mr Lopez.

11 Indeed, in paragraph 18 we see:
 12 "What problems might be encountered in informing
 13 others? How could these problems be overcome?"
 14 And one of those problems in overcoming those
 15 problems, one of the suggestions is a back-up channel
 16 via Airwave communications; do you see that?

17 A. I do.

18 Q. Is that effectively flagging the three-way Airwave
 19 communication issue that we hear of?

20 A. Yes, it's asking what problems might be encountered and
 21 I think to say that there wouldn't potentially be
 22 a telecommunication failure would be sort of wrong for
 23 me not to include that, sir.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can we just -- as I understand it, you
 25 can set up -- on 22 May 2017, it was possible to set up

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1 a three-way Airwave channel but in order to do it you
 2 needed the FDO to notify everybody else, "This is the
 3 channel you go on, go on it now", right?

4 A. Which was also monitored, sir, very importantly,
 5 monitored in North West Fire Control 24/7.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But you need to be notified of what's
 7 happening?

8 A. Yes.

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: After 22 May, they've now set up very
 10 rapidly the one which is open all the time, so you don't
 11 have to be notified of the channel, that's there, and
 12 people are listening to it all the time?

13 A. Correct, sir.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Are you identifying that issue
 15 in February 2016?

16 A. No, sir. That was born out of the commander training
 17 and Hawk River, sir. I'm looking that potentially there
 18 could be a communication failure because the question
 19 says what might be encountered. But to relate that to
 20 the work that came out of those two exercises, sir, in
 21 2017, I'm not referring to that.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So Hawk River is when?

23 A. 1 March 2017.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. So what was required after that,
 25 as I understand it, was someone to give up one of their

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1 Airwave channels and that actually be identified as
 2 being the one that was permanently in that situation;
 3 yes?

4 A. Yes.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's all that was required?

6 A. I think that's -- I'm not a technician, sir. I think
 7 there's more to it than that. But if you're looking at
 8 the timescales, Hawk River on 1 March, the email threads
 9 that you just showed previously is 30 March, so there's
 10 a month passed there, and then we talk about the --

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure time went by. My question is,
 12 did it go by unnecessarily?

13 A. I think that's a question for GMP, sir, because they
 14 were the lead agency.

15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: From your point of view, after
 16 Hawk River, was this a priority, something which is
 17 important to get done?

18 A. It was identified by all three services as a priority,
 19 sir.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.

21 MR COOPER: On that, let me take you to paragraph 78 of your
 22 statement, which deals with the matters that the chair
 23 has been taking you to and then I want to take you to an
 24 email on this point:
 25 "By this stage, following the learning outcomes of

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1 Winchester Accord, discussions between myself,
 2 Dave Whittle and Simon Watson, after the commander
 3 training and through Hawk River, it has been agreed that
 4 a multi-agency Airwave communication channel would be
 5 instigated. This is known as [blank] used by the
 6 emergency responders in Greater Manchester. At the time
 7 of the arena incident this channel was still in the
 8 implementation phase and was not operational. We knew
 9 it had been set up and we were able to access it, but
 10 the policy for [blank] had not been signed off by the
 11 strategic managers involved by May 2017."

12 I want to ask you about that. I want to ask you
 13 about, again, the reasons for this delay. It was before
 14 22 May 2017. It was ready to go, wasn't it, in terms of
 15 its operation?

16 A. My understanding is that that channel was always
 17 available. It's not a new channel that's been sort of
 18 put on the Airwave. It's the policy and the procedure
 19 to actually use that channel in a formal --

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: As I understood it, someone needed to
 21 give up one of their channels and that had all been done
 22 by this stage. It was there, people needed to know it
 23 was there and going, but it hadn't been signed off for
 24 policy reasons and all the rest of it. It just sounds
 25 a bit like process got in the way of progress.

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1 A. It sounds very much like that, sir, and without wanting
2 to defend, I think it was very much a police-led policy,
3 if you like, and the whole project -- so possibly the
4 police are in a much better position.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Well, they are. You did send an email
6 saying: actually, I think it's too soon to do it we need
7 to make sure everything is done properly because it is
8 important we get it right.

9 A. That's right, sir.

10 MR COOPER: Is that what you mean by policy? It was
11 a question I was going to ask. What do you mean by
12 policy?

13 A. So when you instigate a new procedure like this, you
14 would have a tri-service, standard operating procedure
15 that's signed off by strategic managers and then there
16 would generally be a period where that process would be
17 tested to make sure that it works, obviously, before
18 a go-live date. So from my understanding, the SOP
19 needed to be sort of finalised, signed off, published,
20 and then the channel tested, and then it was to go live.
21 I believe that happened quite quickly after 22 May.

22 Q. That was my next question. This policy logjam was
23 solved very quickly, wasn't it, when people actually sat
24 round a table with a coffee in a café and came to an
25 agreement?

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1 A. I suppose what you could say is that the incident on the
2 22nd certainly focused minds.

3 Q. Forgive me for putting this to you bluntly, it shouldn't
4 have taken the issue on 22 May when 20 (sic) people lost
5 their lives to focus minds, should it?

6 A. No, sir, I agree with what you're saying. But there was
7 a --

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The reality is there was a
9 (overspeaking) could have been done earlier.

10 A. -- (overspeaking) other way round it, there was other
11 work going on, but yes I can understand that it did need
12 to be signed off.

13 MR COOPER: Let me finish this point and then suggest,
14 subject to the chair's view, we take a break.

15 You're mentioned in Ben Levy's statement. This is
16 why I just want to show you the paragraph and I want to
17 ask you whether you agree with what he says on these
18 points. His statement is {INQ035164/1}, paragraphs 3
19 and 4 of that statement, please.

20 "On or around the time of 18 January 2017, whilst
21 conducting some research into national Fire and Rescue
22 Service practices, I happened across a document held
23 in the public domain entirely by chance, which set out
24 locally agreed principles for the use of the available
25 interoperable radio channels within the Devon and

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1 Cornwall region. Having read that document, I realised
2 that the interoperability arrangements that it set out
3 could be adapted for the Local Resilience Forum in
4 Greater Manchester in order to formalise arrangements
5 for the use of the already available inter-agency
6 channels. I sent a copy of the Devon and Cornwall
7 document by email to my colleagues Neil Gaskell and
8 John Fletcher, simply inferring that a similar
9 arrangement in Greater Manchester would be beneficial."

10 That was in January 2017. Do you remember receiving
11 that?

12 A. I remember receiving the document from Ben, yes, I do.

13 Q. {INQ034531/1}. And to the bottom, please. So there
14 we have from you, on 20 January 2017:

15 "Some really useful information in there Ben."
16 And then if you could scroll, please, Mr Lopez. And
17 again acknowledged there:

18 "We could do with similar in the LRF here."
19 That was on 20 January 2017. What did you do after
20 you realised that was extremely useful information? How
21 did you action it or your colleagues action it?

22 A. To answer your question, sir, I didn't action anything.
23 I was aware of the document. I read the document. As
24 I've said to Ben, there was some really useful
25 information there. I'm not sure when the next LRF

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1 meeting would have taken place, I think it takes place
2 on a quarterly cycle, and that would have been escalated
3 to the Local Resilience Forum attended by my line
4 manager with other emergency service equivalents to have
5 that discussion about the document that was in place.
6 Obviously, the LRF, I believe, were the driver initially
7 for the interoperability channel because it deals with
8 the --

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So did the Devon and Cornwall Fire
10 Brigade have this permanent interoperability channel
11 open, which is the distinction we've been saying between
12 what happened prior to 22 May and what happened after?
13 Is that what they'd come up with, is that the idea, or
14 is it something different?

15 A. If I remember correctly, Devon and Cornwall was
16 a fire-specific policy. I really don't know if it was
17 in draft or if it had been published.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, don't worry about it.

19 A. Probably Ben would be the better person to ask for that.
20 It was a document that was of a similar nature to what
21 we eventually got in.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It was suggested that they already had
23 what you eventually had?

24 A. I believe that's the case.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

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1 MR COOPER: Just this before the break. So effectively in
 2 January 2017, things were well advanced as far as this
 3 idea or this process was concerned?
 4 A. I wouldn't say they were well advanced. I know there
 5 were discussions about the feasibility of this
 6 interoperability channel as in what we had at this
 7 present time and what this could bring. But I would say
 8 -- this email from Ben Levy is on 20 January. I know
 9 from my records that Ben attended the MTFA commander
 10 training on 18 January, which was probably in his head,
 11 recollected this document, which was now coming to CPU.
 12 So as I said before, the commander training and then
 13 Hawk River were the drivers for this. I think
 14 20 January is the reason that Ben has obviously got this
 15 document, he's attended the training on the 18th sent
 16 and the sent this through to CPU for escalation up to
 17 the LRF.
 18 Q. I am not going to take you to it, but there is an email
 19 where a view is expressed, I think by Mr Levy, where he
 20 said:
 21 "This is all good for Devon and Cornwall, but why
 22 not for us?"
 23 Do you remember that sort of passage of
 24 communication?
 25 A. I don't remember that, sir.

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1 MR COOPER: Thank you.
 2 Would that be a convenient moment?
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll have quarter of an hour.
 4 Just give me an update -- this is only to get
 5 the timetable in my mind because we've got Mr Berry
 6 coming later.
 7 MR COOPER: About half an hour, sir.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 9 (11.03 am)
 10 (A short break)
 11 (11.20 am)
 12 MR COOPER: Sir, before the short break you asked for some
 13 clarification from JOPs 3 in relation to the declaring
 14 of an MTFA and who should be involved with that
 15 declaration. Can I please ask Mr Lopez for JOPs 3,
 16 {INQ008372/9}.
 17 I won't go through it in detail, but just for your
 18 information, that's where the answers appear. Can we
 19 look at paragraph 4.3 as well, please? {INQ008372/10}.
 20 We have there the paragraph:
 21 "The response to an MTFA will be police-led."
 22 I don't intend, sir, subject to your view, to take
 23 the witness to this, but that's the document I think
 24 that you might have been interested in. I'm in your
 25 hands.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that the bit you're referring to?
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. That's very helpful.
 4 MR COOPER: Thank you.
 5 I would like to ask you, before we move on to some
 6 more particularity from your statement, just a question
 7 about leadership within the Fire Service. Do
 8 I understand it that when one is trained for leadership
 9 in the Fire Service, it's a decision which is made,
 10 which takes perhaps individuals that choose leadership
 11 off in a different direction, for instance, from front
 12 line work?
 13 A. So leadership from the Fire and Rescue Service -- so
 14 let's take it from a station manager perspective.
 15 You will have operational station managers who are in
 16 charge of fire stations. Like myself, you'll have
 17 station managers who are working in a specialist role,
 18 for example at the Contingency Planning Unit, and there
 19 are many other different roles. The commonality between
 20 those roles is you are what's deemed as a flexi duty
 21 officer, so you turn out to incidents, both day and
 22 night, so you have to be operationally competent
 23 regardless of your role ID.
 24 Q. That was really the second question in terms of
 25 operational experience. Is it right that when an

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1 individual, if an individual chooses a leadership role
 2 in their career, their experience of operational roles
 3 diminishes?
 4 A. Absolutely not, sir. Within the role map you have to
 5 remain operationally competent for the reason I have
 6 just said, that you will be part of the command
 7 structure depending on the size of the incident. So we
 8 looked at the action cards. The action card, for
 9 example, for explosions says to send a station manager,
 10 which could be me, working in headquarters, or it could
 11 be someone working in a borough, Wigan or Bolton, for
 12 example. It depends on the location of the incident.
 13 Q. All right. Witnesses have been asked on a number of
 14 occasions, as have you, about the various operations and
 15 I am not going to detain the inquiry too long on this
 16 but I just want to try and draw a little bit of it all
 17 together, if I can, through you.
 18 You were involved, were you not, with a number of
 19 operations, let's go through a few of them just to
 20 clarify this. Were you involved with the Saton Force?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Were you involved with Powerhouse?
 23 A. No, sir.
 24 Q. What about Black Swan?
 25 A. Yes, sir.

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1 Q. Lionheart?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Clearly Winchester Accord?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And clearly Hawk River?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. As far as Winchester Accord is concerned, the matters
 8 that were flagged within that operation are now well
 9 heard in this inquiry. But effectively — and you deal
 10 with it in your paragraphs 59, 60, 61, if you want to
 11 refresh your memory on that — Winchester Accord
 12 demonstrated, did it not, a number of systemic problems
 13 with the way the emergency services reacted to the
 14 events they were being tested upon? As a general
 15 heading, would you accept that?
 16 A. I don't, sir. I think that Winchester Accord was an
 17 extremely well-planned and well-delivered exercise.
 18 I think the failures of Winchester Accord, as I've said
 19 earlier, were down to two key reasons: one that I was
 20 completely unaware of, that there was a parallel
 21 exercise to relocate the force duty officer; and the
 22 second, the decision for the TFC on scene to deploy into
 23 a CCTV room without placing another relevant officer to
 24 deal with the arrival of the emergency services.
 25 I genuinely don't think it was systemic, sir.

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1 Q. Would you not say that the lessons learned, important
 2 lessons learned in Winchester Accord, demonstrated some
 3 very serious problems?
 4 A. The communication issues with Winchester Accord,
 5 absolutely, sir, was a serious issue and something that
 6 had to be, as a lesson, identified and learned upon,
 7 yes.
 8 Q. Let's not minimise this: the failure of communication,
 9 particularly in the police for instance, was a chronic
 10 failure, which was identified, wasn't it, by
 11 Winchester Accord?
 12 A. Due to those two key elements that I have just told you,
 13 yes.
 14 Q. Problems contacting the police, the tactical firearms
 15 commander at the Trafford Centre, for instance, was an
 16 example of that?
 17 A. It was, sir, but it was based on the decision that that
 18 individual decided to locate himself in a CCTV room,
 19 which from an operational perspective I fully
 20 understand, but it was the lack of the deployment of an
 21 officer, a suitable officer, who had communication with
 22 the TFC to meet the Fire and Rescue Service and the
 23 Ambulance Service, sir.
 24 Q. Can I ask you to look, for instance, at your
 25 paragraph 60:

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1 "We are taught in Fire and Rescue not to
 2 self-deploy, to maintain discipline and to wait for
 3 instructions from other agencies. After a while, we
 4 started to become concerned that the notification seemed
 5 to be getting later and later. We began to wonder if we
 6 had been forgotten about."
 7 What do you mean by that, forgotten about?
 8 A. So part of the planning process that we had agreed was
 9 that at midnight the exercise was commenced, there would
 10 be a period of time, 30 minutes, when police would carry
 11 out their single agency interventions, which would have
 12 given time then for a declaration of Operation Plato and
 13 an RVP to be nominated so that the Fire and Rescue
 14 Service and the Ambulance Service could move forward.
 15 That didn't happen.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The reality, just looking at it, this is
 17 an exercise to test all three of the rescue services'
 18 response to an Operation Plato. The only way you would
 19 know about an Operation Plato is if you're told by the
 20 FDO?
 21 A. That's correct.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Actually, that never happened. It's
 23 pretty fundamental.
 24 A. I know, absolutely it is, sir, but there is a huge
 25 mitigating factor that that didn't happen on

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1 Winchester Accord, sir, which as a planning team
 2 I certainly wasn't aware of and that was the relocation
 3 of the FDO.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But that tended to mask what I think
 5 Mr Cooper is suggesting was the systemic problem, which
 6 is actually everyone knew before it that the FDO was not
 7 going to be able to cope. This had been indicated well
 8 in advance and because it didn't happen on that night
 9 and somebody said, "Oh well, actually the reason for
 10 it is we're thinking of relocating and it'll all be
 11 different then", and it all got forgotten and everyone
 12 said it will be all right on the night, when it happens
 13 in reality? Isn't that fair?
 14 A. I fully agree with your statement, but what I would say
 15 is that Winchester Accord in May 2016, from a single
 16 service perspective, we had not encountered difficulties
 17 with contacting the force duty officer, sir. And then
 18 when we had the commander training in early 2017 and the
 19 Hawk River, that's when it absolutely came to the front
 20 that we needed to do something about it.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The fact of the matter is you never had
 22 a real MTFA or a potentially real Operation Plato before
 23 and it was inevitable when that happened the FDO was
 24 going to be put under far greater stress than he would
 25 in normal situations.

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1 A. Just from a single service perspective, sir, we
 2 understood that the force duty officer had a key role
 3 and would be very busy. I don't think that we
 4 anticipated that there would be a point where we would
 5 not be contacted at all, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. We, of course, know the evidence
 7 we've been given and it is for me to consider is
 8 actually that was deliberate rather than being
 9 overwhelmed, but we'll have to see where the evidence
 10 lands us up.
 11 MR COOPER: Can I suggest to you, Mr Gaskell, your answers
 12 display and still display an element of complacency
 13 about the messages being given by Winchester Accord.
 14 A. Based on what, sir, sorry?
 15 Q. Based on the fact that you seem to be minimising the
 16 signs given to the Fire Service — I'm speaking of them
 17 because you're in the witness box, I would extend that
 18 to others as well if they were here. But the signs and
 19 messages being given by Winchester Accord of serious
 20 failures. You seem to be still complacent, I suggest to
 21 you, about those signs that were being given.
 22 A. And I would completely disagree with that statement.
 23 I think the issues of Winchester Accord, where it
 24 indicated that the communication between GMP and the
 25 other services, yes, there was an issue. To say that

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1 we are complacent, sir, I don't believe that at all but
 2 I do think it was an issue that GMP would have looked at
 3 as an agency because obviously the problems were with
 4 GMP.
 5 Q. When you — I'll leave Winchester with this, it's in
 6 your paragraph 61. When I read, and as I do now, this
 7 line in paragraph 61 from your statement:
 8 "We had no idea what was happening inside the
 9 Trafford Centre and no contact with the police. It is
 10 a requirement of the JOPs that an RVP is managed by an
 11 officer to ensure that situational awareness is shared
 12 by all emergency responders."
 13 Sound familiar? Does that sound familiar when it
 14 comes to 22 May 2017?
 15 A. No, because we didn't get to the RVP, sir.
 16 Q. All right then. Is your answer no because we did even
 17 worse on 22 May 2017, we didn't even get there? Is that
 18 your answer?
 19 A. Obviously, the Fire Service did not make an attendance
 20 for over 2 hours on 22 May. This in isolation, sir,
 21 I find down to an individual, not the Fire Service,
 22 Ambulance Service per se.
 23 Q. I'm going to suggest to you, whatever one may, and it is
 24 a matter entirely for the chair, may make of Mr Sexton,
 25 to simply say it is down to one individual is very

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1 complacent of you.
 2 A. Of me as the Fire and Rescue Service?
 3 Q. You as a representative.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It depends on the finding of fact that
 5 I make. If Mr Sexton is correct that he made
 6 a deliberate decision not to tell anybody, clearly it is
 7 down to an individual personal decision. If in fact
 8 it's because he was overwhelmed then maybe it's
 9 certainly arguable that all the emergency services
 10 should have been concerned with that fact and perhaps
 11 could at least have tested it after Operation
 12 Winchester Accord to see that actually when you were
 13 being told it will all be all right on the night because
 14 we are having a different system that that was actually
 15 going to happen rather than having to wait until 22 May
 16 to see it wasn't.
 17 A. Yes, sir. And throughout — I think very early in this
 18 inquiry, you said that we weren't going to use hindsight
 19 to evaluate evidence. That was what we had in place
 20 at the time and we thought it was adequate. Obviously
 21 it wasn't, sir.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. I'm not quite sure that's what
 23 I said. You have to use hindsight when evaluating the
 24 evidence. It's when you're deciding whether anyone is
 25 culpable that you can't use hindsight because that would

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1 be unfair to individuals.
 2 A. The point I'm trying to make is at this point we didn't
 3 have the interoperability channel. If we had, I am sure
 4 things would have ran very differently on Winchester
 5 Accord as it would on 22 May, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We won't go back to the interoperability
 7 channel.
 8 MR COOPER: Simply this: if — and it is a big if because
 9 it's a matter for the chair — but if it be a considered
 10 opinion that Mr Sexton or some of Mr Sexton's decisions
 11 were made because he was completely overwhelmed and
 12 because the system and the procedures around him were
 13 not capable of allowing him, in certain circumstances,
 14 to do his job, Winchester highlighted that, didn't it?
 15 A. It highlighted the issue, sir. But there is a caveat
 16 about the exercise that we've mentioned as well because
 17 that was a major influence on the role of the FDO at
 18 Winchester Accord.
 19 Q. As far as other operations were concerned, Hawk River
 20 for instance, that was a tabletop exercise, wasn't it?
 21 A. That was a regional tabletop exercise, sir, yes.
 22 Q. It was designed to include the learning events from
 23 Winchester Accord?
 24 A. No, sir. So Hawk River was completely separate to
 25 Winchester Accord. Hawk River was always going to

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1 happen. It was a nationally funded regional exercise,
 2 and the content of the presentation was dictated to us
 3 by Central Government.
 4 Q. It may well be that I wrote down your evidence wrongly
 5 and I'm not going to detain the inquiry by checking it
 6 out but I thought you said there was a part of it
 7 designed to learn from Winchester Accord. Have I got
 8 that wrong?
 9 A. No, sir, the content was dictated to us by Central
 10 Government.
 11 Q. And again, it's paragraph 77 of your statement. You
 12 said:
 13 "As far as Hawk River is concerned [which
 14 was March 2017] I felt we had turned a corner
 15 in relation to multi-agency response capability."
 16 Your paragraph 77. We can look at it if you want
 17 to. In early March 2017, of Hawk River, you're saying:
 18 "I felt we had turned a corner in relation to
 19 multi-agency response capability"; correct?
 20 A. Yes, because the responses by the key personnel at
 21 Hawk River, over 120 separate attendees from different
 22 agencies, it was an extremely positive exercise, whereby
 23 the contents of the JOPs were applied to a multi-seated
 24 incident, and it appeared to be that everything that was
 25 in the JOPs would be followed by those blue light

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1 agencies on scene.
 2 Q. You were clearly wrong.
 3 A. Er --
 4 Q. I hope you are going to admit that because when you say:
 5 "I felt we had turned a corner in relation to
 6 multi-agency response capability in March 2017."
 7 And we have people here sitting in this room now who
 8 lost loved ones only a few months later, I presume
 9 you're going to accept you were wrong with that
 10 assessment of Hawk River?
 11 A. And I think it is extremely unfair to put me culpable
 12 for the actions of individuals on the night --
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're talking about the capability of
 14 your service and other services to deal with it, but it
 15 did actually all go wrong on the night as we know.
 16 A. Yes, but my point there is Hawk River was an extremely
 17 positive exercise and my opinion, having been part of
 18 that exercise as a facilitator, was that, yes, I do
 19 believe we had turned a corner. I thought --
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You had positive responses from people
 21 and they came up with ideas and so you had more ideas of
 22 how things could go wrong or right and all the rest of
 23 it and what people knew. Do they really work, tabletop
 24 exercises, or are they so far away from reality? What
 25 you do is, as I understand it, you put out the scenario,

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1 you tell people what's happened and then say, "Right,
 2 let's discuss this".
 3 A. Yes. The purpose of the Hawk River exercises across the
 4 UK was to embed the recently published MTFA JOPs 3
 5 amongst the three blue light services, looking at the
 6 different sections, how they'd be applied to a set of
 7 scenarios, which obviously includes the communication
 8 cascade initially and then the whole JESIP principles,
 9 all the way through to a deployment. So that was the
 10 purpose of Hawk River from a governmental perspective.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Is that what actually happened?
 12 Do you have people sitting at different tables?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You put the scenario and say, "Now
 15 discuss it, discuss what you would do?"
 16 A. There's a plenary session, sir, so you have an exercise,
 17 obviously the tables are prearranged so you have
 18 multi-agencies on different tables. You then give an
 19 exercise scenario, you have a plenary and then you have
 20 an open discussion and then the exercise moves on.
 21 Just for -- the people at the back of the room were
 22 the national JESIP audit team, Central Government, so
 23 again extremely positive feedback from the whole
 24 exercise.
 25 So yeah, I can understand how it says I was really

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1 positive about, considering what happened 6 weeks later.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that. I'm just really
 3 concerned, do you think they do work?
 4 A. I think there's a place for tabletop, sir. They tend to
 5 be more of a tactical/strategic when you look at the
 6 tabletop because that's the subject matter that they are
 7 going to be involved with. So the practical exercises
 8 that we hold, operational and tactical, sometimes there
 9 is a link to strategic, but I do think there's a place
 10 for tabletop, sir, yes.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are you judging the tabletop on whether
 12 people, when they have discussed it and come back to you
 13 with what they are going to do and whether they get it
 14 right or are you judging it on the comments that they
 15 have on JOPs 3 and how it operates?
 16 A. No, sir. It was the engagement that we had with all the
 17 agencies and the different responses that we had on the
 18 day that were absolutely in conjunction with how the
 19 JOPs were written and how we would expect a response to
 20 be handled, if you like, in real life.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 22 MR COOPER: Just one more on this: do I understand your
 23 evidence, despite what happened on 22 May 2017, you are
 24 of the view that the problems caused and displayed by
 25 Winchester Accord were easily solvable and unfortunate

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1 but easily solvable? Is that where you are with
 2 Winchester Accord now?
 3 A. Communication issues are not easily solvable, sir .
 4 There was a major communication issue on
 5 Winchester Accord. Historically, regardless of the
 6 incident methodology, the incident type, communications
 7 is historically where the failings are within the
 8 multi-agency arena.
 9 Q. And Hawk River, the tabletop exercise, again you were
 10 relatively satisfied with what that showed and no real
 11 cause for concern?
 12 A. I think that's a fair point, yes.
 13 Q. Utter complacency, wasn't it? Utter complacency --
 14 A. No, sir .
 15 Q. -- which was exposed, I suggest to you, Mr Gaskell, on
 16 22 May.
 17 A. I disagree, sir . I don't think it's utter complacency.
 18 From a multi-agency MTFA response capability, I will
 19 happily stand up in front of anyone to say that
 20 Manchester, the region, had one of the best in the
 21 country, and when I did my national role, I could
 22 confirm that with my colleagues in the Home Office and
 23 the capability assessment in January 2016 also reflects
 24 that. I think to say we were complacent is completely
 25 wrong.

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1 Q. I shall be coming on to the Home Office in my final
 2 series of questions. I want to clarify an aspect of
 3 evidence which arose, which hasn't really been dealt
 4 with yet and I want to top and tail this. Did you hear
 5 the evidence of Rachel Buckle to this inquiry?
 6 A. I was made aware of it and I watched it retrospectively
 7 yes.
 8 Q. That was Day 100, pages 189 to 220 {Day100/189:1}.
 9 She seems confident, if I can suggest that, that she
 10 spoke to you on the telephone on the night of 22 May.
 11 What do you say about that?
 12 A. I would say if you think Rachel Buckle looked confident,
 13 sir, then I think you're mistaken, because she was
 14 unaware of the Neil that she allegedly spoke to.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did she speak to you?
 16 A. Absolutely not, sir .
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. So that's a mistake and it's
 18 another Neil?
 19 A. I know Rachel from previous work and we worked together
 20 closely, professionally, but I can -- I have probably
 21 not spoken to Rachel -- well, I can't say, but 100%
 22 I did not speak to Rachel on 22 May.
 23 MR COOPER: Just to clarify something, were any SRTs
 24 deployed at the scene at all on the night of 22 May?
 25 A. My understanding, sir, is that they were not deployed to

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1 scene.
 2 Q. And there were 12 of them; is that right?
 3 A. There would be, yes, that was the minimum number.
 4 Q. With some extremely specialist and essential equipment
 5 to assist stricken people?
 6 A. Absolutely, sir .
 7 Q. The failure of the Fire Service to help citizens in this
 8 position deprived those citizens of critical help,
 9 didn't it?
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think the answer to that is yes.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The explanation is something for me to
 13 decide, but the reality is you have told us they could
 14 have fulfilled a useful function had they got there and
 15 they never got there.
 16 A. Yes. That is especially -- what I was thinking about
 17 then was the SRT capability had the training to work
 18 in that environment, they had the knowledge of the
 19 dressings and tourniquets, so it pays particular
 20 reference to that capability .
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. I'm sorry to have interrupted.
 22 MR COOPER: You flagged this on a number of occasions, your
 23 secondment to the Home Office, and at your paragraph 88,
 24 you say that:
 25 "[Your] secondment to the Home Office gave [you] the

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1 platform to ensure that the painful lessons learned from
 2 the arena response could be purposefully addressed at
 3 a national level for multi-agency MTFA capabilities."
 4 So:
 5 "[Your] secondment [you say] to the Home Office gave
 6 [you] a platform to ensure that the painful lessons
 7 learned from the arena response could be purposefully
 8 addressed at a national level for multi-agency MTFA
 9 capabilities ."
 10 How has that been addressed at a national level?
 11 A. So that relates to my involvement in the drafting of the
 12 MTA JOPs edition 1, which contained operational
 13 learning. It was also a reference to the work that
 14 I did with the JESIP team, the national JESIP team, and
 15 the joint organisational learning platform, whereby
 16 I was the JOL SPOC, the single point of contact, for
 17 government. So I was able to monitor the learning from
 18 exercises across the UK and feed that into national
 19 doctrine.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just help me about this: everyone
 21 agreed, or everyone who's given evidence has tended to
 22 agree, they well understood JESIP principles on the
 23 night of 22 May. We heard that exercises embedded that
 24 within people so they knew and everything had been done
 25 necessary to do it. Everyone is also agreed that on

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1 22 May, the JESIP principles failed, they were not
 2 followed. So how in your view, and with the work
 3 you have done in the Home Office, how do you ensure that
 4 when it comes to it, they are actually used when the
 5 real thing is happening rather than just being something
 6 which can be learned? It may be impossible, and that's
 7 certainly what some people said from British Transport
 8 Police, actually in the first half hour you just can't
 9 do it. Have you solved it?
 10 A. My opinion, sir, is that -- I think I've said this
 11 before to you, sir -- JESIP --
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I probably asked the question to you
 13 before, sorry about that.
 14 A. JESIP is key to any multi-agency response. To say
 15 that -- I have heard evidence where JESIP is not done at
 16 a watch manager level but it's done at a higher level.
 17 I completely disagree with that. So regarding the key
 18 aspects of JESIP is co-location -- so that didn't happen
 19 on the evening -- communication, it's the coordination
 20 of resources. So you could very easily say that JESIP
 21 failed on the evening, sir, yes. But from a national
 22 perspective, working with the JESIP team, my role was
 23 also to work closely with the national leads for police,
 24 fire and ambulance for writing of national doctrine and
 25 we ensured that the early lessons from the

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1 Kerslake Report and then from the other incidents was
 2 attempted to put into national doctrine and the fact
 3 that the police single service Operation Plato national
 4 guidance was written in conjunction with the
 5 multi-agency MTA JOPs edition 1 was a massive step
 6 forward, sir, because it was an acceptance that they had
 7 to work together. I don't know if that answers your
 8 question.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That was accepted before. Everyone has
 10 agreed that for a long time. This is not meant to be
 11 very critical of you, but I just wonder: what have you
 12 done which is going to make it actually work in practice
 13 when it didn't on 22 May, despite the fact that
 14 everybody knew the principles?
 15 A. I think the only answer I can give to that is that
 16 we have updated national doctrine to reflect the
 17 happenings of 22 May in relation to the communication
 18 cascade. From a government perspective, we looked at
 19 the different regions and what communications they had
 20 in place at different regions, for example the
 21 interoperability channel in Manchester, looking at what
 22 different regions had put in place.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. You've already done a great deal
 24 of work about this, but I would like somebody to tell
 25 me, just in bullet points, what is different in JESIP

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1 now that wasn't there before so that I can say it's
 2 a good idea and, what's more, it works or is capable of
 3 working.
 4 A. I truly believe, sir, that as of 22 May 2017, JESIP was
 5 in place and worked effectively if it was applied
 6 correctly.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 8 MR COOPER: In listening carefully to the answers you were
 9 just giving to the chair, can I suggest to you, you in
 10 liaison -- and you're the witness so I'm directing it at
 11 you, I'm sure it's not just you, but you're the man
 12 in the box as it were -- that you and your colleagues
 13 at the Home Office and indeed in the Home Office since
 14 22 May 2017 have simply actioned ideas and plans which
 15 were well-known before 22 May 2017.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. That's exactly what I want him to
 17 do. I want you to go away, or somebody, I just want to
 18 know in bullet points, what is different. Okay?
 19 A. Okay, sir.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would you mind doing that for me?
 21 A. Please bear in mind that I actually started on 1 August.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Well, if someone else needs to do it,
 23 that's fine.
 24 A. We had recommendations but within the Home Office that's
 25 something that's done at senior Civil Service level.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's perfectly fair enough and we will
 2 get somebody else to do it.
 3 MR COOPER: Sir, I have completed my questions, but can I
 4 just emphasise now -- sir, you've asked for up-to-date
 5 JOPs. We are still awaiting, for reasons no doubt that
 6 are good, the New Plato or what we can see of New Plato.
 7 May I take this opportunity -- and I nervously look at
 8 Mr Suter who will tell me we have been sent it and I
 9 have missed it and if that is the case then --
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He's looking puzzled. Rather than
 11 starting a hare run, can I suggest you talk to Mr Suter
 12 or others? We do need to keep a check on these things
 13 so that's fine.
 14 MR COOPER: I have no further questions. Thank you very
 15 much.
 16 MR DE LA POER: Not engaging directly with Mr Cooper's last
 17 point but making this clear, that we are expecting to
 18 hear from a witness in our first week back after the
 19 summer break who will be able to assist you and other
 20 core participants with the MTA JOPs that are in force.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. But we don't have the statement
 22 at the moment or do we? Mr Suter shook his head
 23 slightly.
 24 MR DE LA POER: There is one statement that was originally
 25 received by Mr Hipgrave, if I'm not mistaken, which is

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1 imminent. It is in hand and everyone will have an
 2 opportunity to prepare properly for their questioning,
 3 much of which we anticipate will need to be in
 4 a restricted session, bearing in mind it will be
 5 current.
 6 Finally, can I turn to Mr Warnock QC on behalf of
 7 GMCA.
 8 Questions from MR WARNOCK
 9 MR WARNOCK: Just a few short matters, Mr Gaskell.
 10 First of all, North West Fire Control action plans.
 11 Are you able to help the chairman with how they actually
 12 work? What I have in mind is -- is it a case that the
 13 North West Fire Control have a piece of card in front of
 14 them with all of those actions written out? How does it
 15 actually operate?
 16 A. No, sir, my understanding is that it is an electronic
 17 list that is populated when you put the incident type in
 18 and then it gives you a chronological list of actions in
 19 a hierarchical manner. So depending on what the
 20 incident is, it's generally to send appliances, pumps,
 21 but it's on a screen in front of the operator.
 22 I believe it's called the ICCS system.
 23 Q. So is it the case that each action pops up, events
 24 completed, and then you move on to the next action, or
 25 do all the actions appear at once?

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1 A. I don't have that knowledge of the system, sir, sorry.
 2 Q. Thank you.
 3 The interoperability channel. You were asked
 4 questions about the delay in getting it operational.
 5 I wonder if Mr Lopez could put up {INQ017957/2}.
 6 At the bottom of page 2, Mr Gaskell, you see the
 7 email you sent, saying that with timescales, and this
 8 was on 20 April, it might be worth postponing slightly.
 9 That was beyond 28 April. You were asked about that and
 10 you said that the reason was it needed a standard
 11 operating procedure and testing.
 12 If Mr Lopez could please scroll up to {INQ017957/1}.
 13 At the bottom half of that page is an email from
 14 Jo Hoyte, to which you are copied, along with Mr Whittle
 15 and Ms Lewis. If you go to the second paragraph, she
 16 references the visit to North West Fire Control and to
 17 the Ambulance Control on 10 April, where it was
 18 established that their control rooms could operate the
 19 channel. Then she said:
 20 "Fire and ambulance asked for a template to be
 21 circulated with the shortcuts/speed dials for each of
 22 the Talk Groups as they are different for each
 23 organisation. Laura and I are in the process of
 24 collating this information. We also agreed we would
 25 draft a protocol for sign-off by each agency. This is a

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1 work in progress at the moment."
 2 And then:
 3 "The Sunday morning testing that Neil mentions below
 4 was also discussed and there is an appetite and probably
 5 a need to expand on this to include the interoperability
 6 channel in the testing and also include control room
 7 testing."
 8 Is that what you had in mind as to what still needed
 9 to be complete?
 10 A. Yes. There was a system in place that had identified
 11 that it needed to be improved and that's what this
 12 conversation is in relation to, sir.
 13 Q. And were you concerned that 8 days was not enough time
 14 to achieve all those things?
 15 A. Yes. Again my understanding -- I wasn't involved in the
 16 drafting of the SOPs, but I certainly hadn't had sight
 17 of it at that time. So to introduce a SOP and test it,
 18 it just didn't seem -- the timescales just didn't seem
 19 appropriate, hence the requirement to get it right,
 20 which may need to postpone that.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The testing at the airport, as
 22 I understand it, now with the interoperability channel
 23 which is on all the time, it's actually tested on
 24 a daily call rather than a test from the airport?
 25 A. Yes. I think it's three times a day, sir. Every day.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the airport in the end didn't come
 2 into it?
 3 A. I think they're still included in the test, sir, but it
 4 was instigated by the airport for the weekly tests, the
 5 previous system, sir.
 6 MR WARNOCK: Next topic, Winchester Accord. You said that
 7 one of the problems with that exercise was that the
 8 police tactical firearms commander deployed himself, no
 9 doubt for good operational reasons from his perspective,
 10 to the CCTV room but didn't deploy anyone to communicate
 11 with the Ambulance Service or the Fire Service at the
 12 forward control point. Do you recollect saying that?
 13 Have I got that right?
 14 A. That is right. I think it was the RVP.
 15 Q. And it was suggested to you -- first of all, what did
 16 you think or did you think about what was the root cause
 17 of that?
 18 A. I'll be honest with you, sir, I wasn't aware of the
 19 cause of that at the time. It was obviously a massive
 20 disruption to the response capability of ambulance and
 21 fire. I wasn't aware of why we couldn't get hold of the
 22 TFC and it became apparent that he either located --
 23 we would expect the tactical firearms commander to be
 24 located at the forward command point and to call the
 25 other blue light services forward, which wasn't the

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1 case, sir, initially .
 2 Q. In your statement you describe having had a concern
 3 after the incident, or after Winchester Accord, that
 4 police didn't really understand the capability that the
 5 Fire Service, and indeed possibly ambulance, could bring
 6 to an MTFA situation --- sorry, you were about to say
 7 something?
 8 A. I think from an ambulance perspective, because of their
 9 key role, I would say that they were aware of the fact
 10 that ambulance would attend, to triage casualties, apply
 11 dressings, tourniquets, et cetera, as appropriate.
 12 I think probably the role of the Fire and Rescue Service
 13 in this very specialised role, probably not --- certainly
 14 not aware that we'd had the enhanced training to be able
 15 to use the dressings and tourniquets under the clinical
 16 governance of NNAS, and then the equipment that we have
 17 to transport casualties from a scene to a place where
 18 they can get definitive care.
 19 Q. Did you, after Winchester Accord, do something about
 20 that?
 21 A. I had discussions with my line management as they were
 22 attending the debriefs for Winchester Accord to be fed
 23 into the multi-agency debrief, sir.
 24 Q. Right. I'm looking at paragraph 69 of your witness
 25 statement if that helps you. No need to bring it on the

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1 screen. You reference there the fact that multi-agency
 2 commander training was put in place. Was that something
 3 that you were involved in setting up or was that others
 4 who set that up?
 5 A. The multi-agency commander training, sir?
 6 Q. Yes.
 7 A. Yes, I was involved in that.
 8 Q. What were the aims of that commander training?
 9 A. The aims of the commander training was to, once again,
 10 reinforce the content of the joint operating principles,
 11 which details in detail the responsibility of the police
 12 to declare Plato and that communication cascade. So it
 13 was about working their way through the JOPs and JESIP,
 14 but it was also an opportunity for both fire and
 15 ambulance to take the specialist vehicles for this type
 16 of incident to the location so that everyone could have
 17 a clear understanding of what the capability consisted
 18 of and the specialist equipment that was in place to be
 19 utilised, should it be requested.
 20 Q. And were they brought to the training?
 21 A. Yes, sir.
 22 Q. And where they shown to the police officers who were
 23 present?
 24 A. Yes, sir.
 25 Q. Finally, Mr Gaskell, a question about the Skeds. In

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1 your evidence on Wednesday you described them as a form
 2 of drag stretcher and you confirmed to the inquiry that
 3 they can be used on stairs. Could you just help with
 4 the ways in which they can be used on stairs?
 5 A. Yes. So once the casualty has been positioned correctly
 6 with the buckles that are provided on the Sked, there is
 7 a piece of plastic that comes over the bottom of the
 8 feet and then is tied tightly around the feet so that if
 9 the casualty is lowered down steps, they're not going to
 10 slide off the stretcher. But it's purposely made to
 11 enable rescue personnel to traverse different levels
 12 with a casualty for a rescue purpose.
 13 Q. Does that involve dragging them down the steps?
 14 A. The Skeds have a handle at each end. So when they are
 15 being used on a flat surface they have a long handle
 16 where two operatives would drag the Sked along the
 17 floor. If you needing to change floor levels, you would
 18 have one person at one end, one person at the other end,
 19 and they have handles there where you'd actually lift
 20 the person down the steps, back on to the flat, and back
 21 then to a drag.
 22 Q. So the Sked can be carried, just to clarify, by two
 23 people?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. But you wouldn't drag it down the stairs I think is what

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1 you're saying?
 2 A. No, you'd try to --- because of the potential injury,
 3 I suppose, impact damage, you'd attempt to lift the Sked
 4 at sort of waist level down the stairs and then back on
 5 to the floor as a drag stretcher.
 6 MR WARNOCK: Thank you, Mr Gaskell. Those are the questions
 7 I have for you.
 8 MR DE LA POER: Sir, unless you have any further questions
 9 for Mr Gaskell, that will conclude his evidence.
 10 Having discussed the next witness with
 11 Mr Greaney QC, our proposal is that we take a short
 12 break, an estimated 5 minutes, for the arrangements to
 13 be made for Mr Berry to make his way into the witness
 14 box.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, will do.
 16 Thank you very much for your evidence and thank you
 17 also for giving further thought to the matters which had
 18 been raised when you were last in the witness box to
 19 help me with the matters which had been gone into then.
 20 (12.05 pm)
 21 (A short break)
 22 (12.15 pm)
 23 MR GREANEY: Sir, good afternoon. The gentleman in the
 24 witness box is Mr Andy Berry, about whom of course we've
 25 heard a great detail, and I'll ask that he be sworn,

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1 please.

2 MR ANDY BERRY (sworn)

3 Questions from MR GREANEY

4 MR GREANEY: Would you begin by telling us your full name,

5 please?

6 A. Andrew James Berry.

7 Q. Mr Berry, as I told you when we spoke for a few moments

8 just a short time ago, what I want to do is to spend the

9 time before we break for lunch seeking your evidence on

10 what I will describe as the big questions that confront

11 GMFRS in this case.

12 I'm going to seek your evidence initially in general

13 terms and then, after lunch, and I'm sure tomorrow,

14 we will delve into the detail of what you did that night

15 and into the detail of the explanation that you give me

16 before lunch.

17 So let's make a start. On the night of the arena

18 attack, were you the duty national inter-agency liaison

19 officer for GMFRS?

20 A. Yes, I was, sir.

21 Q. So the NILO. Is it the position that the NILO does not

22 have a command role?

23 A. That's correct, sir. It's a tactical adviser role.

24 Q. And indeed, is it your role as a NILO to act as tactical

25 adviser to those within the command structure?

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1 A. Correct, sir.

2 Q. You are quite softly spoken. I'm going to check that

3 others can hear you.

4 (Pause)

5 You were just saying, in case people didn't hear,

6 that a NILO doesn't have a command role but instead acts

7 as a tactical adviser to the commanders?

8 A. Correct, sir.

9 Q. Is it a role that involves the giving of tactical advice

10 at potentially a wide range of incidents?

11 A. It is, sir.

12 Q. But including incidents involving what is described

13 sometimes as conventional terrorism?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And also incidents involving an MTFA?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. As the very name itself indicates, is it the position

18 that a NILO must have a detailed understanding of the

19 capacity and capabilities of the other emergency

20 services?

21 A. Yes, sir.

22 Q. And, moreover, how the Fire and Rescue Service links in

23 to those other emergency services?

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 Q. I'm going to draw attention to something you said in

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1 your witness statement and invite you to agree with it.

2 I'll give the INQ reference for the record but the

3 witness statement doesn't need to go on the screen.

4 It's {INQ026733/1}. I'm going to be reading

5 paragraph 45. You state:

6 "The NILO is a conduit for communications in and out

7 for the Fire Service."

8 A. Yes, sir.

9 Q. "Internally, we provide tactical advice and guidance to

10 incident commanders."

11 A. Yes, sir.

12 Q. "Externally, the purpose of the role is to advise and

13 provide support to other agencies about Fire and Rescue

14 capability and resources."

15 A. That's correct.

16 Q. Bearing in mind the evidence you have just given to me

17 and indeed that which you said in your witness

18 statement, would it be fair to say that your job on the

19 night of the arena attack was to ensure, so far as it

20 was within your ability to do so, that there was a joint

21 response to the attack by the emergency services in

22 which GMFRS played a full part?

23 A. Yes, sir.

24 Q. Against that background, Mr Berry, I want to agree some

25 basic facts with you and then seek your evidence about

95

1 them in relation to those big questions.

2 Let's deal with the chronology. As we all know, the

3 bomb was detonated within the City Room at 22.31.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. As you will certainly know now, members of the public

6 were already within that room and they began to help?

7 A. Yes, sir.

8 Q. Members of the staff of ShowSec, as we heard last

9 Wednesday, were in the room or they went there and also

10 started to help?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. We can see in the emergency response sequence of events

13 the arrival of others and we're going to look at some

14 examples of others arriving at the scene so we can place

15 your evidence and the arrival of GMFRS in context.

16 Mr Lopez, this is a reference that we are very

17 familiar with, it's the sequence of events,

18 {INQ035612/4}.

19 The time is 22.31.32. We can see that Travel Safe

20 officers are starting to make their way to the

21 City Room, just over 30 seconds after the explosion.

22 Then next, {INQ035612/5}, please. 22.31.37.

23 In that image we can see, can we not, BTP police

24 officers starting to make their way to the City Room?

25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. So those two groups are responding literally within
2 seconds.
3 {INQ035612/8} next, please. 22.31.52. So we are
4 still within the first minute following the explosion.
5 A member of the public, in fact a ticket agent, called
6 Gareth Chapman, starts to make his way to the City Room
7 and we can see he is literally running in that
8 direction, is he not?
9 A. Yes, sir.
10 Q. Next, {INQ035612/19}, please. 22.33.38. Liz Woodcock
11 of Emergency Training UK, within 3 minutes of the
12 attack, is on her way to the City Room. Can you see
13 that?
14 A. I can see that, yes.
15 Q. Next, {INQ035612/57}. We can see in the top image,
16 22.39.19, an employee of Northern Rail, Stuart Craig, is
17 about to enter the City Room, carrying medical
18 equipment.
19 A. Yes, sir.
20 Q. {INQ035612/69} next, please. 22.41.52. An armed
21 response vehicle of GMP arrives on Station Approach. So
22 it's just over 10 minutes now since the explosion has
23 taken place.
24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So fair to say this is the first person
25 from off the scene who's actually arrived?

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1 MR GREANEY: That observation is correct, sir, yes.
2 {INQ035612/70}, 6 seconds later. 22.41.58.
3 Additional members of Northern Rail staff are hurrying
4 to the City Room in order to provide their assistance.
5 Next, an image we've seen a number of times.
6 {INQ035612/75}. It's 22.42.44. Two armed GMP officers,
7 Constables Tyldesley and Dalton, they are on their way
8 to the City Room, and they are approaching from the
9 other side from the ARV that we saw in the image
10 a moment ago.
11 {INQ035612/89}, please. 22.44.31. GMP Inspector
12 Michael Smith, from whom we've heard, arrives and I'm
13 certain you'll know that he becomes the Bronze Commander
14 for GMP.
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. Very shortly after this image, he enters the City Room.
17 We're going to see from {INQ035612/104}, timed at
18 22.46.31, there he is on his way up the steps and
19 shortly to enter the City Room.
20 Mr Lopez, {INQ035612/123}, please. 22.49.14.
21 Police Sergeant Kam Hare of Greater Manchester Police
22 and his team have arrived. As you probably know, we've
23 heard from him. Shortly afterwards, the entirety of
24 that team essentially march into the City Room.
25 Next, {INQ035612/128}, please. 22.49.43. Again,

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1 we've seen this image many times. Advanced Paramedic
2 Paddy Ennis of NWS has arrived at the scene.
3 Then {INQ035612/136}, 22.51.28, he's on his way up
4 the stairs and, as we know, a short time afterwards, he
5 enters the City Room.
6 Mr Berry, the point we've reached is now just over
7 20 minutes post—explosion and I'm sure you can agree
8 that what we have seen is that officers of BTP, GMP and
9 a paramedic have all entered the City Room.
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. Members of the public have gone to that location.
12 Members of ETUK — you're nodding your head — and
13 members of Northern Rail staff?
14 A. Yes, sir.
15 Q. We'll just look at some other images, again to place the
16 arrival of GMFRS into context.
17 If we go to {INQ035612/162}, please, next. It's now
18 22.58.28, and an NWS ambulance is arriving on Station
19 Approach.
20 {INQ035612/172}. 22.59.53. Dan Smith, who a short
21 time later is to become the NWS Bronze Commander, is
22 entering the station.
23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's the one we have to correct the
24 time on, isn't it?
25 MR GREANEY: It is, you're quite right. Perhaps at some

99

1 stage someone could do that so you don't have to keep
2 saying that.
3 Next image, {INQ035612/220}. We've now gone past
4 the 11 o'clock hour mark. It's 23.08.39 and a series of
5 further NWS ambulances are arriving together on Station
6 Approach.
7 {INQ035612/252}. 23.13.54. Here are two members of
8 HART, Chris Hargreaves and Lea Vaughan, arriving at the
9 station and, as I'm certain you'll know, a short time
10 later they too enter the City Room.
11 {INQ035612/302}, please. 23.23.55. Chief Inspector
12 Dexter arrives at the scene to act as the
13 ground—assigned tactical firearms commander and you,
14 later that night, are to have a conversation with him?
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. And we will be looking at that in detail tomorrow.
17 The next relevant time to bear in mind, and we won't
18 show the image on the scene, although it is
19 {INQ035612/370}, so not on the screen, please, is that
20 at 23.39.54, the last living casualty is evacuated from
21 the City Room. Then we're going to move forward by
22 almost exactly an hour to image {INQ035612/469} timed at
23 00.36.
24 At 1 second before 00.37, we see the first fire
25 appliance arriving on Station Approach.

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1 A. Yes, sir .
 2 Q. Next, {INQ035612/472}, please. 00.38.12. You have by
 3 this stage, am I correct, arrived on the scene and you
 4 are walking towards the war memorial entrance?
 5 A. Yes, sir .
 6 Q. {INQ035612/495} next, please. It's 00.43.27. Although
 7 the appliance had arrived, still no firefighter has
 8 entered the station, as I understand it, and here
 9 we have, however, a firefighter at the entrance of the
 10 war memorial, but not at this stage entering.
 11 A. Yes, sir .
 12 Q. {INQ035612/499}. We've moved on a further minute and
 13 7 seconds, 00.44.34. We can see that firefighters are
 14 by this stage massing but doing so outside of the
 15 station itself .
 16 A. That's correct.
 17 Q. {INQ035612/507}. 00.47.53. By this stage, firefighters
 18 are starting to move stretchers along Station Approach?
 19 A. Yes, sir .
 20 Q. Then the final image that I'll show you at this stage,
 21 although we'll come back to some further images
 22 tomorrow, {INQ035612/509}, so 2 seconds before 00.50,
 23 00.49.58. This is the point at which firefighters are
 24 about to enter the station. You're nodding your head.
 25 They are, we believe, the first to do so, although

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1 I think we're going to hear from you that at that stage
 2 they are not entering with your consent or on your
 3 instruction .
 4 A. Yes. I'm trying to establish the facts before I deploy
 5 them into the war memorial.
 6 Q. You said that you were trying to establish, I think you
 7 said, the facts before deciding whether to deploy?
 8 A. That's correct.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: They were entering without your
 10 permission is the point you were making.
 11 A. Yes, sir. I'd just been told in the past few minutes
 12 that Op Plato had been declared.
 13 MR GREANEY: We are, I promise you, going to come to your
 14 discussion with Chief Inspector Dexter, as he was, later
 15 in your evidence, although I think that will be
 16 tomorrow. But as a matter of fact, notwithstanding that
 17 they had no instruction, this marks the first point at
 18 which any firefighter enters the station, 2 seconds
 19 before 00.50?
 20 A. Yes, sir .
 21 Q. What I want to do is to draw certain strands together
 22 and then ask you three questions that will provide,
 23 I hope, the context for the balance of your evidence.
 24 So pulling those strands together then from what
 25 we've just seen, the arrival of firefighters into the

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1 station at 00.49 means that the Fire and Rescue Service
 2 entered the station 2 hours and 18 minutes after the
 3 explosion.
 4 A. Yes, sir .
 5 Q. Firefighters entered the station 2 hours and 15 minutes
 6 after the first notification to North West Fire Control,
 7 as we'll hear later, of an explosion?
 8 A. Yes, sir .
 9 Q. They entered the fire station 2 hours and 9 minutes
 10 after you were first alerted to the issue in a call at
 11 10.40?
 12 A. That's correct.
 13 Q. The firefighters entered the station 1 hour and
 14 58 minutes after each of the other emergency services
 15 actually has someone within the City Room?
 16 A. That's correct.
 17 Q. And the firefighters enter the station 1 hour and
 18 10 minutes after the last living casualty has been
 19 removed from the City Room?
 20 A. I believe so, sir, yes.
 21 Q. As we learned from Kerslake and from other sources, all
 22 of that compares, have we understood correctly, with an
 23 average time of deployment of 6 minutes for the Fire and
 24 Rescue Service?
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That average time is getting to the

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1 scene?
 2 MR GREANEY: Getting to the scene as I've understood it.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. I have attempted to compare like with like.
 5 So let me, against that background, which I hope
 6 will provide context, ask you those three big questions
 7 that I told you I would ask. The first two should,
 8 I think, be capable of yes or no answers, the third not.
 9 The first question is: is the period that it took
 10 GMFRS firefighters to enter the station acceptable to
 11 you as a senior firefighter ?
 12 A. No, it's not, sir .
 13 Q. Question 2: if firefighters had entered the station at
 14 what I will describe as a relevant time, did they have
 15 value to bring to the emergency response?
 16 A. Absolutely, sir, and they wanted to be there.
 17 Q. I just want, before we turn to the third question, to
 18 understand a little bit more about the value that could
 19 have been brought by the Fire and Rescue Service, albeit
 20 we have heard from Mr Gaskell and others about it but
 21 I would welcome your perspective. On the night of the
 22 arena attack, did the Fire and Rescue Service have
 23 specialist capabilities available?
 24 A. Yes, they did.
 25 Q. In the form of the Specialist Response Team or SRT?

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1 A. Yes, sir .
 2 Q. And in the form of the Technical Rescue Unit or TRU?
 3 A. That's correct .
 4 Q. Had those two capabilities been developed to enhance the
 5 ability of the Fire and Rescue Service to respond to
 6 an MTFA?
 7 A. Yes, they had allowed us to work in the warm zones.
 8 Q. Just to develop what you have just told us, did those
 9 teams have vehicles available containing extra
 10 equipment?
 11 A. They did.
 12 Q. Including PPE designed to enable firefighters to operate
 13 within, as you've just told us, a Plato warm zone?
 14 A. Yes, sir .
 15 Q. And were those vehicles also equipped with enhanced
 16 first aid equipment?
 17 A. Yes, sir .
 18 Q. Including trauma dressings, tourniquets?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. And, as we heard earlier today, rescue stretchers known
 21 as Skeds?
 22 A. Yes, that's right .
 23 Q. In short, the vehicles available to those teams, is it
 24 the position that they were intended to have upon them
 25 the equipment needed to respond to a mass casualty

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1 incident consequent upon a terrorist attack?
 2 A. That's correct, to work with and alongside NWAS.
 3 Q. And just to focus on the TRU for a moment, would the TRU
 4 have had specialist skills that would have enabled them
 5 to assess, monitor and report on the structural security
 6 of the building if that was thought to be an issue?
 7 A. I believe so, sir . That's not my area of expertise but
 8 yes.
 9 Q. In the aftermath of the arena attack, only — and I am
 10 not using that word pejoratively — only three
 11 paramedics entered the City Room at a relevant time, so
 12 when there were people there to treat and who were
 13 living and required evacuation. The chairman may come
 14 to the view that, to say the least, those three were
 15 busy. Casualties were evacuated from the City Room by
 16 police officers and members of the public and, as
 17 we have heard, for example from Sergeant Kam Hare, that
 18 was far from straightforward.
 19 Do you agree that that situation that I have just
 20 described, multiple casualties in need of treatment and
 21 extraction, a small number of paramedics present, people
 22 being evacuated on makeshift stretchers by the public
 23 and police, do you agree that that was precisely the
 24 type of situation that the GMFRS specialist resources
 25 were designed to assist with?

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1 A. Yes, I do.
 2 Q. And do you have any reason to doubt that if the
 3 specialist resources had been deployed into that
 4 location at a relevant time, they would have performed
 5 to a high standard?
 6 A. There's no doubt about it, sir .
 7 Q. As for the non—specialist firefighters, and I'm still
 8 dealing with your evidence about what value the Fire and
 9 Rescue Service would have brought to the emergency
 10 response, is it the position that the non—specialist
 11 firefighters would have been unable or in accordance
 12 with the policy would not have been permitted to deploy
 13 into a warm zone?
 14 A. Yes, that's correct .
 15 Q. But nonetheless, as a matter of fact, did non—specialist
 16 firefighters have training and equipment that would have
 17 assisted with the treatment and removal of casualties
 18 from the City Room?
 19 A. They did have some equipment, yes. They had long boards
 20 and trauma kit on the fire engines.
 21 Q. Again, do you have any reason to doubt that the
 22 non—specialist firefighters, if they had been deployed
 23 into the City Room, would have performed such tasks and
 24 treatment and removal to a high standard?
 25 A. Yes, in any environment I'm sure they would achieve

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1 a high standard. Obviously with the restrictions of the
 2 zones, we wouldn't deploy into a warm or a hot zone, the
 3 regular crews.
 4 Q. So at the very beginning of my — in responding to my
 5 second question, would the Fire and Rescue Service have
 6 had value to bring to the emergency response, you
 7 answered yes, and you answered yes emphatically.
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Have I understood?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. We can now see why there should be absolutely no doubt
 12 that the Fire and Rescue Service would have added real
 13 value to the emergency response if they had been present
 14 at a relevant time?
 15 A. Yes, sir .
 16 Q. Question 3 then is the one that can't be answered yes or
 17 no. Are you able to explain for us as simply as
 18 possible, and bearing in mind that you will have the
 19 opportunity to develop your answers over at least a day
 20 and a half, why, (1), the Fire and Rescue Service did
 21 not arrive at all until well over 2 hours after the
 22 explosion, and (2), why specialist assets never arrived?
 23 A. I would say there was a massive breakdown in
 24 communications. In the initial stages the JESIP
 25 principles weren't implemented correctly, which led to

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1 us not receiving the information I required to be able
 2 to do my job effectively and to deploy our resources.
 3 Q. Thank you for expressing the position as simply as you
 4 can. Between whom was there a breakdown in
 5 communication?
 6 A. Well, it's a tri-service type incident, so between the
 7 three main services, there was a lack of communication.
 8 Q. How do you, in your mind, and bearing in mind how close
 9 you were to these events, how do you divide
 10 responsibility for what went wrong between the three
 11 emergency services?
 12 A. Well, within the JOPs that we were working to at that
 13 current time, based on the information that I had,
 14 primacy is with the police undoubtedly, but obviously
 15 there's the responsibility for all three services to
 16 commit to the JOPs.
 17 Q. I do appreciate that you will not be anxious to
 18 criticise, but it's important we should understand what
 19 your true view is. Is it your view that principal
 20 responsibility for what went wrong, in other words
 21 principal responsibility for the breakdown in
 22 communication, rests with Greater Manchester Police?
 23 A. I think they need to take some responsibility for that.
 24 I think one of the things is we were trying to contact
 25 the police and one thing is trying to contact them and

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1 not being able to contact them, but there's a difference
 2 when they don't want to speak to us or they're unable to
 3 speak to us or they didn't want to speak to us.
 4 Q. Again, I just need to make sure I understand your
 5 answer. You say they need to bear some responsibility.
 6 I'm not going to press you on quantification at the
 7 moment, although I will in due course. Obviously there
 8 was an obligation upon Greater Manchester Police to
 9 provide information to the Fire and Rescue Service.
 10 I don't believe there will be any dispute about that.
 11 But does there come a time when information isn't coming
 12 from Greater Manchester Police and there comes
 13 a responsibility on the Fire and Rescue Service to seek
 14 out information?
 15 A. Yes, I think that's right. Perhaps I didn't say it
 16 clearly enough originally. But if you're trying to
 17 contact someone, we can't do, but at some point we feel
 18 like there will be a connection, that is one mindset.
 19 But there is a different mindset that if we had known
 20 perhaps the information was never going to come, we
 21 could have acted differently.
 22 Q. So just in terms of responsibility, GMP responsibility
 23 proactively to provide information, but you're
 24 acknowledging that there comes a time at which the Fire
 25 and Rescue Service should proactively have sought out

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1 that information?
 2 A. Yes, I suppose in the second example I gave there would
 3 be more impetus on doing something sooner.
 4 Q. And did the Fire and Rescue Service discharge that
 5 responsibility to seek out information when it became
 6 necessary to do so?
 7 A. Can you re-word that, please?
 8 Q. Yes, if it wasn't clear. You've acknowledged that there
 9 came a time at which the Fire and Rescue Service, having
 10 not received the information it wanted from the police,
 11 should have sought out information?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. And the question I was asking was: did the Fire and
 14 Rescue Service discharge its responsibility to seek out
 15 information?
 16 A. We tried to get that information, yes.
 17 Q. This is why I was very keen to set the lines at an early
 18 stage. Are you saying that the Fire and Rescue Service
 19 discharged its responsibilities that night adequately?
 20 A. No, I think there's areas we could improve. We learned
 21 lessons certainly from this incident.
 22 Q. What are the areas in which you could have improved?
 23 A. Responding to the RVP. I think on reflection now
 24 that is certainly something I should have considered and
 25 challenged Control more on the information I was given

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1 originally. But I was guided towards the force duty
 2 officer, who should and would have that information.
 3 Q. Once that information didn't come from the force duty
 4 officer, should GMFRS have done more to obtain
 5 information itself?
 6 A. Yes, in hindsight we should have done more. I suppose
 7 it's finding that point because some of these incidents
 8 are over within minutes, but some unfortunately do go on
 9 for longer. So it's at that point you decide: we need
 10 to do something because this information isn't coming,
 11 but we don't want to put resources into what could be
 12 a hot zone.
 13 Q. So identifying the time at which you should have done
 14 more is obviously important. At a very early stage you
 15 made repeated attempts to contact the FDO, didn't you?
 16 A. Continually.
 17 Q. At one stage you talk about having made seven attempts
 18 within literally minutes of coming off the phone with
 19 NWFC?
 20 A. That's right.
 21 Q. And having called seven times and not got through was
 22 that the moment to think of a different way to obtain
 23 information?
 24 A. My initial thoughts was I needed to get on the road to
 25 get some resources moving towards the incident but, yes,

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1 it was an opportunity.
 2 Q. Was that an opportunity that should have been taken?
 3 A. It could have been. Like I say, my priority at the
 4 moment was still to contact the force duty officer who
 5 has got primacy for this type of incident.
 6 Q. Self—evidently it could have been but should it have
 7 been at that point or shortly afterwards, having made
 8 repeated attempts to contact the FDO and not having been
 9 able to get through, that something different should
 10 have been attempted?
 11 A. Yes, like I said, on reflection now I wish I had
 12 deployed something down to the RVP, be that front line
 13 crews or if I still had concerns about it, perhaps
 14 a NILO who was closer and who had ballistic protection.
 15 Q. So far we have identified some responsibility on the
 16 police, by which I mean GMP, for this breakdown in
 17 communication. We've gone some way now to exploring the
 18 responsibility of the Fire and Rescue Service, that
 19 breakdown in communication, although we will be looking
 20 at that in much more detail in due course.
 21 One organisation that you haven't ascribed any
 22 responsibility to for that breakdown in communication so
 23 far is North West Fire Control, and so let me ask you
 24 a direct question: to your mind, does that organisation
 25 bear any responsibility for the breakdown in

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1 communication that night and which led to a failure of
 2 the JESIP principles?
 3 A. I'm not sure I could answer that on their behalf, to be
 4 honest.
 5 Q. You can answer it from your perspective, bearing in mind
 6 the information that you were supplied with by them and
 7 the stages at which you were supplied with it.
 8 A. I think in hindsight, seeing where some of the gaps were
 9 now, I believe yes, they'll have learned some lessons as
 10 well.
 11 MR GREANEY: Sir, I'm about to move to a different and
 12 substantial topic. It's a little early to break for
 13 lunch, but that would be a convenient moment.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Back at 1.50, please.
 15 (12.50 pm)
 16 (The lunch adjournment)
 17 (1.50 pm)
 18 MR GREANEY: Mr Berry, having sought and obtained your
 19 evidence in overview, we're going to turn next to deal
 20 with your background and training before turning to deal
 21 or starting to deal in detail with the night of the
 22 attack.
 23 So background and experience then. When was it that
 24 you joined GMFRS?
 25 A. January 1997.

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1 Q. It therefore follows that by May of 2017, you had just
 2 over 20 years of experience as a firefighter?
 3 A. That's correct.
 4 Q. Were you promoted to the rank of leading firefighter,
 5 having started?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. At what stage, can you recall, were you promoted to that
 8 rank?
 9 A. From memory I think it was 2003.
 10 Q. Then in late 2006 or thereabouts, were you promoted to
 11 the rank of watch manager?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. In 2007 were you then provided the staff officer for the
 14 deputy county fire officer?
 15 A. That's correct.
 16 Q. Could you tell us in a few sentences what that job
 17 entailed?
 18 A. I was his staff officer. I undertook medal ceremonies,
 19 wrote commendations, that type of thing, but I also
 20 prepared some of the corporate plans as well.
 21 Q. So would it be fair to say that you became involved at
 22 that stage in strategic issues within Greater Manchester
 23 Fire and Rescue Service?
 24 A. Yes, a bit part. Obviously, I worked for the deputy
 25 county fire officer and I prepared the work for him.

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1 Q. But did you start to understand what perhaps you hadn't
 2 understood before, namely how the organisation operated
 3 at that high level?
 4 A. Absolutely, yes.
 5 Q. Did you derive benefit, do you think, from that role?
 6 A. Yes, it was essential, yes.
 7 Q. In 2010 did the Fire and Rescue Service introduce what
 8 were called MDT data terminals?
 9 A. They did, which is basically a television screen within
 10 the front of the fire engines, which provides them with
 11 risk information.
 12 Q. So this was quite a new development at that stage?
 13 A. Absolutely, it was a national programme and obviously
 14 within Greater Manchester we implemented them.
 15 Q. I'm going to check how people are getting on with the
 16 volume of your evidence. I think a little bit louder if
 17 you can.
 18 So this was a national roll-out of new technology?
 19 A. That's correct.
 20 Q. And important new technology?
 21 A. Absolutely, yes.
 22 Q. And as will always be the case, the people who were
 23 going to use it, so the firefighters on the ground, they
 24 needed to have training in how to employ it?
 25 A. That is correct, yes.

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1 Q. As a result, in 2010, were you given responsibility for
 2 coordinating a training programme in the MDT terminals?
 3 A. I assisted with the training; my focus was really more
 4 around the policy writing.
 5 Q. So was this a further example of you being involved in
 6 strategic decision—making and action on the part of the
 7 Fire and Rescue Service?
 8 A. Not so much decision—making; it was more the
 9 implementation and roll—out of the training and the
 10 policies to support the new items.
 11 Q. Were you responsible for that policy, in part at least?
 12 A. Yes, I wrote the draft policy.
 13 Q. In 2011, having completed that job, did you move to work
 14 in fire safety?
 15 A. I did, within Manchester.
 16 Q. In that role were you based at Borough Command?
 17 A. Yes, Manchester Borough Command, which is right next
 18 door to G16, Manchester Central.
 19 Q. So this is a location you're going to be telling us
 20 a lot about. G16, sometimes known as Thompson Street,
 21 sometimes known as Manchester Central, we're talking
 22 about the same location, are we not?
 23 A. That is correct.
 24 Q. And you went to work next door to there?
 25 A. Yes. It's part of the same building.

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1 Q. In your role in fire safety was it your job to enforce
 2 fire safety legislation in the city centre of
 3 Manchester?
 4 A. Yes., it was.
 5 Q. As a result did you become familiar not only with
 6 Thompson Street and the surrounding area but also with
 7 the geography of the city centre itself?
 8 A. Yes, I wasn't that familiar before working there, but it
 9 gave me a good grounding because I walked the streets
 10 most days.
 11 Q. So when it came to the events of 22 May 2017, and you
 12 were being told about events at the arena, did you know
 13 where that was?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. As a result of this job that you'd had from 2011, did
 16 you know how to get there?
 17 A. Yes, I did.
 18 Q. In early 2013, were you promoted to the rank of station
 19 manager?
 20 A. Yes. I think it was 2013.
 21 Q. I'm taking these dates from your witness statement. So
 22 as long as your witness statement is accurate, you can
 23 take them from me. At that stage, having been promoted,
 24 were you allocated to Gorton Fire Station?
 25 A. Yes, I had done a brief spell at Blackley Fire Station

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1 on a temporary basis as a station manager, but then
 2 became permanent later at Gorton.
 3 Q. The way it's sometimes described is this: you had
 4 performed the duties of station manager at a different
 5 station on a temporary basis?
 6 A. That's correct.
 7 Q. But as of that date in early 2013, you were promoted to
 8 the substantive rank of station manager?
 9 A. Yes. I think I moved to Gorton in the October of 2012.
 10 I was still temporary at that point but became permanent
 11 the following year.
 12 Q. We have heard evidence about Gorton Fire Station and
 13 what we have understood is that that is about 3.5 miles
 14 to the east of the city centre.
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Once you were in that role of station manager, did you
 17 commonly work with emergency service and other partners?
 18 A. Yes, I did.
 19 Q. I'm now at paragraphs 12 and 13 of your witness
 20 statement.
 21 Could you tell us, again in just a few sentences, if
 22 that's possible, how it was that you came to work with
 23 other partners and to what extent you did so?
 24 A. So within the community and the station area of Gorton
 25 I worked with other agencies to assist the most

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1 vulnerable people in the community. We worked together
 2 to provide fire risk assessments within — obviously
 3 that was our part that we brought to it, and we worked
 4 with the police as well. Not only that, I worked on
 5 a project relating to cannabis farms and the generation
 6 within domestic properties. It might not seem
 7 a fire—related issue initially, but because people
 8 bypass the electrics and they grow these things in the
 9 loft, there's a big fire risk.
 10 Q. So in short, whilst the subject matter may not have been
 11 directly relevant to what you were addressing on the
 12 night of the arena attack, you did develop experience of
 13 working with Greater Manchester Police?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. With local authorities?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. And with other agencies as well?
 18 A. That's right.
 19 Q. Obviously, by the stage we have reached, 2015, you had
 20 been promoted on a number of occasions.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Did you remain keen to be promoted yet further?
 23 A. Yes. Around that time I went for a promotion to group
 24 manager, but unfortunately I was unsuccessful at that
 25 time.

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1 Q. Were you given feedback that in order to be successful
2 on a further application, you needed experience working
3 in a specialist role?
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. Was there a particular specialist role that you were
6 interested in?
7 A. Yes. I'd identified that within the Contingency
8 Planning Unit there was a role for the COMAH that
9 I thought I could develop and improve, so I submitted
10 a transfer for that.
11 Q. I'm going to ask you some questions about that because
12 the fire expert attaches some importance to it, but let
13 me be clear first of all about what you've said to us.
14 Within Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, there
15 is a unit called the Contingency Planning Unit?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. In general terms, what was the remit of that unit?
18 A. I think Neil Gaskell talked through it this morning.
19 It's about linking in with the national threats and
20 local Greater Manchester threats and the contingencies
21 around that. So the risk register, the action plan, and
22 how we feed into that as one of the agencies, but also
23 within the department for the organisation we did look
24 after the business continuity at that time.
25 Q. I think from what you told us, you were keen not just on

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1 working in that unit in any role but you were
2 particularly interested in being what was known as the
3 COMAH reference holder?
4 A. That is correct. COMAH stands for control of major
5 accident hazards. If you can picture a large chemical
6 plant, it is where the regulations are adhered to.
7 Q. And before we get to what the role involved, can you
8 confirm that you were successful in applying for that
9 transfer?
10 A. Yes, although I was unsuccessful in the process for
11 group manager, someone within the department was
12 successful, therefore creating a vacancy.
13 Q. Just a little more about that. COMAH, as you have told
14 us, stands for the control of major accident hazards?
15 A. Correct, yes.
16 Q. Is enforcement in that area undertaken by both the
17 Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. But do Fire and Rescue Services also have a role to
20 play?
21 A. Yes, within a metropolitan borough such as this, the
22 Fire Service are deemed to be the local authority under
23 the regulations of 2015. So I had the responsibility as
24 the reference holder to produce emergency action plans
25 and test those within a 3-year period.

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1 Q. Was it also your function to chair planning meetings
2 with other category 1 and category 2 responders?
3 A. Yes, that's correct. I would hold a 6-monthly meeting.
4 It was a subgroup of the LRF, which I chaired.
5 Q. Did you spend in that capacity a considerable amount of
6 time planning multi-agency exercises?
7 A. Yes, there was a separate group, an exercising group.
8 We came together and we would talk to the sites. There
9 are specific hazards and COMAH risks within each item
10 site and we exercised against that. But the benefit of
11 bringing the other agencies together, we know what they
12 want to get out of the exercise as well, it's not just a
13 single point for the Fire Service.
14 Q. That's why this role you held may be an important one.
15 It has nothing to do with terrorism, it's to do with
16 large chemical sites and so on, but you were making
17 plans for and devising exercises in respect of how if
18 there was an issue at a large chemical plant, the
19 various emergency services and others would work
20 together to manage it?
21 A. They would definitely need to work together to resolve
22 that incident, yes.
23 Q. Obviously what I'm driving towards is the extent of your
24 familiarity with joint working --
25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. -- as of 22 May 2017 and we're starting to get a clear
2 picture that you were highly experienced.
3 On average, during that period, did you hold five or
4 six exercises each year?
5 A. Yes. It was dependent on the HSE and when they set the
6 date for them to be revisited, but on average I would
7 say five to six.
8 Q. The other agencies that took part, did they include
9 Greater Manchester Police?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. The North West Ambulance Service?
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. The Environment Agency and others?
14 A. Yes, that's correct.
15 Q. During the course of your planning and exercising, were
16 you particularly focused on certain critical elements of
17 incident response?
18 A. Yes. Communication was one of the big key...
19 Q. Let's identify some of the other key issues that
20 you would be concerned with. The establishment of
21 a rendezvous point?
22 A. Yes, and within the plans they would be predetermined.
23 Q. Ensuring that those who were to attend an incident would
24 have the correct personal protective equipment?
25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Joint communications between all of those responding?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. And in simple terms, joint working?
 4 A. Absolutely. So when I took over the reference, I made
 5 sure all the plans had the JESIP dovetailed through
 6 them.
 7 Q. These are all matters that became of importance on the
 8 night of the arena attack?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Rendezvous point, joint communications?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Joint working and also PPE, as we going to come on to
 13 see?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Did your work during that period, from 2015, also
 16 include planning around the communication of METHANE
 17 messages?
 18 A. Yes. That was part of the exercise generally.
 19 I started with an on—the—scene incident, we have
 20 a scenario, like I said, based against the risk.
 21 We would start that probably 20 minutes before the next
 22 bit, which would be the tactical, the Silver level. And
 23 then the two had to communicate between them, sending
 24 the METHANE up and making sure people had the same
 25 situational awareness.

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1 Q. So this again is an issue of interest. In terms of
 2 ensuring a joint response to an incident, is a METHANE
 3 message of importance?
 4 A. Very much so, yes.
 5 Q. And is it important, moreover, not only that one agency
 6 communicates a METHANE message within its structure, but
 7 also that that METHANE message is communicated to
 8 partners?
 9 A. Yes, it's paramount.
 10 Q. And you, I think, mentioned this along the way of your
 11 answer, is it paramount because that is the way in which
 12 situational awareness is shared?
 13 A. Yes, according to the JESIP principles, yes.
 14 Q. On this night, just jumping forward for a moment, we
 15 know that British Transport Police passed a METHANE
 16 message.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. I will give you the exact timing in due course because
 19 I am jumping ahead of where I was expecting to be.
 20 I think it was about 22.55. And also, we know that
 21 a METHANE message was passed by NWS at, I think, 22.54,
 22 by Paddy Ennis. That night, during the relevant period,
 23 as I've been calling it, were you told about either/or
 24 both of those METHANE messages?
 25 A. Neither. I only found out about the METHANE messages

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1 in the Kerslake Report.
 2 Q. When you discovered that METHANE messages had been
 3 passed that night, and yet had not been communicated to
 4 you as the duty NILO, what was your response?
 5 A. Well, I was frustrated.
 6 Q. Why were you frustrated?
 7 A. It had the information — I've still not seen the
 8 METHANE message, but I would expect the content to be
 9 structured the same as usual and it would have had the
 10 exact location, any sort of access to it, the emergency
 11 responders who were already on scene and who were
 12 required, and so forth. It would have had the
 13 information that I probably was looking for at the time.
 14 Q. What I am do at some stage after our break or tomorrow
 15 morning is draw your attention to the terms of those
 16 messages. But as you rightly identified, the E at the
 17 end of METHANE stands for emergency services.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. If you had been given a METHANE message, you would have
 20 known which of the other emergency services were
 21 present, would you not?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. You would therefore have discovered that GMP and NWS
 24 were present?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. And do you think that if you had had that information
 2 that night, it would have made any difference to your
 3 decision-making?
 4 A. It would absolutely have made a big difference, yes.
 5 We'd have responded straightaway.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you remind us while we're hearing
 7 this evidence, as I remember BTP's was reported to their
 8 control room, but not then passed on to anybody else.
 9 MR GREANEY: It was not passed on to anybody else.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: NWS was certainly reported to their
 11 control room; was that passed on?
 12 MR GREANEY: I will need to check on that. I don't recall
 13 it being formally passed on, but whether that
 14 information was drawn to the attention of others we will
 15 check.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.
 17 MR GREANEY: At all events, your clear evidence is that you
 18 were not told about either METHANE message?
 19 A. No.
 20 Q. Either the fact of it or the content of it?
 21 A. No.
 22 Q. And you had just told me that, I think this was your
 23 term, if you had been told about those messages,
 24 it would have made a big difference?
 25 A. A massive difference, yes.

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1 Q. And just tell us, looking back, if you had known about
2 the presence of other emergency services at the scene,
3 what difference would it have made, what would you have
4 done differently?

5 A. Once I had that information, I would have assessed the
6 risk — the risk is on there, the hazards — and I'd
7 have been able to set the policy or procedure we were
8 going to follow, look at the options, and then take
9 action.

10 Q. Let me ask you the straight question: if you had been
11 told of the message and its content, would GMFRS have
12 deployed earlier to the scene than they did?

13 A. I have not seen the information within, but yes.

14 Q. Let me return to that question and you can return to
15 your answer once you have seen the terms.

16 Moving back to your witness statement, paragraph 20,
17 and we're still dealing with the planning and exercising
18 that you undertook whilst you were the COMAH reference
19 holder. You observe that one of the major challenges
20 that arose from the exercising that you undertook,
21 bearing in mind again that we're not talking at the
22 moment about Winchester Accord or anything of that sort,
23 but about COMAH exercising, but nonetheless one of the
24 major challenges that arose related to inter-agency
25 communications and shared situational awareness.

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1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Could you develop that sentence in your statement,
3 please? What do you mean by that?

4 A. Some were not as familiar with the JESIP principles and
5 the need to have a common picture and joint
6 understanding of the risks.

7 Q. Do you mean that, and I don't wish to put words into
8 your mouth, so tell me if I've misunderstood, that when
9 you carried out these exercises one of the common issues
10 that arose was the emergency services communicating
11 inadequately with each other?

12 A. Yes, between themselves even, not passing on the salient
13 points, and then once we stopped, or during the debrief,
14 we would find out that there was a miscommunication of
15 how many casualties or the actual location of the
16 incident that we were dealing with.

17 Q. So we're talking about a problem with getting shared
18 situational awareness?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And have I correctly understood that across these five
21 or six exercises you were doing each year this wasn't
22 just a problem that had arisen on one occasion, it was
23 a problem that cropped up again and again?

24 A. Yes, we would get different plays for each site — when
25 I say plays, the role plays — so I tried to get

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1 consistency, I gave the agencies some feedback, again
2 with that exercising group that I developed through that
3 format.

4 Q. So whilst, as I've emphasised a number of times, we are
5 not talking about exercising that relates to terrorism
6 or anything of that sort, we are talking about
7 exercising which is testing similar kinds of things to
8 Winchester Accord, namely joint working?

9 A. Yes, and some of these people would be involved in other
10 tactical coordinating groups and so forth. So they are
11 the people — yes, it was COMAH this week, but they are
12 people that would actually respond to incidents.

13 Q. I think where we can get to is that on 22 May 2017, you
14 as much as anyone within Greater Manchester Fire and
15 Rescue Service were well aware that in the event of
16 a response to an incident, communication between
17 emergency services might well not work?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And that as a result, there might very well not be
20 shared situational awareness?

21 A. Yes, and it would be difficult.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is this something which was known
23 generally? You knew it. You feared for communications
24 in a real emergency. Was this generally known across
25 the Fire Service?

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1 A. In respect to COMAH or generally within incidents?

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're seeing what's happening in COMAH,
3 a particular problem is identified in COMAH, but you've
4 already really told me that you would expect it to occur
5 in any other sort of emergency situation.

6 A. There was a potential, I think, yes. We knew there was
7 a potential.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You told us the same people were
9 involved in some of them.

10 A. Yes.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So is this something which was known
12 across the Fire Service and for how long has it been
13 known?

14 A. I think it had been known to varying degrees with
15 people's participation and obviously I was raising it
16 within the groups, the meetings —

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you were raising it?

18 A. Yes.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was that to a chair of that meeting or
20 were you passing it on to people higher up the
21 organisation?

22 A. No, to try and develop it I brought other speakers into
23 the group who would talk about incident command from our
24 point of view and various backgrounds to try and assist
25 with it.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What I really need to know is: is it
 2 getting to the corporate body, to the people at the top
 3 of the organisation?
 4 A. Yes, I think it was, yes, through my line manager.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 6 MR GREANEY: This was really what I was going to explore,
 7 but the chairman has got there before me. You are
 8 a group manager at this time?
 9 A. Station manager.
 10 Q. Forgive me. So you have a significant position within
 11 the organisation?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. But obviously there are a number of rungs further up
 14 than you?
 15 A. That's right.
 16 Q. And when you discovered repeatedly that there was this
 17 problem with joint communication and the sharing of
 18 situational awareness, were you keeping that to yourself
 19 or were you communicating it to others?
 20 A. No, I shared it with my line manager.
 21 Q. So you were sharing it at the meetings which were
 22 a subcommittee of the LRF?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. And within your own emergency service you were sharing
 25 it with your line manager?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And who was your line manager?
 3 A. John Fletcher.
 4 Q. And his rank?
 5 A. At the time, group manager, now retired.
 6 Q. We've heard some evidence from him already and we're
 7 going to hear from him in due course.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Do we have within the documents any
 9 documentary — a document relating to this issue between
 10 people?
 11 A. I was just thinking that. I think within the meetings
 12 there will be minutes, hopefully, around some of the —
 13 certainly around the incident command and so forth that
 14 I brought to the meetings and the discussions. Because
 15 it was about best practice from some of the sites as
 16 well and some of the learning that we tried to develop.
 17 MR GREANEY: When you were speaking about this at the
 18 meetings and when you were telling Mr Fletcher about it,
 19 were you aware that in the event of a real world
 20 incident a failure of people to communicate and share
 21 situational awareness was capable of being really very
 22 serious?
 23 A. Yes, absolutely.
 24 Q. So when you were communicating it, were you
 25 communicating the gravity of this problem?

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1 A. Yes, and I think John would know that anyway.
 2 Q. Do you know what was done about it within the Fire and
 3 Rescue Service?
 4 A. I don't. You're probably better asking John about what
 5 the next steps were. It was obviously part of a bigger
 6 picture about developing — we've already talked about
 7 the channel earlier today and the communications, the
 8 tri-communications, which is —
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is this (inaudible: coughing) all part
 10 of JESIP?
 11 A. It's communication between the services, which — JESIP
 12 is the answer, about committing to it.
 13 MR GREANEY: Let's talk in a straight way about this: on the
 14 night of the arena attack, the critical thing that
 15 failed was joint communication so that there was no
 16 shared situational awareness.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. And you had known since you took up your role as COMAH
 19 reference holder, or shortly afterwards, that this was
 20 the very thing that might happen in the event of an
 21 incident?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And so just leaving aside Winchester Accord and so on
 24 that we'll come to, there had been a period, measured in
 25 not just months but years, during which that could have

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1 been put right?
 2 A. Yes. There were varying degrees, of course, of the
 3 severity. There was never a point where no information
 4 was shared, it was just sometimes the quality.
 5 Q. That's what I wanted to ask you about your role as COMAH
 6 reference holder. I'm going to go on to something which
 7 is overlapping with it, which is your role as a NILO.
 8 When you had been in the Contingency Planning Unit for
 9 a period of less than 12 months, were you asked by
 10 John Fletcher if you wanted to take on the NILO role?
 11 A. I was, yes.
 12 Q. Was that something you were interested in doing?
 13 A. Yes, definitely.
 14 Q. Why was that?
 15 A. It's a challenge, it was another area of expertise that
 16 I could learn. All the time I have been in the Fire
 17 Service I have always wanted to develop myself and it
 18 was just another avenue that I could follow.
 19 Q. So was this therefore a natural step in your career
 20 development?
 21 A. Yes, it's part of the same rank. I don't get paid any
 22 more for it. It's just — it was really...
 23 Q. What you observe in your witness statement,
 24 paragraph 29, is that:
 25 "Historically, GMFRS were always look for certain

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1 qualities in a NILO, including experience and [it's this
2 phrase I want to ask you about] a track record of
3 dynamic decision-making."
4 A. Yes. So we would constantly be assessed for our
5 incident command, and obviously I would attend live
6 incidents and John obviously was my line manager and he
7 would have a good understanding of my capacity and
8 capabilities .
9 Q. Did you think when you decided to take on the role of
10 NILO that you were someone with a track record of
11 dynamic decision-making?
12 A. Yes, I would say so.
13 Q. And on the night of the arena attack do you consider,
14 looking back, that you engaged in dynamic
15 decision-making?
16 A. I did.
17 Q. You'll appreciate that's an answer I'm going to press
18 when we get to the relevant stage.
19 Before you became a NILO, did you attend in 2016
20 something called Saton Force?
21 A. Yes.
22 Q. What is or at least was Saton Force?
23 A. Saton Force at the time, I think, it was EOD -- the bomb
24 squad have to re-licence and I think at the time it was
25 every 6 months, so we went up to a location to fulfil

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1 the role of the NILO to show how we could fit in that
2 environment, in a pre-explosion and post-explosion, and
3 the skills and resources that we could bring to that
4 incident.
5 Q. Did you find that experience that you had in 2016
6 a valuable one?
7 A. Yes, it was excellent.
8 Q. Before starting to work as a NILO, did you also
9 undertake additional training?
10 A. In what sense, sir?
11 Q. Training in being a NILO.
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. Was that comprised of a number of courses?
14 A. It was.
15 Q. Introductions to other agencies and individuals?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. And specific one-to-one training?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. In particular did you attend something called the
20 national NILO course?
21 A. Yes, I think it was the October of 2016.
22 Q. I don't suppose we need the precise address, but was
23 that held at the Fire Service College?
24 A. Yes, it was.
25 Q. Was your training provided by the London Fire and Rescue

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1 Service?
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. But supplemented by other speakers from Fire and Rescue?
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. The military?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. And also experts in terrorism and counter-terrorism?
8 A. Yes.
9 Q. Did that course last for 10 days over 2 working weeks?
10 A. Yes, I think it did.
11 Q. And did it include an examination based around -- and
12 for good reason I'm not going to identify everything
13 that you were examined on -- but did the things that you
14 were examined on include emergency response?
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. Including the response to an MTFA?
17 A. Yes, it did.
18 Q. And was that a pass-or-fail course?
19 A. It was.
20 Q. And did you pass?
21 A. I passed.
22 Q. During those 10 days, how much of the course was focused
23 upon extremism and terrorism and counter-terrorism more
24 generally?
25 A. There was quite a large part. I couldn't give you

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1 specific days, but it was quite prevalent throughout.
2 Q. I think you said this was October 2016.
3 A. Yes.
4 Q. So was some of the course at least dedicated to
5 informing you about terrorism threats from
6 Islamic State?
7 A. Yes, it was.
8 Q. In your statement at paragraph 33, you use a phrase
9 that, certainly speaking for myself, I didn't entirely
10 understand, and I wanted to give you an opportunity to
11 explain it if it's relevant. In the course of dealing
12 with the NILO course, you stated:
13 "After the arena attack, Mick Lawlor described the
14 lead-up to the attack as a battle rhythm during
15 presentations."
16 What did you mean by that or at any rate what did
17 you understand him to mean by that?
18 A. It was over the previous 12 months before the arena
19 attack we had a number of safety alerts that had come
20 through, identifying some of the terrorist attacks that
21 had taken place around the world, about the need for
22 more security and so forth. But obviously that was
23 supplemented with the training that was received at the
24 time as well, so it was very focused around -- I'd gone
25 from a regular officer, if you like, that I was now

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1 being fed this information that was --
 2 Q. You'll appreciate I don't want to know the detail of the
 3 information. Do you mean by that phrase that you
 4 understood as a result of your training, and therefore
 5 understood before the night of the attack, that it was
 6 a question of not if but when there would be an
 7 attack --
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. -- in the United Kingdom?
 10 A. Yes, the battle rhythm. It was sort of building towards
 11 something.
 12 Q. Still dealing with the NILO course, was the latter part
 13 of the course focused on the response to an MTFA?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Was it attended not just by firefighters but also by
 16 police officers?
 17 A. Yes, it was.
 18 Q. What about paramedics?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. So one of the benefits of the course that you gained an
 21 appreciation of how other emergency services would
 22 respond and what their capabilities were?
 23 A. That's right, yes, and get a better understanding of the
 24 equipment that they carried.
 25 Q. So at the end of that course, what view did you have

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1 about the value that your resources and your
 2 capabilities had together with those of other emergency
 3 services?
 4 A. Within Greater Manchester, I would say we were quite
 5 resource rich in that area compared to some other fire
 6 services who don't have any who would share our
 7 resources. So overall, we were in a good place and
 8 I would in future be able to advise how we could use
 9 these assets.
 10 Q. Let's just pause to reflect for one moment. I believe
 11 that where we've reached is that if things went wrong
 12 from a Fire and Rescue Service perspective on the night
 13 of the attack, and you've acknowledged that they did, it
 14 wasn't for a lack of training that you had received?
 15 A. That's correct.
 16 Q. And it wasn't for a lack of resources available to the
 17 Fire and Rescue Service?
 18 A. That's also correct, yes.
 19 Q. At paragraph 41 of your statement, you explain that
 20 you were put on the "NILO run" from February of 2017.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. What did you mean by that?
 23 A. That is the point at which I became live and being able
 24 to be contacted as a NILO.
 25 Q. So this is the moment at which you are, my phrase,

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1 deployed operationally as a NILO?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Is it the point at which you are able to go on the duty
 4 roster?
 5 A. Correct.
 6 Q. And had you performed NILO duties prior to 22 May 2017?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Had you performed NILO duties in relation to a real
 9 world event before 22 May 2017?
 10 A. Yes, on my very first day as a NILO I dealt with a white
 11 powder event in the city.
 12 Q. By white powder, do you mean something that was thought
 13 to present a risk to the public?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. So no problem with your training as of 22 May and also
 16 you had developed some operational experience by that
 17 date as a NILO?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. So just to draw those strands together: as of 22 May,
 20 did you consider that you were adequately trained and
 21 sufficiently experienced to perform the role that you
 22 had?
 23 A. Yes, I did.
 24 Q. Whilst we are dealing with training and before we get to
 25 the events of 22 May, I'm going to ask you about other

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1 training that you received before the night of the
 2 attack that was relevant to the role that you performed.
 3 I'm at paragraphs 34 and following of your statement.
 4 Had you attended, before the attack, MTFA
 5 multi-agency training that was organised by one of the
 6 emergency services?
 7 A. Yes, I had.
 8 Q. Did that take place at, we don't need to identify
 9 exactly where, but premises of GMP?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Was that training that both the Fire and Rescue Service
 12 and Ambulance Service took part in with GMP?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Do you remember when that took place?
 15 A. I think it was probably the February or January, sorry.
 16 Q. We do have your records and we can check that.
 17 A. I would have to check that.
 18 Q. We're talking about something that happened a relatively
 19 small number of months before the attack?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Did that exercise give you exposure to a training
 22 exercise enabling you to undertake different parts of
 23 the NILO role?
 24 A. Yes, it did. It enabled me to be the NILO 1 role, which
 25 is what we call over-the-bonnet talks with the other

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1 agencies, so we have those conversations about risks,
 2 the zones, limits of exploitation, that sort of thing,
 3 and then you have the NILO 2 role, which is the person
 4 who would actually deploy the specialist response into
 5 the warm zone.
 6 Q. So this I wanted to understand because it was a concept
 7 I hadn't come across before although it may have been
 8 mentioned. So the NILO role splits down into two parts?
 9 A. For the purpose of deployment and the on-scene
 10 commander.
 11 Q. Part 1 is what might be described as the classic JESIP
 12 role; is that right?
 13 A. Yes, that person who has that conversation with the
 14 other agencies.
 15 Q. So the person that you might expect in a Plato situation
 16 to be at the forward command post?
 17 A. That is correct.
 18 Q. Speaking to commanders, Silver commanders probably, from
 19 other organisations?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. And achieving joint situational awareness?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And a shared appreciation of risk?
 24 A. Absolutely, yes.
 25 Q. The second part of the NILO role is to be the person who

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1 says, "I now know what the situation is, I now know what
 2 the risk is, this is how I'm going to deploy our
 3 specialist resources"
 4 A. Yes, they will brief the responders with what they know,
 5 where the casualties are, the limits of exploitation,
 6 the expectation of them, before deploying them into that
 7 area.
 8 Q. And on the night that we are concerned with, were you
 9 NILO 1, NILO 2 or both?
 10 A. I began the evening as the duty NILO, I suppose the
 11 information gatherer, bridging the intelligence gap.
 12 But as the incident developed and Ben Levy took over the
 13 incident, I then became on-scene commander and the first
 14 in attendance for the Fire Service.
 15 Q. So when you started out that night as duty NILO, was it
 16 the expectation that you would be the person to perform
 17 the NILO 1 and NILO 2 role or did you have some
 18 different and separate role?
 19 A. There is no difference. It could have been the first
 20 two, the first two that arrived there would have done
 21 that, because these incidents could be multi-seated,
 22 there might be a seat of an incident or there might be
 23 something in a different part of the city and we'd have
 24 to divide them. So it'd be more a case of the nearest
 25 that would form the teams.

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1 Q. I think, as we're going to come on to hear, you
 2 certainly weren't the nearest that night, were you?
 3 A. I wasn't, no.
 4 Q. That's no fault of yours, you lived where you lived.
 5 But I'm still not entirely understanding this?
 6 A. Okay.
 7 Q. When that call came through at 10.40, were you at that
 8 stage NILO 1 and NILO 2?
 9 A. No, that's not been decided yet.
 10 Q. And one would have thought that there ought to come
 11 a time at which there is some certainty in relation to
 12 who's going to have the classic JESIP role and who's
 13 going to have the "that's where you're going" role. At
 14 what stage did that discussion take place, if it took
 15 place?
 16 A. There is no rank and role, if you like, although we have
 17 got a different rank within the NILOs, which tends to be
 18 station managers and group managers. It would be the
 19 first person that got there would probably take — if
 20 the other commander was present they would have that
 21 conversation with them and become the NILO 1 whilst the
 22 NILO 2 and the specialist response would also commit.
 23 So there's nothing set in stone, it's dynamic.
 24 Q. It's dynamic. We have come across this before in the
 25 evidence that we've heard. I've got in mind in

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1 particular that Mr Dexter, who didn't think that he
 2 should have responsibility for unarmed assets and others
 3 thought that he should have, but many agreed that,
 4 whatever the position, he should have known what his
 5 responsibility was. How within GMFRS that night was the
 6 person who was NILO 1 to know that that was his job and
 7 the person who was NILO 2 to know that was his or her
 8 job?
 9 A. As the incident developed because initially I didn't
 10 mobilise the NILOs and it was an explosion, it was on
 11 the second call, of course, which I'm sure we'll come on
 12 to —
 13 Q. We will.
 14 A. — when I got the further information. At that point
 15 I mobilised NILOs —
 16 Q. That's the 22.52 call?
 17 A. Yes. So at that point, they have been mobilised for the
 18 role of on-scene commanders.
 19 Q. When you say on-scene commander, are you intending to
 20 refer to them as having a position within the command
 21 structure and, if so, Bronze, Silver or Gold, or are you
 22 talking about commander in a different context?
 23 A. In a different context. We as a service at the time
 24 didn't have — if it had been an MTFA straightaway
 25 notification, we didn't have a supporting command

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1 structure on the action plan at that time. So you would
 2 have only got the specialist response and the NILOs.
 3 Q. Was that an inadequacy in the way in which GMFRS was set
 4 up to respond?
 5 A. It was at the time, yes.
 6 Q. Right. So I will come back to the NILO 1/NILO 2 issue
 7 when we get to the conversation at 22.52, which I rather
 8 suspect won't now be today.
 9 We were dealing with other training that you had
 10 received prior to the arena attack. Obviously, I am not
 11 going to deal with all of the training that you
 12 received, only that which was or may have been relevant
 13 to the role you performed.
 14 Had you undertaken specific training in relation to
 15 the following: in January 2017, did you undertake MTFA
 16 advanced trauma training with the Ambulance Service at
 17 their premises?
 18 A. Yes, I did.
 19 Q. And did that provide specific training in the use of
 20 specialist medical equipment?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Including ballistic dressings, bandages and tourniquets?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. So was this training you received as a NILO or in some
 25 different capacity?

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1 A. As a NILO.
 2 Q. And were you learning about how you might utilise such
 3 equipment or were you learning about how the
 4 Ambulance Service would utilise it?
 5 A. Yes, the ambulance, the crews, and myself, I would also
 6 have a Prometheus pack and would need to know how to use
 7 it.
 8 Q. Were you making sure NWAS also knew about what you could
 9 bring by way of value to an incident?
 10 A. Yes, absolutely, yes.
 11 Q. That is to say evacuating casualties by the use of
 12 Skeds?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. And providing also a degree of treatment?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And I don't believe there is anything operationally
 17 sensitive about this and we're probably -- well, we are
 18 only describing the situation in May 2017. But did each
 19 SRT vehicle at that time carry five Skeds?
 20 A. Yes, they did.
 21 Q. In simple terms, as we have heard, are they designed to
 22 enable the rapid evacuation of casualties?
 23 A. Yes, they are.
 24 Q. In February 2017, did you receive MTFA commander
 25 training?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Was that multi-agency training?
 3 A. Yes, it was.
 4 Q. Which involved going through the JOPs?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. A discussion around terrorist techniques?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And also a practical exercise during which you were able
 9 to practice the roles of NILO 1 and NILO 2?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Was that arranged by and attended by Mr Gaskell from
 12 whom we heard on Wednesday and today?
 13 A. Yes, I believe it was.
 14 Q. And also by the lead firearms instructor for GMP?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And someone at an equivalent level within the
 17 Ambulance Service?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. You also received, I believe, in June 2016 and
 20 January 2017, national counter-terrorism awareness
 21 training; is that correct?
 22 A. Yes, that's correct.
 23 Q. During which you were briefed on current issues and what
 24 you describe as global trends?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. So the way in which you put it in your witness statement
 2 is this was a micro NILO course?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Which was designed, am I right, to inform you about the
 5 form that an attack might take?
 6 A. It was, it was more localised. Obviously on the
 7 national course we talk more widely but there was some
 8 focus around local issues as well.
 9 Q. In April 2017, did you attend a course at the firearms
 10 college, which enabled you to view and understand the
 11 type of assistance that the military might provide --
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. -- in responding to a terrorist attack?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. On 10 May 2017, did you attend Project Griffin, about
 16 which we've heard?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. What did you derive from that training?
 19 A. It focuses around the security of risk and how to
 20 prevent -- they were more focused around the business
 21 themselves but also as a NILO, the type of information
 22 that I would need to share if we became aware of
 23 anything.
 24 Q. Do you recall that in the build-up to the attack you
 25 also attended a multi-agency tactical JESIP meeting,

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1 where matters such as emergency service channels on
 2 radios were discussed?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. And overall, did you consider that your training before
 5 the attack was extremely thorough?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. And that it prepared you well to respond to that with
 8 which you were confronted on the night?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. In your statement at paragraph 38 you observe that
 11 notwithstanding the quality of your training as you
 12 considered it to be, in hindsight you could see that
 13 there was one area where you had needed more practice,
 14 namely mobilisation, and you add:
 15 "We had probably placed too much faith in other
 16 agencies to comply with all aspects of the JOPs."
 17 I'm going to ask you to expand upon that and explain
 18 in further detail what you meant.
 19 A. Yes. Obviously, with the failings of the night, the
 20 realisation was that we'd actually never practised --
 21 I'd certainly never practised the mobilisation to this
 22 type of incident. We always started our training from
 23 the deployment board where we were all pretty much stood
 24 together or the RVP, so we didn't have that aspect of
 25 communication and that feel of what it would be like.

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1 Q. So I think I've understood what you mean, that when you
 2 had planned, certainly when you'd exercised, you had
 3 always started from a particular point in time, but you
 4 were able to reflect that that point in time was too
 5 late because it always started from when you had
 6 actually deployed?
 7 A. Yes. I suppose we always thought, because we go to lots
 8 of other incidents, that everybody turns up, but this is
 9 a different type of incident where there's zones and
 10 it's more of a threat, somebody's trying to hurt you or
 11 injure you, so I think there was an oversight that we
 12 just never practised exercising that element. I knew
 13 after there was the -- they tried to plan an exercise
 14 earlier in the year, but it never came to fruition.
 15 Myself and John Fletcher organised one later in the year
 16 called Exercise Powerhouse.
 17 Q. And you do deal with that in your statement. I'm not
 18 going to ask you about it because it post-dates the
 19 attack.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. I think the point of it is that having realised that
 22 there was this inadequacy in your understanding and your
 23 training, you and Mr Fletcher sought to put it right
 24 subsequently?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Just so that we all know what you mean by this, is what
 2 you're saying to us that the training from the point of
 3 deployment was okay, but what you hadn't trained for was
 4 how are we going to get to that point at which we are
 5 together and making a decision about what we're going to
 6 do?
 7 A. Yes, and that communication, that vital communication,
 8 and sharing of information during that period.
 9 Q. I'm going to ask you, finally in relation to this topic,
 10 about your background and experience, about
 11 Winchester Accord and then I will ask the chairman
 12 whether we should take a break. Did you take part in
 13 Exercise Winchester Accord?
 14 A. No.
 15 Q. Did you, however, subsequently become aware that issues
 16 had been identified as a result of that exercise?
 17 A. Yes, I was made aware, yes.
 18 Q. I'll come on to those in one moment. But bearing in
 19 mind your aspirations at that time, in fact the exercise
 20 had occurred before you started to become a NILO, so
 21 let's go straightaway to the issues that were
 22 identified. First, how did you become aware that issues
 23 had been identified in Exercise Winchester Accord?
 24 A. With working in the office. Obviously, at that
 25 particular time there was Neil Gaskell working in the

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1 same office, John Fletcher and Michael Lawlor, so it was
 2 a conversation initially when I first heard it.
 3 Q. So should we take from that that you didn't become aware
 4 as a result of any formal document that came out, it was
 5 as a result of informal conversation within the office?
 6 A. Initially it was informal. As I say, it was
 7 a conversation I was involved in but there was formal
 8 later -- I think some of the evidence provided is an
 9 email to that response.
 10 Q. Either through the conversation or the email or both,
 11 what issues did you understand had arisen?
 12 A. I'm just going to refer to my notes.
 13 Q. Of course. It's paragraph 40 of your witness statement.
 14 A. There was confusion around Op Plato and whether it was
 15 or it wasn't.
 16 Q. Yes.
 17 A. And the difficulty in communicating to the police
 18 tactical firearms.
 19 Q. Were you aware that, for whatever reason, there had been
 20 a delay in both the deployment of the Fire Service and
 21 the Ambulance Service?
 22 A. Yes, I knew there was a delay.
 23 Q. As a result of the understanding that those issues had
 24 arisen, what was done within the Fire and Rescue
 25 Service?

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1 A. At that time we wouldn't have been too familiar with the
2 discussions that took place to resolve that. Obviously,
3 we know that they implemented the channel later on, the
4 three-way communication channel, but at that particular
5 time that wasn't part of my workstream. I was more
6 a user, if you like.

7 Q. Did you become aware that some training had taken place
8 with a view to providing clarity over the joint
9 operating principles?

10 A. Sorry, would you repeat that?

11 Q. Certainly. I'm at the bottom of page 11 of your
12 statement where you appear to talk about training.
13 There was a range of opinions from GMP FDOs around
14 whether or not Operation Plato should have been declared
15 in relation to a specific training scenario. The
16 intention was to provide clarity over the JOPs but also
17 to feed back to the Home Office about gaps in
18 understanding of Operation Plato.

19 Are you talking there about training after Exercise
20 Winchester Accord or the exercise itself?

21 A. Yes, I believe you're talking about the workshops, which
22 was one of the outcomes from Winchester Accord, where
23 they got the commanders from the three agencies.
24 I attended one of those -- I think it was at our
25 training school in Manchester -- and it was to talk

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1 through the joint operating principles and some of the
2 issues identified during Winchester Accord.

3 Q. We have heard about that. So we're talking about a time
4 before the arena attack has occurred, and this is really
5 what I wanted your help with. You say:

6 "During this training there was a comment from a GMP
7 force duty officer that if an incident occurred, they
8 would not have time to make calls. I understood the
9 demand on them [so the FDOs] is massive."

10 And do you remember being informed of that?

11 A. Yes, I remember in the room there was a discussion
12 around capacity and how busy they would be. I was
13 a relatively new NILO, as you know, and I assumed, if it
14 was an identified risk, that they would have been
15 dealing with it.

16 Q. There are two stages to this. First of all, before the
17 attack you understood that there was a risk that the
18 FDO, in the event of a real incident, might become
19 overburdened?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. But I think you're saying that you had anticipated that
22 GMP would have put that right by the time of the attack?

23 A. Yes, and of course I was aware because I'd visited the
24 FDO to see where they were located and so forth, I was
25 aware they had a team around them, that they might be

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1 incapacitated at some point, but somebody would
2 communicate or do that part of the job for them.

3 Q. I am going to suggest we take a break now, but in due
4 course, when we return, I'm going to seek your help
5 in relation to the extent to which that knowledge of the
6 risk of an FDO becoming overburdened played a part or
7 didn't play a part in your decision--making on the night
8 of the attack.

9 A. Yes.

10 MR GREANEY: Perhaps that's something you can give some
11 thought to.

12 Sir, could we take a break at this stage?

13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Ten minutes, so just after 3.00.

14 Thank you.

15 (2.53 pm)

16 (A short break)

17 (3.06 pm)

18 MR GREANEY: Could I just remind everyone that we have an
19 earlier than normal start tomorrow, we are sitting at
20 9 o'clock in order to discuss an issue relating to a
21 witness. In part because of that and in part because of
22 the need to prepare for that hearing, I'm going to
23 suggest that we only sit one more session this afternoon
24 and that we aim to finish at some time around 4.15 or
25 4.30. I have told those with a particular interest in

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1 this and everyone understands that there is good reason
2 for that approach.

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.

4 MR GREANEY: So at least you know for how long we're going
5 on. You always appreciated that we would not finish
6 told or even tomorrow, I think, Mr Berry.

7 A. Yes.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry about that.

9 MR GREANEY: Where we have reached is the night of the
10 attack, when, as we know, you were the duty NILO.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. In that capacity, what hours were you to work?

13 A. I had been on duty for some time at that point. I think
14 I'd started -- I'd been away on the Saton Force the
15 previous week.

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. But I'd been on duty since Saturday morning, 9 o'clock.

18 Q. In this role as duty NILO?

19 A. Not continually the duty NILO, but on my duty weekend.

20 Q. So had you been either at work or on call for the whole
21 of that period from the Saturday morning until the
22 Monday night?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. That sounds like a long period of time.

25 A. It is. It's slightly different because I'd been away on

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1 the course. Normally, we work the Friday, we start on
 2 the Friday morning at 9 o'clock and work until Monday
 3 evening, but I was slightly out of kilter because I'd
 4 been away on the course.
 5 Q. Obviously it's one thing to be on duty at home but able
 6 to go to bed and sleep, although one might always have
 7 the thought, I might be called out, at the back of one's
 8 mind, and another thing to be on call and actually have
 9 to respond to something. During the on-call periods of
 10 your duty from the Saturday morning, had you actually
 11 been called upon to do anything?
 12 A. Yes. Well, I've got the day job obviously, still got to
 13 do that. From memory, I think I had been to other
 14 incidents at the weekend.
 15 Q. So let me ask you a question that I wasn't expecting to:
 16 do you think that that night, the night of the attack,
 17 when you were called upon to engage in dynamic
 18 decision-making, tiredness played any part in relation
 19 to whether you did or didn't?
 20 A. No, I was rested. I obviously hadn't been to bed at
 21 that point, so then I was up during that night, but
 22 I don't think it impacted, no.
 23 Q. As we've been going on, we've been excluding things that
 24 might have played a part what went wrong, we have
 25 excluded your training, your equipment, and now we have

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1 excluded any risk that you were affected by tiredness.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Very helpful and indeed fair.
 4 So let's begin with the period before the bombing
 5 took place. I'm going to ask that we put on the screen
 6 the phone records for your work telephone and you made
 7 and received a number of calls on that telephone that
 8 day and that night, did you not?
 9 A. I did.
 10 Q. Mr Lopez, this is -- and don't put this on the screen
 11 until I give you the page -- {INQ004348/63}. Later
 12 we'll look at page 64, which, can I tell core
 13 participants, a small part of that has been unredacted
 14 as of today. So page 63.
 15 We are going to be looking at lines 32 through to
 16 38.
 17 We can see from this record that your work telephone
 18 made contact with the FDO line on three occasions prior
 19 to the attack. Line 32, which is 16.50, when there is
 20 a contact lasting for nearly 2 minutes. Line 36, at
 21 17.00, again just short of 3 minutes. And again a call
 22 from your mobile to the FDO line, line 38, at 17.16, and
 23 a longer call, just over 5.5 minutes.
 24 First, do you recall making those calls?
 25 A. I don't, no.

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1 Q. Do you have any reason to doubt that you made them?
 2 A. No.
 3 Q. Are you able to assist us either by reference to
 4 anything that was going on at the time or by reference
 5 to your usual practice why those calls were made?
 6 A. I would assume from the length of call that it's
 7 regarding an incident I dealt with.
 8 Q. Should we conclude from the fact that these appear to be
 9 calls of some length, a number of minutes, and from the
 10 fact, I suppose, that you don't recall anything
 11 particularly about them, that on these occasions you
 12 didn't have any difficulty getting in touch with the
 13 FDO?
 14 A. No.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was that normal, not to have any
 16 difficulty?
 17 A. Absolutely. Got through first time generally.
 18 MR GREANEY: As always, the chairman is slightly ahead of
 19 me. The point is that you had had contact on occasions
 20 before 22 May as a NILO with the FDO; is that correct?
 21 A. That's correct.
 22 Q. On those occasions and these earlier occasions on the
 23 22nd, you'd had no difficulty?
 24 A. No, that was the agreed method of contact.
 25 Q. Would it also be fair to say that on the other occasions

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1 that you had sought contact and achieved contact, you
 2 would not have been calling about anything remotely on
 3 the scale of the Manchester Arena attack?
 4 A. No.
 5 Q. I'm going to deal with the first notification to North
 6 West Fire Control that something had happened at the
 7 arena. I want to be clear that I am not suggesting that
 8 you were a party to these calls, you plainly were not,
 9 but in due course I'm going to be asking you about the
 10 extent to which what they were told was communicated to
 11 you.
 12 The first call started at 22.32 and was a call by
 13 GMP to David Ellis at North West Fire Control. I think,
 14 even if you weren't a party to that call, you are aware
 15 that it happened?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. Initially, that call at 22.32 had nothing at all to do
 18 with the bombing, it was to do with something trivial,
 19 namely youths throwing fireworks and the risk that
 20 a fire might occur?
 21 A. I believe so, yes.
 22 Q. But events took a turn when, at 22.34.44, the GMP
 23 operator told David Ellis that reports of a bomb having
 24 exploded at the arena had been received. And if you
 25 want to listen to the recording, although the total

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1 recording is a long one or if you want to look at the
 2 transcript, let me know, but I'm going to summarise the
 3 effect of it for you.
 4 The report was of a bomb that had exploded, causing
 5 multiple casualties, including deaths, the rendezvous
 6 point was Cathedral Car Park?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. That GMP was deploying and what the operator said was
 9 this:
 10 "We've got absolutely loads of officers en route.
 11 Obviously I think we're going to meet at that RVP point
 12 before we go in just in case of any secondary devices."
 13 Okay? The timing of that part of that call was
 14 22.41.11. That's important because that is happening
 15 either whilst you're on the phone or just after you're
 16 on the phone. Nonetheless, that information is passed
 17 at that stage.
 18 The report by GMP in that first contact to NWFC also
 19 contained the information that NWAS had five vehicles
 20 en route. The timing of that was 22.43.13, so again we
 21 must bear in mind that that information had not been
 22 passed at the time that you spoke to NWFC.
 23 The final matter that I draw attention to was that
 24 the report contained a reference to a potential
 25 shooting. So just hold that information in your head

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1 for a moment. If we need to go back to it, just let me
 2 know. That was a call which in total lasted for,
 3 I think, over 20 minutes.
 4 At 22.37, while that call was still underway, a call
 5 was made to NWFC, Joanne Haslam, by the
 6 Ambulance Service. So the two from that point are being
 7 made at the same time, although this is a shorter call.
 8 Again, I will seek to summarise what was said in this
 9 way.
 10 NWAS requested the assistance of the Fire and Rescue
 11 Service. You're nodding your head.
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. That's entirely within your expectation because the two
 14 of you would be expected to work together, would you
 15 not?
 16 A. Correct, yes.
 17 Q. That call also included the information that a bomb had
 18 "gone off", and as that call continued, Joanne Haslam
 19 was picking up information that was concurrently being
 20 provided to David Ellis, okay?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. So let's just pause for a moment. So in those two
 23 calls, which started before you were called at 22.40,
 24 and before you were called, it was made plain that there
 25 had been an actual explosion. Okay? So have you

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1 understood what I mean?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. That was the information they had, among other things,
 4 before they called you.
 5 Were you, as of 22 May, familiar with the action
 6 cards used by North West Fire Control?
 7 A. No.
 8 Q. Had you ever seen them?
 9 A. No, I don't think I had.
 10 Q. Did you know that they existed?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. So you knew of their existence but not of the content of
 13 them?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Bearing in mind your role as a NILO, would it have been
 16 rather better if you had understood the content of them?
 17 A. Yes, absolutely.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, in terms of you saying you knew
 19 about them, in what terms did you know about them?
 20 What was the description you would give of those action
 21 cards from what you had been told?
 22 A. I was aware they had action plans and cards for
 23 particular types of incident. I obviously know a bit
 24 more with the role I've currently got, but there are
 25 about 260 of these things.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 2 A. There's quite a lot. You'd never be able to remember
 3 them all.
 4 MR GREANEY: So I was expecting that you'd say that you were
 5 familiar with them. The fact that you are not I'm not
 6 going to suggest is a criticism of you. Nonetheless,
 7 I'm going to press ahead and ask you the question that
 8 I would like your answer to, namely what your
 9 expectation would be, I suppose now, as opposed to then,
 10 as to which card would be followed.
 11 So I'm going to ask that we put on the screen the
 12 cards that we did look at during the evidence of
 13 Mr Gaskell, and these are the versions that were, I'm
 14 told, in force at the relevant time. We'll have, first
 15 of all, the "Explosion" action card; they are called
 16 action plans. {INQ004404/1}, please.
 17 So this is for an explosion. Is it your
 18 understanding now, even if not at the time, that this
 19 relates to a situation in which there has actually been
 20 an explosion --
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. -- albeit one that may have a number of causes?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. The actions of NWFC involve sending the TRU, sending
 25 appliances, sending a station manager, and sending the

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1 duty NILO. So the point that's being made is that this
 2 action plan does not dictate a call to the NILO? Do you
 3 follow me?
 4 A. Yes, they would just be sent.
 5 Q. Just be sent. So we'll just look at each of them and
 6 then I'll ask you my question.
 7 Next, please, is the action plan entitled "Bomb ---
 8 general". This is {INQ004360/1}. Is it your
 9 understanding now that this relates to a scenario in
 10 which there is believed to be a bomb which has not
 11 exploded?
 12 A. Yes, correct.
 13 Q. We can see, I'm not going to go through all of this, the
 14 top line:
 15 "Inform duty NILO, request guidance on actions to be
 16 carried out before proceeding further."
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. We can see what the triggers are:
 19 "Confirmed message from the police or any other
 20 category 1 responder."
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. So this one does involve, on its face, a call to the
 23 NILO before any deployment takes place?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Before there is any mobilisation?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. And then of the 260, I'm just going to ask you about
 3 a third and then I think we've covered those which are
 4 capable of being relevant. Mr Smith will put me right
 5 in due course if I'm wrong.
 6 This is the "Operation Plato --- standby phase"
 7 action plan. I think this is a slightly different
 8 reference or a completely different reference from the
 9 one given by Mr de la Poer so apologies for that, but it
 10 takes us to the same document: {INQ004447/1}.
 11 The top half of the page, please:
 12 "NWFC actions upon receiving information from fire
 13 crews/GMP/NWAS that a firearms incident is ongoing."
 14 And then the first action is:
 15 "Contingent: if call not received from NILO..."
 16 And we know that night the call was not received
 17 from you:
 18 "... inform duty NILO, obtain address, and seek
 19 advice."
 20 So here again, on a call not being received from the
 21 NILO, the direction is to call the NILO.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. I believe from what you've told us just a few moments
 24 ago that that night, and throughout the course of that
 25 night, you did not have a view about which of those

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1 action cards the North West Fire Control should have
 2 been following.
 3 A. My view at the time would have been that they would have
 4 mobilised to the explosion. That was my expectation.
 5 That's not to say once I received the call that
 6 I thought they'd done the wrong thing.
 7 Q. So this may be a more helpful way of looking at it than
 8 analysing the action cards. Notwithstanding your lack
 9 of understanding of the content of the action cards,
 10 your understanding was that North West Fire Control,
 11 before speaking to you, would have mobilised resources?
 12 A. Yes. To the explosion, yes.
 13 Q. And that they would have mobilised resources to the
 14 scene of the explosion?
 15 A. Yes. That was the way it was set up. The card at the
 16 time was probably inadequate, but that was my
 17 expectation at the time, yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can everyone hear all right?
 19 MR GREANEY: It is important, keep your voice up.
 20 A. I apologise.
 21 Q. You mustn't apologise, but you are quite softly spoken.
 22 So that was your expectation at the time. What was
 23 that expectation based on bearing in mind your level of
 24 awareness of the action plans?
 25 A. They generally just deployed on the basis of the action

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1 plans that we provided them.
 2 Q. So were you surprised when you received the call that
 3 we'll turn to in a moment that mobilisation had not
 4 occurred at that time?
 5 A. Yes. However, that wasn't the way it was suggested to
 6 me. It was suggested that, "Obviously we haven't
 7 mobilised".
 8 Q. And that is the precise term I think that was used and
 9 we will get to that in a moment. But you are saying to
 10 us, I believe, that at the time it was contrary to your
 11 expectation and therefore a matter of surprise that NWFC
 12 had not commenced the mobilisation of resources to the
 13 scene?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Just in case this evidence is of value to the chairman,
 16 you are now familiar with the action cards?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. Do you have a view of which of those action cards, or
 19 any other action card, it was appropriate for the
 20 Fire Control to follow that night?
 21 A. In the early stage of that, I would say probably it fell
 22 between the gaps.
 23 Q. Right.
 24 A. It didn't specifically hit one plan.
 25 Q. Is that what you meant when you said a little earlier

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1 that there was a problem with the action plans?
 2 A. Yes, because in my opinion now of the action plan, it
 3 was more developed around an explosion, possibly in
 4 a domestic property, smaller scale. With some of the
 5 information I was given in the initial call, which we're
 6 coming on to, I was told, talking about the arena, we're
 7 talking about a public place, talking about a crowded
 8 area. That's different, that's a transport hub,
 9 a completely different environment.
 10 Q. In a moment we're going to get to the call itself and
 11 then we'll return to some of this detail. But as the
 12 duty NILO that night, were you at a fire station or
 13 somewhere else?
 14 A. I was at home.
 15 Q. And obviously, we're not going to give your address, but
 16 I believe there is no difficulty in mentioning where at
 17 that time in very general terms you lived; am I correct
 18 about that?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. In general terms, you lived in the Wigan area?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. And therefore, to the west, a little to the north—west,
 23 of the centre of Manchester?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. And more than 20 miles by car to the arena?

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1 A. Yes, I was.
 2 Q. And more than 20 miles to either the Central
 3 Fire Station at Thompson Street, G16, or Philips Park
 4 Fire Station, G18?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. At 22.40, whilst both of the calls that I have mentioned
 7 were underway, were you telephoned by someone at NWFC?
 8 A. Yes, I was. I was telephoned by Michelle Gregson.
 9 Q. Was she someone you knew?
 10 A. No.
 11 Q. Did you know her even by name?
 12 A. Yes, I know the name and I'd spoken to her before, yes.
 13 Q. So were you aware that she was the or a team leader for
 14 North West Fire Control?
 15 A. Yes, but not on that night. I obviously didn't know
 16 until she rang up.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I missed that. You didn't know on the
 18 night?
 19 A. Not until she rung up that she was on duty.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 21 MR GREANEY: So the point you're making is that you did know
 22 that her status was team leader, but until she rang you
 23 up, you didn't know she was doing the job that
 24 particular night?
 25 A. No.

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1 Q. I am going to ask you to say yes or no in answer to my
 2 questions. You were saying yes, you did know of her
 3 status in general terms, but no, until she made that
 4 call, you didn't know she was doing the job that night?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's just that someone is making a note
 7 and if we have a blank, it's quite difficult to
 8 interpret it when we come to look at it later.
 9 MR GREANEY: Before you received that call from
 10 Michelle Gregson, did you know from social media, the
 11 radio or from any source anything about what was taking
 12 place at the arena?
 13 A. No, I didn't.
 14 Q. At that time, can you recall, were you at home, awake or
 15 asleep?
 16 A. I was awake.
 17 Q. What we are going to do is to listen to the recording of
 18 that call and have the transcript on the screen at the
 19 same time. I know this will take you just a moment to
 20 sort out, Mr Lopez. We'll bear with you because you'll
 21 need to download the recording. The recording is
 22 {INQ004449/1}. Is it helpful to have the transcript
 23 reference now as well? The transcript reference is
 24 {INQ001198/1}.
 25 (Audio played)

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1 So as we have just heard and seen, you were told
 2 that there had been an explosion in the sense of a bomb
 3 had exploded in the foyer to the arena. You're nodding
 4 your head.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. That 30 casualties had been reported?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. That the rendezvous point was the cathedral car park?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. You were asked to speak to the police. The team leader
 11 said:
 12 "Would it be all right for you to get in touch with
 13 them [the police]? Obviously we're not mobilising at
 14 the moment."
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. You were asked whether you wanted the information that
 17 the member of the public was providing at that moment
 18 and you said no. You rejected the cathedral car park
 19 rendezvous point. You said that you didn't want Central
 20 and you decided upon, your phrase, a muster point of
 21 Philips Park Fire Station?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. Is that a fair summary of what happened in that call?
 24 A. It is.
 25 Q. As you will appreciate —

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry. In terms, is there any
 2 difference between an RVP and a muster point?
 3 A. I'm sure we're going to come on to it, but I just wanted
 4 some time to have a phone call.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, right.
 6 MR GREANEY: We will come on to it. Let me just ask you
 7 a series of questions that I hope will help us to
 8 understand what your position was in that call. First,
 9 you were the NILO, were you not?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. And would it be fair to say that as compared with
 12 Michelle Gregson and her staff at the North West Fire
 13 Control, you were the expert in responding to this
 14 situation?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Now that you look back, was it appropriate for North
 17 West Fire Control to consult you before mobilising any
 18 resources or at least not inappropriate?
 19 A. As I've said, my expectation at the time would have been
 20 that they'd mobilise, but I think you're thinking what
 21 I was, there's a bit more to this as well.
 22 Q. Let me press you a little because I know that if
 23 I don't, Mr Smith will. He probably will anyway. Are
 24 you saying that you are not critical of the decision of
 25 North West Fire Control to consult with you before

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1 deploying resources?
 2 A. I think it's reasonable.
 3 Q. Secondly, you said that you didn't want the information
 4 from the member of the public. You're nodding your
 5 head. This was a situation in which it was important
 6 that you should gain situational awareness, was it not?
 7 A. That's correct.
 8 Q. And this was at the very least a potential source of
 9 situational awareness, do you agree?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Why did you not avail yourself of that information?
 12 A. I think one of the things you don't hear on that tape is
 13 me prioritising things. At that time, the person
 14 I really needed to speak to is the force duty officer,
 15 albeit there will be some substantial information from
 16 that person, I'd expect Control to gather that
 17 information whilst I'm acting and making that phone
 18 call.
 19 Q. So does that mean that you recognised that that member
 20 of the public might have contributed to your situational
 21 awareness?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. But what was going to get you the best situational
 24 awareness the quickest was speaking to the FDO?
 25 A. Yes, because they are the person and that is the agency

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1 who have got primacy.
 2 Q. Let's be fair to you, that was also the person that you
 3 had been asked to speak to as a prelude to mobilisation?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Thirdly, you rejected the nominated RVP.
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. You rejected Thompson Street as an RVP or discounted it
 8 rather?
 9 A. Yes, this is all timed around the phone call though that
 10 I'm making to the force duty officer. That's not to say
 11 they are completely discarded. I have at this moment in
 12 time but I'm expecting to make it call, because I can
 13 always get through, and just get that information and
 14 then decide what is the best point of action.
 15 Q. So it may be then that my reference to rejected is to
 16 put it too high. Is the position that you wanted
 17 situational awareness?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. And having got it from, as you expected, the FDO, at
 20 that stage you would re-evaluate where the appropriate
 21 RVP was?
 22 A. Based on that information, yes, I could have assessed
 23 the risk again, decided which procedure I'm going to
 24 follow, think of the options and act on it.
 25 Q. Let me just return to what I was putting to you and

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1 ensure that I use language which reflects your position.
 2 Your position in that call was -- let's leave the word
 3 rejected to one side -- you did not -- you decided not
 4 to deploy resources to the nominated RVP?
 5 A. Initially, yes.
 6 Q. You decided not to deploy resources to Central
 7 Fire Station at Thompson Street?
 8 A. Correct.
 9 Q. And you decided to deploy resources, four pumps, as
 10 we have heard, to Philips Park Fire Station, G18?
 11 A. I did, yes.
 12 Q. Do you agree, and I do recognise you're going to tell me
 13 you thought that this was all going to change quickly,
 14 but do you agree that the consequence of that series of
 15 decisions about an RVP at that stage was that there was
 16 not initially going to be a multi-agency RVP?
 17 A. One of the issues was I thought this had just happened,
 18 I was under the influence (sic), I suppose, this had
 19 just happened. So the RVP itself, getting an RVP that
 20 soon, what sort of risk assessment had been done, who's
 21 decided that. There's quite a few questions that
 22 I would want answering.
 23 Q. Why didn't you ask them?
 24 A. Well, I was going to ask the FDO, who is the person who
 25 has primacy in that environment.

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1 Q. Bearing in mind from what you have just said, the timing
2 of the explosion was a relevant, a highly relevant
3 factor. Why not ask Michelle Gregson, "When did this
4 happen?", as opposed to assuming it happened only just
5 a moment ago?
6 A. I appreciate that. That would be the first time I would
7 have ever asked it because we are an emergency service
8 and we get the information and we deploy straightaway.
9 So this would have been the first time this would have
10 happened.
11 Q. So that is the explanation or part of it. What I just
12 want to focus on for a moment is the consequence. Are
13 you able to agree that the consequence of the decision
14 you made about RVP was that that was not going to be
15 a multi-agency RVP?
16 A. Perhaps I should just develop it a bit more and tell you
17 my reasons for initially not going there. Obviously the
18 location, I'm familiar with the location --
19 Q. Can I ask you to pause for a moment? I do promise you
20 that you'll have an opportunity to give your
21 explanation. I am keen to pursue this in accordance
22 with what I hope is a structured and helpful way for the
23 chairman. I want to identify what the consequences were
24 of your decision-making and then explore with you what
25 your reasoning was. I'm not suggesting you didn't have

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1 reasons or necessarily that they weren't good ones, that
2 will be for the chairman; I want to identify the
3 consequences first.
4 I think you are driven to accept that the
5 consequence of in particular not deploying to the
6 nominated RVP was that where your pumps were going was
7 not going to be a multi-agency rendezvous point?
8 A. Correct, yes.
9 Q. And as a result, certainly at that initial stage, JESIP
10 wasn't going to work, was it?
11 A. Well, I was trying to make and get that information, but
12 as from a resource moving forward, not at that point,
13 no, but they were never supposed to get to Philips Park.
14 That's the reason.
15 Q. The consequence, moreover, was that your decision was to
16 cause appliances to move to a location about 3 miles
17 from the arena?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. And appliances that were at Thompson Street, about
20 a mile away, actually drove further from the arena than
21 they were to begin with?
22 A. Yes. Obviously, when I asked -- and you've just heard
23 the call -- I asked for the four pumps. It was never in
24 my mind that two of the pumps would be selected because
25 what happens is the pumps, the nearest pumps are

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1 selected -- sorry, they come up, they are available, and
2 they are selected by Control operators. It never
3 entered my head that Manchester Central would then turn
4 the opposite (inaudible).
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not sure that's -- I understand the
6 point but I'm not sure it's hugely relevant. The
7 question is: you're choosing a fire station which is
8 further away than the nearer one.
9 A. Yes. The reason I've chosen a further station is
10 because I do think this is a terrorist attack, I think
11 this might be an initial deployment or an explosion, and
12 there may be other elements. So within my mind and the
13 prioritising I'm doing at the time, I'm drawing cordons
14 in my mind, you know, the explosion, the secondary
15 device, [REDACTED] metres, that sort of cordon.
16 I do consider MTFA, I know it's not mentioned at
17 this point, which is a smaller cordon, but that does
18 influence -- I don't think Central is in that cordon,
19 but do you know what, why wait? If that shifts, just
20 rule it out and go to the next one.
21 MR GREANEY: Sir, I didn't mean to cut across your
22 questioning.
23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's perfectly all right. Let me see
24 what your next question is so I'm not asking the
25 question you're just about to ask.

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1 MR GREANEY: I'm going to actually step back for a moment.
2 Shall I have a go, sir, and then turn to you?
3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely!
4 MR GREANEY: So I am concerned to explore your reasoning
5 because I'm sure that you will appreciate that the
6 public or some members of the public would find
7 surprising the idea that having been informed that
8 a bomb had exploded at the arena, you should have
9 directed that pumps should drive not to the arena, not
10 stay near to the arena, but in fact should drive further
11 away from the arena, which is to express in stark terms
12 what the effect of this was.
13 So can I ask you first: why not go to the cathedral
14 car park?
15 A. I do think this is part -- the initiating for a larger
16 attack. The location is quite close. If it is to
17 become an MTFA or elements of an MTFA, it would be
18 within that cordon. I think the timing as well, I've
19 just assumed that this has just happened. It seems
20 predetermined, the RVP, and again, like I say, the other
21 cordon I have put in for the secondary device, I just
22 want to get some answers before we make a deployment to
23 that location.
24 Q. So far as the cathedral car park is concerned you had
25 assumed that the bomb had just detonated?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. You were thinking to yourself, this may be the prelude
 3 to something else?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Namely a terrorist armed with a firearm, marauding. You
 6 were thinking to yourself, the cathedral car park is
 7 near to the arena?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And were you also thinking, if we deploy there, we may
 10 be deploying into the danger zone or in other words the
 11 Plato hot zone?
 12 A. That's it, and we're talking about regular crews at this
 13 point with no ballistic protection.
 14 Q. So all of that may well make perfect sense and you were
 15 not the only person to proceed on the basis that the
 16 bomb might be the prelude to something else. Mr Sexton,
 17 of course, we know proceeded on that basis too.
 18 But why also reject Thompson Street or at least
 19 leave those pumps there?
 20 A. As I have said, I didn't realise they would mobilise
 21 Thompson Street's pumps away. When I asked for four
 22 pumps I literally left it with control to decide which
 23 four fire engines.
 24 Q. Or to look at it other way, if you did think that the
 25 other four were going to come from Gorton or somewhere

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1 else, why not deploy them, not 3 miles away but 1 mile
 2 away from the arena?
 3 A. As I've discussed already, the size of the cordon that
 4 I had drawn in my mind, albeit I didn't think they were
 5 in that cordon, if there was a marauding element of it
 6 though and they started walking up Miller Street
 7 it would soon come within that cordon.
 8 Q. Did you really think, even if there was a terrorist with
 9 a firearm, he was going to get a mile up Miller Street,
 10 up Oldham Road and find Thompson Street to present
 11 a risk to people there?
 12 A. I didn't know. I just thought with it being
 13 multi-seated it could be across the city. I know now we
 14 know it is the arena but it could have been anywhere in
 15 the city --
 16 Q. I'm not criticising you for imagining there may be
 17 a terrorist with a firearm, but was the thought that he
 18 might get as far as Thompson Street, and be focused on
 19 Thompson Street, really a thought that you had at the
 20 time?
 21 A. No, and like I said, because of the cordon, albeit it
 22 wasn't in, if they started walking in a particular
 23 direction, that cordon moves, so I'm not saying they
 24 would end up at the fire station, but it may compromise
 25 it as a location.

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1 Q. Let's look at this a different way because I am
 2 concerned to explore why there wasn't going to be
 3 deployment from Thompson Street. Your anticipation
 4 based on what you've said was that there would be
 5 people, firefighters and others, at Thompson Street
 6 at the time you're making this decision.
 7 A. Yes, unless they were out on an incident.
 8 Q. Obviously. This is really what I would like your help
 9 with: if you really thought that there was any risk to
 10 any person at Thompson Street why did you not cause it
 11 to be evacuated?
 12 A. Like I said, I didn't think about it at the time.
 13 Q. Was Thompson Street really the obvious choice now you
 14 look back, for a muster point?
 15 A. I think in hindsight, we know it would have been a safe
 16 location, yes.
 17 Q. Well, let's strip away hindsight. It's barely a mile
 18 away, at one end, really, of a straight road. It's
 19 going to take people who are there a very short time to
 20 deploy. And no one there was going to be at risk, even
 21 at the time it was obvious that if you weren't going to
 22 deploy to the nominated RVP, the place for people to
 23 deploy from was Thompson Street?
 24 A. I accept now it probably was the better location than
 25 Philips Park, yes.

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1 Q. Bearing in mind that you were not going to be sending at
 2 that stage assets to the scene, and not to the nominated
 3 RVP, do you agree that it was vital that you should gain
 4 situational awareness as quickly as possible?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're moving on? Do you mind?
 7 If JESIP is going to work, you actually need to
 8 trust each other, don't you --
 9 A. Yes.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- the services? Who takes primacy in
 11 any sort of terrorist attack?
 12 A. The police.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the police who are giving the
 14 information to the Fire Service are the people who have
 15 nominated the cathedral car park?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Basically, you don't trust them, do you?
 18 A. No, I just wanted some reassurances because I thought it
 19 had just happened. And like I say, about the timing,
 20 and the RVP being nominated so fast.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Even if it had just happened, if the
 22 police are nominating it, don't you have to go with it?
 23 A. On reflection now and now knowing how it panned out --
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If it's any consolation to you, no one
 25 else went to the cathedral car park either --

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1 A. I believe so, I believe so.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: — even though that is what you were
 3 being told to do?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That was one question. The other one
 6 was this: you've told us that at the time your view was
 7 that the correct thing for — you have changed your mind
 8 now with more information. But at the time you would
 9 have expected North West Fire Control actually to have
 10 mobilised to the scene.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So when they said, "We obviously haven't
 13 mobilised", why didn't you query it at the time?
 14 A. Well, I'm directed to speak to the force duty officer,
 15 but the element of doubt is put in there as well because
 16 we would normally go straight to scene. So you have
 17 introduced an RVP and I don't know if the police have
 18 actually said why they introduced an RVP because we
 19 could have gone straight to scene.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But you didn't ask (overspeaking) —
 21 A. I thought again I was going to — my training tells me
 22 to contact the FDO. That's the person that has got the
 23 information.
 24 MR GREANEY: You just said a moment ago that you were
 25 directed to speak to the FDO and I'm going to ask you to

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1 reflect on that because on the face of it, as a matter
 2 of language, you weren't directed, you were requested.
 3 You obviously have to agree with that and you are doing.
 4 But secondly, in any event, NWFC aren't in
 5 a position to direct you, as the expert, what to do, are
 6 they? You're the one that should be making the
 7 decisions about what to do.
 8 A. I was always going to speak to the FDO. That would
 9 always be my next priority.
 10 Q. Before we leave that conversation, I just want to ask
 11 for your help with one issue. At the time of that call,
 12 you were at home and more than 20 miles from the arena,
 13 from Philips Park and from Thompson Street.
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Just to pick one of those, G18, Philips Park, it was
 16 going to take you more than 30 minutes to reach there
 17 from home?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Even without roadworks?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. And so would it be fair to suggest that you weren't
 22 in the ideal place to be performing the duties that you
 23 were performing?
 24 A. No, we obviously have a limited amount of resource,
 25 certainly during evenings and at weekends, across the

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1 county, officer — wise I'm talking about. So there has to
 2 be a spread of them across the county. What we've
 3 learned from this is that the duty NILO would now stay
 4 in that location and more orchestrate the resources and
 5 get some of the salient points out the incident log and
 6 so forth and provide plans and mapping and everything
 7 else in that location and then move forward after that.
 8 Q. So are you saying that now, if heaven forbid this were
 9 to happen again, the duty NILO would remain wherever
 10 they are and direct from afar?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. And only deploy, I suppose if they deploy at all, once
 13 they have put in place whatever plans need to be put in
 14 place?
 15 A. Yes, and to make sure they were moving forward.
 16 Q. Would it have been better if you had done that that
 17 night?
 18 A. Absolutely. It was self-inflicted. It's a natural
 19 thing to want to move towards and initially I was going
 20 to an explosion, and I knew I'd become involved at some
 21 point, it was a potentially protracted major incident,
 22 so I got on the road and started moving.
 23 Q. You recognise as you look back that would be a better
 24 thing to do?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. Now the direction, I think you're saying, would be that
 2 the duty NILO would stay where they are to make those
 3 plans. At the time, was there a direction one way or
 4 the other about what the NILO should do, that is to say
 5 stay where they are, move to some other location, or was
 6 there no direction either way?
 7 A. No direction either way. And of course, we'd not tested
 8 the mobilisation, as I mentioned earlier.
 9 Q. So you were left to do what you thought was the right
 10 thing to do in the circumstances?
 11 A. Based on the information that I had, yes.
 12 Q. And as we're going to see, you are going to deploy?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the alternatives are at the time for
 15 you — I know you just acted instinctively, but the
 16 alternatives were you stayed where you were and you got
 17 a NILO who was closer to go to the scene?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Or you immediately arranged for
 20 a potential on-scene commander —
 21 A. Yes.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: — to actually be instructed at that
 23 time to take control of the situation?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And have a NILO to advise him

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1 tactically , which is to understand what the primary role
2 of a NILO is?
3 A. That's right, and that would be based on the information
4 that we received from the other agencies.
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It seems quite odd, doesn't it?
6 I understand the NILO being phoned to say, where do we
7 go from here, but once it becomes obvious that you need
8 someone to take control of it, actually the NILO is not
9 the right person.
10 A. They are not the officer in charge, no.
11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you were taking charge of this
12 without being the officer in charge. You were dealing
13 with it operationally when you're really tactical .
14 A. Yes, I was trying to gather that information to go back
15 to Control and say we need to mobilise, A, B, C, to use
16 that action plan, which would have a command structure.
17 MR GREANEY: I think this takes us back to an answer you
18 gave earlier that it would have been rather better if
19 GMFRS had operated a command structure more like that
20 operated by the Ambulance Service and by the police?
21 You are nodding your head.
22 Bearing in mind that you are not deploying resources
23 immediately to the scene or to the nominated RVP or even
24 to the fire station that was nearest, do you agree that
25 it was plainly vital that you should, as soon as

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1 possible, gain situational awareness?
2 A. Yes, I agree.
3 Q. And including within that finding out what your
4 emergency service partners were doing?
5 A. Which is what I was trying to do, yes.
6 Q. Let's come on then to what happened after you had that
7 call at 22.40.
8 First, I'm keen to identify the time at which you
9 left home, and we'll deal with that in this way. Does
10 GMFRS operate something called the MODAS gateway?
11 A. Yes. I believe it picks up the radio -- I'm not
12 technically minded like that, but it picks up the GPS
13 and will mark out the location.
14 Q. So what we should understand is that through that
15 system, GMFRS vehicles can be tracked?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. And that night, when you left your home, you were in
18 a GMFRS vehicle that was equipped with the MODAS
19 gateway?
20 A. I don't know about the vehicle but the radio that I had.
21 Q. At all events your movements have been able to be
22 tracked and you'll be aware of this.
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. We have the product from that system. I'm going to be
25 showing it to you, and I'm not going to be putting it to

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1 you that what we are seeing provides an accurate
2 indication of a particular time, it may not do, I'm
3 going to seek your assistance. So don't be led into
4 giving a particular answer. Does that make sense?
5 A. Yes.
6 Q. That's rather clumsily expressed --
7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But do give an answer.
8 MR GREANEY: We'll have the product on the screen. We are
9 going to look at a map that's based on GPS activations.
10 The INQ reference is {INQ004300/1}.
11 In the top left --hand corner is the general area in
12 which you live. It shows, I'm sure you will accept,
13 a circuitous route to arrive at Philips Park.
14 A. Yes.
15 Q. We're going to come on to why that was in due course but
16 that was not the route that you would have wanted to
17 take, was it?
18 A. Certainly not, no.
19 Q. It was not the route you expected to take when you left
20 home?
21 A. Absolutely not.
22 Q. "Times provided below are taken from the MODAS gateway.
23 The data for each officer [and this page relates to you]
24 shows change of status and change of speed/direction.
25 This is recorded from the radio location."

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1 So you were quite right about that:
2 "Depending on the current status, the gateway
3 records every 10 to 30 seconds, so actual time mobile or
4 arrived could have occurred 10 to 30 seconds before the
5 times given below."
6 Then the time is given mobile 22.56.05. That's the
7 one I want to come back and ask you whether that can be
8 right:
9 "Arrived at G18 at 23.40.28 and remained in M1
10 status. Arrived at G16 [Thompson Street] at 00.06.38."
11 A. Yes.
12 Q. That first time, mobile 22.56.05, that is 16 minutes
13 after you received a call from Michelle Gregson?
14 A. Yes.
15 Q. Do you think that that time correctly records when you
16 got into your car and started moving?
17 A. No, I'd imagine that's when I turned the radio on.
18 Q. Well, this is just what I wanted to be clear about. In
19 fact, my own view, I shouldn't express my own view, but
20 I believe when we are going to listen to calls made
21 before this time, it's plain that you are already on
22 your way.
23 A. Yes. And there is a period when you start the radio
24 that there is a lapse in time before it picks up the
25 GPS.

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1 Q. It may well be from your evidence that that timing is
2 not inaccurate, it just reflects a different point in
3 time from the point at which you shut the door on your
4 car?
5 A. I would say it's accurate in that point and that
6 location on my journey, yes.
7 Q. Do your best then. What time do you think you did leave
8 home?
9 A. I'd have to refer to my notes.
10 Q. I don't think you actually give a time in your notes.
11 A. Well, it would have been a few minutes -- in fact, there
12 is a recording of the telephone call to control to say
13 that I'm mobile, I think.
14 Q. So I think you're telling us about a call that is at
15 22.48?
16 A. Possibly.
17 Q. Shall we get to it in due course?
18 A. Yes.
19 Q. And then we can try and identify the time. Let's do our
20 best to identify it by reference to the various calls
21 that you made, as you recall it, during your journey.
22 So let's turn to the conversations that you had at
23 that time and I'm now going to paragraph 59 of your
24 witness statement at page -- let's go to 58 and 59 first
25 of all.

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1 Having spoken to Michelle Gregson, what was the
2 first thing you did?
3 A. I think once I put the phone down, I got some equipment,
4 got my laptop open and so forth, ready for taking some
5 notes, if I needed it, based on the information the FDO
6 was going to tell me.
7 Q. Even I am struggling a little to hear. A little bit
8 louder would be better. I do know that you are trying.
9 A. Sorry.
10 Q. You said, I think, that you gathered together some
11 equipment you might need, your laptop --
12 A. Yes.
13 Q. -- included so that you could make a note of anything
14 that you were told by the FDO?
15 A. Yes.
16 Q. Was it your intention to speak to the FDO whilst at home
17 and before going anywhere else?
18 A. Yes, like I've said already, it's normally a quick phone
19 call straight through to the FDO.
20 Q. Having got that equipment together, did you then call
21 the FDO?
22 A. Yes.
23 Q. Did you call the FDO on a number that you knew or on
24 a number that you had to source?
25 A. No, it's already in my phone.

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1 Q. As we know, you had called the number earlier that day.
2 A. Yes.
3 Q. How long after you had come off the phone with
4 Michelle Gregson do you think that you spoke or first
5 attempted to speak, I should say, to the FDO?
6 A. Quite quickly, I'd imagine, once I had got the
7 equipment, I quickly rushed around and got some bits, it
8 wouldn't be long at all.
9 Q. Did you get through?
10 A. No.
11 Q. What did you do next?
12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you get the engaged tone? Do you
13 remember?
14 A. I think it was more likely to be the engaged tone,
15 I didn't get through.
16 MR GREANEY: I believe that we have heard evidence that one
17 would get the engaged tone.
18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's what I thought, you're quite
19 right.
20 MR GREANEY: What we are going to see on -- well, on your
21 phone records, there is no contact that occurs between
22 your phone and the FDO line until 23.50.
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. That does not, as we understand the evidence, exclude
25 that the calls were made, you do say in one of the

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1 calls, "I have been trying to get through", it reflects
2 the fact that one would get the engaged tone so there
3 would be nothing that would be recorded.
4 So you have called, you have probably got the
5 engaged tone.
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. What did you do next?
8 A. I tried several times and at this point now I know I've
9 got fire engines moving but I think I need to get on the
10 road, that because of this explosion, I'm going to get
11 involved at some point.
12 Q. You have made a number of attempts to make contact with
13 the FDO --
14 A. Yes.
15 Q. -- before you have left home?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. You looked slightly quizzical then.
18 A. I know in my statement I put about seven times. I don't
19 know where I got that at the time, but yes, I can't
20 remember how many times.
21 Q. Can I be clear that you did make multiple attempts to
22 contact the FDO --
23 A. Absolutely, yes.
24 Q. -- before you left home? And then you got in your car
25 and started to make your way towards?

200

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Towards where?
 3 A. Well, initially I was still trying to get through but
 4 I do say Philips Park.
 5 Q. So were you intent on going to Philips Park unless --
 6 A. We got the information we required.
 7 Q. Unless something intervened and made it appropriate to
 8 go somewhere else? At around that time did you receive
 9 a call from any person, and can I be clear, I don't want
 10 you to tell me where that person was based or where
 11 he was.
 12 A. Yes, I did, I got it from -- do you want me to name the
 13 person?
 14 Q. Yes, I think you can name the person?
 15 A. Group Manager Peter Buckley.
 16 Q. Did he say that he had heard that an incident had
 17 occurred at the arena?
 18 A. Yes, he did.
 19 Q. He was at that stage dealing with a road traffic
 20 accident on the motorway?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. And did he tell you that he was together with
 23 a particular crew, namely the Specialist Response Team?
 24 A. Yes, part of the specialist response, yes.
 25 Q. What did he ask you?

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1 A. He asked me if he wanted me to release the crew from
 2 that incident, so they would be available if required
 3 for a specialist response.
 4 Q. And after all, as we've agreed already, these were one
 5 of the specialist teams?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. Designed to deal with exactly the kind of situation that
 8 you now suspected you were dealing with?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. What did you say in response to that sensible request?
 11 A. I said yes, if we can, let's release it, let's get them
 12 back to station and kitted out in their specialist
 13 response PPE.
 14 Q. So again, we're not naming where that would be, but they
 15 were to go back to their base, they were to get kitted
 16 out in their MTFA gear?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. And did you say to Mr Buckley that they should then make
 19 their way to the rendezvous point at Philips Park?
 20 A. Yes, I did.
 21 Q. So by this stage, I think this is going to be around
 22 10.50, something like that, perhaps a little earlier
 23 than that, we've got four pumps making their way to
 24 Philips Park?
 25 A. Yes.

202

1 Q. And now the SRT, or one of them, is going to be going
 2 there as well once they have become equipped; is that
 3 right?
 4 A. That's right, yes.
 5 Q. Was that call received by you whilst you were in your
 6 vehicle?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. We know from the records that at 22.44 exactly, North
 9 West Fire Control made a further call to your number,
 10 but they were unable to get through and so left
 11 a voicemail. In your statement you observe that it is
 12 likely they couldn't get through because that was the
 13 stage at which you were on the phone to Mr Buckley.
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Do you still believe that?
 16 A. Still, yes.
 17 Q. That's your view. The question wasn't loaded. Is it
 18 still your view?
 19 A. I've not seen any evidence contrary to that.
 20 Q. That probably fixes the time at which you are moving, at
 21 which you speak to Mr Buckley, at no later than 22.44.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. Does that sound about right?
 24 A. It sounds reasonable.
 25 Q. So you receive or your phone receives a call from

203

1 Rochelle Fallon of NWFC. We'll listen to that recording
 2 and see the transcript on the screen.
 3 The recording, Mr Lopez, is {INQ004331/1}. That's
 4 the recording. The transcript is {INQ001229/1}.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want to ask one thing about the
 6 phone calls to the FDO. We have heard about an
 7 alternative way of getting hold of the FDO, namely
 8 a Hailing channel on the radio. Were you aware of that?
 9 A. No.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Never heard of it?
 11 A. No.
 12 MR GREANEY: Should you have been aware of it?
 13 A. I think in hindsight.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, I think you should have been aware
 15 of it, shouldn't you?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There's not much point in having it if
 18 the people who need it don't know about it?
 19 Yes.
 20 MR GREANEY: It might be thought a fair point, sir. Sorry
 21 if I asked a silly question. I am sure it is not the
 22 first time.
 23 So do you have those references, Mr Lopez?
 24 Thank you very much. So we'll listen to that. It helps
 25 other people in the room if we play the recordings. I'm

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1 not going to quite hit 4.15, I'm afraid, it's going to
2 be a little later.

3 (Pause)

4 Let's read out what was said. The first entry,
5 because I've listened to it, is -- this is your recorded
6 message:

7 "This is Station Commander Andy Berry. I am not
8 available at the moment, but if you leave your name and
9 number I will return the call as soon as possible."

10 And so on.

11 NWFC say:

12 "Hi Mr Berry, it's Control. I've just had Andy
13 Waterhouse on from [beep] asking if they can be released
14 to this incident due to the incident at Manchester MEN.
15 We've just literally had a call from ambulance now,
16 stating that people are being shot. Can you contact
17 with Control or... just as soon as you get this so
18 we can make arrangements? Thank you."

19 Are you able to tell us, without going into anything
20 that is operationally sensitive, who Andy Waterhouse is?

21 A. He is a watch manager now. I'm not sure what rank
22 he was at the time but he made up, an individual, part
23 of the specialist response team.

24 Q. So this is a very similar enquiry to one that had been
25 made by Mr Buckley that obviously you had received?

205

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. In your witness statement, you observe that you didn't
3 pick up that message until all the events were over.

4 A. That's my recollection, yes.

5 Q. I'm not going to dispute that it's your recollection.
6 I will in a moment look at whether that recollection is
7 necessarily accurate. But the question is if you had
8 received that message at a relevant time, so shortly
9 after 22.44, would it have made any difference to your
10 approach?

11 A. No, it would have been the same approach.

12 Q. Would it, do you think, have intensified in your mind
13 the need to gain situational awareness?

14 A. It certainly would have reinforced the message, yes.

15 Q. Bearing in mind that it wouldn't have made a difference
16 to your approach, it may not be of the highest relevance
17 to identify whether in fact you picked up that message,
18 but let me just present you with the billing so you can
19 help one way or the other. I'm not suggesting you
20 should necessarily alter your account.

21 Could we go back, please, to that page that we had
22 of the billing record? {INQ004348/63}, at the bottom.
23 Line 47. So this is one of the entries from which some
24 of the redaction has been removed. The final entry on
25 that page, entry 47, is a call by you to a number ending

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1 222. Do you see that?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. Is that a call to your voicemail facility?

4 A. Is that not the phone diverting the call?

5 Q. Well, you may know better than I do. Let's go over the
6 page then, I might have picked the worst example.

7 {INQ004348/64}. We can see a series of further calls
8 from lines 50 down to 52.

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: 49 and 50 are phone calls to the
10 answerphone service, which does look like you're ringing
11 your answerphone, doesn't it?

12 MR GREANEY: Certainly the 50. I think the 222 is the
13 answerphone service, although, sir, I do take your point
14 about 49. The relevance of this timing is it's 23.02 so
15 it's after the message has been left by NWFC. I don't
16 know if this is helping you at all, but it does look, in
17 particular bearing in mind the length of 50, as if it
18 gets through. Do you see what I mean?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. If you had got through to your answerphone service at
21 that stage, it would seem that you would have picked up
22 the call from NWFC.

23 A. Possibly, yes.

24 Q. Does that cause --

25 A. I'm a bit confused, I suppose, with the records, what is

207

1 a call divert and what...

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I can understand that. The number 2222,
3 certainly in 50, is for the answerphone service. 49 is
4 a different number. It's actually the 2222 that's the
5 number for call divert. Do you know what the 2222
6 number is?

7 A. I don't. I'm just looking at the record, and for 50 and
8 51 they appear to use the same number. But one is the
9 answerphone service and one is the call divert.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that. We'll have to check
11 that, I think.

12 MR GREANEY: It wasn't my aim to confuse you, quite the
13 contrary, but I think that what you are saying is that
14 even if you did call your answerphone service at that
15 stage, it does not cause you to recollect things any
16 differently from the description you've given?

17 A. No.

18 Q. The next call in which you were involved, so the next
19 call after the 22.44 call, you didn't pick up because
20 you were on the phone to Mr Buckley, was timed at
21 22.48.01, when you again spoke to North West Fire
22 Control. This is a more important call, but I'm just
23 going to check...

24 (Pause)

25 We've had to make a redaction to this transcript

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1 today. So we're going to play, Mr Lopez, this
 2 recording. You need to stop the recording as soon as
 3 I ask you to, please, as we haven't yet been able to
 4 redact the recording. I'm confident we can do this
 5 safely. The recording is {INQ004367/1}, and the
 6 transcript reference is {INQ001215/1}.

7 Just whilst that's being found, had you made calls
 8 while you were at home to the FDO?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. In your statement you describe making further calls to
 11 the FDO once you were in your car; is that correct?

12 A. Yes. The problem, of course, that I had, I've only got
 13 one phone. So I'm receiving calls on the phone that I'm
 14 trying to make phone calls on.

15 Q. And that we understand, but over the course of the first
 16 10 minutes, 8 minutes let's say, from the call that you
 17 had first received notification, over the course of that
 18 period, you had made multiple calls to the FDO line and
 19 not been able to get through?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. So what you wanted to achieve, you had not been able to
 22 achieve?

23 A. Yes, that's correct.

24 Q. We're going to hear you referring to that in this
 25 recording at 22.48.01.

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1 When I ask you to stop, leave the transcript on the
 2 screen, please, but stop the recording.

3 (Audio played)

4 Let's just play that again, please, if that's
 5 possible, Mr Lopez.

6 (Audio played)

7 Stop the recording. Let's just read through the
 8 rest of the transcript. You say:

9 "I'm just letting you know -- can you put me on the
 10 log?"

11 What did you wish Dean of NWFC to do in response?

12 A. That is to attach my call sign to the log and register.

13 Q. And he tells you he will do that now. You say:

14 "I'm making my way over to Manchester now."

15 So you're plainly in the car and driving?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Indeed we can hear that. You say:

18 "Probably rendezvousing at Philips Park."

19 So that remained your intention at that stage?

20 A. Because I can't get through to the FDO, yes.

21 Q. "Just bear with me one second, I'll have a look for you.
 22 I just want you to tell me now what other information
 23 we've got about this incident."

24 And you're told:

25 "We have had reports that a bomb -- and it's

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1 exploded, reports that there's over 60 casualties and
 2 we've had reports that there is an active shooter."

3 "Right, okay. Well, I've..."

4 And then you're then told that:

5 "They've closed off Great --"

6 And you ask him to finish what he's saying:

7 "They've closed Great Clowes Street and Deansgate's
 8 being closed off as well."

9 You say:

10 "Right, okay. I've got that now. I have just
 11 spoken to Pete Buckley."

12 So again that fixes the time of that call probably
 13 around 10.44:

14 "Are you just jotting this down for me?"

15 "Yeah."

16 Over the page {INQ001215/2}, please:

17 "I'm putting this down."

18 "He's now releasing crew from the other incident."

19 "Yep."

20 This is not the word that's used, but what you were
 21 telling him was that Mr Buckley was releasing the SRT
 22 from the other incident?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. And you gave the location in which they were based,
 25 perfectly understandably:

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1 "They're going to pick the vehicle up and the
 2 capability for the MTFA."

3 He asks:

4 "Pick the vehicle capability of the what, sorry?"

5 And you clarify for him:

6 "The MTFA, the marauding terrorist firearms attack."

7 "Okay. And they [so the SRT] are going to
 8 rendezvous at Philips Park until we are instructed
 9 otherwise and we get more information about this
 10 incident."

11 "Thank you. I'll put that on the log."

12 You thank him and you then ask who the duty general
 13 manager is.

14 A. Duty group manager.

15 Q. Duty group manager, thank you very much. Of course:

16 "Is it Pete Buckley?"

17 Dean checks and tells you it's another Dean who is
 18 duty group manager, namely Dean Nankivell. You ask him
 19 to get Dean Nankivell on the phone for you to give him
 20 your -- get him to give you a ring on the mobile.

21 Do you see that?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Can we go back to the first page, please?
 24 {INQ001215/1}. We can see that you were seeking further
 25 information from North West Fire Control about what

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1 other information they had about the incident at that
 2 stage.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. And I'm going to come on to this as a general topic
 5 tomorrow about what information was known by NWFC and
 6 others, but we can see that you were not told that it
 7 was known that other emergency services were deploying
 8 to the scene, were you?
 9 A. No.
 10 Q. So that's a point that needs to be made out of fairness
 11 to you.
 12 We can also see that you made plain that you had
 13 been trying to get hold of the FDO but that person was
 14 not picking up for obvious reasons, they're probably
 15 really busy. Do you see that?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. So let's just see where you were by 10.48. You had been
 18 making repeated calls to the FDO?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. You had not been able to get through?
 21 A. Correct.
 22 Q. The reason why was obvious to you?
 23 A. I knew they'd be busy, but that's not to say I didn't
 24 expect them to contact me if I wasn't able to get hold
 25 of them.

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1 Q. Well, you're answering the next question and I don't
 2 blame you for that. You have not been able to get
 3 through. It was obvious to you that there was a good
 4 reason for that, namely how busy they would be?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And they weren't going to stop being busy any time soon,
 7 were they, given what was happening?
 8 A. No, but they should be ringing me, so if it wasn't the
 9 FDO, it should be one of the team.
 10 Q. Let's be frank about this. This, at 22.48, when you've
 11 not been able to get through and you know full well the
 12 likely explanation, this is the time to try something
 13 different, isn't it?
 14 A. Yes, and I've accepted already, on reflection, now
 15 I wish I'd sent someone to the RVP.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You don't actually say, do you, "Can you
 17 keep ringing for me and get them to ring me"?
 18 A. Tell who, sorry?
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Control.
 20 A. Control, no.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're driving?
 22 A. Yes, but there is an expectation, and they would
 23 normally do that, you know. I've told them that I can't
 24 get through.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you'd expect them to do that without

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1 you asking?
 2 A. Yes, or at least the police. I'm not sure at this point
 3 if they are still on the line to the police, which I'm
 4 also unaware of.
 5 MR GREANEY: Certainly the first call was still connected to
 6 the police, the David Ellis call. But what you said to
 7 me when I asked you to agree, and you did pretty much
 8 agree earlier, was that this was the time to do
 9 something different. Your view now is that this was the
 10 moment at which you should have deployed someone to the
 11 RVP to gain situational awareness?
 12 A. Yes, I'm aware now that it was my "in" early into the
 13 incident.
 14 MR GREANEY: Thank you. We're going to go on to other calls
 15 and other things that you did tomorrow, but for the
 16 reasons I identified earlier, I'm going to suggest to
 17 the chairman that we stop for the day and we will
 18 resume, if the chairman agrees, at 9.00 tomorrow
 19 morning, but not with you. Would you please be back and
 20 ready to restart at 9.30?
 21 A. No problem.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just say to people, the 9 o'clock
 23 hearing will be a short hearing. I think people will
 24 know — and there will be conversations about what it's
 25 actually about overnight — and it's simply making

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1 public an issue which has arisen and making sure that
 2 everyone can agree the way of best dealing with it.
 3 MR GREANEY: Yes. We have received, from those who wish to
 4 make written submissions, written submissions. They
 5 have been, if we may say so, extremely helpful and
 6 constructive and all really come to a not dissimilar
 7 conclusion.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But there is more information to be
 9 given about it, so it's important we all know.
 10 (4.27 pm)
 11 (The inquiry adjourned until 9.00 am
 12 on Tuesday, 22 June 2021)
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1 I N D E X

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3 MR NEIL GASKELL (continued)1

4 Questions from MR SMITH (continued)1

5 Questions from MR HORWELL24

6 Questions from MR COOPER31

7 Questions from MR WARNOCK85

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9 MR ANDY BERRY (sworn)93

10 Questions from MR GREANEY93

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