

OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 125

June 30, 2021

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Phone: +44 (0)20 3008 5900

Email: transcripts@opus2.com

Website: <https://www.opus2.com>

Wednesday, 30 June 2021

2 (9.30 am)

MS JANINE CARDEN (continued)

Questions from MR DE LA POER (continued)

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Good morning, Mr de la Poer.

Can I just say generally that it is clear from the evidence of this witness and previous ones that a number of people working in the control room generally agree about a fairly large number of things and they've heard each other's evidence, so they can say whether they agree.

So for me, a fairly clear picture of what the people working in the control room thought of what was going on has come across to me, so some of those things where there is agreement -- I'm not saying this evidence is not important, obviously it is, but where there is obvious agreement I don't need to go into a great deal of detail about those things.

As you know better than I, we have a fairly busy programme this week which we need to get through in order to make sure that we have actually reached the stage we intended to reach by the summer break. I don't think we're rushing anybody -- if they think we are, they can say so -- but I think we need to see where a clear picture has emerged and where we are dealing

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with new things. I think it's worth saying, I hope.

MR DE LA POER: Yes.

Ms Carden, we were part-way through discussing your involvement as single point of contact for GMFRS and we'd looked at action plans yesterday; I'm not going to go back to them with you.

I just want to deal with one discrete part of your involvement as single point of contact and indeed more generally, and it is this: were you involved in receiving MTFA training from Station Manager Gaskell?

A. Yes, I was. I was involved in the presentations that he gave to Control staff. I also asked for him to bring the special vehicles down so that we could see the equipment the firefighters use, the clothes they wear that are different to normal, and I also attended MTFA training at Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service's training centre.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Having said I don't need to go into a great deal of detail, I'm now going to do this and contradict myself. I'm interested in the MTFA training. Clearly you're being told what an MTFA is?

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But are you being trained in how you respond to it?

A. Yes. Well, when I say yes, it's always, "Tell a NILO",

2

and then you quite often are going to follow Op Plato.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So obviously if Operation Plato is declared, you have specific action cards for that?

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But what are you told to do or were you told to do if you reached the situation, which happened here, when you think it may be an MTFA but no one's actually told you it's an MTFA, so when you have suspicions but you don't know? Were you trained as to what you were to do in that situation?

A. Tell a NILO, go to the NILO.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You were trained to do that?

A. Yes, and that was even back when I was in Cheshire when NILOs were first introduced. It sticks in my memory because it felt, in a way, wrong to Control staff because we'd always been taught to mobilise and "If in doubt, turn out".

So after the NILO role was introduced and we had training, and that was the same when we were at North West Fire Control, Mick Lawlor came and did NILO training for staff. It was always: think NILO, think NILO, think NILO. Because the nature of people setting off bombs has changed, if you think of what bombs were like 20 years ago, it was a bomb in a set place that was normally hidden.

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SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm going to -- I just want to limit myself. So far as you're concerned what Michelle Gregson did -- she says, "I suspected there may be an MTFA" --

A. Yes.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- "therefore I rang the NILO and I didn't follow any of the action cards", as I understand her evidence at the end. She was following, you say, exactly the training that she had been given?

A. Yes. Training and experience, yes. Yes, of understanding that type of thing.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you leave out experience for a moment? We can come back to that. But you're saying when you were given training about MTFA, you were being told specifically by the trainers -- and this is dealing with NWFC training -- you were being told by them: if you suspect an MTFA, don't do anything, speak to the NILO?

A. Yes, that training come from MTFA training and also NILO training that was provided by Mick Lawlor of what the NILO role consisted of.

SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's perfectly clear, thank you.

MR DE LA POER: Was that training delivered to anyone else at NWFC other than you?

4

1 A. The NILO training or the MTFA?
 2 Q. The training that you are describing about if you
 3 suspect an MTFA, call a NILO.
 4 A. Yes, the team leaders — I tried to get all of the team
 5 leaders on to that training. The training package was
 6 also left by Mr Gaskell so that it could be disseminated
 7 to the staff and the NILO training was also given to all
 8 the team leaders.
 9 Q. All the team leaders?
 10 A. By Mick Lawlor, yes.
 11 Q. By Mick Lawlor?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. That very stark message that you have conveyed, if you
 14 suspect an MTFA call a NILO —
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. — was that ever reduced to a clear, written piece of
 17 training material?
 18 A. I don't know, to be honest. I can't remember — like
 19 I say, I remember the NILO training and I remember,
 20 because it was quite heavy, of the type of people there
 21 are in the world, and I remember the MTFA training, but
 22 I don't remember any written — there may be something
 23 in North West Fire Control's guidance information,
 24 I cannot remember, sorry.
 25 Q. I'm sure those listening will identify that as we are

5

1 speaking, Ms Carden. But for example, we have looked
 2 at, with Mr Gaskell, the PowerPoint presentation that he
 3 created in its latest version —
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. — as it was being delivered. We can go through it.
 6 But it may be thought that that very simple message, "If
 7 in doubt, call a NILO", is not captured on any of those
 8 slides.
 9 A. Right.
 10 Q. Would that come as a surprise to you?
 11 A. Not really, no.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's the impression you got, whatever it
 13 was?
 14 A. Yes. It's definitely in my head.
 15 MR DE LA POER: Certainly it's right to say one of the
 16 slides said:
 17 "Should any contact be made to the FRS for
 18 assistance or become aware of an incident involving
 19 firearms, then the on-call NILO must be contacted."
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Which is, I'm sure you'd agree, a little more specific
 22 than what you're talking about as, "If you suspect it or
 23 if in doubt"; there it's talking about specific
 24 information coming in about firearms.
 25 A. Right. And you say that's the latest one? Because he

6

1 has delivered that training back from 2015.
 2 Q. There are two versions: one in 2014 and that's the 2015
 3 version.
 4 A. Okay.
 5 Q. And that's, as we understand it, the current version.
 6 Perhaps we can have a look at it in a different way.
 7 {INQ004447/1}. What we're going to look at now is the
 8 "Operation Plato — standby phase" action card. We're
 9 not going to linger long on it because we've had a lot
 10 of evidence about this topic. But as it's characterised
 11 on the face of this card:
 12 "NWFC actions upon receiving information from fire
 13 crews/GMP/NWAS that a firearms incident is ongoing."
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. That's what that document says, which again is perhaps
 16 slightly different to the way that you have captured it,
 17 would you agree?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. But at all events, it appears that on the face of this
 20 document, that information, that standby phase, would
 21 you agree, doesn't require a declaration of
 22 Operation Plato by GMP because the information can come
 23 from fire crews, GMP or NWAS?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. So in order to go to the standby phase, you just need

7

1 that information and the first action is:
 2 "If you haven't already heard from the NILO, inform
 3 the NILO, obtain address, seek advice?"
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. All right.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can you help me about this too?
 7 Unhappily, there have in the past, and may be in the
 8 future, a number of shooting incidents in Manchester.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would the Fire Service be routinely
 11 called to a shooting incident?
 12 A. No, not at all.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 14 MR DE LA POER: The last questions — thank you very much,
 15 Mr Lopez, we can take that down and we remind ourselves,
 16 as I am sure you can confirm, Ms Carden, that that isn't
 17 the format in which that information appeared on the
 18 NWFC system, is it?
 19 A. No, it isn't, no.
 20 Q. Finally on the MTFA, there was an MTFA audit carried out
 21 in 2016?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. Which organisation did you understand was carrying that
 24 audit out?
 25 A. Oh, I can't remember who was carrying it out. I was

8

1 just asked by Mr Fletcher, could they come along to
 2 North West Fire Control to meet with me to see if what
 3 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service had told the
 4 auditors was actually correct of what was in the system.
 5 Q. The only point I wanted to elicit about it, the other
 6 details can emerge from elsewhere, but as you're in the
 7 witness box, and in fairness to you, is it right that
 8 you were commended by a number of sources for your
 9 participation in that?
 10 A. I was, yes.
 11 Q. To complete the MTFA training picture, did you also
 12 attend a workshop run by Mr Gaskell in early 2017?
 13 A. Yes, I did, at training centre for Greater Manchester
 14 Fire and Rescue Service.
 15 Q. Was that just you from North West Fire Control?
 16 A. No.
 17 Q. Were team leaders present as well?
 18 A. Team leaders and operation managers were present. It
 19 was basically sent to all of them to see who was
 20 available to attend on the day, but the team leaders did
 21 have to come off duty. There wasn't enough on staff to
 22 have them taken out of the control room, so it was
 23 a voluntary thing.
 24 Q. Next topic airwaves. You were involved, on North West
 25 Fire Control's behalf, in relation to the development of

9

1 the multi-agency interoperability channel.
 2 A. I was, yes.
 3 Q. We've heard a lot of evidence about this already, in
 4 particular from Laura Lewis, who's somebody I think you
 5 know and have worked with closely?
 6 A. Yes, that's correct.
 7 Q. What it has all come to is this: that there already
 8 existed on the channel number that we are not going to
 9 name, a channel that was being used at that time as the
 10 tactical or Silver commander's multi-agency channel; is
 11 that right?
 12 A. That's correct, yes.
 13 Q. The plan was to take that channel and use it as a means
 14 of multi-agency interoperability at the control room
 15 level; is that right?
 16 A. Yes, that's correct.
 17 Q. So effectively it would no longer be used by the
 18 tactical commanders to speak to each other, instead
 19 it would be used by the control rooms to speak to each
 20 other?
 21 A. For those occasions, yes.
 22 Q. So it already existed and worked; is that right?
 23 A. Yes, it did already exist and, like I say, it was used
 24 by police but we could all get access to that channel
 25 and were aware of that.

10

1 Q. And it was just a question of arranging the
 2 practicalities so its use was embedded in each of the
 3 control rooms?
 4 A. That's correct, yes, sir.
 5 Q. There was a need to agree a standard operating
 6 procedure?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. And that was agreed on 10 April 2017?
 9 A. I don't know if that was so much agreed...
 10 Q. It's my loose question. Perhaps I can reframe it
 11 because I can see exactly why you're hesitant. Was it
 12 circulated, which is a much more precise and different
 13 way of putting it, by email on 10 April 2017?
 14 A. I think it was. I know that was the date that
 15 Laura Lewis and Jo Hoyte came to North West Fire Control
 16 to test that we could access and use the channel and
 17 they tested with a few different members of staff, some
 18 of which were no notice. Just they went up and asked
 19 them to bring the channel over and speak on it. And
 20 I know they were going to NWAS to do the same there, to
 21 make sure that everything worked as it should.
 22 Q. But the position was, as at 22 May 2017, some 6 weeks
 23 later, that it had not officially come into use for the
 24 control rooms; is that right?
 25 A. That is correct, but if I could just add, I haven't seen

11

1 or heard — I haven't heard it anywhere. When the JESIP
 2 MTFA was — I think it was February 2016, I think.
 3 I know the control room bit was section 4.4, I can't
 4 remember anything else, but it was that the three
 5 control rooms needed to talk to each other.
 6 Q. So this is the joint operating principles, version 3,
 7 that came into effect in early 2016, which made it
 8 a requirement for interoperability at a control room
 9 level?
 10 A. That's correct, that's the one. After that came in,
 11 Mr Neil Gaskell contacted me and asked if I would go to
 12 police control with him to discuss it, the fact that the
 13 three control rooms had to speak together. I can't
 14 remember the date, I'm sorry, I don't know when it was
 15 that I went, but myself and Neil went to one of the
 16 police rooms, I don't want to say where it is, where the
 17 FDO was, and had a chat with the FDO.
 18 Q. Can I stop you there? The question that I just want to
 19 ask you to complete this topic, I hope, is bearing in
 20 mind that the joint operating principles that mandated
 21 this came into effect in early 2016 —
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. — bearing in mind that we were dealing with an existing
 24 channel that effectively had to be repurposed —
 25 A. Yes.

12

1 Q. -- so that it was just used by different operators who
2 were trained in its use --
3 A. Yes.
4 Q. -- what explanation do you have as a member of that
5 working group for why it was not signed off and in use
6 by 22 May 2017?
7 A. By that date, I thought -- well, I hadn't heard anything
8 else after -- that Jo and Laura were happy with how it
9 was working at North West Fire Control and were going to
10 NWAS. I wasn't overly concerned at that time that
11 we wouldn't have that channel because of my visit with
12 Neil Gaskell to the police the year earlier, when it had
13 been said we probably couldn't do a teleconference
14 because it would tie up too many operators but police at
15 that point would use a radio channel instead and they
16 would nominate it on the day. And it was going to be
17 one of the -- I daren't even say it, but I haven't seen
18 it mentioned so far. But it was a sharing channel.
19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it probably has been mentioned.
20 MR DE LA POER: It will have been mentioned obliquely. The
21 difficulty here is that you can't say the channel name
22 so we can't confirm whether it has or it hasn't.
23 I think what you're saying is that your understanding
24 was that as an interim measure, you expected that the
25 police would nominate a particular channel --

13

1 A. Yes.
2 Q. -- should an incident occur and that that would then be
3 a shared channel inter-agency?
4 A. That's correct because there was a choice of three
5 in that group and they would tell us at that time what
6 that is. When I came back after that visit, I asked
7 North West Fire Control's operational support department
8 to add that into the guidance information for control of
9 JESIP ways of working for this type of incident to say
10 there's a good chance that the police are going to,
11 rather than telephone, set up channel. So for me, it
12 was sort of in but not on a dedicated
13 monitored--all--the--time channel.
14 Q. So far as North West Fire Control was concerned, what
15 training had been given to control room operators and
16 team leaders that that was what would happen during
17 a spontaneous incident?
18 A. The operational support department would be better on
19 that one because I put the information in to them to
20 then disseminate to staff. All the staff had been
21 trained on how to bring over radio channels and use
22 radio channels. It was something they were very good
23 at.
24 Q. We're going to have a look at the chronology in a moment
25 but in fact it took until approximately 1 hour after the

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1 explosion and a telephone call from Group Manager
2 Fletcher at a time when you were in the control room to
3 cause North West Fire Control to go on a channel.
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. Do you agree?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. And before that, there had been no request by any of the
8 North West Fire Control staff of GMP to identify what
9 channel might be used?
10 A. That's correct, yes.
11 Q. I'm going to turn now to GMP and the FDO. A very brief
12 topic. What awareness, if any, did you have as
13 operations manager that there was a body of information
14 before May 2017 that indicated that the FDO would become
15 overwhelmed in the event of an incident of the type on
16 22 May? Did you get told that by anyone?
17 A. I don't think I did, to be honest. I mean, I'm aware of
18 it now because of all the things I've been involved in.
19 I couldn't say if I was aware of it at that time.
20 I don't think I was. I'm not sure.
21 Q. Let's look at that from another direction. You knew
22 that in the event of a suspicion of an MTFA, North West
23 Fire Control would phone the NILO?
24 A. Yes.
25 Q. That's what you thought the procedure was?

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1 A. That's correct.
2 Q. And having received the NILO training, you knew that the
3 NILO would phone the FDO?
4 A. That's correct, sir, yes.
5 Q. So the fact that the FDO might become overwhelmed might
6 be thought to be a pretty significant piece of
7 information in the context of North West Fire Control's
8 ability to gather information and GMFRS's ability to
9 gather information in the event of following procedures
10 for an incident like 22 May? Do you agree just with
11 that proposition that, on the face of it, it is
12 a significant piece of information?
13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just don't feel forced to agree with
14 that. How important is it to you at NWFC to be able to
15 contact the FDO?
16 A. We didn't really contact the FDO. I can only look at --
17 I have been to GMP's room where the force duty officer
18 was prior to -- I don't know if it's changed now, but
19 prior to this. For me, as a member of Control, and
20 someone who's been in charge of a control room for many
21 years, I know when someone wants my attention. If
22 somebody had -- if it was me ringing the police, I don't
23 give up, and if I couldn't get through to that person,
24 I might say: well, I'm staying with you until you get me
25 that person. And I would expect that of my staff to do

16

1 the same with me and they do. They'll indicate to me if
 2 I'm on the phone that someone wants me and they need me.
 3 They'll either come and pass me a note of how urgent
 4 that is, who it is.
 5 So that... I know he did, I know from evidence
 6 now --
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In a way you are commenting on other
 8 bits of the evidence and I understand about the NILO,
 9 but for the moment I want you to focus on what we are
 10 talking about here. Okay, you knew the NILO would need
 11 to contact the FDO?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But did it matter to you from the point
 14 of view of North West Fire Control how difficult or
 15 otherwise it would be to contact the FDO?
 16 A. I'm probably saying it the wrong way. I didn't think
 17 it would be difficult because I thought the FDO, if
 18 he was busy, would have someone almost next to him.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand the practicalities and that
 20 sort of thing. You think quite reasonably there must be
 21 ways around this --
 22 A. Yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- so if you really need the FDO you
 24 hang about and you make sure someone gets him for you.
 25 A. Yes.

17

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I well understand that. I'm just
 2 concerned really with North West Fire Control. In
 3 there, how important was it for you in North West Fire
 4 Control -- not the NILO, you -- to contact the FDO?
 5 A. It didn't really ever come up. We didn't really contact
 6 the FDO.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 8 MR DE LA POER: Next topic --
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you want to ask your questions --
 10 MR DE LA POER: Not at all, sir. It was really a way of
 11 finding out whether this witness was aware of the
 12 problem because if it was important, then it might be
 13 thought to be something she would have become aware of.
 14 It was a different way of approaching the same question,
 15 but I think we got the answer there which comes to this,
 16 Ms Carden: that it wasn't something that was really on
 17 your radar --
 18 A. No, not at all.
 19 Q. -- and perhaps that's because it wasn't important for
 20 you at North West Fire Control?
 21 A. Yes, I didn't realise there were issues with that.
 22 I would have acted differently.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 24 MR DE LA POER: Michelle Gregson gave evidence about
 25 concerns that she had in relation to training, those

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1 concerns existing before 22 May 2017.
 2 A. Mm--hm.
 3 Q. Were you aware that she had such concerns in relation to
 4 the training of staff before May 2017?
 5 A. I had heard Michelle and others say that they felt they
 6 didn't get enough time to train.
 7 Q. Can I stop you there? I'm not asking you to comment
 8 upon what they've said now.
 9 A. Right.
 10 Q. Before 22 May, were you aware that Michelle Gregson was
 11 expressing concerns that came to your attention about
 12 the training?
 13 A. Nothing came directly to me because I didn't line manage
 14 people and I didn't do training.
 15 Q. Yes.
 16 A. But as an ops manager in general, I was aware that the
 17 team leaders from the start wished there was more
 18 training, wished they had more time to train. That was
 19 something that was getting raised.
 20 Q. Was it any part of your role to see that that was
 21 actioned?
 22 A. No.
 23 Q. When you say "from the beginning", are we talking about
 24 from May 2014?
 25 A. That's correct, yes.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the specific thing that she and,
 2 I think, most people have emphasised about the training
 3 is not being involved in live exercises from the start.
 4 So start the live exercises, not from when everyone is
 5 assembled, but actually from the call-out. Were you
 6 aware of that problem?
 7 A. Not necessarily aware of that, because that is something
 8 I actively would encourage. I myself have been involved
 9 in COMAH exercises where you get the call from the site,
 10 so part of that training is to -- not training, sorry,
 11 part of the feedback on that exercise is, for the COMAH
 12 site, how did they do passing the information, did we
 13 ask all the relevant questions, did we ask all the
 14 relevant questions, did they ask anything they didn't
 15 expect. So we'd done it a lot for COMAH sites. I know
 16 we had done one for an exercise at Barton Aerodrome --
 17 I did actively encourage that and the call did come from
 18 the site to us. I remember that one in particular. But
 19 it is something I did encourage, of actively being
 20 involved in exercises and I did hear Mr Gaskell's
 21 evidence when -- I don't know where he got that from and
 22 I would love to know the person that told him that.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just remind me, just in case I have
 24 forgotten what it was.
 25 A. When he said he couldn't involve North West Fire Control

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1 in exercises from the start because they were
 2 understaffed. I was the Manchester SPOC, nobody ever
 3 said that to me, so if he's got it from -- sorry, I'm
 4 acting like I still work there now -- but if he got it
 5 from a member of Control staff, they need to raise that
 6 with their team leader, not him, and if he got it from
 7 someone higher, then I want to know why they are saying
 8 that or why they wouldn't want to do training. Sorry,
 9 I'm on my high horse (overspeaking) --
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Because it wasn't correct as far as you
 11 were concerned?
 12 A. It wasn't correct at all, no. We would always want to
 13 be involved in training and it's something I actively
 14 encouraged and was passionate about.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Thank you.
 16 MR DE LA POER: You have mentioned a number of exercises
 17 that you were involved in. Were there, to your
 18 knowledge, any exercises relating to the response to
 19 a terrorist attack?
 20 A. I know that the NILOs would work with the HART team and
 21 with the police firearms, doing training --
 22 Q. I'm so sorry, I'm being specific here to North West Fire
 23 Control. Were North West Fire Control, to your
 24 knowledge, involved in any mobilising exercise arising
 25 from a suspected terrorist act?

21

1 A. Not until after the events of May 2017, no.
 2 Q. Given your enthusiasm for such exercising, why do you
 3 think it is that they were not?
 4 A. Something I was quite often told is that sometimes the
 5 control rooms would be too busy to be involved. That
 6 wasn't aimed at -- I know speaking to someone from
 7 ambulance, they had once said, "We're too busy", and
 8 having been in ambulance control, I couldn't work there.
 9 It's far too busy.
 10 So having been there, I can understand where they're
 11 coming from, of what they are dealing with, more so than
 12 fire having the time. If you look at the percentage of
 13 999 calls taken, fire is the smallest majority, so we
 14 had more time to do that.
 15 Q. As Manchester SPOC, did you ever say to Mr Levy or
 16 Mr Gaskell, "We really need to be involved in
 17 a mobilisation exercise relating to a terrorist event"?
 18 A. I wouldn't say I've used those words, no. I would
 19 always ask if we could be involved, and I know the
 20 Winchester Accord, Ben Levy had asked if we would and
 21 could be involved in the exercise.
 22 Q. Who did he ask?
 23 A. It was either Neil Gaskell or Mick Lawlor, I can't
 24 remember.
 25 Q. What did you understand either of those two people to

22

1 have said when Mr Levy asked for North West Fire Control
 2 to be involved?
 3 A. From what I can remember, I think it was a bit -- no
 4 other control rooms are to being involved. It would
 5 almost be pointless involving one if you're not going to
 6 involve all -- it wouldn't be pointless if, but if
 7 you are not going to play it for real then you are not
 8 going to --
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand, if ambulance haven't got
 10 time there's no point in having fire there.
 11 MR DE LA POER: Finally before we turn to 22 May, you
 12 mentioned your awareness of the SRT working with the
 13 Hazardous Area Response Team from NNAS.
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. We have heard evidence from people within the control
 16 room that they didn't know that, in particular
 17 Michelle Gregson.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Her evidence was she didn't know that. Firstly, do you
 20 agree that it was quite clear from all the training and
 21 exercising that was going on that HART and SRT did work
 22 closely together at incidents?
 23 A. I would say yes, but I think I knew it because of the
 24 amount of time I spent at Greater Manchester Fire and
 25 Rescue Service, their training centre, two training

23

1 centres. So it was more because I was around HART
 2 people at meetings, I would just get a better --
 3 I suppose I was just more involved in
 4 Greater Manchester, so rather than anyone telling me,
 5 I was just aware from being there.
 6 Q. Do you think that team leaders in particular, but the
 7 control room staff as well, ought to have known about
 8 the close working relationship between HART and SRT
 9 in relation to terrorist incidents?
 10 A. I think they knew they worked together. I wouldn't have
 11 said they didn't know they worked together from training
 12 because the MTFA training goes into who can go into what
 13 zone. So for me, I think from the MTFA training, that
 14 would have been clear, I would have thought.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: They knew enough so far as you were
 16 concerned?
 17 A. Sometimes you can know too much about something that
 18 makes you think you're an expert when you're not.
 19 MR DE LA POER: 22 May. You were duty operations manager
 20 that night?
 21 A. I was, yes.
 22 Q. And that meant that you were available to be called in,
 23 if required?
 24 A. Yes. I'd worked the day and then went home and then
 25 available on call.

24

1 Q. And your shift ended at 7 pm, and you left North West
2 Fire Control about 7.15; is that right?
3 A. My shift was from 7 am that morning until 7 am the next
4 morning.
5 Q. I understand.
6 A. Sorry.
7 Q. So you're in place on-duty shift ended at 7 pm; is that
8 right?
9 A. No. We could go at any -- we were on call -- at
10 weekends we wouldn't necessarily go in and do those
11 hours, we would be on call from home. It was up to us
12 what time we left of an evening. It wasn't that my
13 shift was until 7, I was on call, so I could go earlier.
14 It was my practice to stay behind, speak to the night
15 watch to say, "Hi, it's me you've got for the rest of
16 the night", just so that if they had any issues at that
17 time --
18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What time did you leave on the Monday?
19 A. On the Monday I think I left about 7.15 that night.
20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And that's normal for you?
21 A. Yes.
22 MR DE LA POER: That meant that you were at home when you
23 first became aware of the incident?
24 A. Yes, I was.
25 Q. When you left, the staff on duty, as has already been

25

1 identified, were David Ellis, Joanne Haslam,
2 Rochelle Fallon, Dean Casey, Aisha Jabin, and they were
3 the rostered CROs, two team leaders that we know about,
4 Lisa Owen and Michelle Gregson, and there was another
5 member of staff present, a trainee in the form of
6 Vanessa Ennis?
7 A. That's right, but at the time I left at, there was more
8 staff in because there's (overspeaking) --
9 Q. Those were the people relevant?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. I just wanted to ask you questions from your point of
12 view of operations manager about two of those members of
13 staff.
14 Firstly, Dean Casey described himself as being
15 part-way through the first stage of a logbook-based
16 training, if I've understood his evidence correctly.
17 A. Yes.
18 Q. Was he competent to act independently as a control room
19 operator on the night of 22 May? I'm not asking you to
20 comment on his ability, I'm asking whether he was
21 regarded as competent by reason of his training.
22 A. He hadn't been signed off as a fully-fledged, for want
23 of a better word, control room operator. He was still
24 in development. So he was an in-development control
25 room operator. So he passed his initial training,

26

1 he was deemed to be able to operate on his own, but
2 he wasn't physically competent at that stage.
3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: He can act on his own?
4 A. Yes.
5 MR DE LA POER: Vanessa Ennis, the information that the
6 inquiry has received so far is that she was not somebody
7 who was able to act independently.
8 A. That's correct.
9 Q. Was that your understanding?
10 A. Yes, it is.
11 Q. Should Vanessa Ennis, given that status, have had any
12 involvement in taking or making calls in relation to
13 this incident on the night of 22 May?
14 A. Not really. That's where -- I know when I got in that
15 night, Michelle had said to me that Rochelle was meant
16 to be monitoring and buddying Vanessa but they basically
17 said to Vanessa: stand back, we need Rochelle as a fully
18 fledged control room operator, and I don't know if
19 Vanessa was told that she could answer admin calls.
20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. So the correct thing would have
21 been: Rochelle should have been doing it, Vanessa should
22 have stood back, but whether it was actually told to
23 Vanessa, you can't say?
24 A. I wasn't there at the time.
25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely.

27

1 MR DE LA POER: Let's deal with your notification. We don't
2 have audio for this call, so we'll just bring up the
3 transcript. This is a call from Lisa Owen to you at
4 22.44. Just one very small aspect to pick out of it.
5 {INQ001234/1}.
6 You can re-familiarise with that. You can see that
7 you are being told by Ms Owen some of the information
8 that North West Fire Control had at that time; do you
9 agree?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. And if we turn over the page, {INQ001234/2}, we'll get
12 the complete picture. The one aspect that I wanted to
13 ask you about is on the first page {INQ001234/1} and
14 it is the fact that, in the first part of the speech
15 from Lisa Owen, the penultimate line, first two words,
16 she informs you of a report of a dirty bomb.
17 A. Yes.
18 Q. Thank you very much, Mr Lopez.
19 Did you know what a dirty bomb was on 22 May 2017?
20 A. Yes. But I don't remember hearing those exact words.
21 I was asleep. I remember taking the call and as soon as
22 I heard her say there'd been a bomb, I can't remember
23 her saying -- I can't remember. I just knew I had to
24 get there. So...
25 Q. You don't think those words registered with you when

28

1 they were said, given that you were disturbed from
2 sleep?
3 A. No, I was just thinking the worst nightmare's happened.
4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What would be your understanding had you
5 heard it of what was meant by a dirty bomb?
6 A. I would believe the bomb to have things within it that
7 would cause further harm, so it could be that it's
8 chemical related as the thing causing the
9 (overspeaking).
10 MR DE LA POER: There would be a secondary effect?
11 A. Yes.
12 Q. Potentially affecting responders, including emergency
13 services and members of the public?
14 A. Yes. But I am going back quite some far time in my
15 training, so ...
16 Q. Yes. At home, one of the first things you did was to
17 send to message to Tessa Tracey, senior operations
18 manager?
19 A. Yes.
20 Q. Ms Tracey has provided the words in the text that she
21 received from you.
22 A. Yes.
23 Q. Are you aware of what she's put in her witness statement
24 about that?
25 A. I'm not aware of what she's put in her witness

29

1 statement. I've seen the comment within the North West
2 Fire Control timeline that I was sent in the bundle but
3 I don't know what -- I haven't seen Tessa's statement at
4 all.
5 Q. The terms of the text as she records it in her statement
6 -- and we will hear from her later today:
7 "Tessa, on way into Control. Incident in
8 Manchester Arena and Victoria Train Station. Dirty bomb
9 and gunshots, 30 casualties."
10 A. Right.
11 Q. That's how she captures it. If that is accurate, it
12 appears that the words dirty bomb, would you agree, had
13 registered with you at some level?
14 A. At some level it must have done, yes.
15 Q. You then drove to NWFC?
16 A. That's correct, yes.
17 Q. On the way, Ms Tracey called you on your mobile phone
18 and you spoke to her briefly?
19 A. I did, yes.
20 Q. What I expect is the last question on the issue of dirty
21 bomb, bearing in mind the evidence you have given so
22 far, did you do anything at North West Fire Control once
23 you were there to follow up what information there was
24 around the issue of dirty bomb?
25 A. No. I honestly -- that surprised me that I haven't

30

1 registered that, even -- I've seen that transcript
2 before and I haven't even noticed it register with me,
3 I'm sorry.
4 Q. So you arrived at North West Fire Control, we can time
5 it almost to the second, by two means, firstly because
6 you are said to be arriving by Michelle Gregson when
7 she's speaking to Tessa Tracey at 23.09.
8 A. Yes.
9 Q. Secondly, you have checked your log-in card; is that
10 right?
11 A. I clocked in at the time --
12 Q. So we can have some confidence that by 23.10 you were
13 present in the control room?
14 A. Yes, yes, I was.
15 Q. One of your first actions was to ring Sarah-Jane Wilson;
16 is that right?
17 A. That's right.
18 Q. You didn't speak to her but you left a message?
19 A. That's correct, yes.
20 Q. Did you seek an update from Michelle Gregson?
21 A. Yes, I did, yes.
22 Q. Did you rely entirely on Michelle Gregson to bring you
23 up to speed or did you also consult the log?
24 A. As soon as I got there, I logged in to the system and it
25 takes a while to come up. That's when Michelle was

31

1 giving me a verbal sort of handover, shall we say, of
2 what had been done so far and what we were doing, to
3 then let me read the log for myself, because she had
4 just given me a brief outline of: this is the report
5 we've had, we've got these pumps there going there,
6 we've got NIOs going there, we've brought capability
7 back over from an incident they were attending. So she
8 was telling me the logistics of what had been done to
9 prep for going.
10 Q. We know on log 9074 that by 23.10, it was recorded
11 principally by Mr Ellis that police officers were
12 travelling to the scene in numbers, precise numbers not
13 specified, and that they had arrived on the scene. We
14 know that there were a number of ambulances which were
15 said to be going to the scene. And that by 22.55, he
16 recorded that the paramedic Bronze commander was on the
17 scene. That is on log 9074. Did you review log 9074?
18 A. I did look at it. I looked at all the logs. Because
19 there was so much going on and phone calls coming in and
20 people coming in -- I remember Sarah Wilson coming in as
21 I was part-way through looking at the log. It wasn't
22 like this is nice and calm and I could sit and reading
23 something, it wasn't that environment. I was trying
24 to -- I took in the information Michelle had told me and
25 was trying to read through the salient points of the log

32

1 to see where we were up to. But that wasn't done in
 2 peace: that was done with constantly being interrupted.
 3 Q. Once you'd completed reading the log and listening to
 4 what Michelle Gregson had said, did you effectively, and
 5 actually, become the person in charge of North West Fire
 6 Control's response?
 7 A. I don't think I said those exact words. It's probably
 8 something we should bring in. But that's the — what we
 9 both got from it, really, is that I would be there in
 10 charge.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It might be important to say those exact
 12 words, mightn't it?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Because the situation is she's been
 15 running the incident for quite a long time and it may be
 16 best to say, "You carry on, I'm here, I'll look over
 17 your shoulder, and you can get advice from me if you
 18 want to", rather than saying, "Right, I'm now taking
 19 over", which is what she assumed you were doing.
 20 A. Yes, I do think — because that's how the fire ground
 21 works: someone will arrive and they don't take charge
 22 until they've done a full assessment of the scene. So
 23 really, with hindsight, it might be something that's
 24 best for controls to do because they normally put on the
 25 log that the OM has arrived and, like I said yesterday,

33

1 depending on the experience of the team leader, a lot of
 2 the time I wouldn't take charge. So it could be just
 3 there for advice and assistance, so it probably is
 4 a good practice to put that on the log.
 5 MR DE LA POER: But by 23.30, did you regard yourself as
 6 being in charge?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Did you form the firm view that Michelle Gregson
 9 understood by that time that you were in charge?
 10 A. Yes, because the way we were working together on it
 11 because she said she was pleased it was me that was the
 12 duty OM that night because of my relationship with
 13 Manchester, that I knew all the people who were on duty,
 14 so she felt it helped.
 15 Q. What you say in your statement of approximately this
 16 time period — we can look at the detail of it — is —
 17 you say:
 18 "As an experienced operations manager and as the
 19 day-to-day SPOC for GMFRS, I was happy with the actions
 20 that had been taken."
 21 A. That's correct, yes.
 22 Q. Does that reflect your state of mind at the point that
 23 you took command?
 24 A. Absolutely, yes.
 25 Q. At that point — and we'll select 11.30 unless you

34

1 disagree with it as a point which means you have been
 2 there for at least 20 minutes to allow you to complete
 3 those actions and gather your thoughts — 55 minutes had
 4 elapsed since your control room had first been notified
 5 of the incident; do you agree?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. That will be apparent?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. That there were no fire appliances at the scene; do you
 10 agree?
 11 A. I agree, yes, sir.
 12 Q. And that in itself, given the Fire and Rescue Service's
 13 ordinary response time, was a very unusual state of
 14 affairs?
 15 A. It was a very unusual incident. I was thinking it was
 16 an MTFA when I got the call and when I got there.
 17 Q. You had reviewed a log that indicated that NWS had
 18 a number of paramedics on the scene, including
 19 a commander?
 20 A. I see what you're saying that they were on scene.
 21 I hadn't expected them to actually be there. I thought
 22 they were... I thought that they were like in — that
 23 they were there but they were in a holding area waiting
 24 until they knew it was safe to go in.
 25 Q. Would it help you to look at the log entry or would you

35

1 like me just to read it to you so that we can — its
 2 precise terms are these, 22.55.22:
 3 "Paramedic Bronze commander is at scene."
 4 That's as Mr Ellis has recorded it.
 5 A. I can't remember reading that particular thing or,
 6 if I have, I'm thinking they're waiting. I hadn't
 7 realised — and time flew, time absolutely flew.
 8 I hadn't realised they were in there. If they were in
 9 there, I'd have told the NIOs, "Do you know that we've
 10 got ambulance actually in?"
 11 Q. We'll come to you speaking to members of GMFRS and, in
 12 particular, Mr Nankivell in a moment, as he was the duty
 13 group manager. But I'd like to pause here for a moment.
 14 You know that your appliances are not at the scene?
 15 A. That's correct, yes.
 16 Q. A question, if a person is thinking in terms of
 17 multi-agency response, may be: where are other people's
 18 resources so that we can all get together?
 19 A. That's correct, yes, and it is something that control
 20 staff kept asking people, asking the other agencies —
 21 sorry, one thing that sticks in my mind is Rochelle
 22 asking and ambulance saying, "We don't know, they're
 23 everywhere" —
 24 Q. We'll come to Ms Fallon's call. We'll need to look at
 25 exactly what was said, but let's just park that for

36

1 a moment. If you were sitting there, asking yourself
 2 the question, "Where are the other emergency services?
 3 We need to meet up with them", do you think it is not
 4 inevitable that you would have looked at the log from
 5 that point of view and seen that there was clearly
 6 expressed information that both police and ambulance
 7 were on scene?
 8 A. If I was reading the log, I may have got that from
 9 there, but I probably assumed, wrongly, that fire, the
 10 ops fire people, were talking to the other commanders
 11 because I couldn't see... I didn't expect them to have
 12 not been. I know that they kept asking for an FCP,
 13 which we kept trying to get, but I think by the time
 14 I realised there wasn't communication, the fire that we
 15 had at Philips Park were moving back to Thompson Street,
 16 so they were going to chat to them there and see
 17 what was going on. That's sort of when I realised that
 18 it wasn't happening. But I was quite comfortable that
 19 they were going back to Thompson Street to talk to them
 20 and get more information and awareness.
 21 Q. Should you have identified the significance of that
 22 information on the log about police and the ambulance
 23 before 11.30?
 24 A. Before 11.30?
 25 Q. Before that point, that line in the sand that I've drawn

37

1 there, so in other words up to and including 11.30?
 2 A. No, I would say not at that time because even though
 3 I arrived in the control room at 11.10, Michelle's on
 4 the phone, David come over to speak, everybody looked at
 5 me in shock and horror of what they were dealing with.
 6 David came over to speak to me about what he was feeling
 7 and how he never expected to take a call like that, so
 8 I was trying to make him feel at ease: we'll do our job
 9 now and we're going to try and help.
 10 So I was speaking to David for a short period of
 11 time while Michelle was still on the phone. That's when
 12 I thought: I'll make the best use of my time now I've
 13 got here and I know it is real, I will ring
 14 Sarah Wilson -- sorry.
 15 Q. Do you want a short break?
 16 Sir, I wonder whether that would be a good idea
 17 because I think it is always a difficult thing to ask
 18 a witness whether they want a break.
 19 A. I'm sometimes better to carry on and ignore that I'm
 20 upset --
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can, but just understand this for
 22 a moment: we are really not seeking to try and blame you
 23 in any way.
 24 A. It's not that. It's not that at all.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's what's happened?

38

1 A. It's just what's happened and the fact that we weren't
 2 there to help. Sorry.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's important that you are in a state
 4 to answer the questions.
 5 A. Sorry, I've got myself in a mess.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Shall we have a 10--minute break then?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 9 (10.22 am)
 10 (A short break)
 11 (10.35 am)
 12 MR DE LA POER: Miss Carden, I hope there are only about 15
 13 more minutes of questions to take us through to a point
 14 that we are generally reaching with all of our
 15 witnesses.
 16 So we got to about 11.30. A message was received
 17 shortly before that from Group Manager Fletcher in
 18 a call taken by Joanne Haslam about the tactical
 19 multi--agency Talk Group, as it was still being known at
 20 that time.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Do you recall?
 23 A. Yes, I do, yes.
 24 Q. So we're talking that that channel that we were talking
 25 about earlier. Whether it's the multi--agency

39

1 interoperability channel, which it was intended to
 2 become but hadn't gone live, or it's the tactical
 3 multi--agency Talk Group, Mr Fletcher asked for that to
 4 be monitored, didn't he?
 5 A. He did, yes, sir.
 6 Q. That was something that you became aware of?
 7 A. I did, yes.
 8 Q. And I think it's something, a channel that you
 9 subsequently came to be monitoring?
 10 A. I did, yes. We had handheld radios, and I thought so we
 11 could all -- the top desk, the two team leaders and
 12 myself, so we could all stay free to answer things or
 13 anyone grab that channel, I turned on the handheld radio
 14 and turned it on to that particular channel.
 15 Q. Just sticking with that as a topic area, at just after
 16 midnight did you hear a broadcast from GMP?
 17 A. Yes, I did.
 18 Q. Did you answer that broadcast to say that North West
 19 Fire Control were listening?
 20 A. I did, yes.
 21 Q. Did you hear any response from any other emergency
 22 responder?
 23 A. No. After I'd confirmed that fire were there, they then
 24 asked if NWAS were on there and there was no response,
 25 and I didn't hear anything else on that channel. But to

40

1 be fair, I thought that was going to be the start of
 2 a move forward.
 3 Q. So that's the channel. Just to go back to your
 4 involvement in the control room, there is some small
 5 uncertainty about this time and I'll explain what I mean
 6 about that, but do you recall that shortly after 11.30,
 7 you spoke to Group Manager Nankivell?
 8 A. Yes, I think that's --
 9 Q. I'm going to ask for the transcript to come up and
 10 I want to be very clear about the time because it may be
 11 that there's some uncertainty about it.
 12 {INQ001140/1}, just the transcript, please,
 13 Mr Lopez.
 14 The time at the top of this says 23.36, so it's just
 15 after 11.30, but I do want to draw your attention to the
 16 fact that in the North West Fire Control sequence of
 17 events this call appeared to be recorded at 23.46. It
 18 perhaps doesn't matter precisely but I don't want there
 19 to be any misunderstanding. I'm sure we can investigate
 20 that and find out which is right.
 21 At all events, this no doubt is a transcript of
 22 a call that you had some time after 11.30 but before
 23 midnight with Mr Nankivell?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. And all I want to draw your attention to is -- at the

41

1 bottom he says:
 2 "Have you got any more updates that we're not privy
 3 of?"
 4 And your answer is:
 5 "No, we haven't, no. John Fletcher's en route.
 6 He's on way to you, isn't he? He asked if I could put
 7 Merseyside..."
 8 And so it goes on.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can we go back to page 1? It's
 10 described as GM Dean Nankivell's call to NWFC. That's
 11 the right way round, is it, because the first person to
 12 speak is -- no, you're right, sorry, that's my fault.
 13 A. Yes, I knew from his call sign that it had come up on
 14 the system who I was speaking to.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's what I was wondering about, how
 16 you --
 17 A. I knew his call sign.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 19 MR DE LA POER: Thank you very much indeed, Mr Lopez.
 20 I'm sure you understand what I'm going to ask you
 21 and I make it clear in this context that Joanne Haslam
 22 had given Group Manager Nankivell an update of the log
 23 up until 22.55 at that time; all right?
 24 A. Right.
 25 Q. I want you to know that when I ask my question. We're

42

1 looking here at systems rather than necessarily whether
 2 or not he in fact had the information. The first
 3 question is: did you know at that stage, when he asked
 4 you for that update or whether there's any more
 5 information, that he had received a report from somebody
 6 in NWFC which brought him up to date to 22.55?
 7 A. I was told he was aware, he'd been informed of the
 8 incident and what was going on, and that he was -- like
 9 me, he'd driven into the command support room. I could
 10 kick myself now for assuming, but when information is
 11 received, it's passed or it should be passed on. When
 12 you get something from a Control perspective, when you
 13 get something in, it's yours until you give it to
 14 someone else. If you can't give it, you pass it to
 15 someone else to give.
 16 So I... It sounds like a cop-out. I'm thinking he
 17 knows everything unless there's something that
 18 I particularly have taken or that someone has drawn
 19 attention and gone, "I'm on the phone, can you pass this
 20 on?", because that's how we would work: you own the
 21 information until you've given it to the relevant person
 22 or people and if you can't, you'll do it -- you didn't
 23 get people on a persons reported, they'll just put house
 24 fire and they're talking to the person in the house
 25 fire (?).

43

1 Even though they're being watched and someone's
 2 doing something, they'll put them on mute and go, "Can
 3 you get ambulance for me", and then they'll carry on the
 4 call. You own it until... So him saying that, because
 5 nothing had come directly to me and it sounds a bit
 6 pathetic now --
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It really doesn't and we are really
 8 looking at the systems. I need to know what the
 9 procedure was. You've obviously looked at all this in
 10 your own mind with a great deal -- and there is a danger
 11 of people -- of not only some people actually saying,
 12 "I've got no blame for anything", but actually if people
 13 say, "I've got blame for more than I have". Just try
 14 and be completely neutral about it and just forget
 15 kicking yourself and things like that. All right? If
 16 that's any help -- it probably isn't.
 17 MR DE LA POER: What you're saying is you assumed that he
 18 would have that information because you had been told
 19 that he had been spoken to?
 20 A. Yes. If it was his first time speaking to me, I'd have
 21 told him...
 22 Q. Again, I can see you've become distressed. Do you want
 23 a moment?
 24 A. No, just keep going.
 25 Q. Again, so we're absolutely clear, your assumption was

44

1 correct, okay? So please understand that from a system
 2 point of view, looking at the fact that you were acting
 3 on an assumption in what was a fast-moving situation,
 4 how can the system be developed so that someone who is
 5 either as senior as you is not relying upon assumptions
 6 but making sure that what is potentially vital
 7 information is passed on? Do you see where I'm going
 8 with it? You have lived that experience so you can give
 9 us the benefit of that.

10 A. Yes. In a normal situation, it's different. In this
 11 situation, where things were flying at you from
 12 different directions, it's something that I have given a
 13 great deal of thought from (sic). I think it almost
 14 needed to go through one person organising it. That's
 15 something now with hindsight I think, right,
 16 (overspeaking) people had different things —

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, if someone is looking at the logs,
 18 selecting what information needs to be passed on —

19 A. Yes.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, there are more problems with it
 21 than that, so I just want to look at it in its context.
 22 By the time you come, the NILO's been asked for
 23 information, the NILO, as far as you know, has gone off
 24 to speak to the FDO to get information.

25 A. Yes.

45

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And as far as you know, was linked up
 2 with the FDO, did you —

3 A. I didn't know he wasn't linked up.

4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's fine. That's not your fault in
 5 any way. After 8 minutes I think he said, "I haven't
 6 got through to the FDO", but he didn't say, "Would you
 7 do it for me", or anything like that. So you don't
 8 have, as it were — one of the problems is that
 9 different people call in.

10 A. Mm, yes.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you've got Mr Nankivell who calls in,
 12 you've got the NILO who calls in.

13 A. Yes.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You don't know whether they're
 15 communicating with each other.

16 A. Mm—hm.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you really need, don't you, a single
 18 person that you're talking to who's running the
 19 operation on the Fire Service side, who you give the
 20 information to?

21 A. Yes.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you have to give it new to everybody
 23 who rings in —

24 A. Unworkable.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, unworkable. So that's one

46

1 problem. The other problem is what is the information
 2 that you need to be passing on? Obviously if you sent
 3 a number of fire engines somewhere, you need to tell
 4 them that. Obviously, if they're ringing up to say,
 5 "We are now" — fire engines are ringing up and are
 6 saying, "We've now arrived at so and so", that's
 7 information that needs to be passed on.

8 A. Yes.

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is it part of your brief there, and
 10 I genuinely want to know the answer from a practical
 11 point of view, with updating them on what the other
 12 agencies are doing?

13 A. That should be happening.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Is that part of the training?

15 A. Yes. Like I say, everything you get, you own, until you
 16 give it to the relevant people. Because people don't
 17 ring you up with information (overspeaking) —

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So when the information came through to
 19 say the Ambulance Service are on scene, police are going
 20 to scene, that's relevant?

21 A. Yes.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Who is the relevant person to get that
 23 information?

24 A. As in from Control or fire?

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're in Control, you have the

47

1 information, you say, "I own it and I have now got the
 2 duty to pass it on to the relevant people", who are the
 3 relevant people?

4 A. If it was information from our officers wanting more
 5 from —

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, it's not.

7 A. — it goes to them.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We're talking about information coming
 9 into Control from the other agencies. You now own that
 10 information, you have told me that it is the obligation
 11 of the control room to pass it on.

12 A. Yes.

13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: To whom are you under an obligation you
 14 pass it on?

15 A. To the incident commander.

16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What?

17 A. The incident commander.

18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Who was the incident commander?

19 A. Ben Levy when I was there. Ben had made himself
 20 incident commander.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Someone else, Mr Nankivell, rings
 22 in, who's not the incident commander.

23 A. He's in the command support room. They have — I've
 24 been in Manchester's command support room. They have
 25 our computer system up on their screens —

48

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So do they have the log?
 2 A. They put the logs in the command support room, yes.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So why wasn't he able to see it if he's
 4 there?
 5 A. I don't know. My --- they have a massive screen with the
 6 incident on. You have operational people in the command
 7 support room but they also bring in an admin person
 8 in the command support room and the admin person will
 9 log on to the computer system and go through the logs.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just help me: is Mr Nankivell in the
 11 command support room at this time?
 12 MR DE LA POER: At the time of this call, yes. At the time
 13 of the call that Ms Haslam makes to him at 22.55, he's
 14 not there yet.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No. So he's then asking, "Has anything
 16 new come in?" That's a bit surprising if he is in the
 17 command support room and got the log.
 18 A. Unless he's not set --- because the admin person would
 19 normally get the log for them and get everything up on
 20 the screen ---
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. When he asked you that, "What
 22 information" --- never mind what you actually told him,
 23 what information do you think you ought to have given,
 24 not blaming yourself for everything, which you are not
 25 really responsible for, but under the system, as it

49

1 operated, what ought you have told him?
 2 A. From when he'd last spoke to us, if there was anything
 3 new.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. But would you have known when he
 5 last spoke to you (overspeaking)?
 6 A. I'd have to look at the log to see when he'd last spoke
 7 to us or ask him, who did you last speak to, what sort
 8 of time was it, and then from that point onwards --- but
 9 I didn't think there was anything new, I thought we were
 10 still waiting for an FCP.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 12 MR DE LA POER: To complete the chronology and my questions,
 13 you spoke again to Mr Nankivell at 00.22 ---
 14 A. Mm---hm.
 15 Q. --- when the requested ambulance resources were
 16 communicated to you?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. And you spoke to Group Manager Fletcher at 00.55 and
 19 were told that Operation Plato had been declared by the
 20 police?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. And at that point you instructed Michelle Gregson to add
 23 the Operation Plato action plan to the log?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. We don't need to turn it up, but the incident log

50

1 reveals that that was added at 00.56.05.
 2 A. Right.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So no action plan was ever activated
 4 actually?
 5 A. No.
 6 MR DE LA POER: I'm very grateful again to Ms Gilmour: she
 7 tells me that it has been checked and the time of that
 8 call that I was asking you about with Mr Nankivell in
 9 which he asked you that question is at 23.46. So the
 10 transcript has a typo on it and the North West Fire
 11 Control sequence of communications is correct by
 12 reference to mobile telephone records. I'm very
 13 grateful for that.
 14 I would like to conclude, please, by looking at an
 15 email that you sent to Tessa Tracey, because it
 16 captured, as at 6 November, some of the comments that
 17 you were making at that time {INQ001131/1}.
 18 It's the third paragraph:
 19 "Effective information sharing. We shared
 20 everything with police and ambulance but not our
 21 officers. When Andy Berry rang to say he couldn't get
 22 through to the FDO at police, he was told part of the
 23 log but not the part that said there wasn't any gunshot
 24 injuries as had been previously stated."
 25 This is obviously not in the form of a formal

51

1 debrief, this is an email between you and Tessa Tracey,
 2 the senior operations manager. Would I be right in
 3 inferring from that that certainly you had identified
 4 and were communicating up that there was a real concern
 5 about how well North West Fire Control shared
 6 information with GMFRS?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Were you any part of the steps that were taken, if any,
 9 to address that?
 10 A. No, I don't think I was. Like I say, it sounds like
 11 a cop-out, but I didn't do the training. I didn't train
 12 our staff.
 13 Q. So would either Tessa Tracey or Ms Wilson be the right
 14 person to ask about ---
 15 A. Yes. I would imagine Tessa would have gone ---
 16 I shouldn't say what other people will be doing. But
 17 I would imagine it would be discussed with the
 18 operational support department who are in charge of
 19 training.
 20 MR DE LA POER: Thank you very much indeed. We can take
 21 that email down. Thank you, Ms Carden, that conclude
 22 the questions I have for you.
 23 Can I just remind everybody that it is imperative
 24 that time estimates are kept within. Can I see if
 25 Mr Warnock QC has any questions on behalf of GMCA.

52

1 Questions from MR WARNOCK
 2 MR WARNOCK: Just one question, Ms Carden. You were asked
 3 to whom information of GMFRS should be passed and you
 4 said the incident commander.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. And at the stage when you were involved, Ben Levy became
 7 the incident commander?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. That's how you understand it; is that right?
 10 A. That's correct, yes.
 11 Q. Prior to that point, to whom in the Fire Service should
 12 information received by North West Fire Control have
 13 been passed?
 14 A. Prior to Ben Levy appointing himself as incident
 15 commander, I would have passed everything to the duty
 16 NILO, Andy Berry. That's what I would have done.
 17 MR WARNOCK: Thank you. That's all.
 18 MR DE LA POER: Can I see whether Ms Roberts QC has any
 19 questions for Ms Carden.
 20 (Pause)
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We'll pass on and see whether she comes
 22 later.
 23 MR DE LA POER: Yes. Mr Horwell, please, on behalf of GMP.
 24 Questions from MR HORWELL
 25 MR HORWELL: Three short topics.

53

1 We have heard many times that it was extremely
 2 unusual for pumps to be driving away from the scene
 3 rather than to it, and extremely unusual for NILOs to be
 4 driving away from the scene rather than to it. And I'm
 5 sure you will agree with that?
 6 A. Yes. Yes, sir.
 7 Q. To try and cut across the detail, one simple question
 8 for the moment: how were the NILOs to obtain situational
 9 awareness on the basis that they were driving away from
 10 the scene rather than to it? What was your
 11 understanding?
 12 A. Well, the NILOs were driving to meet up — the way I saw
 13 it is the NILOs were driving to meet up with their fire
 14 crews. I don't know what the situation is for the NILO
 15 when they're en route contacting the force duty officer,
 16 which is what I would have expected to be happening, and
 17 conversations between themselves. That would be better
 18 directed at them, I feel. I can't answer for what they
 19 would do other than if we had information, we would give
 20 it to them.
 21 Q. Once it was discovered that unarmed police officers and
 22 ambulance crews were going to the scene, surely that was
 23 vital information?
 24 A. Yes, sir.
 25 Q. But it appears that it wasn't appreciated as such on the

54

1 night?
 2 A. For me personally, when they've said they're going to
 3 the scene, I'm thinking they are going to the area, not
 4 the actual scene.
 5 Q. Surely there are two destinations, either the scene or
 6 the RVP, or should they be working on the basis that
 7 there's yet a third destination type to which pumps
 8 might be sent?
 9 A. I do appreciate what you're saying, but "on scene" isn't
 10 a Fire Service term. So for me, it's not something the
 11 Fire Service would use, so I'm thinking they're in the
 12 area, they're waiting to then be called forward once we
 13 know it's safe to do so.
 14 Q. But there is certainly a reference in the log to
 15 ambulances going direct to the booking office.
 16 A. Yes. And they also do say that they've got ambulances
 17 everywhere (overspeaking) so for me it seemed chaotic
 18 and not... It wasn't a confident, "We are at this place
 19 and we are meeting with police", or, "We are waiting for
 20 fire to join us", it was a "Oh yeah, they're everywhere
 21 we don't even know" — at one point someone said, "We
 22 don't even know where our ambulances are." That to me
 23 is not a clear, disciplined, "We are at this place and
 24 we are going in".
 25 Q. What did you think "ambulances being sent to the booking

55

1 office" meant?
 2 A. That that's where they were being held for now.
 3 (Overspeaking) that is honestly what I thought, that
 4 they were being held there.
 5 Q. "Paramedic arriving at the scene", what was it thought
 6 that that meant?
 7 A. Again, "on scene" isn't something for me, and I know
 8 from my dealings with ambulance, sometimes they would be
 9 at an RVP and they would wait, say it was a fire-led
 10 incident, they would wait for us to confirm, get
 11 confirmation from our crews that it was safe to go
 12 forward. So I wasn't expecting ambulances to be on
 13 scene, as you say, until it was deemed safe to do so.
 14 And as I hadn't had that information, I wasn't assuming
 15 they were actually in attendance, dealing with it, but
 16 they were just there waiting.
 17 Q. I am not going to press this point further, but you
 18 believed that references to the scene were references to
 19 places other than the scene of this attack?
 20 A. The scene in that — the area surrounding the arena, not
 21 necessarily in dealing with casualties.
 22 Q. In terms of your ability to contact the FDO, if asked,
 23 we've heard a number of occasions, and I'm just asking
 24 for you to confirm this, that, is this right, you didn't
 25 have the telephone numbers of either the FDO or the FDS?

56

1 A. I'm not sure what the FDS is, I'm sorry, I've never
 2 heard of the FDS. I have looked in the government
 3 lexicon and I can't see it there either. The FDO, we...
 4 I'm not sure, to be honest. When North West Fire
 5 Control was set up, the phone numbers were given by the
 6 four different Fire and Rescue Services of the numbers
 7 they had, that they wanted us to have. So it would have
 8 been whatever was given to us at that time for police.
 9 Without looking at what we had in at that time,
 10 I couldn't tell you whether we did or didn't have it.
 11 We had a speed dial for the police control room and the
 12 ambulance control rooms, but I don't know if we had the
 13 FDO number at that time. I honestly don't know.
 14 Q. The multi-agency Hailing Talk Group, the channel that
 15 was monitored by GMP 24 hours a day, were you aware of
 16 the existence of that Talk Group and the fact that it
 17 offered you access to the GMP control room where the FDO
 18 was based?
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, just to clarify, just for my
 20 benefit, you called it a talking group. Is the
 21 Hailing --
 22 MR HORWELL: Talk Group (overspeaking). Sir, because of the
 23 fact that someone a long time ago decided that we can't
 24 refer to the channels, we are having to attempt to use
 25 the same language. There's one channel -- I am more

57

1 than happy to show the witness the schedule if it will
 2 help her -- but there is one channel that we are
 3 describing as the multi-agency Hailing Talk Group.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Right. Fine, thank you.
 5 MR HORWELL: That is the Talk Group that is monitored by GMP
 6 24 hours a day. My question to you is this: were you
 7 personally aware of the existence of that channel and
 8 the fact that it offered you access to the control room
 9 where the FDO was based?
 10 A. At some point I would have been aware of it and when
 11 people say I think, oh yes, I do know of it, I'm aware
 12 of it. I didn't feel the need to use it because
 13 I didn't feel we had a problem. I didn't know we had
 14 a problem getting through to the FDO. Every time we
 15 rang the police control room we got through. It didn't
 16 -- I know I've got other ways of getting through to the
 17 control room by either radio or even ringing 999, if my
 18 normal source doesn't work. I didn't see the need to do
 19 any of those because we were actually getting through to
 20 the control room.
 21 Q. When you say control room, do you know which of the
 22 control rooms you are referring to because there are
 23 three?
 24 A. I didn't realise there were three. I'd been to one.
 25 I know that police and ambulance were completely

58

1 different to fire. But if I'm getting through to
 2 someone, I can then ask for various people. It's not
 3 a case of, "Sorry, I can't help you". I'd never rang
 4 the police and got, "Oh sorry, you're through to the
 5 wrong place, I can't help you". That number will always
 6 get you through to whoever you need to go to.
 7 Q. One further issue and one document. I'm going to ask
 8 that this document is put on the screen. It's an email
 9 dated 30 March 2017 and it's part of a chain, but I hope
 10 that I can deal with this relatively briefly.
 11 The document is {INQ001039/1}. I hope you've been
 12 shown this email.
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. I hope that I do neither it nor you any injustice by
 15 saying that this email is part of a chain of emails
 16 concerning the setting-up of the dedicated tri-service
 17 channel and you have given evidence about this already;
 18 yes?
 19 A. Yes, yes.
 20 Q. We can see the subject heading of this email, "Switch to
 21 Airwaves", and then the channel itself is redacted, "for
 22 JESIP communications".
 23 You know that that is the channel that we are
 24 describing as the tactical multi-agency Talk Group?
 25 A. That's in the heading?

59

1 Q. Yes, in the heading, and is the main purpose of this
 2 email. This is the channel that has been designated as
 3 the channel to be used in the future once this system
 4 has been established and signed off; yes?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Right. If we look to the body of that email, and it's
 7 from Gemma Shepherd, who is a team leader for NWFC; yes?
 8 A. At that time, yes.
 9 Q. At that time, thank you. It's to Tessa Tracey and
 10 yourself. The second paragraph of the email refers to:
 11 "Setting up the dedicated three-way link between the
 12 control rooms"; yes?
 13 A. Yes, that's correct, sir.
 14 Q. Then it's the next paragraph, which is only one line, to
 15 which I wish to refer:
 16 "Currently, our staff are aware that the link would
 17 be via ..."
 18 And that channel has been redacted, but please take
 19 it from me, that channel is the first of the three
 20 operational multi-agency Talk Groups. I know from an
 21 answer that you have given previously you understand
 22 what that channel is.
 23 A. Yes, that's the one I set up when I went to see the FDO
 24 with Neil Gaskell. That's the one the FDO gave us to
 25 use.

60

1 MR HORWELL: So for the purpose of your note, sir, that is
 2 one of the channels that is referred to in Dale Sexton's
 3 aide-memoire.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 5 MR HORWELL: The question I ask you is this: whilst you were
 6 waiting for the dedicated channel to be established and
 7 signed off, it was NWFC's understanding that a three-way
 8 communication link could be established through the use
 9 of this particular channel, one of the three operational
 10 multi-agency Talk Groups.
 11 A. Yes. When I met with the FDO and Neil Gaskell, we were
 12 told that the police would tell us which one of the
 13 three, because it might be that number 1 is in use, so
 14 they would say which one we were to use because they're
 15 their radio channels, so they would say which one was to
 16 be used for that particular incident.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And that's the evidence that I've
 18 understood it to be as well. Is that right, Mr Horwell?
 19 It needed the FDO to say they're going on to this
 20 channel?
 21 MR HORWELL: Yes, that is correct, sir.
 22 So my question to you is this: if NWFC had received
 23 one telephone call or your NILO had received one
 24 telephone call saying, "We're going to use either
 25 number 1, number 2 or number 3 of this channel", you

61

1 would have understood what that message was?
 2 A. Absolutely, sir, yes.
 3 Q. And you could have gone on to that channel, we have
 4 heard, in a matter of seconds?
 5 A. Literally a couple of presses of different buttons and
 6 it could have been monitored by a set control room
 7 operator and we could have monitored on the top desk as
 8 well, yes.
 9 MR HORWELL: That is in accordance with the evidence that
 10 we have already heard. Those are my questions.
 11 Thank you very much.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Horwell, just stay there for
 13 a minute, will you? I just want to clarify something
 14 you said earlier and you may want to come back.
 15 If the police want the Fire Service to go to
 16 a particular place, what do they do?
 17 A. For what type of incident, for any normal type of
 18 incident?
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Whatever type of incident. They ring
 20 you up and (overspeaking) --
 21 A. They ring us up and tell us where they want
 22 (overspeaking) --
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you know exactly where to go to?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The phone call, the first phone call

62

1 which was had in this case was -- it gave an RVP point?
 2 A. That's correct, yes.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So where from your point of view and
 4 your experience would you send fire engines at that
 5 time?
 6 A. I would send them to the RVP rather than the scene, but
 7 because of the information we were getting, I wouldn't
 8 have done that without the NILO.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You said earlier on that having too much
 10 information can be a risk.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sometimes, if you don't mind me saying,
 13 you give us too much information when answering the
 14 question.
 15 A. Sorry.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's all right. Obviously we're getting
 17 together, we're going to go on a little trip down this
 18 line.
 19 From that first call the direction was to send it to
 20 the RVP point, which was the cathedral car park.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Who decided that that was not an
 23 appropriate place to send them to from your reading of
 24 the logs?
 25 A. Andy Berry, the duty NILO.

63

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: After that, did you ever receive
 2 a direction from the police to go to any other
 3 particular place expect for the cathedral car park?
 4 A. Not that... This is where I can get confused because...
 5 Not that I can recall on the night because if I'd known
 6 of another RVP, it would have been passed on. I have
 7 heard other RVPs mentioned --
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not interested, sorry. Were you
 9 told that night from your studying of the logs by the
 10 police anywhere else to go apart from that original RVP
 11 point?
 12 A. I can't recall, sir, sorry.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. We can check the logs.
 14 Mr Horwell, do you want to come back on any of that?
 15 MR HORWELL: No, thank you, sir.
 16 MR DE LA POER: Mr Cooper QC, please.
 17 Questions from MR COOPER
 18 MR COOPER: I ask questions on behalf of the bereaved
 19 families as far as these matters are concerned.
 20 In accordance with the chair's sensible direction,
 21 if I may say so, I'm not going to go over old ground.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I hope that's all right with everybody.
 23 It's important that everyone knows where I've got to at
 24 the moment.
 25 MR COOPER: I've had my red pen out over the last hour or

64

1 so, crossing a number of questions out, if that's
 2 reassuring. But I do want to develop, if I can,
 3 evidence relating to exercises and the attendance at
 4 exercises. We've heard the evidence about the concern
 5 about the attendance at such events.
 6 It's right to say that you were part and parcel,
 7 though, of Operation Powerhouse, weren't you?
 8 A. Yes, I was.
 9 Q. And that was something that took place on
 10 20 November 2017. Given the concerns about
 11 non-participation in the past, I just want to look at
 12 a few documents with you to see exactly what your
 13 participation was in Powerhouse and what conclusions you
 14 drew on behalf of the Fire Control on behalf of that
 15 exercise.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This is after 22 May?
 17 A. It is, yes.
 18 MR COOPER: This is after the 22nd, but it does
 19 demonstrate --
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's fine, I was just checking that.
 21 MR COOPER: This was on 20 November 2017. Let's begin by
 22 looking at the Powerhouse report by Mr Fletcher, which
 23 was {INQ004526/1}, please, Mr Lopez.
 24 Scroll down, if you will, Mr Lopez. And again.
 25 Next page, please. And the next page, please

65

1 {INQ004526/4}. We see there your name appearing?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Do you see your name there, Ms Carden?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. It says there:
 6 "Provided ex con at NWFC."
 7 What does that mean?
 8 A. I was the exercise coordinator at North West Fire
 9 Control.
 10 Q. Thank you. As far as that exercise was concerned there
 11 were some learning outcomes of that?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Let's look at {INQ004526/4-5} of those learning
 14 outcomes. In particular -- go back to {INQ004526/4},
 15 please, Mr Lopez. In particular, we see some references
 16 to the North West Fire Control. Let's just look at
 17 a couple of those to see where we were post 22 May with
 18 participation in an exercise:
 19 "As stated above, this exercise involved
 20 a combination of physical and notional mobilisations.
 21 This caused considerable problems for the NWFC operators
 22 as they had to read through the action cards and
 23 manually record notional actions and assets used.
 24 It would be much quicker and easier to physically
 25 mobilise all required assets as this is done

66

1 automatically as part of the mobilising system.
 2 "For future exercises of this nature, allow NWFC to
 3 practically mobilise the assets. This will be
 4 a realistic and timely test of procedures in NWFC."
 5 Do you agree, firstly, Ms Carden, with that
 6 analysis?
 7 A. Yes, I think that's something that I did say to
 8 Mr Fletcher. It was very, very confusing because it
 9 was: let's pretend this bit, let's do this bit for real.
 10 Q. Keep your voice up, if you can. It may be my hearing,
 11 I don't know.
 12 This was something that was clearly brought out by
 13 Powerhouse as a problem at the Fire Control, even after
 14 the arena?
 15 A. Yes, for this particular one, because there was only the
 16 officers involved rather than fire appliances and the
 17 MTFA capability.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you're still not doing the real live
 19 exercises as it would be in real life, you're still
 20 doing part make-believe.
 21 A. For this one, yes, it was meant to have the fire
 22 appliances.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But this was a problem with this one, it
 24 wasn't actually a real-life exercise?
 25 A. No.

67

1 MR COOPER: Again, if I can take you to {INQ004526/5},
 2 please. Number 3:
 3 "The use of the channel was a great improvement for
 4 the passage of risk-critical information and general
 5 situational awareness. However, there were a number of
 6 occasions where GMP had to repeatedly ask NWFC for
 7 clarification that they had received the information.
 8 As the exercise progressed it was clear that in the
 9 majority of circumstances, the NILO coordinator would
 10 have been the best person to engage in conversation with
 11 the partner agencies. In addition, it seemed to be
 12 one-way traffic with the police as the main communicator
 13 and NWFC and NWAS on receive. It is acknowledged that
 14 GMP may be the primary agency for
 15 gathering/disseminating information. However, it should
 16 not be forgotten that both NWFC and NWAS Control may be
 17 in possession of information that would be risk-critical
 18 to other agencies.
 19 "Recommendation: the role of the NILO coordinator to
 20 take up a more active role in the communication chain
 21 with other agencies. This is not to say that NWFC
 22 should not interject too at appropriate times."
 23 Those are the only two matters I'm taking you to,
 24 but that's another matter that impacted on NWFC, isn't
 25 it?

68

1 A. Um...

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This seems to be a bit of a criticism of

3 NWFC, doesn't it.

4 A. Yes.

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry to take you -- this is the

6 tri-agency Talk Group?

7 A. Yes.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which is on all the time now as we

9 understand it?

10 A. Yes.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What's being said is you're not

12 contributing enough?

13 A. This was for the particular exercise, which -- I felt

14 that criticism to be very unfair because what -- in

15 Powerhouse, they were doing it -- the police were

16 checking it was an MTFA --

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm very sorry, in a way I'm not

18 particularly interested who was at fault about this,

19 whether the criticism was right or not, because I don't

20 think it really matters to my consideration.

21 A. That's fine.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What does matter, however, is how would

23 the NILO be able to be part of that? Is he

24 automatically on the tri-agency Talk Group?

25 A. Not at first. The idea is the tri-agency Talk Group is

69

1 between the three control rooms. So what will happen

2 is that whoever's got the information comes on first.

3 So in this situation, it was police. They started the

4 exercise, so they come in first and tell the other

5 agencies.

6 When I went and met -- we had a debrief but only

7 police were there, ambulance --

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm really sorry, this may be me getting

9 too much information and I won't be able to process it.

10 A. Sorry.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But how did the NILO get in on this

12 control room Talk Group if he's going to give the

13 information? They're saying here it'd be better if the

14 NILO had the information. How do you get him in on it?

15 A. On this exercise, the NILO was there at the start which

16 surprised me --

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Where?

18 A. On the Talk Group, but he shouldn't have been. It was

19 a no-notice exercise. I didn't give the staff any

20 notice. I give the team leaders 5 minutes' notice

21 beforehand but I stayed with them so they didn't speak

22 to their staff because I truly wanted it to be no notice

23 for the staff.

24 GMP came on the line, a member of staff that didn't

25 know this was happening answered and the exercise

70

1 started. So I went over to be with them as the exercise

2 coordinator because I was taking notes on what was going

3 on. And then a NILO came on the channel, but in reality

4 the NILO wouldn't have known that was --

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Fine, that's an artificial bit about

6 this. So in a real-life situation like 22 May, can you

7 somehow get the NILO on to that channel?

8 A. Yes. As soon as we are aware of it and the channel is

9 open, and we tell the duty NILO --

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The channel is open all the time.

11 A. Sorry, the channel is activated. It's open all the

12 time, but as soon as someone has spoken on it and said

13 it is, they're going to say the same words three times

14 to indicate or listen in.

15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Then you can get the NILO on to it,

16 can you?

17 A. Yes, we can tell them -- take the information initially

18 of what we've got, tell the NILO. The duty NILO can

19 then listen in on that as well as the three control

20 rooms, so you'd have an ops commander listening as well

21 as control rooms and the idea was that that channel

22 would then stay live until they're all on scene

23 together.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That really helps. Can you get the

25 incident commander on it if it's not the NILO as well?


71

1 A. Yes, you could do.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You can get anyone extra on to it,

3 can you?

4 A. Yes, I have to check their radios had those in. I think

5 they have. I know all the officers have  -- sorry.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Don't worry, we'll get it removed.

7 A. I have been so careful not to say that.

8 MR COOPER: You are not the first person to say something

9 live which they are embarrassed about.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think I was the first!

11 So I now understand how it works, thank you.

12 MR COOPER: That was in existence, just so I'm clear on

13 this, on 22 May?

14 A. That particular channel?

15 Q. Yes.

16 A. The channel was in existence but it wasn't one we were

17 using. It was, like Mr Horwell said, the one we've been

18 told by -- when I had met with the FDO and

19 Neil Gaskell -- was a different channel and that was

20 going to be that the police would say, "We're closing

21 phone communications and we're going to" (overspeaking)

22 --

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This is the one which was about to start

24 and had not got going on 22 May but was activated a week

25 after, you remember, when people met together?

72

1 A. That's the one.
 2 MR COOPER: And would this channel that was activated a week
 3 or so later of course have assisted with events on the
 4 22nd?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you could have got the NILO in on it
 7 which would have been --
 8 A. Yes, and we could have got the incident commander as
 9 well.
 10 MR COOPER: I'm not going to go down the line of why so
 11 late --
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That question is very much an open one.
 13 MR COOPER: You're well over that.
 14 Can I take you on the same point, so far as
 15 Powerhouse is concerned, to your responses to it in
 16 a document? {INQ001248/1}. This is from
 17 a Natalie Pomponi. Remind me please, who is
 18 Natalie Pomponi?
 19 A. She is one of the team leaders at North West Fire
 20 Control and she was on duty for this exercise.
 21 Q. Thank you. And she's asking about your feedback on
 22 Powerhouse. Just scroll down if you will please,
 23 Mr Lopez. Then scroll up in that case.
 24 You give a response, don't you, in due course?
 25 Do you see that?

73

1 A. I would have imagined so. I can't remember.
 2 Q. Let's look at {INQ001249/1} and see if it's there.
 3 Mr Lopez, if you can scroll down there, if there is
 4 another document. I think my references are out and
 5 I won't detain the hearing with that.
 6 Nonetheless, here is Natalie Pomponi contacting you
 7 in relation to the feedback. She says there:
 8 "It all got a bit messy mainly because were
 9 initially informed that we would have little
 10 involvement. However, that proved not to be the case."
 11 Again, that touches upon the short notice perhaps
 12 that you had as far as that exercise is concerned.
 13 A. Mm.
 14 Q. All right. I'll move on --
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, you said you wanted it to be
 16 a no-notice exercise?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you didn't tell the CROs?
 19 A. No.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So why should it matter that they were
 21 being asked questions?
 22 A. People like to know and in all my time in the Fire
 23 Service when people say no-notice exercises people
 24 normally know. And I -- I have never agreed with that,
 25 I do have issues around exercises, but I've always

74

1 thought you're not learning anything. If you're not --
 2 if you're telling someone something's going to happen,
 3 you're not learning.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, too much information again,
 5 perhaps.
 6 A. Sorry.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So as far as you're concerned,
 8 Natalie Pomponi's criticism is actually not a very valid
 9 one because she really wants to have more notice of it?
 10 A. She wants more notice because whatever they had planned
 11 that night I have just gone in and totally disrupted
 12 because it's a night-time exercise --
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But you think you're right and she's
 14 wrong?
 15 A. I think if you want the best from training, you do
 16 no-notice exercises.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 18 MR COOPER: Finally on this, it's just following up on an
 19 answer you gave to my learned friend this morning, and
 20 about involvement in these exercises, and you indicated
 21 to him that there was a problem about NWFC being too
 22 busy to attend.
 23 A. That's something I strongly disagree with. I have
 24 never -- like I say, I don't know where that came from.
 25 Q. That was going to be my question. I was going to ask

75

1 you where did that come from. Who was giving the
 2 information, can you guide us, as to the fact that NWFC
 3 were too busy?
 4 A. I am so strongly against that. Don't get me wrong, if
 5 an exercise was about to start and we had loads of major
 6 incidents going on --
 7 Q. Forgive me, I don't mean to be rude, because I know
 8 you're doing your best, but my question was: who was it
 9 from NWFC --
 10 A. I would love to know -- who told Mr Gaskell that we were
 11 too busy?
 12 Q. Yes.
 13 A. I would love to know because that should never -- if
 14 it's a con op, it's very, very unprofessional and they
 15 need to take it to their team leader. If it's anyone
 16 higher than that I want to know. Sorry, I'm not even
 17 there any more. As the SPOC for Greater Manchester and
 18 an operations manager in that control room, I would want
 19 to know who said that.
 20 Q. Did you take any steps to find out?
 21 A. I have only found that out when I heard Mr Gaskell's
 22 evidence.
 23 Q. I see. And you also told the chair that it was
 24 a similar problem, it seemed, as far as the
 25 Ambulance Service was concerned, they also said

76

1 apparently that they were too busy.
 2 A. When I went -- I went to -- for Powerhouse I went to the
 3 meetings about what was going to happen with the
 4 exercise, there was never anyone from ambulance control
 5 there because they couldn't attend so they sent somebody
 6 else who I had met on numerous occasions at the RDG.
 7 Q. Effectively we have a fire control room not there,
 8 ambulance control room not there -- were the police
 9 there?
 10 A. At the Powerhouse meeting?
 11 Q. Yes.
 12 A. I was there from -- representing Fire Control.
 13 Q. Of course you were.
 14 A. And police were there. NWS were there but not from the
 15 control room. They were passing the -- they were going
 16 to take all the information from the control room and
 17 I think it is in the document of who it was --
 18 Q. So would you agree that it's not just a problem with
 19 control rooms not being involved and not being asked to
 20 be involved, perhaps control rooms should be more
 21 proactive, not just fire, but ambulance, for instance,
 22 on your evidence, to say they want to be involved?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. It's a two-way thing, isn't it? It's not just being
 25 told you're not involved, it's management perhaps going

77

1 forward and saying: wait a minute, we'll kick the door
 2 down if necessary, we want to be there?
 3 A. I've always said that I wanted to be involved in
 4 exercises --
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let me just stop for a moment. I think
 6 where we got to with your evidence earlier, and you will
 7 have to tell me whether we are still there or whether it
 8 has changed, is you accept that NWS are very busy?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you were being told, rightly or
 11 wrongly, and we don't know, that NWS were saying, "We
 12 can't take part in these exercises, we really haven't
 13 got the capacity, we're too busy". And so that was
 14 being sort of knocked on to you, NWFC, who, as far as
 15 you're concerned, would have been prepared to do it, but
 16 they were saying, there's no point in having you
 17 if we don't have NWS; is that right?
 18 A. There would be occasions where all three were involved
 19 in things, but it was more of a -- not from the initial
 20 call, it was more of an informing and sometimes they'd
 21 know that they were meant to be involved, sometimes they
 22 wouldn't.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 24 MR COOPER: I'll move on.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want to make sure I had got it

78

1 right.
 2 MR COOPER: Absolutely.
 3 Again, just touching upon paragraph 4, please, and
 4 then another document allied to it.
 5 In paragraph 4 of your statement, that's your second
 6 statement, {INQ025470/1}, this is just to remind
 7 ourselves on the issue relating to the staffing of
 8 control rooms. We touched on it yesterday with your
 9 colleague, Ms Gregson. I'm not going to labour it.
 10 There is the full layout of staff numbers provided at
 11 different times at different rotas during the day.
 12 Do you see that in your statement?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. We see there highlighted the staff provided between
 15 7 o'clock in the evening and 10 o'clock in the evening.
 16 With that in mind I would like Mr Lopez to take us to
 17 one of the briefing documents that this witness was
 18 party to, which is {INQ030902/1}.
 19 Just the first page to begin with just to orientate
 20 ourselves. This is the Manchester Arena terrorist
 21 attack debrief on Wednesday 12 July, 2017. You were one
 22 of the attendees of that, weren't you?
 23 A. I was, yes.
 24 Q. Can we go, please, to {INQ030902/7} of that document.
 25 There we see something from you just underneath 12.15:

79

1 "Return back to the room."
 2 You say this:
 3 "For us what didn't go well, bearing in mind we
 4 cover the whole of the north-west and we only have eight
 5 operatives, two were tied up with NWS and GMP on one
 6 line each and there was one operative in the middle. We
 7 did have a five-pump incident going on. We were trying
 8 to get some people in on overtime. If the three
 9 controls had been able to communicate on [blank] or on
 10 a conference call then three people would have been able
 11 to do instead of being tied up."
 12 We've had some evidence, and I'm not asking for that
 13 to be repeated, from your colleague Ms Gregson about the
 14 difficulties that were occurring during that evening,
 15 but is there anything within your answer there in
 16 addition to what we've heard that you'd like to develop?
 17 For instance your latter comments:
 18 "If the three controls had been able to communicate
 19 on [blank] or on a conference call then there people who
 20 have been able to do ops instead of being tied up."
 21 Perhaps you could just develop that.
 22 A. Yes. What I meant there, the three people I'm talking
 23 about is one from each control room, so one from police,
 24 ambulance and fire. If we'd have had a conference call,
 25 as is suggested in the JESIP MTF, or done the Talk

80

1 Group, that would have meant one control room operator
 2 from each room would have been involved in taking the
 3 information from the other services and for me it would
 4 have made it a lot slicker, a lot easier rather than the
 5 information coming in in lots of different ways.
 6 Q. Has that been addressed perhaps since the arena in terms
 7 of how you do your work?
 8 A. That would come on the —
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The Talk Group.
 10 MR COOPER: The Talk Group.
 11 A. Yes, the group.
 12 MR COOPER: Again, just looking at the second line:
 13 "Two were tied up with NWS and GMP on one line each
 14 and there was one operative in the middle."
 15 What do you mean there was one operative in the
 16 middle?
 17 A. I don't know what I mean by that. I think I mean
 18 that — I know the layout of the room and I can still
 19 picture it for that night. There was David taking the
 20 call from GMP, then there was Dean and then the next
 21 person across on the next pod was Jo Haslam, who was
 22 taking the call from NWS. So I think that's what I've
 23 meant by one in the middle.
 24 Q. All right.
 25 A. I don't know, sorry.

81

1 Q. I'll move on to a different topic now. During the
 2 course of the evening, certainly in the early part of
 3 it, you were receiving and making calls on your own
 4 personal mobile, weren't you?
 5 A. Not my personal mobile, my work mobile. The only call
 6 I made on my personal mobile was to Tessa.
 7 Q. Forgive me, your work mobile, which is in addition, is
 8 it, to the communication equipment, for instance, in the
 9 control room?
 10 A. Yes. All the operations managers had a work mobile
 11 phone due to the fact we were on call.
 12 Q. I can take you to it, I don't really need to, but
 13 I don't know whether you have had the opportunity of
 14 learning of the criticism made, for instance, by
 15 Tessa Tracey that that shouldn't be done, that sort of
 16 thing shouldn't be done?
 17 A. She did say that to me at about 4 o'clock in the
 18 morning.
 19 Q. And do you agree that perhaps you shouldn't have been
 20 doing that?
 21 A. It didn't occur to me at the time because at the time
 22 I sort of wanted to get the information the quickest
 23 way. So yes, it would have been better if they were all
 24 recorded.
 25 Q. That's the point I was just about to get to. It is the

82

1 second time you have done that and you are obviously
 2 reading my mind because my question was: the calls that
 3 you make on that mobile aren't recorded, are they?
 4 A. No, they're not no.
 5 Q. And there's no record of what is said at all about them,
 6 is there?
 7 A. If it's been something to do with the incident I would
 8 have put it on one of the logs, so it would marry up.
 9 Q. I do understand that but we've heard, quite
 10 understandably, about the tense nature of the events and
 11 how people were working hard but overwhelmed at times.
 12 Would you agree, and I'll simply leave it here, that
 13 perhaps that shouldn't be done, in terms of it's best to
 14 do it through a system which records everything without
 15 you having to remember, for instance, or your
 16 colleagues, what you have said?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. I want to move on now. That's a whole page of questions
 19 I'm turning over so you'll be relieved.
 20 I want to ask you though about Fire Control job
 21 descriptions. We know that Fire Control, North West
 22 Fire Control, employed David Ellis and Dean Casey.
 23 What was their job description?
 24 A. Control room operator.
 25 Q. Let's just clarify what was expected of them because

83

1 we have the control room operator job description here.
 2 {INQ000938/1}, please.
 3 This is the job description of a control room
 4 operator. So looking down, that's effectively — 1 to
 5 10 are the key responsibilities and there's a lot of
 6 responsibility on these men and women, isn't there?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. In many respects, as we have heard for instance from
 9 David Ellis, only recently in his case, and part
 10 qualified?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Looking at that for instance:
 13 "Undertakes emergency call handling activities in
 14 accordance with regional and national emergency call
 15 management principles. Mobilises appropriate resources
 16 in accordance with Fire and Rescue Service response
 17 principles. Undertakes incident management and
 18 operational support activities", and so on.
 19 Would you perhaps agree that those responsibilities
 20 are perhaps too onerous on individuals who are expected
 21 to perform the job of control room operator and they
 22 should perhaps be honed down a little so that they can
 23 focus on the important aspects of their job?
 24 A. No, I wouldn't say so. I believe that... I'll have to
 25 check but I believe that comes from — that's a national

84

1 thing for control operators, not for Fire Control
 2 operators, no. I don't think it is too much.
 3 Fire Control operators do do more of the whole role than
 4 police and ambulance. Police and ambulance have call
 5 takers and dispatchers. For fire the person taking the
 6 call chooses the incident and decides which it is. It's
 7 the way fire work and that's something there that hasn't
 8 come in just with North West Fire Control, that's
 9 something I have always known and I believe it is
 10 a national thing and I, as a control operator, when
 11 I was one, didn't feel it was too much, no.
 12 Q. I understand it might not have been too much in the
 13 general and important work that you and your colleagues
 14 do but in the context perhaps of what was happening on
 15 22 May, would you accept perhaps the duties imposed upon
 16 the control room operator, if undertaken fully, were
 17 very onerous indeed?
 18 A. Again I wouldn't say so, no. I mean, we were all facing
 19 something that night that those of us on duty hadn't
 20 really faced. The last time there'd been a bomb in
 21 Manchester was over 20 years before.
 22 Q. All right. Let me move on.
 23 I want to take you to your statement again, please.
 24 That's your statement -- not your statement, I want to
 25 take you to {INQ040465/1}, please.

85

1 This is obviously a call from Mr Nankivell to you;
 2 is that right?
 3 A. That's correct, yes.
 4 Q. As a preface to this, I've looked at a number of
 5 communications that you've had with Mr Nankivell, you
 6 seem to know him well and get on with him well?
 7 A. Yes, I knew most of the Manchester office as well.
 8 Q. I was about to add that, that's the third time you've
 9 done it.
 10 Is that as a result of you having worked in the
 11 area, and it's the point you were making yesterday, that
 12 you've got to know people and they've got to know and
 13 trust you?
 14 A. Yes, very much so.
 15 Q. And Mr Nankivell, when you look at the dialogue between
 16 you and him, that's a classic example of it?
 17 A. That's correct, yes.
 18 Q. All right looking at that, could you scroll down please
 19 Mr Lopez to {INQ040465/5}. I want to ask you something
 20 about what you say in the top quarter there:
 21 "I'll tell about it another time. Just something
 22 that shocked me."
 23 Then Mr Nankivell says:
 24 "I'll tell you about my end and that will shock you
 25 as well, believe me."

86

1 So firstly, what is it that you were referring to
 2 there when you say:
 3 "I'll tell you about it another time. It's
 4 something that shocked me"?
 5 A. Um... (Pause). It's something actually we've just been
 6 referring to of me having calls on my works mobile phone
 7 from the Manchester officers.
 8 Q. From the Manchester what?
 9 A. Officers, sorry, from the Manchester flexi duty
 10 officers, such as Dean, Ben and so on. I'd just at that
 11 point been told not to do that by Sarah and Tessa
 12 because it wasn't on tape, and I wasn't -- I was saying
 13 it shocked me because -- sorry, I feel bad saying this.
 14 My mind at that time was on the incident and I was sort
 15 of surprised that someone was thinking like that.
 16 Q. I'm going to stop you there because I'm completely lost
 17 at the moment and I know you're distressed and I don't
 18 want to distress you --
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you were upset about this criticism
 20 of you, particularly at that time, being made?
 21 A. Yes. Because I was thinking time and a place --
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, and actually by using your mobile
 23 phone you were just trying to make everything quicker
 24 and you weren't necessarily thinking of people looking
 25 at recordings later; is that right?

87

1 A. That's what shocked me, yes, because I was thinking --
 2 I completely-- because when they said it, I was like,
 3 God yeah, really everything you do as a Control person
 4 is on tape completely. I was in such shock that the
 5 thinking was they were already thinking ahead and I was
 6 thinking of the incident.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. We understand that.
 8 MR COOPER: I understand, sir.
 9 When Mr Nankivell said he's got a few shocking
 10 things to tell you, did he ever tell you what they were?
 11 A. Um... Briefly. He just said it was what went on in the
 12 control room that night.
 13 Q. What did he say?
 14 A. Sorry, the command support room that night. To be
 15 honest, by the time I got to speak to him, because
 16 we were told that at that point we couldn't discuss the
 17 incident, so he didn't say what had gone on, but his
 18 feeling was that he didn't want to be in the Fire
 19 Service any more.
 20 Q. He didn't what?
 21 A. Sorry. Want to be in the Fire Service any more.
 22 Q. Did he say, and we'll hear from him, did he say in
 23 short, and I think we can gather from the evidence we've
 24 seen, but I'm asking you because he spoke to you, did he
 25 say to you why he didn't want to be in the Fire Service

88

1 any more?

2 A. We... We are a disciplined service and because we are
3 told not to discuss it, we really didn't -- I found out
4 so much through watching this -- but he just said that
5 he couldn't believe what had gone on and he didn't want
6 to be in the Fire Service any more.

7 Q. All right. There are a number of communications that
8 you have, particularly with Mr Nankivell, that I want to
9 take you to. Only three, but I would like to take you
10 to them. Do you have this bundle of calls at
11 {INQ041473/1} that North West Fire Control have very
12 helpfully put together for us?

13 A. I have seen it in my bundle. I haven't got it in my
14 front of me now.

15 Q. I wonder if a copy could be supplied to you in some way
16 or it might be on the screen perhaps, if that helps.
17 Let me do it on the screen if it's easier.

18 I want to take you to {INQ041473/103} of that
19 document. In fact we've already dealt with page 103.
20 I can move from that that because that's in your
21 statement.

22 I want to take you to {INQ041473/111}, please. This
23 is a call -- if you can see that, just familiarise with
24 the page. This is a call involving GM Ben Levy, a call
25 to you. You have indicated to us, haven't you, that you

89

1 knew Mr Levy?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Another one of the men that you knew well. You say
4 this:

5 "Is there any that you're putting out that we could
6 sort of go on the back of the board of directors?"

7 And Levy says this:

8 "I'm not putting anything out because it's just
9 embarrassing what we've done. I'm starting to get that
10 John Fletcher's not very happy, very low, very, very
11 low, and reduced to tears [Gaskell]. He'll be glad he's
12 not there I think."

13 And you say this:

14 "Like you say, we can discuss the plan. I'll speak
15 to you later anyway."

16 What were you trying to get over to him when you
17 said:

18 "Like you say, we can discussion the plan. I'll
19 speak to you later anyway?"

20 And did you speak to him later?

21 A. I don't know -- I'm sure I've seen a full transcript of
22 that call. I don't know if I have just seen that, I'm
23 not sure.

24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is it that you're not very happy with
25 what's gone on that night and you wanted to put

90

1 something to the board of directors of NWFC?

2 A. That was from Sarah. Sarah said she was going to have
3 to email the board of directors to let them know what
4 had gone on and let them know what Control's involvement
5 was. So that was...

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Getting things from him which might help
7 with that report?

8 A. Yes, and I think she'd asked me to -- because I worked
9 closer with Ben Levy, she had asked me to contact him to
10 get that information.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

12 MR COOPER: Finally on this, I would just like to -- it's
13 the point about of text messaging and whether you can
14 help us with anything that appeared in those text
15 messages. {INQ041473/112}.

16 At the bottom of that page you can see there are
17 a number of text messages that pass between Mr Meakin
18 and you.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. What were they about?

21 A. From what I can remember, because Carlos was the one
22 that was involved in that, because we'd had the hazard
23 zones on all night, one of the control operators was
24 saying, do we still need the hazard zones, because every
25 time you created an incident within the hazard zone the

91

1 message would pop up to say check before mobilising due
2 to the incident. So I'd asked -- because Carlos is very
3 familiar with the city centre, I'd asked him could we
4 reduce the hazard zones now and I think I'd sent him
5 what the hazard zones were by text so that he could have
6 a look at it. I know I definitely sent him text
7 messages about the hazard zones.

8 Q. I see. Thank you.

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: By this time you had been on duty
10 practically for 24 hours.

11 A. That's correct, yes.

12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: With about a 3-hour break?

13 A. Yes.

14 MR COOPER: Just a question now, a very self-contained
15 question, I don't need to take you to the document. But
16 in one communication, you comment on someone called
17 Vicky Worrall from NWS.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. And you indicated, and it's there, you were annoyed
20 about her, she annoyed you in some way?

21 A. I wasn't talking -- no, sorry, this is me and my mouth.
22 I was talking to Michelle and someone in the room did
23 something, I can't remember who it was now, but I was
24 referring to... It is not very nice thing to say stuff
25 like this -- I was referring to someone in the control

92

1 room at the time, I can't remember who, but someone did
 2 something that annoyed me. I was waiting for -- that
 3 was -- if you listen to the call --
 4 Q. Can I stop you to help you (overspeaking)?
 5 A. It's not about Vicky.
 6 Q. It just seemed the juxtaposition was -- well, we've put
 7 that right and everyone's happy, but I'm not going to
 8 ask you about the incident in the control room unless
 9 it's something which affected the way you worked.
 10 A. No, it's just someone generally was annoying me.
 11 Q. Let me move on entirely from that. I just want to go
 12 now, finally, to a few debriefs just so again the chair
 13 has them before him and some of your observations just
 14 in two other debriefs that we've not seen. Can I take
 15 you, please, to {INQ001124/2}.
 16 As you can see, this is from you. Look at the
 17 second paragraph there:
 18 "Peter O'Reilly stated that he felt the
 19 communication and passing of information in the initial
 20 stages wasn't very good. He felt not all the control
 21 rooms were thinking the same, including the fact that
 22 GMP had declared Plato at 22.47 but didn't let us know.
 23 It was only due to the fact ..."
 24 And it goes on to explain how that was found:
 25 "Also, David stayed on the phone to GMP for over [an

93

1 hour] and not all the information he received was given
 2 to the NILO, Berry, or the other officers attending,
 3 some of which they believe to be key. John Fletcher
 4 confirmed that following this, the GMP O is now
 5 monitored constantly in Control and this type of
 6 incident would now come through that so that all the
 7 control rooms are receiving the information [in the same
 8 way]."
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think, Mr Cooper, now you have done
 10 what a number of us have now done by referring to the
 11 channel number.
 12 MR COOPER: I'm so sorry --
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Don't worry, we can have it removed.
 14 MR COOPER: Thank you. As it was in a document which was
 15 open, as it were -- forgive me.
 16 A. (Overspeaking). It's not been redacted.
 17 Q. Forget what I've just done.
 18 A. Glad it's not just me.
 19 Q. Well, no, it's me.
 20 But let me ask you about the essence of that
 21 paragraph. It's the point about Mr O'Reilly's view that
 22 not all the control rooms were thinking the same. Do
 23 you agree with that and can you develop it if you do?
 24 A. At the brief, the first time that Peter O'Reilly asked
 25 a question was to me saying, "Do you agree the control

94

1 rooms didn't work together well on the night?" Which
 2 I have to say, knowing what other control rooms knew,
 3 he was right, they didn't work together. We didn't have
 4 information, we didn't know we didn't have that
 5 information, if that makes sense, because you're
 6 expecting, if you're speaking to someone saying "What
 7 have you got", they're going to tell you. So I did
 8 agree with what he said there that the three control
 9 rooms -- it was very, very clear at that stage that it
 10 hadn't been passed on.
 11 Q. Again, have improvements been made since then as far as
 12 you're aware about that sort of (overspeaking) --
 13 A. Like he said, the O -- sorry, it's because I saw it
 14 written there.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, don't worry. The situation is
 16 now you've got the communications open all the time,
 17 every bit of information should be able to be
 18 communicated instantly between all of them?
 19 A. To all three, yes.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In relation to Operation Plato, we now
 21 have to make a decision actually as to whether that was
 22 deliberately not communicated or whether everyone was
 23 overwhelmed or what happened. So I think we can leave
 24 that, Mr Cooper, as well. Clearly, at this particular
 25 stage, when they're talking, the fact that the

95

1 Operation Plato declaration had not been communicated
 2 was an important omission. So I think we can --
 3 MR COOPER: Then I will. It's simply a line in that
 4 paragraph that, with the hearing's leave, I just wanted
 5 to briefly examine. Four lines in:
 6 "Although David stayed on the phone to GMP for over
 7 half an hour, not all of that information he received
 8 was given to the NILO or the other officers attending,
 9 some of which they believe to be key."
 10 Can you just elaborate on that?
 11 A. On the bit about being believed to be key or --
 12 Q. The fact that information was not passed on.
 13 A. Yeah, because that very became -- at the time, didn't
 14 know that --
 15 Q. What information, just so I can just join it up --
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think, sorry, it's the information on
 17 the document which we've been supplied with, so it's all
 18 those pieces down the right-hand column, I think, we're
 19 talking about; is that right?
 20 A. Yes, I think so.
 21 MR COOPER: (Overspeaking) and that information was not
 22 passed on and steps, no doubt, without me giving details
 23 of them, are in place to address that?
 24 A. Yes, yes.
 25 Q. All right, again I'm not going to take you in any great

96

1 depth to it. Your next paragraph:
 2 "We were good at passing information we received to
 3 the other controls, but we didn't tell the
 4 Greater Manchester Fire Service officers of the
 5 information received, some of it important such as
 6 Bronze commanders being on the scene and details of
 7 where the police were."
 8 And so on. Is that right?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Finally, as far as debriefs are concerned, please,
 11 Mr Lopez, {INQ001130/3}:
 12 "From your own role perspective what aspects of
 13 Operation Newtown did not go well?"
 14 Are there any (inaudible: distorted) in that
 15 paragraph that you would particularly like to emphasise
 16 that you think were particularly important to you?
 17 A. Could I just point out the channel's showing again
 18 there, sorry.
 19 I would like to go particularly ... Um...
 20 (Pause)
 21 Um... Really, the Plato ... I was going in with the
 22 opinion that's what it is. It felt like that's what
 23 type of incident it was. And I can't speak for other
 24 people, but I think other people are thinking along
 25 those lines. If we'd have known, we could have had the

97

1 conversations about it, so that would have made, for me,
 2 a difference because if it was like, yeah, it is warm
 3 zone, but it's going to be a cold zone soon, at least
 4 you can pass that on so you're giving something.
 5 Q. Thank you. Take that down, please, Mr Lopez.
 6 Mr Berry, again I won't take you to it, but take it
 7 from me it's there, in his debrief said that North West
 8 Fire Control operators did not understand the marauding
 9 terrorism firearms attack terminology. What would you
 10 say about that?
 11 A. He was referring to -- because I was at that debrief and
 12 obviously he directed that to me, he was referring to
 13 the fact that when eh said MTFA he was asked to repeat
 14 it: "Sorry, what was that? MT?"
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That was Mr Ellis, wasn't it?
 16 A. Mr Casey.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So sorry, thank you.
 18 A. That's someone on a telephone call saying, "Sorry,
 19 can you repeat something?" I don't think that -- to me,
 20 that doesn't really say that they don't know. It just
 21 says they haven't heard.
 22 MR COOPER: Then I'll move on. I wanted to put that to you
 23 because it is in the email.
 24 Last question, last document. Because it's an email
 25 from you to Sarah Wilson very recently.

98

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Of 30 July. You know the one I'm referring to?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. 30 July of last year.
 5 Mr Lopez, {INQ035467/1}, please. This is my last
 6 series of questions, the last document. This is from
 7 you to Sarah Wilson and you see the date. You say this:
 8 "I do also have concerns that the inquiry team would
 9 consider me part of NWFC when I feel I am only getting
 10 some information and even part of the fire report
 11 shocked me about my own ex-colleagues. I literally had
 12 no idea Michelle followed the action plan."
 13 We have heard -- seen her two statements now:
 14 "The first I heard of this was in the fire report."
 15 I am going to ask you about that opening line:
 16 "I do have concerns that the inquiry team will
 17 consider me part of NWFC."
 18 What do you mean by that?
 19 A. I was disappointed that I wasn't included -- obviously
 20 I don't work there any more and a number of other staff
 21 don't either who were on that night. Some of the other
 22 members of staff had been sent emails as a group email
 23 that I had been left out of and then I'd get either sent
 24 them at a later date or would -- someone would say, "It
 25 was in the email from Sarah", "What email from Sarah?"

99

1 --
 2 Q. Let me ask the question: you clearly are or were part of
 3 NWFC.
 4 A. Yes. In relation to this what I mean was I --
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I attempt to short circuit it too?
 6 MR COOPER: Not at all, sir, if it helps.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think you have felt at times that you
 8 are not getting all the information you ought to have
 9 been given in order to prepare for the inquiry.
 10 A. Yes.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: By the time you have come to give
 12 evidence, are you happy that you have been given the
 13 information you have needed in order to prepare properly
 14 to give your evidence?
 15 A. Once I received everything from the inquiry team direct,
 16 yes.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So I know there has been direct
 18 communication.
 19 MR COOPER: Then that has dealt with it.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just needed to clear that up.
 21 MR COOPER: I just didn't know that, sir.
 22 A. It was more of an admin thing to do with the inquiry.
 23 MR COOPER: I ask no more questions of you.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 25 MR DE LA POER: Sir, we have been going a little over an

100

1 hour since our last impromptu break and I wonder whether
 2 that might be a convenient moment before I turn to
 3 Mr Smith.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Can we make it a 10-minute break
 5 again? Is that all right for you?
 6 A. Yes, that's fine.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 8 (11.57 am)
 9 (A short break)
 10 (12.09 pm)
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Smith.
 12 Questions from MR SMITH
 13 MR SMITH: I would like to ask you, to begin with, about the
 14 action plans for Operation Plato, which you were
 15 involved with in terms of their amendment.
 16 A. On occasions, yes, sir.
 17 Q. We have seen that the action plans for Operation Plato,
 18 which were current at the time of the attack, also had
 19 your initials, with those of Mr Levy, attached to the
 20 date of the amendment.
 21 A. It's the date of the amendment and Mr Levy had put my
 22 name, my initials, next to it, so that he knew who had
 23 amended it, that it was me that had amended it within
 24 North West Fire Control. He's just quite thorough like
 25 that. So as well as him, there were his actions -- my

101

1 initials next to it were because I was the one who'd
 2 done it rather than ops support or another person within
 3 North West Fire Control.
 4 Q. I think we can see that at the end of these action
 5 plans, the Plato ones, it also indicates that Group
 6 Manager John Fletcher was also involved. He'd been
 7 consulted by Mr Levy, no doubt?
 8 A. Yes. Because all of that fell under Mr Fletcher's
 9 department.
 10 Q. When it came to the process of amending and updating
 11 those plans prior to the attack, did you provide the
 12 Fire and Rescue Service, that's Mr Levy in particular,
 13 with any views of yours in relation to the management of
 14 a Plato exercise?
 15 A. Not at all, no, that wasn't my role.
 16 Q. Why has it come about that your initials were placed
 17 there on the action plan?
 18 A. Because I was the one that actually actioned the
 19 amendments. He'd done it almost like he would on
 20 a letter with a secretary, where you've got the person
 21 who has written the letter and then you'll have the
 22 secretary's initials after it. It was a bit of that
 23 sort of thing, so he knew who had amended it rather than
 24 actually having the input.
 25 Q. Were you in any way involved in any discussion

102

1 concerning the "Bomb -- general" action plan and the
 2 explosion action plan which was in force prior to the
 3 attack?
 4 A. No, sir. Like I say, I was just there to put in what
 5 they wanted. If words didn't make sense because they
 6 had used local terms, I would ask if we could change
 7 that to a more general term so everybody could
 8 understand.
 9 Q. I should point out in relation to those two plans, your
 10 initials don't appear at the end.
 11 A. No. It's something he started doing and then I said,
 12 "Why have you done that?", and it was because he'd
 13 previously -- someone else within North West Fire
 14 Control had changed it and he wasn't sure where I kept
 15 records, so he wanted it to be clear. He is just very
 16 thorough like that.
 17 Q. So a very simple explanation?
 18 A. Very, yes.
 19 Q. I'd like to ask you next about the MTFA audit conducted
 20 on 11 February 2016.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. You attended the audit, didn't you?
 23 A. Yes -- I suppose you could say attended, yes. I didn't
 24 ever go to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
 25 about it, but they brought the auditors to North West

103

1 Fire Control just to check that what Greater Manchester
 2 were saying that their control room would do was
 3 actually in our system to action.
 4 Q. Is it correct that when the auditors came to the control
 5 room, representatives of the Fire and Rescue Service
 6 came as well at the same time?
 7 A. They did because it was their audit, not North West Fire
 8 Control's audit.
 9 Q. Is one of the things that the auditors were interested
 10 in to see to what extent North West Fire Control were
 11 aware of the mobilising procedures in the context of an
 12 Operation Plato incident?
 13 A. When I was told by Group Manager Fletcher that they
 14 would like to visit, that wasn't what I was told. I was
 15 told it was more to see -- they wanted to see if the
 16 plans were in place of what they'd said and whilst
 17 there, they did ask me questions about what I knew about
 18 Op Plato and MTFA.
 19 Q. We don't need to visit these documents unless absolutely
 20 necessary, but complimentary emails were exchanged
 21 between the head of North West Fire Control,
 22 recipient --
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. -- and Mr Gaskell, Mr Keelan, all relating to the fact
 25 that you had displayed clear knowledge of the mobilising

104

1 procedures that would be required in the event of an
 2 Operation Plato. You'll be aware of that
 3 correspondence?
 4 A. I am aware of that correspondence, that's correct, sir,
 5 yes.
 6 Q. Do you consider, therefore, that you were well prepared
 7 for an Operation Plato incident --
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. -- by the time of 22 May. Forgive me, I saw your
 10 expression. I didn't mean to interrupt you either.
 11 By 22 May 2017, you were well prepared by that date
 12 for the management of such an incident?
 13 A. Yes, sir, that's correct.
 14 Q. There are some matters that the inquiry will be
 15 interested to know your views in relation to. The first
 16 is: do you consider that the control room should have
 17 taken steps on the night of 22 May to instigate,
 18 initiate, however you want to describe it, a three-way
 19 multi-agency Talk Group with GMP and North West
 20 Ambulance Service, or do you have a particular view
 21 otherwise?
 22 A. I think as I've said previously in debriefs, I think it
 23 would have been very helpful to have had that in the
 24 initial stages until people got to scene. Yes, I do
 25 think that would have been a good thing. I did think it

105

1 hadn't been done on the night because the police were
 2 still dealing with neutralising the area before saying
 3 to the other two, "Right, we're ready for you", that
 4 sort of thing. So that's what I thought was happening,
 5 but the initial bit really would have been better
 6 communicating to all at once on one of the channels.
 7 Q. Do you agree that it has its value in the early stages
 8 of an incident?
 9 A. Absolutely, yes. That's when you're getting your
 10 information.
 11 Q. That's when it has its real value, isn't it?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Before there is coordination on the ground?
 14 A. Yes, because then you're feeding information in to them
 15 and everyone's getting it at once so nothing is getting
 16 lost.
 17 Q. So really, my question as well is: did you consider
 18 at the time, after the attack had occurred, let us say
 19 in the aftermath, that perhaps North West Fire Control
 20 should have taken the initiative when no step was taken
 21 by GMP to identify a channel for these purposes?
 22 A. To be honest, at that time I felt they must have been
 23 too busy to get back to us, because to me they were
 24 still dealing with possible firearms and because we were
 25 getting more information in, there was something at

106

1 Oldham Hospital, it was just like -- I thought this is
 2 the real big one, so it was like you're waiting for the
 3 police to then tell you when you're needed. I thought
 4 they were dealing with the threat to make it that then
 5 the other services could go in and get casualties.
 6 Q. Once Group Manager Fletcher mentioned the use of the --
 7 this is operationally sensitive --
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. -- the use of the particular Airwave, and North West
 10 Fire Control, through you, began to monitor that
 11 Airwave --
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. -- I think we have from the records from Laura Lewis
 14 that it was just a moment or two, a minute or two,
 15 before midnight.
 16 A. I would think it's around that time. I don't recall the
 17 exact time.
 18 Q. The call-up came over the channel. Is there a reason
 19 why you simply acknowledged the call and indicated that
 20 fire was monitoring but took no other step to discuss
 21 any aspect of the night's incident with GMP, who were
 22 also therefore on the channel and calling you?
 23 A. No, because I thought -- because they called us up
 24 first, as in fire, and I've responded. I was then
 25 thinking: right, okay, we're ready to go now. Then when

107

1 they called NWS up and NWS didn't answer I thought
 2 they must be now doing a different means of
 3 communication because NWS hadn't answered so it's sort
 4 of pointless having the radio channel if you haven't got
 5 everyone on it. So I thought they must have been going
 6 to NWS -- I've assumed -- I've thought they must have
 7 been going to NWS to get them on it so that they're now
 8 telling us as the other two responders where to go.
 9 Q. Was it therefore a question of waiting for developments?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Moving on from there, is it correct that you would
 12 become aware that fire crews and appliances, both
 13 specialist and non-specialist, were now held up at G18
 14 Philips Park Fire Station and had been there for some
 15 considerable time?
 16 A. When I arrived into Control, I had no idea how long
 17 they'd been there. Time flew. The whole night flew.
 18 So I didn't know how long they'd been there and when
 19 I got -- it seemed like it was 2 minutes from when I got
 20 there that I was being told, "Right, we're going to
 21 go to Thompson Street". So for me, there was action
 22 happening, so I didn't feel like there wasn't anything
 23 happening because it's like: we are here but now we are
 24 going back to here.
 25 Q. In fact when you look at it, it's 23.10 when you are

108

1 in the control room --
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. -- and it's only just before midnight when crews start
 4 to arrive at G16 Thompson Street.
 5 A. But we'd been told beforehand that that's where they
 6 were going back to. So I don't know how long it was
 7 from me arriving to being told they were going back,
 8 I don't know. But I felt like there was movement of:
 9 we're here but we're now going to here.
 10 Q. This is the point I want to come to which I'd like to
 11 ask your help about. If we look at the sequence of
 12 communications, {INQ041473/42}, please.
 13 What we can see is that at 23.41.46 -- forgive me,
 14 I've given you the wrong page. I think what we'll see
 15 is that at 23.16 -- if you forgive me, sir, I'm trying
 16 to get my system to work properly.
 17 (Pause)
 18 {INQ041473/42}, please. Your arrival is 23.10?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. At page 42 of the sequence of communications we can see
 21 that at 23.13.50, incident log 9083 was created, which
 22 related to the opening of the command support room.
 23 A. Yes, sir.
 24 Q. Did you become aware of that following your arrival?
 25 A. I didn't realise that was created while I was in there.

109

1 I think at that time I was either speaking to David or
 2 I had rang Sarah. I didn't know that was created while
 3 I was in there, by the time I'd logged on I thought that
 4 was already there, I didn't look at the time it was
 5 created.
 6 Q. Not to worry about the time then. Did you appreciate,
 7 once you'd arrived at North West Fire Control, that
 8 within a short time of that, the command support room
 9 was open?
 10 A. I would have thought due to the nature of the incident
 11 that, yes, I would expect it to be open. I'd have
 12 expected people to be making their way there as soon as
 13 they'd been told of the incident.
 14 Q. So would you just help the chairman, please, about your
 15 assessment of what had happened so far by the time you
 16 got into the control room and familiarised yourself with
 17 what had so far taken place within North West Fire
 18 Control and the Fire and Rescue Service?
 19 A. I was told about the incident, obviously, that a bomb
 20 had gone off, that there was believed to be an
 21 active shooter, but that one person had shrapnel, not
 22 gunshot wounds. But it hadn't been unconfirmed that
 23 there wasn't one. I'd been told that Andy Berry, I had
 24 been told, was the duty NILO, he was on is way, that
 25 he'd asked for further NILOs, and that he'd asked for

110

1 pumps to RV and for the specialist crews to be released
 2 from an incident because they were attending, I think it
 3 was an RTC on the motorway, they were attending that, so
 4 to go back and get -- swap appliances, swap kit and come
 5 to the RVP. And that we were just basically -- we were
 6 all congregating at Philips Park to be ready for the
 7 next steps to come from police.
 8 Q. So one of the questions that was asked of you by
 9 Mr de la Poer earlier today was whether you thought
 10 about this issue: so far as the Ambulance Service and
 11 the police are concerned, do we need to meet up with
 12 them? Do you remember that question being asked of you?
 13 A. Yes, yes, yes.
 14 Q. Is that the reasoning or approach that the control room
 15 should have been taking in the circumstances that I have
 16 just been asking you about?
 17 A. Yes, I would expect, if they hadn't met up, they'd had
 18 conversations. I hadn't realised there hadn't been
 19 those conversations. I knew they all knew each other as
 20 NILOs and as higher members of NWS and the police FDO.
 21 I knew they all knew each other so I hadn't realised
 22 there was such a communications issue at that time.
 23 Q. You didn't realise it. What did you believe would be
 24 taking place among the senior officers at the Fire and
 25 Rescue Service in terms of their ability to have

111

1 situational awareness?
 2 A. In the command support room?
 3 Q. Generally, that is both the NILOs and the officers
 4 in the command support room. Can I just remind you of
 5 some timings then. At just after 11.15, Mr Etches was
 6 mobilised to the command support room. We've looked at
 7 the opening of the incident log for the command support
 8 room.
 9 At 23.41, Mr Nankivell was there. So he had arrived
 10 in the command support room at that time. You have
 11 a duty NILO obviously engaged since 22.40. Two
 12 additional NILOs on the way, arriving at 22.36 and just
 13 before half past at Philips Park.
 14 Were you aware of all that information?
 15 A. I knew the command support room was being set up. When
 16 you say there about Paul Etches being mobilised at that
 17 time, he was -- it wasn't in North West Fire Control's
 18 procedures at that time to tell him. We told the duty
 19 group manager, who would then escalate up, because it
 20 was appreciated with lean staffing we would have too
 21 much to do. So that was taken off us by the duty group
 22 manager, so Mr Etches might have actually been mobile
 23 earlier than that because he would have been told by
 24 Mr Nankivell.
 25 I was aware that the command support room was

112

1 opening.
 2 Q. And you were aware of the involvement of the NILOs, were
 3 you?
 4 A. I knew there was three NILOs, yes.
 5 Q. Armed with that information or that knowledge what,
 6 first of all, did you think or assume was taking place
 7 in terms of situational awareness for the Fire and
 8 Rescue Service, not the control room, but the Fire and
 9 Rescue Service?
 10 A. I thought they were talking to their counterparts at
 11 police. Not so much ambulance because I felt like
 12 they — because police has primacy, I was feeling like
 13 they were waiting to get the go-ahead from police so
 14 I thought they were communicating with police more so —
 15 I didn't really give NNAS that much of a thought of
 16 communications, I was thinking it was police were
 17 waiting for where to go and when and that it's safe.
 18 Q. Did you have any appreciation of the fact that the Fire
 19 and Rescue Service were effectively stalled at
 20 Philips Park Fire Station as, for example, explained to
 21 you later in the night when Mr Fletcher's distress was
 22 identified in that call we've referred to?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Did you any perception of that at the time?
 25 A. No. And like I say, I didn't feel like — I wish — one

113

1 thing I wish from the night is that I'd paid more
 2 attention to the time, because the time went so quick,
 3 I didn't realise that they were stalled because of...
 4 Me being me, the way I was in that job, I would have
 5 landed on deck and gone, "Is everything okay? Do you
 6 want anything? Is there anything we can do?"
 7 I definitely would have rang Ben Levy and said, "What's
 8 going on? Why are you there?", if I'd realised there
 9 was that delay.
 10 Q. Following up on that, I would like to take you to a call
 11 to which you have been referred earlier, which came from
 12 Vicky Worrall at North West Ambulance Service. For
 13 these purposes, we need to go in the sequence of
 14 communications to {INQ041473/74}, please, Mr Lopez.
 15 I'm sorry, could you go back to {INQ041473/73},
 16 please?
 17 So what we see at 00.21, and it's worth just
 18 spending a moment or two on this, this is a call which
 19 involved Dean Casey, first of all, and it was passed to
 20 Michelle Gregson as team leader.
 21 A. That's right, yes.
 22 Q. It's just worth running through this, I suggest:
 23 "I've got a request from our Gold commander at scene
 24 for some support from you, please."
 25 "I'm just transferring you to our team leader."

114

1 "I've got a request from our Gold commander for
 2 support from yourselves, support for the movement of
 3 casualties."
 4 Then running on down the page to the bottom:
 5 "Can we have 12 firefighters, equivalent to three
 6 pumps, and one officer to support the movement of
 7 casualties? If possible, trauma technicians. And we
 8 want them to go to Victoria Station. They must take the
 9 route of Corporation Street."
 10 And then North West Fire Control, Michelle Gregson:
 11 "We've passed that on."
 12 Simultaneously, moving on now to {INQ041473/74} —
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just before you do that, just help me,
 14 please, on the sequence of what's going on, and forgive
 15 me for forgetting. Is that particular call before or
 16 after Mr O'Reilly's call when he is being told that's
 17 what they want, 12 firefighters?
 18 MR SMITH: As I understand it this is before.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. That's what I wanted to
 20 know.
 21 MR WARNOCK: I would like to check that.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Please do, we'll get it checked.
 23 MR SMITH: I'm sure Mr Warnock is probably correct.
 24 Just running now down the page at {INQ041473/74},
 25 what we can see happening on the incident log is that —

115

1 and this I think supports the accuracy of what
 2 Mr Warnock just told you, sir:
 3 "By radio from Station Manager Berry: proceeding to
 4 RVP at Corporation Street."
 5 So that's going on to the incident log.
 6 A. Oh right. Sorry? Yes, I can see it now, yes.
 7 Q. On page 74 —
 8 A. Oh yes, got that.
 9 Q. — and picked up again on log 9078 at 00.21.44. Then
 10 00.22.08, 9078, again by phone:
 11 "Proceeding to Victoria Station to meet HART."
 12 So that's the time sequence. Then I'd like to take
 13 you, please, to this call at 00.22.53, which did involve
 14 you.
 15 A. Mm—hm.
 16 Q. This is a call in from Group Manager Nankivell to North
 17 West Fire Control in which you tell him that:
 18 "We're just now having a conversation with North
 19 West Ambulance Service. They're asking for support to
 20 remove — to assist removing casualties."
 21 And then you provide some information and
 22 Mr Nankivell says:
 23 "Yes, they're on their way."
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. And then the detail comes in from you again:

116

1 "Three pumps and one officer."
 2 My question for you is this, having set the scene,
 3 if you like: if you had received a direct request of
 4 that nature in those terms, regardless of the precise
 5 terms here, but a request broadly in those terms from
 6 the Ambulance Service at an earlier stage, let's say
 7 that you had received, what action would you have taken?
 8 A. I ... Depends how early you're talking. If everyone's
 9 at Philips Park or Thompson Street, I would have told
 10 the IC at that incident what they're asking for.
 11 Q. What would you have expected your control room staff to
 12 do in those circumstances also?
 13 A. The same, really, of just: are you okay with that, can
 14 we go with that? Because you've got people there with
 15 an incident commander, if we start mobilising different
 16 things without the incident commander being aware, you
 17 are losing --
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The incident commander's got to take
 19 control of the situation?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you have to ask him whether it's all
 22 right first?
 23 A. I'm just waiting are to the yes from him but I would
 24 never mobilise -- if you've got them there with an
 25 incident commander, I'd never mobilise and not tell him

117

1 because otherwise you're not giving him the information.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You wouldn't mobilise without asking him
 3 (overspeaking) --
 4 A. Yes, just to make -- I'd be expecting a yes from that --
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Of course.
 6 A. -- but I don't know what his plan is so that's why --
 7 he's the incident commander.
 8 MR SMITH: I'm just focusing on that issue therefore. If
 9 you had received a request in those clear terms --
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. -- or in similar clear terms, the step you would have
 12 taken therefore is to inform the incident commander?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. One of the matters you have acknowledged in documents
 15 that you've had your attention drawn to is that North
 16 West Fire Control were deficient, if you like, my word,
 17 in informing Fire and Rescue Service officers of
 18 information coming into the control room.
 19 A. That's something I came to find out later on, yes.
 20 Q. So put shortly therefore, do you consider that the
 21 control room ought to have been looking at this more
 22 proactively and so instead of a situation where clear
 23 information is coming in by way of a request to provide
 24 support, you've got a situation where information is
 25 simply coming in, you consider that the control room

118

1 should have been applying the same standard that you
 2 apply in response to the Ambulance Service's call, and
 3 passing that information to the Fire and Rescue Service
 4 officers?
 5 A. I do, yes.
 6 Q. Is that a lesson to be learned for the future?
 7 A. Most definitely. It's been so drummed into me my whole
 8 career that I sort of can't believe it wasn't done until
 9 after the event when I saw that it hadn't been done.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But it isn't, is it? I think we've
 11 perhaps established already it's not just enough to say
 12 the information needs to be passed on to the Fire and
 13 Rescue Service. We understand that. But first of all,
 14 what needs to be passed on needs to be identified as
 15 being needed to be passed on and, secondly, you need to
 16 have a person to whom you're passing it on.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So there needs to be some single point
 19 of contact during all this, do you think? Or is that
 20 not right?
 21 A. I would think it ... The incident commander needs to
 22 know -- or if it was at a large incident and you had the
 23 command unit or command support unit there, you would
 24 tell the command support unit or command unit, because
 25 everything goes through them at the incident, it's

119

1 a vehicle they set up at the incident, so everything
 2 goes into that and then they tell (overspeaking) --
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Had all these details which follow on
 4 from what you've agreed with Mr Smith, that you should
 5 have been more proactive, the details of how you become
 6 proactive, to whom you are proactive, if that's not
 7 an odd phrase, and what you're being proactive about,
 8 all needs to have been drummed into you as well, it's
 9 not good enough, is it, just to say you need to tell
 10 people, or is it?
 11 A. It's ... It's hard to describe because it's been in my
 12 thinking as a control room operator for so long.
 13 Otherwise what's the point? You take the information --
 14 if you don't do anything with it, it's not going
 15 anywhere. And I think ... It's ... For me, it's part of
 16 the essential, part of being a -- it's that ingrained.
 17 I'm sure it's in the training but it's a long time since
 18 I've looked at training.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it should be there. Ingrained in
 20 everybody. And it's extraordinary to you that it didn't
 21 happen?
 22 A. Yes, yes.
 23 MR SMITH: Just to follow up one point from the chairman's
 24 questions: if there was a single point of contact in
 25 a major incident --

120

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. -- at the Fire and Rescue Service, to whom critical
 3 information involving other agencies should be
 4 channelled, and from that single point of contact that
 5 officer could provide that level of communication to the
 6 incident commander, who might change of course, would
 7 that be a sensible step to take?
 8 A. Yes, I would say so.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Again, the other alternative is you've
 10 actually got someone in the Fire and Rescue Service
 11 who's actually looking at the log and so sees all the
 12 information that comes in as well?
 13 A. Yes. They are -- yes, they can see the logs and see the
 14 information. All the flexi duty officers have their own
 15 log-ins for iNet Viewer so they can all see the logs, so
 16 someone could have done it remotely from home.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Berry has accepted that had he
 18 decided to stay at home to run the operation at the
 19 early stages, he would have had access to logs and he
 20 would have seen what was going on.
 21 A. Yes. In the early stages as incident commander.
 22 MR SMITH: I think Mr Levy already said, although it
 23 wouldn't have been easy for him, that he could have gone
 24 into Philips Park and taken certain steps with a view to
 25 trying to access the log, but what was apparent, sir,

121

1 I believe, if you'll forgive me for raising this now,
 2 was that it wasn't easy for the NILOs to view the
 3 incident log at that stage.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Not when they're on the road and even
 5 when they got to the station, even if they see it,
 6 they're seeing it at a particular instant only where
 7 information may come over a period of time. Okay,
 8 I understand that.
 9 But if Mr Berry had remained at home, he would have
 10 been able to see it all?
 11 MR SMITH: So could I ask you about an entirely different
 12 matter now. I would like to take you to {INQ000250/1},
 13 please, which is an interview held for the purposes of
 14 the Kerslake investigation.
 15 In the course of that interview you made
 16 reference -- could we go to {INQ000250/2}, please.
 17 At the very bottom of that page, you made reference to
 18 the issue of whether control rooms work well together.
 19 The answer that comes in there is:
 20 "Everyone's busy doing their own thing. Radio's
 21 a good step forward. No one is taking the higher view
 22 to make sure all are linked up. Did your control room
 23 share everything? Not about not being a gunshot wound.
 24 Hindsight re realising NILO."
 25 And this is what I want to ask you about:

122

1 "Not on Batphone."
 2 A. Mm.
 3 Q. You made a reference to the Batphone in your email
 4 correspondence that you were asked about which you sent
 5 to Sarah Wilson after you had left North West Fire
 6 Control, which we saw on screen not very long ago.
 7 Could you explain what you meant by this reference
 8 in the Kerslake investigation and in your email, please,
 9 to a Batphone?
 10 A. I sort of expected, like, a private line between the
 11 two. That's what I mean by that. I expected that it
 12 was going to be a line that if that particular phone
 13 rings, it's only coming from that person. We used to
 14 have them in the fire services where it was like
 15 a private wire, so if it was like a high COMAH site they
 16 could ring without going through the 999 and it would be
 17 direct to the control room and you knew it was that
 18 site. I almost assumed it would be like that, that
 19 there would be a set phone, but I'm assuming --
 20 I assumed there would be a set phone, that it would only
 21 be the NWS NILOs and the fire NILOs that would be using
 22 that to get through to the FDO. I thought they had
 23 something different because so much emphasis was put on
 24 the NILOs and the FDO.
 25 Q. Did you know about the NILO Talk Group?

123

1 A. Yes, I did know there was a NILO Talk Group, it wasn't
 2 something that North West Fire Control could access
 3 because it was a higher security -- there's different
 4 levels of security within the Airwave and it was just
 5 for NILOs only.
 6 Q. Did you entertain any thought as to whether that was
 7 being or might be being used as an avenue of
 8 communication with the Fire Service that night?
 9 A. Again, with hindsight, really it would have been better
 10 to use the operational Talk Group because there was --
 11 as soon as officers mobilise to an incident they go on
 12 one of North West Fire Control's operational Talk
 13 Groups. Realistically, they could have all talked on
 14 that and then that would have included us and the
 15 command support room could have listened in. With
 16 hindsight, that would probably have been -- the best
 17 option is to use the operational normal Talk Group for
 18 the Fire Service.
 19 Q. Will you forgive me, it's probably my fault and the way
 20 I asked the question. When you were managing the
 21 incident in your position --
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. -- did you make any assumptions in relation to whether
 24 those means of communication, if you like the Batphone,
 25 or the NILO Talk Group, would be in use and therefore

124

1 something which North West Fire Control would not have
2 access to?

3 A. I did think they were all talking, yes. I did think
4 that fire were talking amongst themselves and that there
5 was communication. I didn't realise there wasn't any
6 communication.

7 Q. I would like to take you to the debrief that was
8 conducted on 12 July. If Mr Lopez could put on the
9 screen {INQ030902/3}, please:

10 "Our training is tell the NILO, think NILO; think
11 NILO because we don't know what we are sending crews
12 into. We have had NILOs in for training of what
13 information they need to assist them in the initial
14 stages."

15 That's something that was recorded as having been
16 said by you —

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. — at the 12 July debrief. Do you remember that?

19 A. That's correct, yes, I do remember that, yes.

20 Q. Present at that debrief, I think, was the chief fire
21 officer, Mr O'Reilly.

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. The assistant chief fire officer, Mr Keelan.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. And a large number of representatives, officers, crews

125

1 members and others from the Fire and Rescue Service; is
2 that correct?

3 A. That's correct.

4 Q. That meeting was held at a place called The Hive in
5 Manchester?

6 A. It was indeed, yes.

7 Q. What were you intending to convey when you used those
8 words in the course of that debrief?

9 A. That for anything out of the ordinary that isn't your
10 standard incident, you tell a NILO. There's other
11 things that you might mobilise to and then tell a NILO
12 afterwards, but for something terrorist-related, you
13 would always tell a NILO.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Before you mobilise?

15 A. Yes. Because terrorism has evolved into different
16 things and you could be causing more harm than good.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You go to the NILO before you mobilise?

18 A. Yes.

19 MR SMITH: Did any of those senior officers there from the
20 Fire and Rescue Service disagree with what you were
21 saying in that regard at that meeting?

22 A. Not that I can recall at all, no.

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We do know that Mr O'Reilly on some
24 occasion has said — maybe it's in his statement — he
25 can't understand why you didn't just follow the

126

1 explosion card.

2 A. He didn't say that at the time because I would have said
3 something back, which I'm sure I would remember and
4 would be in the minutes because I can still remember the
5 questions he asked me. So if he'd said that, I would
6 have remembered that.

7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

8 MR SMITH: That's the very point. When you said this at
9 that meeting, there recorded, Mr O'Reilly was present,
10 wasn't he?

11 A. Yes, he was sitting directly opposite and one away from
12 me, so he was actually — not directly opposite. So the
13 person directly opposite, he was to the side of that
14 person, so he definitely — I would have heard what he
15 said because we were so close.

16 Q. His position at that meeting, so far as you can recall,
17 is this correct, did not at any time involve
18 a suggestion that crews should have been deployed direct
19 to the incident without consulting the duty NILO?

20 A. I don't remember him commenting on it, no. It certainly
21 wasn't questioned, no.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. You'll have read the whole thing,
23 which I'm afraid I certainly haven't. It's one thing
24 Mr O'Reilly remaining silent when this is said, but it's
25 another thing him saying, "I positively agree".

127

1 MR SMITH: There is no question about that. I am not
2 suggesting he positively agreed —

3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, so we are agreed? He just didn't
4 contradict it?

5 MR SMITH: That's the position, sir, yes.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

7 MR SMITH: I would like you to look at the notes taken by
8 the Kerslake Inquiry panel. My reason for these
9 questions is to ensure that the inquiry is not misled at
10 a later stage when looking at documents.

11 A. Okay.

12 Q. But the reference is {INQ000251/1}.

13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So these the notes, are they, of
14 what was said? It's not a transcript?

15 MR SMITH: It's not a transcript, sir. That's the very
16 point I want to come to.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want you to understand that these
18 are notes, with the best will in the world, sometimes
19 notes don't accurately report what has been said. Do
20 tell us if it's not what you said.

21 A. Yes.

22 MR SMITH: There are a number of bullet points on that page,
23 are there not?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. Have you had an opportunity to go through these notes?

128

1 A. I read over them at the weekend and again yesterday
 2 morning.
 3 Q. I don't want to take up time unnecessarily with fine
 4 detail. But are there inaccuracies in those notes?
 5 A. Oh, I can't remember.
 6 Q. Let me --
 7 A. Nothing -- to be honest, I just flicked through the
 8 Kerslake stuff because, like you say, it was notes.
 9 I know when I've seen them I was never asked to sign
 10 a statement or saw that there was notes and at this
 11 particular meeting I do remember thinking I was
 12 surprised that no one seemed to be taking notes but
 13 I haven't -- sorry, I'd need to go through it.
 14 Q. This purports to be a note of a conversation which
 15 involved yourself on the occasion of a visit by the
 16 Kerslake Arena Review Panel to North West Fire Control.
 17 A. At that meeting -- I don't know if this relates to the
 18 earlier bit when they came to North West Fire Control
 19 and saw myself and Sarah Wilson and Tessa Tracey, it
 20 says on there that Pat Johnson was in attendance. I'd
 21 mentioned who works for Greater Manchester Fire and
 22 Rescue Service. I met Alan Goodwin at reception. He
 23 asked who he was seeing and I said that it was
 24 Pat Johnson and he asked if we had invited Pat Johnson
 25 from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and

129

1 I said no. I was surprised when he turned up because
 2 this was North West Fire Control's interview.
 3 So Alan Goodwin, when he arrived, he asked
 4 Pat Johnson to leave the meeting. So the reflection of
 5 who's present there, Pat was asked to leave by
 6 Alan Goodwin, and Sarah and Tessa were also in
 7 attendance at that meeting.
 8 Q. As I say, without picking over the fine detail, I want
 9 to take you to an important point in the second bullet
 10 point.
 11 A. Okay.
 12 Q. It reads:
 13 "At 22.37, information was received that a bomb had
 14 gone off at the arena and that there was thought to be
 15 an active shooter still in the area."
 16 Pausing there, that's not the sequence of events, is
 17 it? The first information coming into the control room
 18 was that a bomb had exploded and it was several minutes
 19 later before there was information that there was an
 20 active shooter?
 21 A. I know that Jo took the call about the active shooter
 22 from Nwas (overspeaking) --
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We can check this. The best place to
 24 look at this (overspeaking) --
 25 MR SMITH: I am coming to the next point, sir, and I don't

130

1 want to take up time --
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I am not complaining about that. I am
 3 just saying -- asking the witness whether it's a correct
 4 sequence of events. It seems to me we can tell the
 5 (overspeaking) from the incident logs.
 6 MR SMITH: We can, sir, yes.
 7 I will come straight to the point now, if I may. If
 8 you look on in this:
 9 "As a result of this, the NWFC operator changed to
 10 the predetermined plan for bomb."
 11 What I want to ask you is this: when you arrived at
 12 North West Fire Control, and spoke to the team leaders,
 13 did they ever suggest to you that they had followed the
 14 action plan for a bomb?
 15 A. No action plans were mentioned to me when I arrived.
 16 And again I would say there, they changed the
 17 predetermined plan for bomb.
 18 Q. My question --
 19 A. The bomb plan was never put on there.
 20 Q. This is why I'm asking you because it's an important
 21 part of the enquiry into the facts which the inquiry is
 22 conducting. I just want to be clear: did you ever tell
 23 the persons who arrived to deal with the Kerslake
 24 investigation on this date that that is what had
 25 happened?

131

1 A. Definitely not because I know it didn't happen. I know
 2 it is something that's been raised by someone within
 3 Greater Manchester because I was asked to -- you've seen
 4 yourselves from the incident logs, if someone views
 5 a log, it's on there. So if someone changes an incident
 6 type or removes an action plan, that is also on there.
 7 Nothing was ever changed or removed and I have proved
 8 that to one of the officers at Greater Manchester, Group
 9 Manager Lee Bourne, and I recreated an incident and
 10 I showed him what would happen if we changed the
 11 incident type or removed any action plans. That never,
 12 ever happened, so I don't -- I would have been strongly
 13 saying something about that, as I'm sure you can
 14 imagine.
 15 Q. So before we finally leave these questions, can I remind
 16 you that Mr Hall, the fire expert, said in his report
 17 that that is what had happened, that the team leaders
 18 had followed that plan. When you sent the email on
 19 16 July 2017 to North West Fire Control to Sarah Wilson,
 20 you made it clear in that email that you were very
 21 surprised at that part of Mr Hall's report because it
 22 had never been your understanding.
 23 A. That was my email in 2020, wasn't it?
 24 Q. Yes, I'm so sorry. I said 2017. 2020, 16 July 2020.
 25 A. Yes. That has never been the case and it was never,

132

1 ever mentioned to me.
 2 Q. That's always been your position, hasn't it?
 3 A. Absolutely and like I say I did prove that to one of the
 4 Greater Manchester officers because of something that
 5 had been raised to him by one of his officers.
 6 Q. And that position stems, does it not, from your
 7 understanding of what was described to you when you
 8 arrived in the control room and had your conversation
 9 with the team leaders?
 10 A. That's right, yes.
 11 MR SMITH: Thank you very much, sir.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The bullet point above is talking about
 13 how the explosion plan had been jointly drawn up between
 14 a NWFC manager, usually you, and a single point of
 15 contact, usually Ben Levy. Is that an accurate way of
 16 describing it?
 17 A. No. I was more... Because...
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you couldn't understand it or thought
 19 it could be better explained?
 20 A. Yes -- no, I never put the instructions in, just
 21 wording.
 22 MR SMITH: Sir, I actually have a whole list of inaccuracies
 23 that can be determined by you, sir, on the material as
 24 a whole.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.

133

1 MR SMITH: For example, that one, which demonstrate that
 2 there was inaccurate recording of information and
 3 I wasn't going to take up time --
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's fair enough. I just happened to
 5 notice that.
 6 MR SMITH: Yes indeed, sir. That's one of them.
 7 MR DE LA POER: No further questions from me, but two short
 8 comments, if I may, in the witness's presence.
 9 The first is that in relation to the issue of
 10 Mr O'Reilly speaking to Mr Hynes and the timing of that
 11 call, I'm very grateful indeed to GMCA. 00.12, as it is
 12 recorded on a flip chart that was used during the
 13 evening to monitor events.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It pre--dates NWAS calling the control
 15 room?
 16 MR DE LA POER: Yes, it does.
 17 Secondly, so far as Mr Smith's remarks about
 18 Mr Hall's report are concerned, he's absolutely right,
 19 although of course Mr Hall at that stage was reporting
 20 the facts as he understood them to be from the NWFC
 21 witness statements and both Michelle Gregson and
 22 Lisa Owen have said in their first statement that
 23 that is what they had done. So it is a piece of
 24 reporting by him rather than a factual finding, which
 25 of course he's not in a position to make.

134

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we need to wait anyway until
 2 Lisa Owen has given her evidence before any final
 3 determination on that can be made?
 4 MR DE LA POER: Quite so.
 5 Sir, unless you have any further questions for
 6 Ms Carden --
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, I'm grateful. You have obviously
 8 given this a great deal of thought and it has been very
 9 helpful to hear what your conclusions are and what
 10 you have said to say and you've been very candid about
 11 things that went wrong, so thank you for that.
 12 MR DE LA POER: Sir, might I suggest that we take our hour
 13 for lunch.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We have two more witnesses this
 15 afternoon, who are?
 16 MR DE LA POER: Lisa Owen and Tessa Tracey.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We anticipate they will both be shorter
 18 than that witness?
 19 MR DE LA POER: Yes.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think we need to at least do the very
 21 best we can to get through them this afternoon,
 22 otherwise there's no hope of getting through the
 23 witnesses due for tomorrow. Is that a fair analysis?
 24 MR DE LA POER: It is. Whether we have enough time to do
 25 that I think is something that we'll all reflect on over

135

1 lunch, but I'll be looking to refine my questions as far
 2 as I can in the light of Ms Carden's evidence.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.
 4 (1.02 pm)
 5 (The lunch adjournment)
 6 (2.00 pm)
 7 MS LISA OWEN (sworn)
 8 Questions from MR DE LA POER
 9 MR DE LA POER: Please could you state your full name?
 10 A. Lisa Owen.
 11 Q. Ms Owen, we'll begin with your background. Did you join
 12 GMFRS in January 2010?
 13 A. I did.
 14 Q. Did you join North West Fire Control when it went live
 15 in May 2014?
 16 A. I did, yes.
 17 Q. At the point you joined North West Fire Control, were
 18 you a CRO?
 19 A. I was, yes.
 20 Q. Were you promoted to team leader in April 2016?
 21 A. I was.
 22 Q. Were you in the role of administrative team leader on
 23 the night of 22 May?
 24 A. I was, yes.
 25 Q. Had you received training in JESIP?

136

1 A. I had, yes.
 2 Q. Did you receive training in marauding firearms attacks
 3 and Operation Plato?
 4 A. I didn't receive the Neil Gaskell training, but I did
 5 receive resilience training, which covered it.
 6 Q. So the question that I have been asking a number of
 7 witnesses: do you think you were adequately trained for
 8 the responsibilities that you had on 22 May?
 9 A. I did on that day, yes.
 10 Q. When you say you did on that day, have you subsequently
 11 changed your mind?
 12 A. I feel it would have been more beneficial for me to have
 13 been -- taken part in multi-agency exercises involving
 14 the control rooms to see some of the potential problems
 15 so that they could be avoided on the night.
 16 Q. 22 May 2017. Was your attention drawn to David Ellis by
 17 him raising his hand?
 18 A. It was, yes.
 19 Q. And did you approach him as a result?
 20 A. I did, yes.
 21 Q. Did you begin to inform yourself about the nature of the
 22 call that he was dealing with?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. How did you do that?
 25 A. I believe I was looking at his screen -- I know that

137

1 Dean Casey's mentioned that I listened to him. I can't
 2 recollect that, but I definitely obtained information
 3 from the screen that David was typing, that there was
 4 a bomb that was exploded, casualties, that it was at the
 5 arena, the venue was significant for me, and
 6 I definitely felt that this was a potential terrorist
 7 incident.
 8 Q. The information that he was entering on to the screen --
 9 at that stage had he created the incident?
 10 A. I think so. I can't be sure though. He may not have
 11 saved it. I don't know, I'm not sure.
 12 Q. There's a period of time, as I've understood it, where
 13 an operator will type into a text box?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. But until they action that, that text effectively just
 16 sits on the screen?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. Is that right?
 19 A. That's correct, yes.
 20 Q. Is what you're saying that you're not sure whether
 21 he had actioned the text on his screen at the point that
 22 you came to read over his shoulder?
 23 A. I'm not sure, no.
 24 Q. We know that as part of the process of creating the
 25 incident, the word "explosion" having been used, the

138

1 explosion action plan was selected by the system.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Did you see that happen?
 4 A. I saw him save, I believe, yes. The incident type --
 5 very difficult to categorise the type of incident that
 6 we were getting coming in. I didn't feel it fitted
 7 a bomb, I didn't feel it fitted an explosion, so his
 8 selection of an incident type was irrelevant to me:
 9 I needed to get Michelle out of the office, who was the
 10 duty team leader, and pass on the information to her and
 11 get a NILO's input on this information that we were
 12 receiving.
 13 Q. We'll just review your answer there just pick out some
 14 items of it.
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Mr Ellis has explained to us that once the action plan
 17 has been selected by the system, there is a further step
 18 by the operator that causes the predetermined allocation
 19 of resources --
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. -- to begin to occur.
 22 A. Mm--hm.
 23 Q. Is that right?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Did you do anything to stop him actioning that PDA?

139

1 A. I asked him to wait, yes.
 2 Q. At that stage, did you go and speak to Michelle Gregson?
 3 A. I did, yes.
 4 Q. Did she come over to where Mr Ellis was?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. He was still on the phone at the time?
 7 A. He was, yes.
 8 Q. Did you and Michelle Gregson have any kind of
 9 conversation about what the next step should be?
 10 A. We were both of the agreement that we should go to the
 11 NILO. This wasn't something that we could agree to
 12 proceed to based on the information.
 13 Q. Are you satisfied that that was the right choice to have
 14 made on the information you had at that time?
 15 A. At that time, yes.
 16 Q. You were satisfied at that time?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. Was it in accordance with your training?
 19 A. I believe so, yes.
 20 Q. What training had you been provided that caused you to
 21 think that that was the correct approach?
 22 A. I think it was possibly in my resilience training, with
 23 regard to the possible venues that could be targeted,
 24 and the marauding terrorism aspects of it. I didn't
 25 feel it was a standard explosion. My interpretation of

140

1 a standard explosion is something like a gas explosion.
 2 This had been suggested to us that it had been caused by
 3 a bomb, so I felt I needed the NILO's expert advice on
 4 this to decide where we went from there.
 5 Q. There is a dispute which exists about whether the
 6 explosion action card was or was not the right one.
 7 A. Okay, yes.
 8 Q. And certainly the perspective of GMFRS, as expressed,
 9 among other ways, through the chief officer's statement
 10 is that the explosion action card was the right one.
 11 A. Mm—hm.
 12 Q. Had you received any training about when the explosion
 13 action card was correct?
 14 A. No, I don't think we had any in—depth training about the
 15 action cards, no.
 16 Q. Had you ever seen, and tell me if you're not sure of the
 17 document I'm referring to, the action plan in the GMFRS
 18 format?
 19 A. No.
 20 Q. So in a PDF?
 21 A. No.
 22 Q. You hadn't? We do need to clear up one other aspect of
 23 this decision—making before we move on. It's this: in
 24 your first statement —
 25 A. Yes.

141

1 Q. — you indicated that you and Michelle Gregson decided
 2 to follow the bomb action plan.
 3 A. Yes. What I meant by that was the NILO aspect of that
 4 action plan.
 5 Q. Let's just unpick it a little bit. Did you think that
 6 the bomb action plan was for an unexploded bomb or an
 7 exploded bomb or did you not have a view about that
 8 level of detail?
 9 A. I didn't have a view on that level of detail, no.
 10 Q. So again, for example, GMFRS, their position is that
 11 that action plan was intended for an unexploded device.
 12 A. Yes, I'm aware of that now, yes.
 13 Q. Was that your understanding at the time?
 14 A. No.
 15 Q. Have you seen Michelle Gregson's evidence on this point?
 16 A. I have seen part of it, yes.
 17 Q. She's given an explanation which comes down to that
 18 whatever action plan was being followed she needed to
 19 speak to the NILO. Was that essentially —
 20 A. Definitely, yes.
 21 Q. — your perspective too?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let me understand this a bit more. As
 24 I understood her evidence, which you'll have heard, you
 25 tell me whether you agree and it's your decision, where

142

1 you're in doubt about an action plan or what to do next
 2 then you consult the NILOs?
 3 A. Definitely yes.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You don't need to be thinking of another
 5 action plan which would involve a NILO in order to
 6 consider going to a NILO.
 7 A. No.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And because of what was happening, this
 9 explosion, and a possibility of terrorists being
 10 involved, as I understand it, you thought you needed the
 11 advice?
 12 A. Definitely because he would have access to more
 13 information.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. How did you come to mention the
 15 bomb action plan if it played no part in your thinking?
 16 A. That was our best recollection at the time because it
 17 didn't particularly fit an action plan, but I know with
 18 the bomb you do have to seek advice from the NILO.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you talk about the bomb action plan?
 20 Was this post—justification as it were? That's not
 21 meant —
 22 A. I'm not sure on the night. I'm not sure. I think
 23 possibly yes. I don't know though.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 25 MR DE LA POER: Certainly that was in your first witness

143

1 statement in 2019 —
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. — as what you've described as your best recollection?
 4 A. It was, yes.
 5 Q. But you accept the evidence as derived from the system
 6 that the bomb action plan wasn't accessed by either you
 7 or Ms Gregson on the night or indeed by anybody on the
 8 night?
 9 A. No, it wasn't.
 10 Q. But at all events, you reached the conclusion you needed
 11 to speak to the NILO?
 12 A. Mm—hm.
 13 Q. And you were satisfied at the time that that was
 14 a decision in accordance with your training?
 15 A. Yes, I was.
 16 Q. As a result of the decision that you and
 17 Michelle Gregson made, she telephoned Station Manager
 18 Berry?
 19 A. She did, yes.
 20 Q. The time for that, as everybody now knows, is 22.40.
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Did you listen to that conversation?
 23 A. I believe I was sat next to her. I think I heard about
 24 the Golf 18 reference and the muster point, but no,
 25 I didn't actively listen in, no.

144

1 Q. Golf 18 being a reference to Philips Park Fire Station?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Once Ms Gregson had completed her call, what was your
 4 expectation about what Station Manager Berry would do,
 5 if you had one?
 6 A. He would speak to the FDO and gain further information
 7 to decide on a mobilisation to the incident.
 8 Q. Was that something that you overheard or that Ms Gregson
 9 told you or that you simply inferred that he would be
 10 doing?
 11 A. That's what I would expect him to do.
 12 Q. Were you aware that Dean Casey received a call from
 13 Station Manager Berry just 6 minutes or so after that
 14 conversation ended?
 15 A. No, I wasn't.
 16 Q. Were you aware that Vanessa Ennis received a call from
 17 Mr Berry before 11 o'clock?
 18 A. What was her call with reference to, sorry?
 19 Q. "Make NILOs three."
 20 A. I do remember being told by someone, I can't remember if
 21 it was Vanessa or Jo Haslam. I'm not sure.
 22 Q. We'll come back to Ms Ennis.
 23 Speaking generally, your belief was at 22.42 that
 24 Mr Berry would be contacting the force duty officer at
 25 GMP. At any point in the evening did it strike you that

145

1 you had not heard back from Mr Berry to report what the
 2 FDO had told him in order to update the mobilising
 3 instructions?
 4 A. I think the evening was so — there was so much going on
 5 prior to Janine coming in, time went by so quickly that,
 6 no, I didn't.
 7 Q. So for example, it must be inherent in that last answer
 8 that by the time you reached 11 o'clock, it wasn't on
 9 your mind that 20 minutes had elapsed?
 10 A. No.
 11 Q. And you'd had no update as to the mobilising
 12 instructions?
 13 A. No, it wasn't.
 14 Q. Prior to 22 May 2017, had anyone ever indicated to you
 15 that there was a school of thought which existed that
 16 the FDO may become overwhelmed in an event like this?
 17 A. No.
 18 Q. We'll return to our chronology, please.
 19 At 22.44, you made a call to Janine Carden?
 20 A. I did, yes.
 21 Q. We'll bring up the transcript, please, {INQ001234/1}.
 22 The only part I want to ask you about here, because
 23 we've heard from Ms Carden, is the two words in the
 24 second to last line of the first part of your speech,
 25 "dirty bomb". All right?

146

1 I've asked a number of people questions about this.
 2 We know now it was not a dirty bomb in the sense that
 3 that was meant, but looking at the dissemination of
 4 information and using this as an example, where do you
 5 think you had learned that somebody had said dirty bomb?
 6 A. Possibly from Michelle coming back after speaking to
 7 Dean. I'm not too sure.
 8 Q. We know that that was mentioned to Mr Casey by a member
 9 of the public who telephoned in on 999.
 10 A. Mm—hm.
 11 Q. It was a piece of information that you regarded as
 12 sufficiently significant that you mentioned it in your
 13 first introduction to Janine Carden?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Do you agree with that?
 16 A. It was, yes.
 17 Q. Did you know what a dirty bomb was in May 2017?
 18 A. No, I didn't.
 19 Q. You didn't?
 20 A. No.
 21 Q. Do you think that that is something that you should have
 22 asked about at the time so that you better acquainted
 23 yourself with what it might be?
 24 A. I do, yes.
 25 Q. Why do you think you didn't ask somebody, "What

147

1 is that?"
 2 A. I think the pure amount of information coming in. My
 3 main aim at that point was to get Janine to attend
 4 Control. But yes I should have asked, I should have
 5 asked somebody.
 6 Q. Did you take any step to check that the phrase dirty
 7 bomb had been entered on to the log?
 8 A. No.
 9 Q. Again, do you think that if you were regarding it as
 10 sufficiently significant to mention it to Janine Carden
 11 in your initial briefing, that it was something that
 12 should have been on the log?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. So we come in our chronology to Vanessa Ennis. 22.55.
 15 You can turn up your statement if you want, but I'm just
 16 going to read the first line of paragraph 14.
 17 A. Okay.
 18 Q. Would you rather have it in front of you?
 19 A. No, it's fine.
 20 Q. Let me read it and if you have any doubt then we can.
 21 You said:
 22 "I am advised by Vanessa Ennis that duty NILO
 23 Andy Berry has requested three NILOs."
 24 A. Mm—hm.
 25 Q. Sitting there now, do you have a recollection of who

148

1 advised you of that?
 2 A. I can't confirm, no. No, I can't be definite.
 3 Q. Should Vanessa Ennis have been taking calls in this
 4 incident?
 5 A. No. But she did have a mentor, so I don't know whether
 6 that mentor was listening in to her when she took that
 7 call. That would have been the aim for her to do that.
 8 I believe from Michelle's evidence that she was told not
 9 to take calls, so she shouldn't have been taking calls
 10 unless her mentor was listening to her.
 11 Q. Were you aware at the time that Vanessa Ennis had been
 12 told by Michelle Gregson not to take calls?
 13 A. I can't recollect that, no.
 14 Q. Do you think that is something you should have told her?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Had she said to you, as is suggested by your first
 17 statement, "I have just taken a call from the duty
 18 NILO", do you think that that would have provided an
 19 opportunity for you to say, "Thank you for that
 20 information. You must not take any more calls"?
 21 A. Yes. But it possibly was my belief at the time that
 22 Rochelle was listening in to her and mentoring her so
 23 that anything she couldn't handle, Rochelle would take
 24 over, but I can't recollect it.
 25 Q. If we move forward 10 minutes in the chronology to

149

1 23.06. We can bring up the relevant parts of the
 2 transcript if we need to. But you received a call with
 3 Watch Manager Simister?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Do you remember that call?
 6 A. I do, yes.
 7 Q. We'll see if we can do it without documents because
 8 everyone's very familiar with these now, but do not feel
 9 encumbered to not say if you want to see it.
 10 One of the things that Watch Manager Simister told
 11 you at just after 23.06 was that there were ambulances
 12 at Central Station.
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Did you think that that was a significant piece of
 15 information when he told you that?
 16 A. I believed at the time that they'd been told, ambulance,
 17 that we were going to Philips Park and I expected them
 18 to be rendezvousing there. So I expected them to follow
 19 Manchester Central's appliances to Philips Park. On
 20 reflection, I can see, though, it's definitely a big
 21 piece of information.
 22 Q. At 23.06 you had an assumption that they would be
 23 following?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Do you think that it was a sufficiently important piece

150

1 of information for you to have recorded it on the log?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Did you record it on the log?
 4 A. No, I can see that I haven't. I don't think I did.
 5 Q. Was it your assumption that they would be following that
 6 led you to do that or not do that or was there some
 7 other reason?
 8 A. I was very tied up in the incident. I think just prior
 9 to that call I was trying to deal with the SRT call and
 10 mobilisation. But my expectation would be that they
 11 would be going to Philips Park. But the log should
 12 clearly state all information that we're told.
 13 Q. One of the things the inquiry is investigating and which
 14 I seek your comment on in this context is whether or
 15 not, despite the JESIP training that had been given,
 16 there was actually practical multi-agency thoughts going
 17 through people's heads as they are dealing with the
 18 problems that are presenting themselves.
 19 A. I've only had the PowerPoint JESIP training. I haven't
 20 attended an external multi-agency training course.
 21 I feel that possibly would have given me a different
 22 insight into JESIP if I had attended that. At that
 23 point, we're getting so much information in and trying
 24 to reassure the crews, but that is definitely something
 25 I should have followed up.

151

1 Q. So do you think that in your case, thinking about this
 2 as a multi-agency response wasn't quite your mindset?
 3 A. Possibly, yes.
 4 Q. 23.28, a telephone call with Carlos Meakin.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Group manager. Can we please bring up the transcript,
 7 {INQ001143/1}.
 8 If we can crop in, please, to 23.28.16. At the
 9 start of the conversation, Group Manager Meakin says:
 10 "There's the rendezvous point for this job in town,
 11 but I've had no briefing or further information."
 12 To which you say yes.
 13 He then says:
 14 "So I've got crews coming from... They're getting
 15 suited and booted. Have we got a brief or any
 16 instructions?"
 17 To which you reply:
 18 "No, nothing as of yet."
 19 The conversation then continues with you telling him
 20 about the mobilisation to Philips Park.
 21 A. Mm-hm.
 22 Q. You name the personnel who are involved, including
 23 Mr Levy. You mention that the CSR is being set up and
 24 the mention the hazard zone.
 25 A. I do, yes.

152

1 Q. That's my précis of that call .
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. We can take that down for just a moment, but we're going
 4 to come back to it, it just helps people watching.
 5 By this stage, recorded on the log was, among other
 6 things, that police were making their way to the scene
 7 in numbers, so were the ambulance and that a paramedic
 8 Bronze commander was on scene.
 9 A. Mm—hm.
 10 Q. Did you know that information at the time you were
 11 speaking to Mr Meakin?
 12 A. I would have expected that information to have been told
 13 him on mobilisation. My interpretation of his question
 14 to me was: what was the briefing on what GMC —
 15 Greater Manchester Fire were doing and where we were up
 16 to with that, so I thought he was already aware of that
 17 information.
 18 Q. If we bring it up, Mr Lopez, we can see:
 19 "I've had no briefing or further information."
 20 Is how he characterises it at the start, although
 21 the question you ultimately answer is a slightly
 22 different one, which is:
 23 "Have we got a brief or any instructions?"
 24 So we need to remember (sic) that in mind.
 25 A. Yes.

153

1 Q. Do I understand your evidence is you made an assumption
 2 that he already knew all of that information?
 3 A. I did as he'd already spoken to somebody in Control, as
 4 I believe both NIOs had rang into Control prior to this
 5 conversation. So I did make the assumption that he was
 6 already aware of the information.
 7 Q. Given that the language was he was using there, "Had no
 8 briefing or further information", do you think that you
 9 should have brought him or checked that he was up to
 10 speed with the information that was on the log?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Had that thought crossed your mind, particularly bearing
 13 in mind what you have said about whether or not you were
 14 viewing this through the prism of a multi—agency
 15 response, do you think that you would have identified as
 16 relevant the information about where the police and
 17 ambulance were going?
 18 A. Yes, if I believed that he hadn't had that information,
 19 I would have given him that information because I do
 20 view that as critical information for him to know.
 21 Q. Thank you very much. Take that down again just for one
 22 moment, Mr Lopez.
 23 Again, just reflecting on why you didn't do that,
 24 you have told us it was an assumption.
 25 A. Yes.

154

1 Q. Do you think that you had been sufficiently well trained
 2 to make sure that you didn't make assumptions like that?
 3 A. Possibly not, no.
 4 Q. Again, I'm just going to press you a little bit. You
 5 prefaced that with possibly not. What do you mean by
 6 that?
 7 A. I hadn't completed an exercise involving this type of
 8 incident or a major incident, so I hadn't put into
 9 practice my training of making sure that each agency,
 10 each officer, is aware of all the information.
 11 Q. So when you say you hadn't put your training into
 12 practice, do we take from that that you had been told at
 13 some point: you should make sure that the commanders or
 14 the relevant senior officers have all the information
 15 when you speak to them?
 16 A. I can't recollect the specific training. But I should
 17 imagine that it would have covered that, yes.
 18 Q. But it's one thing to be told that and it's another
 19 thing to have that tested under pressure —
 20 A. Yes, I think —
 21 Q. — to see whether you remember to do it?
 22 A. — it's reinforced if you're able to practice it, yes.
 23 Q. If we just go back to the transcript, please, Mr Lopez,
 24 23.29.10, just over the page, {INQ001143/2}. We can see
 25 at the top what Group Manager Meakin says:

155

1 "Right, okay. Because I've just had reports from
 2 crews at Philips Park that I think they're from Central,
 3 that they have been sent here from the stations, yet
 4 we've had NWAS staff turning up on the forecourt so..."
 5 Thank you very much indeed. This is the same
 6 information —
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. — watch Manager Simister had given you?
 9 A. Mm—hm.
 10 Q. You have told us that at 23.06, your assumption was that
 11 NWAS would be following?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. We are now over 15 minutes later?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Mr Meakin is effectively conveying to you: NWAS are not
 16 here as far as I know, they are on the forecourt —
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. — of Central. What, if anything, did you think about
 19 that information when he gave it to you?
 20 A. I was surprised that they still hadn't turned up at
 21 Philips Park. I think at the time I felt that he now
 22 has this information, he needs to make a judgement on
 23 whether he needs to move, and I expected him to move to
 24 Central.
 25 Q. So you regarded that as a matter for his operational

156

1 judgement?
 2 A. Yes, I should have also, though, made a call to
 3 ambulance to check why they were there and if they were
 4 still at Central.
 5 Q. That's what you expected him to do with that
 6 information?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Did that mean that once you had received that
 9 information you didn't need to do anything with it?
 10 A. No, I should have made a call to ambulance to see why
 11 they were at Central and whether they were still there.
 12 Q. Should you have made a record of that information on the
 13 log?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Again, we may have covered it in your answer to the
 16 Watch Manager Simister call, but why do you think it is
 17 that you didn't make that entry on the log and you
 18 didn't follow it up by checking with NWS what was going
 19 on?
 20 A. I think it's such a pressurised environment, he gave me
 21 quite a lot of information that I did have to note on in
 22 terms of what I'd actually told him, but I should have
 23 noted that, yes, and I should have made the call to
 24 ambulance. I think possibly I took it for granted that
 25 he would proceed to Central but I should have followed

157

1 it up.
 2 Q. Is it just that you took it for granted that that's what
 3 he was doing or is it that you weren't thinking in terms
 4 of the multi-agency response or is it some other reason?
 5 A. I took it for granted. I expected him to make a move
 6 towards Central now that he was aware that ambulance had
 7 still not turned up at Philips Park.
 8 Q. Next and finally in terms of the detail, can we go,
 9 please, to {INQ041473/49}.
 10 We've got a summary of that call -- in fact we can
 11 take that down, I've duplicated my own reference there.
 12 I'm sorry about that.
 13 One of the things that you said to Mr Meakin in that
 14 call was that Station Manager Berry was "possibly
 15 speaking to the FDO". That's the phrase you used?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. By this stage, over 45 minutes had passed since you
 18 thought that Mr Berry was going to make his first
 19 attempt to speak to the FDO.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. At that point, as you were talking about it and bringing
 22 it to mind in that way, did it strike you that it had
 23 been a very long time in Fire and Rescue response terms
 24 that you haven't heard from Mr Berry?
 25 A. No, it didn't. I viewed this as an MTFA incident and

158

1 I've never experienced one before, I wouldn't know how
 2 long it would take to get all the relevant information
 3 to complete a risk assessment to see whether they should
 4 proceed to the incident. I'm not aware of that
 5 timescale.
 6 Q. As that didn't strike you as being an unacceptable or
 7 exceptional period of time because you didn't have that
 8 yardstick to measure it against, presumably you didn't
 9 feel prompted to take action to try and find out from,
 10 for example, GMP Control whether they could give you
 11 some further information?
 12 A. No, I didn't, no. The FDO is the person that the NILO
 13 needed to speak to. I feel the control room may not
 14 have been privy to all the information, but it was
 15 definitely the FDO that we needed to speak to.
 16 Q. I'd just like to ask you some general questions in
 17 conclusion. Did you know that the Hazardous Area
 18 Response Team from NWS and the SRT trained extensively
 19 together?
 20 A. No.
 21 Q. If you had understood that pairing, which was
 22 specifically, in terms of a number of its exercises,
 23 directed towards MTFA --
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. -- do you think that the importance of speaking to NWS

159

1 would have been clearer to you?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Finally, in relation to seeking information from other
 4 control rooms, again I'm taking it in your statement, at
 5 paragraph 19 of your second statement, you say this:
 6 "It was not something that we were trained to do
 7 at the time."
 8 A. Mm-hm.
 9 Q. Do you recollect saying that?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Sitting there now, is that your position, that as at
 12 22 May 2017, you had not been trained actively to seek
 13 information from other control rooms?
 14 A. I think that's what I took from the training. That's
 15 possibly not what the training is trying to deliver.
 16 Q. I'm sorry, it's my fault, but I don't understand that
 17 answer.
 18 Do you think that by 22 May, you had had such
 19 training or that you hadn't?
 20 A. I'd had JESIP training, which is all about
 21 communication. I don't think I took from that enough to
 22 appreciate the importance of being in constant contact
 23 with the other control rooms.
 24 MR DE LA POER: Thank you, Ms Owen. That concludes the
 25 questions that I have for you. I hope that, as has been

160

1 explained to you before you came in, you won't take it
 2 as any disrespect that I haven't asked you about any of
 3 the other things that you have done on the night.
 4 Can I turn now, please, to Greater Manchester
 5 Combined Authority and to Mr Warnock QC and his
 6 questions.
 7 Questions from MR WARNOCK
 8 MR WARNOCK: Could I take you back to that transcript of the
 9 call you had with Group Manager Meakin at 23.28.
 10 Mr Lopez, it's {INQ001143/1}.
 11 If we could go to {INQ001143/2}, please. A moment
 12 ago, Ms Owen, you told Mr de la Poer -- in answer to
 13 a question from Mr de la Poer QC, you said that you
 14 assumed that Mr Meakin, having heard that the ambulances
 15 were at Thompson Street, would mobilise there and I just
 16 want to explore that with you a little bit more.
 17 You'll see at the top of the page the bit
 18 Mr de la Poer took you to, where he says that:
 19 "They've been sent here from the station. We've had
 20 NWSA staff turning up at the forecourt."
 21 And then the next bit is from you:
 22 "The duty NILO decided that Philips Park was the
 23 location which I think is pretty standard. You normally
 24 have to be a certain distance away from the location of
 25 it, don't you?"

161

1 "Yes."
 2 Were you not there giving him some reassurance that
 3 Philips Park was the right place to be?
 4 A. He's the NILO, he would have more information than me.
 5 From my previous training, it is usually a certain
 6 distance away from the location of the incident. But
 7 I don't think I could give him any reassurance. He's
 8 much more experienced than me in this type of incident.
 9 Q. Can we read on. He then says, yes, and you say:
 10 "So ambulance, obviously I can't speak of why
 11 they've sent them there, but they are aware that our
 12 rendezvous point is Philips Park."
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Having considered that exchange, do you still stand by
 15 your answer that you assumed Mr Meakin would mobilise to
 16 Central or may it be the case, as Mr de la Poer
 17 suggested, that you simply weren't thinking about
 18 a multi-agency response?
 19 A. I would expect him with his training and experience to
 20 fully appreciate the multi-agency and how you need to
 21 co-locate. So I would have expected him to move, yes.
 22 Q. I'm asking, did you assume in the light of that
 23 conversation that he was going to mobilise to
 24 Thompson Street or not?
 25 A. I did expect him to move, yes, because ambulance had not

162

1 turned up at Philips Park, yes.
 2 Q. That was an assumption you say you made at the time?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. You didn't say anything to him about it, did you?
 5 A. He's more senior to me. I can't suggest where he should
 6 go. He needs to make that decision.
 7 Q. Why could you not --
 8 A. I could possibly have mentioned it to him, yes.
 9 MR WARNOCK: Thank you.
 10 MR DE LA POER: Next, Mr Horwell QC, please.
 11 Questions from MR HORWELL
 12 MR HORWELL: I'm going to confine my questions to one issue,
 13 which is perhaps at the centre of this. The pumps and
 14 the NILOs were driving away from the scene, weren't
 15 they?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. And yet ambulance crews and police officers were being
 18 deployed to the scene?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. I can take you through the references in the incident
 21 log, I'm sure you are familiar with them: ambulances
 22 going to the scene, ambulances going to the booking
 23 office, paramedic Bronze at scene.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Surely the importance of their going to the scene and

163

1 arriving at the scene must have been obvious in the
 2 control room?
 3 A. I don't know what their risk assessment is in terms of
 4 when they decide that it's safe to go to an incident.
 5 I couldn't comment on ambulance. I did believe, though,
 6 that the officers were aware of that information.
 7 I have since learnt that they weren't.
 8 Q. Did you think that the ambulance risk assessment might
 9 be different from that of fire?
 10 A. I don't know. I don't know. I'm not sure. I'm not
 11 sure what their risk assessment is or what fire's is, to
 12 be honest, I'm not qualified in that.
 13 Q. No one in the control room thought to contact the
 14 Ambulance Service and ask them, "You're going to the
 15 scene, why? What is happening? What do you know?"
 16 A. I think there was so much information coming in,
 17 I believed that the officers from fire were aware of
 18 that information and we were awaiting instruction from
 19 them.
 20 Q. If I can just pause there: when you say officers from
 21 fire, do you mean the NILOs?
 22 A. The NILO, yes.
 23 Q. You thought that the NILOs were aware that the police
 24 and ambulance crews were being deployed to the scene and
 25 were at the scene?

164

1 A. Yes.
 2 MR HORWELL: That's all I ask, thank you.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper QC, please.
 4 Questions from MR COOPER
 5 MR COOPER: I ask questions on behalf of the bereaved
 6 families on these matters.
 7 I would like to take you to one paragraph in your
 8 statement which is {INQ023878/3}. That's paragraph 9.
 9 It's just a point about Mr Berry and his decision that
 10 you record here. Looking towards the bottom of
 11 paragraph 9 you say:
 12 "Team Leader Michelle Gregson advised him that
 13 we were starting to receive further information from
 14 a member of the public and did he want this information.
 15 Duty NILO Andy Berry said he didn't..."
 16 And it goes on. This information being provided by
 17 a member of the public was relatively detailed, wasn't
 18 it, about what was happening at the arena?
 19 A. It was.
 20 Q. And would have given a very clear picture in public
 21 language as to, firstly, the developing catastrophe that
 22 was happening?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. And also as to the attendance there of some emergency
 25 services?

165

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Would you agree it's then somewhat surprising that
 3 Mr Berry didn't even ask what that information was,
 4 didn't want to know what it was?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. It was surprising?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Let me move on then, please, to another aspect, please,
 9 in a statement but a different statement that you made.
 10 {INQ035440/1}. Paragraph 18, Mr Lopez.
 11 Sir, again, I'm taking your guidance from this
 12 morning. There were general issues I was to ask of this
 13 witness but you have indicated you're well across those
 14 issues.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, I'm grateful.
 16 MR COOPER: "I have been asked to comment on the statements
 17 of GMFRS's Peter O'Reilly at paragraph 114 where he says
 18 that we should have mobilised to the incident ground and
 19 followed the explosion action plan. I still think that
 20 he is wrong."
 21 And I presume, Ms Owen, you stand by that as well?
 22 A. I do, yes.
 23 Q. That's another decision, and this is no criticism of
 24 you, another decision made by supposedly experienced and
 25 able people that clearly was wrong?

166

1 A. Which decision, sorry?
 2 Q. We've got Mr Berry's decision to close his ears to
 3 important information from a member of the public. Now
 4 we have the chief, Peter O'Reilly, making a decision
 5 concerning the explosion action plan, another important
 6 decision which in your view the chief got wrong?
 7 A. I do, yes.
 8 Q. Thank you.
 9 Can I take you, please, to your paragraph 19 in that
 10 document. It deals with some observations you make
 11 about Mr Hall's Fire Service report in his addendum
 12 report. You say:
 13 "It has been suggested by Mr Hall in his addendum
 14 report that we could have asked other agencies about
 15 what assets they were deploying and where. At the time
 16 of the incident, this was not something that the control
 17 room was directed to do and such information would make
 18 little sense as we have no training in other agencies'
 19 assets or attendance protocols."
 20 Would you agree then, certainly looking forward, if
 21 it hasn't already been done, that such training should
 22 be provided?
 23 A. Yes. We now have a major incident action plan where we
 24 specifically ask where the other assets are, so that
 25 does definitely cover that, yes.

167

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So why would that not have been part of
 2 the training you've had in JESIP?
 3 A. I'm not sure.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You didn't understand the training that
 5 you had for JESIP to mean that you should know what the
 6 other agencies are doing as well as you telling them
 7 what you are doing?
 8 A. I didn't take from the training that I needed to know
 9 what other assets were there. That may have been
 10 changed since, I don't know.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What did you take from the training in
 12 practice, "We've all got to work together"?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What did that mean in practice from your
 15 point of view?
 16 A. That we should communicate, the control rooms with the
 17 officers, as well, that we should co-locate as well, and
 18 work together.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I mean, you're not going to co-locate.
 20 A. No, no.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You are not going to co-locate —
 22 A. No, No.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: — you are arranging for others to
 24 co-locate, so I'm thinking in practice from your point
 25 of view. So wouldn't it follow from that part of the

168

1 training that actually, what you're doing is telling the
 2 other agencies what the Fire Service are doing and
 3 getting from them what they're doing if they haven't
 4 told you already?
 5 A. Yes. I think -- we told the other agencies that we'd
 6 sent four fire engines to Philips Park. So yes, we
 7 should be telling each other where were sending things
 8 and trying to co-locate, yes.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You told NWAS that when? When they rang
 10 up?
 11 A. It should have been told on that --
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: They should have been told?
 13 A. Yes. I can't -- I wasn't party to that but they should
 14 have been told, yes.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, but with your training at that
 16 time, did you know that, that you should be telling them
 17 what you're doing and they should be telling you what
 18 they're doing?
 19 A. Yes. I would say so, yes. I think what I'm trying to
 20 get across there is that I wouldn't know specifically
 21 what each asset can do --
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you wouldn't know what an SRT is
 23 necessarily or you would know what an SRT is?
 24 A. I would for the Fire Service but not for the other
 25 agencies, anything specialised --

169

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. You hadn't heard of HART for
 2 example?
 3 A. I'd heard of HART, yes, but I didn't know they trained
 4 together with SRT.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did you know that both SRT and HART
 6 functioned in MTFA operations?
 7 A. No, I don't think I recollect that from the training.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So what was your understanding from the
 9 training of -- and I know it may be difficult now to
 10 think what you knew at the time and what you know now.
 11 A. Yes. I think it was that they will work together to go
 12 through the zones when it was safe to do so. But no,
 13 I don't particularly recollect that it would be HART
 14 that would do that, no. I haven't had Neil Gaskell's
 15 specific MTFA training, so whether that went into more
 16 detail --
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm trying to find out in principle what
 18 it is you needed to be told that you hadn't been told.
 19 A. Um...
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not suggesting there weren't gaps in
 21 your training, believe me. I'm just trying to find out
 22 in terms really what it was that (overspeaking) --
 23 A. I think what they're trying to say is that if we'd known
 24 that HART were there -- we should have asked if HART
 25 were there and that should have triggered something in

170

1 myself to say, we need to get SRT there, but I wasn't
 2 aware that HART worked with the SRT. That wasn't
 3 something I took from the training.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think you were getting SRT there
 5 anyway.
 6 A. Yes. But I think they tried to say about other agencies
 7 and the assets of other agencies.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 9 MR COOPER: What actually were you told in your JESIP
 10 training?
 11 A. It was in 2015. I'd have to -- I think it was
 12 a PowerPoint presentation. I can't recollect it in
 13 specifics --
 14 Q. I'm not asking for PowerPoint by PowerPoint slides,
 15 of course.
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. But it seems to me, and I'll put the question to you,
 18 that on what you're saying to us at the moment, the
 19 JESIP training you received was very minimal indeed.
 20 A. I was an operator at the time; whether it was more
 21 in-depth for a team leader I don't know.
 22 Q. Because what you said to the chair a moment ago is that
 23 your understanding perhaps of JESIP was that you'd all
 24 worked together to go into zones when it was safe to do
 25 so.

171

1 A. Mm--hm.
 2 Q. And would that be the top and bottom of what you
 3 understood of JESIP on 22 May?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You knew at some stage that you should
 6 co-locate --
 7 A. Yes, and the communication, yes.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- not you personally, but did you know
 9 that at the time?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So that would involve, would it, if you
 12 get to know where your people are, and you get to know
 13 where NWAS's people are, it's quite a good idea to tell
 14 each other so they can get there?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 MR COOPER: Is some of this common sense though? Forget
 17 it's called JESIP, let's call it working together in
 18 a coordinated way.
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. It's common sense, isn't it?
 21 A. Mm--hm, yes.
 22 Q. And was there an element of common sense understood in
 23 North West Fire Control at the time or was everyone
 24 strictly going with definitions and protocols?
 25 A. No, I think there was common sense. I think myself and

172

1 Michelle, we should have purely been supervising the
 2 room. But due to the activity, we were getting involved
 3 in calls that we shouldn't have been taking that took us
 4 away from monitoring the incident and ensuring
 5 everything was definitely told to the correct people.
 6 Q. Please understand this, it's certainly not our style to
 7 go at individuals doing their jobs. I'm looking
 8 a little higher than that, but I have to ask you these
 9 questions, so please don't get upset by them.
 10 Would you accept that perhaps a little more common
 11 sense needs to be exercised than a slavish adherence to
 12 named protocols, JESIP or whatever? Is there a lack of
 13 common sense out there at the moment?
 14 A. Possibly.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are we talking about 22 May 2017 or now?
 16 MR COOPER: (Overspeaking). I'll be specific. On
 17 22 May 2017, putting to one side all the protocols and
 18 the rules and policies, would it be fair to say in fact,
 19 amongst all this, a bit of common sense was lost on the
 20 night?
 21 A. Um... We tried to do our best that night, we definitely
 22 did.
 23 Q. Of course.
 24 A. But yes, we should have taken a step back and made sure
 25 everything was covered, yes.

173

1 Q. So you accept -- I just need to know where your settled
 2 position is.
 3 A. I wouldn't say common sense, no.
 4 Q. I'm trying to be fair to you. I'm putting to you that
 5 there was a loss of common sense on that night in the
 6 control room.
 7 A. No, I don't agree with that.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Actually, your decision, along with
 9 Michelle, to contact the NILO before you did anything
 10 you would regard as common sense, I think, wouldn't you?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 MR COOPER: The reason I'm asking the question is that we
 13 ask about JESIP training and whether you had JESIP
 14 training and how detailed it was. But a fundamental
 15 part of it is just common sense, isn't it --
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. -- what JESIP says?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. All right, I will leave it there.
 20 Can I ask you, please, to go to paragraph 22 of your
 21 statement:
 22 "I have been asked if control room team leaders are
 23 NILO trained. We are not. In my view it would help in
 24 incidents such as the arena as it would allow us to
 25 access some more data and information. I make the

174

1 observation that during the arena incident, NILO Berry
 2 did not tell us that he had not contacted or had
 3 difficulty contacting GMP's force duty officer (whom
 4 we would expect him to be working closely with) nor did
 5 he ask us to try to contact the FDO direct or to try GMP
 6 to get a message to the FDO to contact him."
 7 I understand the observations you're making about
 8 the FDO and they've been well trammelled already, but
 9 do you want to develop your view about whether there's
 10 actually a need for control room team leaders to be NILO
 11 trained or simply NILO aware?
 12 A. I think it would be a benefit to be more aware of the
 13 NILO role. I think NILO trained as such is probably
 14 a higher role than myself --
 15 Q. That's what I thought, yes.
 16 A. -- on reflection, yes.
 17 Q. I understand. I'm not suggesting that I'm saying you
 18 should be NILO trained, obviously. They're different
 19 ways, different jobs, I understand that.
 20 A. For instance the operations manager would be more suited
 21 to that.
 22 Q. Sorry?
 23 A. The operations manager would be more suited to be
 24 in that role, yes.
 25 Q. All right. Certainly as far as your role is concerned,

175

1 and specifically your role on the night of 22 May, would
 2 it have assisted you to understand a little more about
 3 the work the NILO did and what was required of them?
 4 Is that what you're getting at here in paragraph 22?
 5 A. Yes, I think it would be beneficial to have a better
 6 understanding of his role. I think what I am trying to
 7 get from there is I was under the impression that he had
 8 got through to them and he was processing the
 9 information and deciding on a plan. I wasn't aware that
 10 he couldn't get through to them.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's slightly different, isn't it --
 12 A. Yes, but if --
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- from you understanding the role.
 14 You're saying on the night, if he'd had problems getting
 15 on to the FDO, you should have known so you could have
 16 done what you can?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And I understand that point of view.
 19 You knew that NILOs were fairly senior ranking --
 20 A. Yes.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- and experienced?
 22 A. Mm-hm.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So if you had a problem you could go to
 24 a NILO and the NILO would sort it out for you?
 25 A. Yes.

176

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you knew that in the initial stages
2 of an incident, they would decide who should go where
3 and do what?
4 A. Yes.
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What more did you need to know?
6 A. I think because he wasn't able to get answers on this
7 occasion, if we'd had --- what I am trying to say
8 there is if we'd had someone NILO trained, such as
9 an operations manager, we could have tried our route to
10 make sure that we had the correct information and could
11 have then made sure he was aware. I wasn't aware that
12 he was having difficulties getting through to the FDO.
13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that point. I don't want
14 to become impractical about this, so unless he tells you
15 that he actually can't contact the FDO and would you do
16 it for him, would you or anybody, whether NILO trained
17 or knowing more than they do, think to say, "I wonder if
18 he's not getting through perhaps I'd better ring the
19 FDO"? I suppose you could ring and check whether the
20 FDO --- the NILO can be contacted.
21 A. Yes, I think it's just so that we have an awareness of
22 the full picture. I feel it would be beneficial, not to
23 influence his decision, but just so that we're fully
24 aware of what is happening and whether it is an MTF A
25 incident.

177

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I do understand that they have certain
2 security qualifications .
3 A. Yes.
4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which mean that they can be --- I have no
5 idea whether there was anything on this night they
6 shouldn't know, but they can be given information which
7 you can't be ---
8 A. Yes, that's correct.
9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So you could never actually get the
10 total picture, maybe ---
11 A. I don't know whether that's something that an operations
12 manager or a senior operations manager could have
13 clearance for a control room, I don't know.
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
15 MR COOPER: Following on from that, one of the other
16 considerations that have been posited during this
17 inquiry is for instance in the control room having
18 either a monitoring officer or a senior officer present,
19 maybe even a NILO ---
20 A. Yes.
21 Q. --- overlooking the process. Would that go some way to
22 meeting some of the concerns that you're expressing?
23 A. Yes. It's definitely beneficial when we are in the
24 bonfire period or with floodings, when we're receiving
25 an excessive amount of calls, so I definitely feel that

178

1 for something like this, it would be beneficial, yes.
2 Q. Thank you.
3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you're doing it on Bonfire Night,
4 which I understand you do have somebody there from the
5 Fire Service ---
6 A. We do, yes.
7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: --- is that a NILO or someone
8 (overspeaking) ---
9 A. No, no, it's usually just a station manger ---
10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, so that's a rank down
11 (overspeaking) ---
12 A. I think though for this incident as such, even if
13 he wasn't NILO trained (overspeaking) ---
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sure having a station manager would
15 have been a great reassurance to you, if nothing else.
16 A. Yes, yes.
17 MR COOPER: Last document or last series of questions. Your
18 paragraph 24, please:
19 "I have been asked to look at and comment on the
20 documents GMFRS has submitted to the inquiry, action
21 plans prepared for explosions and 'Bomb --- general'.
22 I have never seen those documents before. The layout is
23 different and they contain information such as brigade
24 orders and heading triggers and references to Netscape
25 and ops bulletins which have never appeared in the

179

1 action plans we held at NWFC at the time of the arena
2 bomb."
3 So in essence there, are you saying that in fact
4 there are significant differences between the action
5 plans prepared by GMFRS and indeed action plans held at
6 North West Fire Control?
7 A. I think from seeing those documents, there's additional
8 information on them. I think the actions are the same,
9 though, I believe.
10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. I think we have heard these are ---
11 they give some of the --- they do give more information
12 but what you have on your computer is simply the
13 actions?
14 A. It is, yes.
15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And perhaps unhelpfully, you don't have
16 information about the triggers, for example?
17 A. No, we don't.
18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Which we have seen on those other
19 documents?
20 A. No.
21 MR COOPER: That would help no doubt?
22 A. Yes.
23 MR COOPER: Thank you sir, I have no further questions.
24 MR DE LA POER: Mr Smith QC please for North West Fire
25 Control.

180

1 Questions from MR SMITH
 2 MR SMITH: I would like to take a snapshot, if I may, of the
 3 stage at 22.40 when Michelle Gregson was in contact with
 4 the duty NILO.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. On the basis of the information that was available to
 7 the control room at that time and passed to Station
 8 Manager Berry, were you confident at that moment that
 9 the right decision had been made not to mobilise until
 10 he had been spoken to?
 11 A. Yes, I was.
 12 Q. Could you just identify in a few short sentences for the
 13 inquiry your reasoning, in the light of your familiarity
 14 with the action plans and your training, your reasoning
 15 for reaching that view?
 16 A. I felt that it didn't fit a particular action plan. The
 17 explosion action plan, I feel, is for domestic gas
 18 explosions, not for something caused by a bomb. The
 19 venue was very significant to me, the number of
 20 casualties. I definitely felt it was something we
 21 needed guidance on. It wasn't -- I didn't feel it
 22 fitted a bomb action plan either. I think we needed
 23 further information from the NILO to able to make
 24 a decision on mobilisation.
 25 Q. Did you consider that it was possible for, for example,

181

1 yourself -- put it like this -- those in the control
 2 room to gauge the seriousness of what was taking place
 3 at the arena at that time?
 4 A. We definitely viewed it as being a very serious
 5 incident. I definitely viewed it as being a terrorist
 6 incident and I needed the input from the NILO.
 7 Q. Do you consider that if you had not sought the input
 8 from the NILO, you would in fact have been conducting
 9 your response in a way which you should not have been?
 10 A. Yes, I do, yes. I agree with that, yes.
 11 Q. And had Mr Berry instructed you or Michelle Gregson to
 12 forthwith mobilise to the arena, would you have done
 13 that?
 14 A. Definitely. If any officer had told us at any point
 15 that night to do that, we would have done that.
 16 Q. I would like to take you, if I may, to the training to
 17 which you made reference --
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. -- and the PowerPoints.
 20 A. Okay.
 21 Q. Could we go, please, to {INQ001030/1}, Mr Lopez.
 22 This is headed, "JESIP. College of Policing."
 23 I must point out it says:
 24 "Joint emergency services interoperability training:
 25 control room managers and supervisors."

182

1 A. Mm--hm.
 2 Q. But do you remember that this was adapted for control
 3 room operators?
 4 A. Yes, it was, yes.
 5 Q. So it's effectively the same PowerPoint presentation?
 6 A. I wasn't aware it's the same. I believe that I only
 7 received at that point the operator one.
 8 Q. Does it appear to bear -- if we go now to page
 9 {INQ001030/2} -- some familiarity for you in terms of
 10 the PowerPoint presentation that you were shown? Maybe
 11 you can't remember at this distance in time.
 12 A. I can't remember, no.
 13 Q. But effectively, you were shown a PowerPoint, is that
 14 correct?
 15 A. Yes, I was, yes.
 16 Q. Dealing with JESIP?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. In the context of the control room's response?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Can I turn, please, to {INQ001304/1}, Mr Lopez.
 21 When you made reference to resilience training --
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. -- did you also receive a PowerPoint in respect of
 24 resilience training?
 25 A. I believe so, yes.

183

1 Q. This one is dated 1 July 2015. As far as that is
 2 concerned, could we go, please, first of all, to
 3 {INQ001304/2}.
 4 We can see, just running our eyes down the screen
 5 there, what the aims of the presentation were. Does
 6 that seem familiar to you?
 7 A. No. But I did have that training, yes. It's not --
 8 I can't recollect it at the moment.
 9 Q. You will see that in the first bullet point, it reads:
 10 "To ensure that everybody can successfully handle
 11 receipt of any notification of an incident relating to
 12 any form of terrorism or extremism campaign, or any
 13 incident where hazardous substances are involved."
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Could we look next, please, at --
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Before we do -- sorry --
 17 MR SMITH: Of course.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Second bullet point:
 19 "Familiarisation of incident types and action plans
 20 related to incidents of this nature."
 21 Would someone be able to tell me which action plans
 22 were actually discussed in this training and dealt with
 23 in the training?
 24 MR SMITH: The next witness is probably the best person --
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's absolutely fine.

184

1 MR SMITH: -- in trying to achieve that.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 3 MR SMITH: Because the next witness, I think you will hear,
 4 adapted the College of Policing PowerPoint presentations
 5 to give preparations to the control rooms.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you. That'll be helpful.
 7 MR SMITH: Could we go next to {INQ001304/4}, please. It
 8 may be that you're going to say straightaway: look, it's
 9 all right to ask me about this, but I have no real
 10 recollection of the content. Is that the position or
 11 does it appear familiar to you?
 12 A. No, it's the same, I don't recollect it.
 13 Q. I'm going to take you straight to page {INQ001304/53},
 14 if I may.
 15 Do you remember seeing those two venues --
 16 A. I do, yes.
 17 Q. -- identified at the end of the presentation and being
 18 asked to start to practice using the computer-aided
 19 dispatch system, putting a number of locations, because
 20 many of them have been blanked out here for sensitivity
 21 reasons, but putting those locations into the system in
 22 order to be prepared for a potential incident of this
 23 nature?
 24 A. I do remember those, yes.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that why the Manchester Arena was so

185

1 significant to you?
 2 A. Yes, it was, yes.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 4 MR SMITH: Thank you.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Before you finish, just give me
 6 a moment. There was something I was going to ask and
 7 I'm not sure I can now remember it.
 8 (Pause)
 9 No, I will remember it at a later stage and perhaps
 10 ask another witness, I'm sorry. It's gone out of my
 11 head. Thank you.
 12 MR DE LA POER: Sir, unless you have any questions.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I do, but I can't remember it. That's
 14 the difficulty, I'm afraid.
 15 MR DE LA POER: Sorry, that was an indelicate question.
 16 I have no further questions, sir.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much. I'm very grateful
 18 to you for coming and helping me as you have.
 19 MR DE LA POER: Sir, perhaps we can take a short break,
 20 which will amount to our afternoon break. It's a little
 21 early, but it will give me time to speak to the next
 22 witness.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Ten minutes. And thank you for dealing
 24 with this witness so economically and speedily.
 25 (3.09 pm)

186

1 (A short break)
 2 (3.33 pm)
 3 MS TESSA TRACEY (sworn)
 4 Questions from MR DE LA POER
 5 MR DE LA POER: Please could you state your full name?
 6 A. Tessa Marie Tracey.
 7 Q. Ms Tracey, are you the senior operations manager for
 8 North West Fire Control?
 9 A. No, I retired as the senior operations manager in
 10 January 2020.
 11 Q. Was that your role at the time of the incident on
 12 22 May?
 13 A. Yes, sir.
 14 Q. Within the hierarchy of North West Fire Control, where
 15 does it sit?
 16 A. I sit directly below the head of North West Fire
 17 Control, so I have a responsibility for managing the
 18 operations managers, who in turn manage the team
 19 leaders, who in turn manage the control room operators.
 20 Q. Did you begin your career in relation to Fire and Rescue
 21 with Lancashire Fire and Rescue in 1980?
 22 A. Yes, sir.
 23 Q. And by the time that you transferred to North West Fire
 24 Control in 2014, had you, whilst at Lancashire, held
 25 a position in their training department?

187

1 A. Yes, sir.
 2 Q. But at the point of transfer, were you acting control
 3 room manager at Lancashire?
 4 A. Yes, that's correct.
 5 Q. Were you part of the North West Fire Control training
 6 team which designed the training programme materials and
 7 delivered the courses to transferees and new starters?
 8 A. Yes, that's correct.
 9 Q. Did you join North West Fire Control at the rank of
 10 operations manager?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Were you promoted to senior operations manager in 2016?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. We're going to deal next with your involvement with
 15 events on 22 May.
 16 You were not on duty that evening and were at home;
 17 is that right?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Did you receive a text message from Janine Carden?
 20 A. That's correct.
 21 Q. Was that at 22.48?
 22 A. It is correct, but I didn't actually see the text
 23 message immediately.
 24 Q. I understand. So it was received by your --
 25 A. By my mobile phone.

188

1 Q. -- by your device at 22.48, but you didn't see it
 2 immediately. Once you had seen it, did you call
 3 Janine Carden and speak to her whilst she was in the
 4 process of travelling to North West Fire Control?
 5 A. Yes, I rang Ms Carden on her works mobile phone.
 6 Q. Did you also contact Sarah--Jane Wilson, the head of
 7 North West Fire Control?
 8 A. Yes, I contacted Sarah once I had made the decision to
 9 go into North West Fire Control, and I did that on
 10 hands--free from my car.
 11 Q. We have heard from Ms Carden that the contents of the
 12 text message included the words "dirty bomb".
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Did you know what a dirty bomb was in May of 2017?
 15 A. My understanding of a dirty bomb was a bomb that had
 16 a secondary element, which could have caused even more
 17 harm. I'd never been trained on determining what the
 18 terminology of a dirty bomb would actually cover, but
 19 that was my understanding.
 20 Q. Having been notified of that quite terrible
 21 possibility --
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. -- did you do anything once you got to North West Fire
 24 Control to follow that up or had events moved on?
 25 A. Events had moved on.

189

1 Q. Did you speak to Michelle Gregson?
 2 A. I did, yes.
 3 Q. The timing of that call is 23.08 and in the course of
 4 that call Ms Gregson can be heard to say that Ms Carden
 5 had just arrived.
 6 A. That's correct.
 7 Q. In that call with Michelle Gregson, were you given
 8 information to the effect that there had been an
 9 explosion, that there were a minimum of 18 casualties
 10 and that that number was rising?
 11 A. Yes, I believe that is what I was told.
 12 Q. Did you ask for Ms Carden to give you a call once she
 13 was ready to do so?
 14 A. I think I did say that to Ms Gregson and to allow Janine
 15 to become fully appraised of the situation and then to
 16 give me an update if possible.
 17 Q. Can I just ask you to keep your voice up just a little
 18 bit? It's not a criticism.
 19 (Pause)
 20 Did you arrive at North West Fire Control at 00.18?
 21 A. Yes, that's the time that I actually clocked in at North
 22 West Fire Control on the ground floor.
 23 Q. You live a distance of between 35 and 40 miles from
 24 North West Fire Control; is that right?
 25 A. Yes.

190

1 Q. And in the course of your journey, did you encounter
 2 some roadworks which you think delayed your progress?
 3 A. Yes, I did.
 4 Q. When you arrived at 00.18, how did you find the
 5 atmosphere in the control room to be?
 6 A. When I walked into the control room, I think my first
 7 impression -- I have to say I didn't know what it was
 8 going to be like that I walked into. Obviously, from
 9 the information that I'd been able to assimilate in my
 10 own mind in the journey, I probably expected it to be
 11 extremely busy in the control room, and I was quite
 12 surprised that when I did actually arrive into the
 13 control room that everything appeared to be relatively
 14 calm.
 15 As I -- I think just very shortly before I actually
 16 entered the control room, I was updated that the
 17 resources had actually moved at that point actually to
 18 the arena itself. So there was no multiple calls coming
 19 in and the two team leaders were sat on what we refer to
 20 as the top desk -- I think you have seen the plan of the
 21 control room, so there are three control room operator
 22 positions that are placed together at what we refer to
 23 as the top desk, it's the three supervisory positions.
 24 Janine Carden was sat in the centre and Ms Wilson was
 25 already in the control room and she was stood behind

191

1 that position. She had been receiving an update and so
 2 I just joined Sarah and then obviously I was then
 3 updated with the situation.
 4 Q. The point that you made right at the start of your
 5 answer was that at about the time that you were
 6 arriving, the deployment of some resources to the scene
 7 occurred?
 8 A. Yes, sir.
 9 Q. You arrived at the end of the period which is the
 10 inquiry's principal focus. Can you confirm that you
 11 were not involved in any decision--making or telephone
 12 calls with GMFRS before you arrived?
 13 A. I wasn't involved, no, sir.
 14 Q. In your statement, you identify a number of the key
 15 transcripts of calls. Here I'm speaking generally, and
 16 we can look at the detail if you want, but perhaps
 17 you'll be able to agree with me that you identify by
 18 INQ number a number of transcripts and the logs.
 19 A. Yes, sir.
 20 Q. Having done that, and here it's paragraph 56 if you want
 21 to turn it up, and if you are going to turn it up, I'll
 22 give you a moment.
 23 You said:
 24 "On reflection, on the night, I felt the incident
 25 had gone as well as expected in relation to

192

1 predetermined plans executed by North West Fire Control.
 2 In line with JESIP/JOPs, GMFRS did what we would have
 3 expected them to do and mobilised resources to
 4 a designated muster point and not directly to the scene.
 5 Therefore later, when criticism was levied towards North
 6 West Fire Control, the reasons for this were not
 7 immediately apparent."

8 I'm going to read on through a couple more parts so
 9 we know the parts that we have in mind. You go on to
 10 say at paragraph 59:

11 "After reading the Kerslake Report, it became
 12 apparent that critical information had not been shared
 13 with North West Fire Control."

14 Do you see that?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. And you go on to draw particular attention to British
 17 Transport Police and the METHANE message and Greater
 18 Manchester Police and the declaration of
 19 Operation Plato.

20 A. Correct.

21 Q. Is that right?

22 A. Yes, sir.

23 Q. That was the position that you committed into that
 24 statement on 16 August 2019; is that right?

25 A. Yes.

193

1 Q. Obviously, a lot of information has come to light since
 2 then and I'm sure you'd be the first to say that there
 3 is new information to you arising from our inquiry
 4 process.

5 A. Yes, I do agree with that, sir.

6 Q. What I am going to invite you to do is to consider
 7 a number of key moments so far as North West Fire
 8 Control is concerned and seek your view on them, whether
 9 individually or collectively, but let's just introduce
 10 why you have a particular expertise to assist us with
 11 that.

12 You are the JESIP lead, or at least you were the
 13 JESIP lead, for North West Fire Control?

14 A. Yes, sir.

15 Q. Was that the position from when you joined in May 2014?

16 A. No, it wasn't from me joining. It was from -- in a way,
 17 the role of the JESIP lead -- we were involved in JESIP
 18 training and that was from 2014 when the control room
 19 training was implemented. We put together at North West
 20 Fire Control a JESIP team and there was myself and two
 21 other members of North West Fire Control. We became the
 22 trainers, the trainers representing North West Fire
 23 Control.

24 Q. When was this?

25 A. In 2014.

194

1 Q. That was in 2014.

2 A. We attended a training course that was facilitated by
 3 the College of Policing, and that was held in Coventry
 4 in August of 2014. Following on from that, we obviously
 5 came back in and started to deliver that training. It
 6 was delivered into North West Fire Control, but then
 7 what became apparent was that there was information that
 8 was being shared nationally to the Fire and Rescue
 9 Services by the national JESIP team. And because of the
 10 unique position of North West Fire Control, that we were
 11 not actually associated with one specific Fire and
 12 Rescue Service, sometimes we were actually missing out
 13 on some of that information directly.

14 So we made the decision to contact the national
 15 JESIP team, and it was a gentleman called Carl Daniels
 16 that I actually dealt with, and asked whether we could
 17 be recognised in our own right and so therefore we would
 18 start to receive the information directly into North
 19 West Fire Control. So that actually required us then to
 20 have designated roles within our organisation. So
 21 I became the JESIP lead and then we appointed a JESIP
 22 organisational learning specific point of contact as
 23 well.

24 Q. Did you have that role from about 2015?

25 A. Yes.

195

1 Q. You were a tri-service control room trainer in relation
 2 to JESIP ways of working; is that right?

3 A. Yes. I attended that course that I have just referred
 4 to then in August 2014. That's where we attended the
 5 training, together with representatives from the
 6 Ambulance Service and from the police service, and it
 7 wasn't just from the north-west, it was from other areas
 8 of the country.

9 We were given the control room and supervisors'
 10 presentation, and then what we had then to do is we went
 11 back and as a region looked to deliver that under
 12 a tri-service model. So we delivered that with our
 13 colleagues from the police and from the
 14 Ambulance Service, and the majority of that training was
 15 delivered at the training school at Sedgley Park in
 16 Manchester, which is the police training establishment.

17 Q. There are a number of other roles that you had. I'm not
 18 going to rehearse all of them, all of this is really
 19 just to establish why you are in a particularly good
 20 position to have a particular insight. I will just draw
 21 attention to one of them, which was that you were
 22 a member of the National Mobilising Officers Group,
 23 which you were to take over as chair of in
 24 September 2019?

25 A. That's correct. I didn't actually take up that position

196

1 of chair because I'd actually made a decision then that
 2 I was going to retire in the following January. The
 3 meetings are only every quarter, so it became apparent
 4 that I was going to be leaving, so therefore I didn't
 5 actually undertake that role.
 6 Q. With all of that and other that I haven't mentioned
 7 experience, you said this about JESIP and North West
 8 Fire Control in your statement, I'm looking at
 9 paragraph 22. It's just one sentence:
 10 "In the light of the training, I personally felt
 11 that I had a good understanding of the ways of working
 12 and felt confident and prepared should we receive
 13 a terrorist incident within our region."
 14 A. Yes, sir, that's how I felt.
 15 Q. That's how you felt then, so I'm just going to list some
 16 propositions now and see whether they accord with your
 17 understanding and we'll just work our way through them.
 18 We'll start with information sharing from North West
 19 Fire Control to Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue
 20 Service officers.
 21 A. Okay.
 22 Q. Do you agree from your knowledge now that David Ellis
 23 was provided with information by GMP to the effect that
 24 GMP had police officers going to the scene and that
 25 paramedics were travelling to the scene and that he

197

1 recorded that in incident log 9074?
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 Q. Do you agree, and we can look at it if you want to, that
 4 by 22.44, he had recorded that GMP had an officer at the
 5 scene?
 6 A. Is that the reference to the Bronze?
 7 Q. No, that's not the paramedic Bronze.
 8 A. Sorry.
 9 Q. Would you like to look at it? I don't want you to agree
 10 with something that you're not --
 11 A. Yes, if I could.
 12 Q. That's quite all right. We're going to go to
 13 {INQ008376/1}. It's just important -- thank you very
 14 much indeed. If we can proceed, please, to
 15 {INQ008376/5}.
 16 We can see, timed at 22.44.26, recorded by Mr Ellis:
 17 "Amb have 5 vehicles on route. Pol have advised
 18 officer landing on scene."
 19 A. I can see that now.
 20 Q. That's what I was referring to.
 21 A. Sorry.
 22 Q. Not at all, it's important that you query it, and that
 23 was the reference, so that's 22.44. We take that down,
 24 but we can go back to if you need to.
 25 Do you also agree, and if you would like to look we

198

1 can, that by 22.46 the log records that GMP had more
 2 officers arriving on scene?
 3 A. I'm all right with that, thank you.
 4 Q. You're comfortable with that?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. The one that you had in mind, 22.55, NWAS had
 7 a Bronze commander on scene?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Here is a transcript that we haven't looked at in any
 10 detail, I don't believe. It is a call involving
 11 Rochelle Fallon. It was adverted to by Janine Carden,
 12 but we're going to see the exact language that was used.
 13 This is at 23.50, the transcript is {INQ001158/1}.
 14 Again we're just focusing on what information was
 15 given to North West Fire Control and what was available
 16 to them.
 17 We can see that NWAS ask halfway down the page:
 18 "Is there an RVP, do we know?"
 19 To which there is a short pause, and NWAS are
 20 recorded as replying:
 21 "A lot of our vehicles are going to Thompson Street
 22 Fire Station."
 23 To which Ms Fallon says:
 24 "Oh, are they? Right."
 25 NWAS reply:

199

1 "Yeah."
 2 And then North West Fire Control say:
 3 "Okay then, right, I'll update our GM. Right. So
 4 you have got ambulances on scene?"
 5 "We've got everybody there, yeah."
 6 And then Ms Fallon says:
 7 "Yeah, right, okay, I bet they're just all over the
 8 place aren't they, really? Right, okay, no problem.
 9 I'll update them on things. Thanks very much for that."
 10 Those are the words which are used.
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. I'm sure you would agree in some way, as information
 13 gathering, it's a slightly unsatisfactory conversation
 14 because at one point the NWAS member of staff says that
 15 there's a rendezvous point at Thompson Street, but then
 16 later they appear to say that all of their ambulances
 17 are at the scene.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. Did you see that?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. I'm sure you've seen that transcript before and you can
 22 see -- but on the face of it, what Ms Fallon seems to be
 23 being told is that there are ambulances at the scene; do
 24 you agree?
 25 A. Either on scene or at the rendezvous point.

200

1 Q. Either/or?
 2 A. Either/or.
 3 Q. When we say either/or, and that was my phrase, do you
 4 mean that it could mean either or that they are
 5 suggesting they have them at both?
 6 A. I think probably it could be either. How it's been
 7 interpreted by the control room operator -- I don't know
 8 how...
 9 Q. I know how Ms Fallon interprets it and we'll come back
 10 to that in a moment. Can we just have that back on the
 11 screen? Thank you very much indeed. I'm not for
 12 a moment suggesting, as I say, that this is
 13 a particularly satisfactorily phrased conversation.
 14 A. No.
 15 Q. It says:
 16 "A lot of our vehicles are going to Thompson Street
 17 Fire Station."
 18 "Oh, are they, right?"
 19 "Yeah."
 20 "Okay then. Right, I'll update our GM. So have you
 21 got ambulances on scene?"
 22 "We've got everybody there, yeah."
 23 So on the face of it, "We've got everybody there",
 24 appears to be an answer to, "Have you got ambulances on
 25 scene?"; do you see that?

201

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. You were not a participant in this, it's not necessarily
 3 a very satisfactory conversation. That is information
 4 coming in at 23.50 from NWAS?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. So that's just a review of information that has come in.
 7 I would now like to turn to the telephone calls that
 8 we have looked at with various witnesses and seek your
 9 comments.
 10 Ms Gregson took part in a telephone call at 22.40
 11 with Mr Berry. By that stage, on the log, was recorded
 12 the fact that both NWAS and BTP were aware, in
 13 particular the BTP log number was there. Ms Gregson did
 14 not pass either of those pieces of information on to the
 15 NILO. In your position, looking at this from a JESIP
 16 point of view, and trying to place yourself in May of
 17 2017, is that information that Michelle Gregson should
 18 have passed on to the NILO?
 19 A. Yes, sir.
 20 Q. Next, Mr Casey answered a call from Station Manager
 21 Berry at 22.48, and he was asked at one point:
 22 "What other information have we got about the
 23 incident?"
 24 We must remember that the information about the
 25 paramedic Bronze commander had not come in by this

202

1 stage, but otherwise information that ambulances were
 2 going to the scene and that GMP had a number of officers
 3 on the scene was available on the log. Should Mr Casey,
 4 in the context of that call, which was a call from
 5 Mr Berry to him, have volunteered that information in
 6 response to, "What other information have we got about
 7 the incident?"
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Third, Vanessa Ennis, and we will just pause for
 10 a moment. In your very senior position within the
 11 organisation, should Vanessa Ennis, who was a trainee
 12 at the time, have been taking any telephone calls that
 13 night?
 14 A. I would... As a team leader, I would have been able to
 15 make that decision with a little bit more clarity
 16 because Vanessa had completed her four-week training
 17 course and I think at the time that this incident
 18 happened, she was still being mentored. Obviously
 19 I have been following the evidence and I know that
 20 Ms Gregson had made the decision to specifically ask her
 21 not to. So if that was the decision by the team leader,
 22 I would have expected that that had been made with some
 23 knowledge of how she could monitor or actively
 24 support -- that the team could actively support Vanessa.
 25 So I don't know whether I can answer that from my

203

1 own --
 2 Q. I understand.
 3 A. -- from my own assumption of her ability, but I would
 4 support the fact that if Ms Gregson thought that she
 5 should not be, that that's the instruction that she
 6 should have followed.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it's within the range of reasonable
 8 decisions Ms Gregson could make?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And when that decision has been made, it
 11 should be followed?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 MR DE LA POER: It may be, and we haven't yet heard from
 14 Ms Fallon, that the evidence will demonstrate that on
 15 some occasions Ms Ennis was on the telephone at the same
 16 time that Ms Fallon was, who was supposed to be
 17 mentoring her. In your senior position, if that is the
 18 correct state of the evidence, whatever Ms Gregson had
 19 said, would that be an inappropriate state of affairs
 20 particularly in an incident like this?
 21 A. Yes, sir.
 22 Q. So Ms Ennis received the call, we'll remember this about
 23 her as we speak to her that she was a trainee, and it
 24 was an instruction from Mr Berry at 22.52 to make NILOs
 25 three.

204

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. So again we need to remember the context of the call.
 3 This is 10 minutes after Ms Gregson has spoken to him,
 4 he phones up, and he speaks to a control room operative
 5 for a specific purpose. Setting aside the fact that
 6 Ms Ennis may not have known what to do, should a control
 7 room operative have volunteered information to Mr Berry
 8 in that phone call without having been asked just to
 9 bring him up to date?
 10 A. Can you just repeat that question?
 11 Q. Perhaps I can put it in a different way. Mr Berry
 12 phones up for a specific purpose. It is an opportunity,
 13 would you agree, to give him more information because
 14 he's on the line?
 15 A. Yes, it could be an opportunity, yes.
 16 Q. The question really is: by the standards of May 2017, as
 17 set by you in connection with JESIP and the importance
 18 of communication, should a control room operative have
 19 said to him, "Would you like an update on the log?", or
 20 even, "I would like to give you an update about what's
 21 been happening"?
 22 A. The training that has been given to all of the staff is
 23 about sharing information and it is about — and I think
 24 from watching the evidence, I know that the control room
 25 operators — and I know Ms Ennis has not obviously given

205

1 evidence — there was that awareness that that is what
 2 should have been done.
 3 I would have expected Ms Ennis to have flagged that
 4 up to one of her team leaders if she just felt like she
 5 was taking information or she was in a position of
 6 speaking to an officer and she didn't feel at all
 7 confident in what information she should either be
 8 taking or giving.
 9 I know that Ms Gregson did actually make an
 10 announcement to the room to say, "Remember about your
 11 JESIP", and about sharing information and if you've got
 12 any concerns to flag that up with one of the team
 13 leaders.
 14 Q. Can I just move us away from —
 15 A. Sorry.
 16 Q. No, not at all. I am sorry if I spoke over you there.
 17 If I just move us away from the personality of
 18 Ms Ennis and just imagine that that is a competently
 19 trained, fully autonomous control room operative. Would
 20 you expect that person, when receiving a call of that
 21 nature, from the NILO, at that stage in the incident, to
 22 actively be offering an update?
 23 A. That would be my expectation, yes.
 24 Q. At 22.57, Joanne Haslam spoke to Mr Berry.
 25 A. Yes.

206

1 Q. She did not pass any information to him from the log of
 2 the type that we have identified at the start of my
 3 questioning here. I make clear that in that
 4 conversation, Mr Berry did not actively ask for it, so
 5 unlike other conversations, he didn't say, "What update
 6 do you have?" Nonetheless, what is your view about
 7 whether or not Ms Haslam should have been volunteering
 8 that information?
 9 A. I would have expected that they probably did a check on
 10 what information had already been imparted to an
 11 officer.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think I just want to know how
 13 practical this is. You have an FDO ringing in — not
 14 the FDO, sorry, the NILO ringing in, who everyone is
 15 expecting is getting into contact with the FDO who's the
 16 person who knows most. In those circumstances do you
 17 really say to him, "Can I tell you everything I know
 18 just in case you don't know it", which is in effect what
 19 you're saying? Or do you really say — wait for him to
 20 say, "Tell me what you know because I haven't managed to
 21 get hold of the FDO"? And do you do it to everybody who
 22 rings in, so any officer from GMFRS who rings in is
 23 given a complete update?
 24 A. I think that is where it does become really, really
 25 difficult with the amount of information that is

207

1 actually either coming into the control room —
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it is really, really difficult. What
 3 was the training they were given as to how to do it?
 4 What had you told them they had to do?
 5 A. Well, it was around just making sure that key
 6 information was shared and, again, that is where — it's
 7 about being able to identify what is key information.
 8 I do have — sorry, it's obviously through this process
 9 that it has come to light that the JESIP training, which
 10 is the national training for the control rooms, there
 11 are gaps in that that really certainly need to be
 12 addressed.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So there are the general principles of
 14 JESIP?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: We all need to know what's going on.
 17 But actually how you do that in practice, how the
 18 operators should do that in practice, the actual
 19 teaching seems to be a bit limited or lacking even?
 20 A. At the time, the training that was actually undertaken
 21 and delivered, which was the same for all of the control
 22 rooms —
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I've got that.
 24 A. — because it was following the principle was — I think
 25 now, and I think very much that — from listening as

208

1 well to a lot of the evidence that has come to light
 2 through the inquiry, that it may be that the JESIP
 3 training was approached as more of a process-based
 4 training, so you were following a process and that there
 5 was the expectation that those things were going to
 6 happen and not necessarily looking at it with a dynamic
 7 approach.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Perhaps I'd prefer to phrase it as what
 9 to do in practice to actually make them work; is that
 10 a fair assessment?
 11 A. Yes, I think some things have been moved forward to
 12 address that in line with the introduction of the
 13 interoperability channel, so that information is out
 14 there. But there definitely is still work to be done to
 15 improve that.
 16 MR DE LA POER: It's worth me probably pausing and saying
 17 now, Ms Tracey, that at the conclusion of my questions,
 18 I have already told you that I'm going to give you an
 19 opportunity to provide the chairman with the information
 20 at this stage you want to give him about your thoughts
 21 on it, and you're certainly going to tell us, as you've
 22 already told me, that there are specific areas of
 23 improvement that you think still need to be made; is
 24 that right?
 25 A. Yes.

209

1 Q. We don't need to come to them now.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'd be grateful for them. Let's do them
 3 at the end.
 4 MR DE LA POER: We're just working through our list, and
 5 in the case of Ms Ennis and Ms Haslam, it seems that the
 6 picture is quite complicated because they weren't asked
 7 for information, so let's move on from them.
 8 Lisa Owen at 23.06, as we heard today, was told by
 9 Watch Manager Simister that there were ambulances at
 10 Central Fire Station. Should she have passed that
 11 information on in some way, if only by writing it on the
 12 log?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Rochelle Fallon spoke to Group Manager Meakin at 23.10.
 15 We haven't looked at the detail of the transcript, but
 16 the conversation begins, and we can look at it if it's
 17 not familiar to you, with Ms Fallon saying:
 18 "Do you know about the incident in Manchester?"
 19 And it's quite apparent from what Group Manager
 20 Meakin then says, having been activated as a NILO, that
 21 he doesn't. All right?
 22 Ms Fallon does not pass on any of that information
 23 that I have identified to Group Manager Meakin in that
 24 first call with him, notifying him about the incident.
 25 Should she have done so?

210

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. At 23.12, Michelle Gregson spoke to Group Manager Levy,
 3 who asked the question:
 4 "What's the incident we are proceeding to, please?"
 5 She then proceeds to provide him with some
 6 information. As she frankly conceded, she did not
 7 provide him with any of that information relating to the
 8 police and NNAS. Should she have done so?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. David Ellis at 23.24 spoke to Group Manager Nankivell,
 11 who had already spoken, I make absolutely clear, to
 12 Joanne Haslam and had been given by her all of the
 13 information that was current at that point. Mr Ellis
 14 was not asked for an update by Mr Nankivell. Should
 15 Mr Ellis have provided Group Manager Nankivell an update
 16 or offered to do so given that he was the duty group
 17 manager?
 18 A. Could you just remind me of the context of the call
 19 between Mr Ellis and ---
 20 Q. Yes, it relates to the setting-up of the CSR as
 21 I recall, but let's bring up the transcript.
 22 {INQ001206/1}, and I'm sure you'll bear in mind the
 23 chairman's comments that he has already made about the
 24 practicalities of this. When should it be...
 25 (Pause)

211

1 So in fact I'm wrong, it's about hazard zones. So
 2 this is about Group Manager Nankivell making efforts to
 3 ensure that people are not deployed into the city centre
 4 because of the risk there.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Do you see that?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. So that's the context, there's a specific purpose for
 9 it. Should Mr Ellis have been offering to give
 10 Mr Nankivell an update or was him just responding to
 11 what Group Manager Nankivell was saying acceptable?
 12 A. I don't know whether David would have referred back to
 13 the update that had been entered on, that Mr Nankivell
 14 had already been updated with information, because
 15 I think that was on the log. I don't know what David
 16 would have looked at at that particular time, I'm sorry.
 17 Q. Again, more nuance. What Mr Ellis knew was that just
 18 half an hour earlier he had been told a Bronze paramedic
 19 is on scene.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. But as you say, a bit more perhaps subtlety to that one,
 22 so we'll move on from that one.
 23 23.28. Lisa Owen takes a call from Group Manager
 24 Meakin, who's just arrived at Philips Park, in which, as
 25 we saw earlier today, he says:

212

1 "No briefing or further information?"
 2 He then goes on to reframe that as a briefing or
 3 instructions. Should Lisa Owen in that telephone call
 4 at 23.28 have been, as part of the information that she
 5 did give Group Manager Meakin, ensuring that he knew
 6 about the multi-agency information recorded on Mr Ellis'
 7 log?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. At 23.46, Rochelle Fallon spoke to, firstly, Station
 10 Manager Berry and Group Manager Levy spoke at the end.
 11 It's the conversation in which Group Manager Levy says:
 12 "Can you get a forward command point?"
 13 Do you recall the terms of that?
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. One of the things that Station Manager Berry said:
 16 "Have we got any further information at all?"
 17 Let's just have a look at that transcript,
 18 {INQ001161/1}.
 19 Mr Berry's comment there is at 23.46.23 and in fact
 20 he asks two questions before there's an opportunity to
 21 answer:
 22 "Okay. Is there anything else? Have we got any
 23 further information at all? Anything confirmed so far?"
 24 And Ms Fallon answers the second question,
 25 indicating 18 fatalities, at which point we can see that

213

1 Mr Levy joins the conversation shortly after that. So
 2 that's that telephone call.
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. Should Ms Fallon have been taking steps, given she'd
 5 been asked, "Have we got any further information at
 6 all?", to find out how much they knew and ensure that
 7 they knew everything relevant from the log?
 8 A. Yes, that could have been done.
 9 Q. Then at 23.48, I think I have my timing right here,
 10 let's bring up the transcript, {INQ001233/1}. It's
 11 22.52 (sic), sorry. This is Ms Fallon calling Mr Levy
 12 at that time to tell him about Thompson Street. The
 13 context of this telephone call is that 2 minutes
 14 earlier, we'd seen what I've described as an
 15 unsatisfactory telephone call between Ms Fallon and
 16 Mr Levy in which one of the answers could be interpreted
 17 that there were ambulances on scene.
 18 Do you feel in a position fairly to comment, bearing
 19 in mind that you didn't participate in that conversation
 20 that Ms Fallon had, as to whether or not she should have
 21 been telling Mr Levy that there were ambulances on
 22 scene, not just telling him that there were ambulances
 23 at Thompson Street? And do say if you don't feel that
 24 it's ...
 25 A. I don't think — because I don't know how Ms Fallon had

214

1 interpreted that information.
 2 Q. So had she recognised that what was being said was
 3 ambulances on scene, then you would say she should have
 4 passed it on, but if the confusing language that was
 5 used meant that she didn't, then she has passed on what
 6 she needs to?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just to make sure the transcript is
 9 correct I think you said the timing of this is 22.52.
 10 I could be mistaken.
 11 MR DE LA POER: That was entirely an error. The sequence is
 12 23.46, the conversation with Station Manager Berry and
 13 Group Manager Levy. Ms Fallon then phones NWAS, she has
 14 that conversation at 23.50, and then at 23.52, she calls
 15 Group Manager Levy and it's 23, not 22.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It may be me mishearing, I'm just making
 17 sure.
 18 MR DE LA POER: We can set against that, to set the context,
 19 that at 22.52, Joanne Haslam has that call with Group
 20 Manager Nankivell in which she does provide all of the
 21 relevant information from the log so far as certainly it
 22 appears.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: 23.52 again?
 24 MR DE LA POER: 22.52. That one I'm right about.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Very good, thank you.

215

1 MR DE LA POER: I'm sure you can see the direction that I'm
 2 driving in, that we've got six or seven, on your
 3 answers, clear occasions when different people of
 4 different levels, we've got team leaders, we've got an
 5 inexperienced member of control room staff, we have
 6 experienced members of control room staff, who have had
 7 the opportunity, I think you've agreed, to pass on very
 8 important multi-agency information, they have not done
 9 so and on your evidence against those six or seven
 10 occasions, they should have? Is that a fair summary.
 11 A. Yes, that's a fair summary.
 12 Q. So do you agree that that suggests that what we are
 13 looking at here is not individual failing but something
 14 that is systemically a problem?
 15 A. If the... The staff, the ones that have been giving
 16 evidence have recognised that the... they had to pass on
 17 that information, but then it's come to light in the
 18 evidence that — I mean, they've all had to give an
 19 account as to why they particularly didn't give that
 20 information. There was information given on the initial
 21 call to Mr Berry about the police having a forward
 22 command — a rendezvous point, sorry, forgive me, having
 23 the rendezvous point.
 24 With that, whether Ms Gregson took it from that that
 25 he would know therefore the police have declared

216

1 a rendezvous point, the police are there, but I can't
2 really answer that.
3 Q. I entirely understand?
4 A. And the same again when Mr Ellis — sorry, Ms Haslam
5 updated Mr Nankivell with the information about the
6 Bronze commander being on scene. So I think that a lot
7 of the other information — I know the staff have
8 actually said that they know that they should have
9 passed that on, and I think that within the JESIP
10 training I think I've touched on it a little bit.
11 I think we've looked at it very much as a process and
12 that things would happen and that we would get the
13 information that would be shared from the organisations
14 that we would be expecting that information from.
15 I think one of the issues within the training is for
16 us not to think around if that process didn't actually
17 work as expected. And I think with that, I think we
18 thought at the time that the JESIP training was
19 adequate. I think now, I think it was very much focused
20 on the incident ground. A lot of it was focused on the
21 co-location and then actually things happening on the
22 incident ground and that there would not be a time when
23 information wasn't readily available through the
24 individuals that were identified to be the key
25 individuals.

217

1 I think that's the bit that — now, I think the
2 foundations are very, very much there, but it's about
3 developing that much further.
4 Q. I appreciate that each of them have given different
5 explanations, it is not all precisely the same
6 explanation, they're all doing their best to recreate
7 their — but one person —
8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think we have got this. There's
9 a problem which goes beyond one person's actions, so
10 there's something needs to be done about the training,
11 maybe it needs to be more nuts and bolts, so people
12 actually know in practice rather than them saying, "We
13 know we have to share everything", but how, to whom,
14 when, what's the information. It seems to me perhaps it
15 hadn't been addressed properly.
16 A. Yes. I would agree sir, yes.
17 MR DE LA POER: Can I turn then away from information from
18 North West Fire Control and to GMFRS officers and just
19 look at North West Fire Control and other agencies.
20 We can deal with GMP fairly quickly, I'm sure you'd
21 agree. At 22.40, Michelle Gregson was expecting that
22 Mr Berry would speak to the force duty officer at GMP.
23 A. Yes.
24 Q. So for a period of time at least, that responsibility
25 was with him as he had access to the person with the

218

1 best information. That seems to be the thrust of the
2 evidence and I'm sure you will agree with that.
3 Perhaps what is a less straightforward question to
4 answer is whether or not there came a point where the
5 information was not coming back to North West Fire
6 Control and the requirements of JESIP, which everyone
7 in the control room was operating under, meant that
8 there needed to be some proactivity. Do you understand
9 the point that I'm making?
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. I'm not going to really ask you to put a precise time on
12 it and obviously we've heard that time moved very
13 quickly, but was it in your view, looking at JESIP and
14 the expectations of it, that before 11.30 was reached,
15 so in other words within the first hour of the incident,
16 bearing in mind that that first contact with the FDO was
17 at 22.40, but before 11.30, it was incumbent on those in
18 North West Fire Control to start trying to find out that
19 information from GMP themselves? Do you think that's
20 right or wrong?
21 A. I ... I would think that they would have anticipated
22 that what was actually happening on that night was that
23 the duty NILO had spoken to the force duty officer and
24 had got the information and that there was
25 representatives from the Fire Service at different

219

1 locations. There was the —
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm really sorry, but do you mind if
3 I cut you off?
4 A. No.
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think the purpose of all this is:
6 no one has mobilised, no one has directed mobilisation
7 yet, no one's pressed the button "mobilise" on
8 a particular action plan, and we're now nearly an hour
9 after.
10 A. Yes.
11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If that happens, should some check have
12 been made with somebody to say, "Hang on"?
13 A. Because they'd mobilised them to the rendezvous point,
14 when I reflected back on the incident, I thought that it
15 was part of the tactical plan, in that there was
16 information that was actually shared, that was stopping
17 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service from actually
18 being sent to the scene.
19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's an assumption?
20 A. Yes.
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Should that assumption be being made by
22 people there or should they be checking on it?
23 A. They could have checked on that, yes.
24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Should they?
25 A. They could have checked on it. I think that — I know

220

1 that Ms Carden has said that the time went by so quickly
 2 and that they had made the mobilisations to the
 3 rendezvous point, which was what we would have expected
 4 to happen, and then await then actually being advised to
 5 mobilise the resources then as and when they were
 6 permitted to do so.
 7 MR DE LA POER: Can I just ask you about what you've just
 8 said there. You said two things: that they were
 9 mobilised to a rendezvous point --
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. -- as would be expected to happen?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. First point: it wasn't a rendezvous point, was it, it
 14 was a muster point --
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. -- because there was no--location involved in it?
 17 A. No. Sorry, sir, that's probably my terminology.
 18 Q. Not at all, but it's important that we are precise about
 19 our language, because we come to the second point, which
 20 is: you say it was expected to happen. Was it your
 21 expectation in May 2017 that the Fire Service would
 22 deploy to their own location and not co--locate initially
 23 with the other emergency services?
 24 A. It would have been my expectation for the duty NILO to
 25 have made a decision as to where they wanted the Fire

221

1 Service resources and to actually ... Obviously on the
 2 night, that was discarded by the duty NILO because of,
 3 obviously, concerns that he had. But the expectation
 4 would be for a decision to be made by the NILO and
 5 we were thinking that it would have been in conjunction
 6 with the force duty officer.
 7 Q. I have taken that as far as I want to. I want to turn
 8 away from GMP and look at BTP. Let's just review what
 9 North West Fire Control knew about BTP. At 22.43,
 10 Mr Ellis was told that GMP officers were liaising with
 11 a BTP sergeant.
 12 At 22.44, Vanessa Ennis spoke to BTP, who had called
 13 North West Fire Control, and told BTP that no fire
 14 appliances were being sent and she would phone back with
 15 more information. She did not pass on the information
 16 from GMP about the cathedral car park rendezvous point.
 17 She did not pass on any of the information available
 18 to her on the log at that time about police officers and
 19 ambulances going to the scene. She did not ask the BTP
 20 officer what information they had and what their
 21 officers were doing.
 22 Should she have done all of that? Ignore for
 23 a moment the fact that this is Vanessa Ennis, because if
 24 she shouldn't have been answering the phone, then it
 25 should have been somebody competent to do it. Should

222

1 somebody competent to answer that phone call have had
 2 that conversation with BTP at that point?
 3 A. If they were asking for information from us, yes.
 4 Q. At 23.07, Vanessa Ennis, who had said that she would
 5 call BTP back, did so and she told BTP that GMFRS were
 6 going to Philips Park. She did not pass on any other
 7 information, she did not ask BTP what information they
 8 had, where their officers were deployed to, or whether
 9 BTP had any METHANE information. By that stage, BTP did
 10 have METHANE information; that wasn't volunteered.
 11 We are not interested in BTP at the moment, just on what
 12 a competent CRO from North West Fire Control -- should
 13 all of that discussion have taken place during that
 14 conversation at 23.07?
 15 A. I don't think she would have known about specifically
 16 asking for a METHANE message.
 17 Q. I'm not talking about Vanessa Ennis, I'm talking about
 18 someone who was competent to deal with the phone call.
 19 A. I don't think that they would have actually asked for
 20 that information.
 21 Q. What about asking, "What are your officers doing? Where
 22 are they going? Do you have any more information about
 23 this incident that we can put on our log? Let me look
 24 at the log and tell you the paramedic Bronze has gone to
 25 the scene", that sort of conversation? Should that have

223

1 occurred?
 2 A. It should have occurred, sir, yes.
 3 Q. We know that at the time of both of those phone calls,
 4 that if those questions had been asked and if the BTP
 5 operator had acted competently, North West Fire Control
 6 would have been told there are lots of BTP officers
 7 at the scene and more are going. It was a complete
 8 JESIP failure, wasn't it, so far as BTP was concerned?
 9 A. BTP had a METHANE message and if we'd been given that
 10 information, that would have given a lot of the
 11 situational awareness that would be required.
 12 Q. I entirely understand that and that's on BTP. They can
 13 answer for that and they've been asked about it. I am
 14 focusing on the responsibility of North West Fire
 15 Control to play their part to cooperate, to communicate.
 16 What I have asked you about is exactly that. From what
 17 I have taken you to, which covers the significant BTP
 18 matters in the first hour, that cooperation, that
 19 communication with BTP didn't happen beyond simply
 20 telling them that you had resources going to
 21 Philips Park. It was a total JESIP failure, wasn't it?
 22 A. JESIP on the night did not achieve what we were
 23 expecting it to achieve in lines of communication.
 24 Q. I've asked my question. I'm sure you've understood it.
 25 I'm going to move on --

224

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's clearly not a total failure because
 2 they did tell them they had gone to Philips Park, so
 3 there is a bit of communication.
 4 MR DE LA POER: There you are, sir, quite right —
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the answer to your question is no?
 6 MR DE LA POER: No. Thank you.
 7 North West Ambulance Service. At 23.37,
 8 Joanne Haslam took a phone call from North West
 9 Ambulance Service which finished at 22.49. At the same
 10 time, Mr Ellis was being told about paramedics, as we've
 11 covered many times. At 23.06, Lisa Owen was told about
 12 NWAS ambulances at Thompson Street and she was told that
 13 again at 23.28. And we've seen the phone call,
 14 unsatisfactory as it is, that Rochelle Fallon had at
 15 23.50, which may or may not have been adequate depending
 16 on what she had taken away from that conversation.
 17 But when it comes to that first hour, we do not see
 18 within the evidence any proactive seeking of information
 19 from NWAS by North West Fire Control about where NWAS
 20 units are. NWAS had had their deployment communicated
 21 but no update was sought, do you agree?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. That information had come from GMP, but no check was
 24 attempted to say, "You've got a Bronze commander on the
 25 scene, they'll know what's going on, can you tell us

225

1 what they've told you?"; do you agree?
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 Q. Do you agree that there was a substantial JESIP failing
 4 as between North West Fire Control and NWAS?
 5 A. Yes, there wasn't a full exchange of information.
 6 Q. I'm sorry?
 7 A. There was not a full exchange of the information.
 8 Q. So setting aside the communication between North West
 9 Fire Control and GMFRS, there are also JESIP problems,
 10 do you agree, between North West Fire Control and other
 11 services?
 12 A. Yes, sir.
 13 Q. I would like to just move on to one more topic before
 14 I come to invite you to tell us of your recommendations
 15 and that is the subject of risk. I'll just put it this
 16 way and I'm not suggesting this one way or the other,
 17 but it is a suggestion that has arisen from others.
 18 Were North West Fire Control risk averse on the night,
 19 do you think?
 20 A. North West Fire Control I don't think were risk averse
 21 to the point of actually making the — what they did was
 22 they followed their training in relation to
 23 a terrorist —type incident or what appeared to be the
 24 precursor to a terrorist incident, which would have been
 25 in their minds from the training that they'd had and

226

1 therefore made the decision to speak to the duty NILO,
 2 who is the officer who has that expertise in that
 3 particular field of actually determining whether — to
 4 balance that risk.
 5 Q. Can I just approach this in a slightly different way and
 6 just — it's important that we recognise that different
 7 services arrange themselves in different ways. But
 8 if we look at BTP Control, GMP Control and NWAS Control
 9 by contrast, just to see if we can tease out. In the
 10 case of BTP, I'm sure that you would tell me that it is
 11 not a fair comparison because they had officers on the
 12 ground at the time?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. So it wasn't a question of them being deployed so much,
 15 their officers were the first people with the
 16 information. So let's put them to one side.
 17 So far as GMP is concerned, again it's perhaps not
 18 a fair comparison because firearms officers have the
 19 highest degree of protection of any emergency service
 20 and you would expect them always to be deployed into
 21 every incident.
 22 But when it comes to the unarmed assets we know that
 23 Inspector Smith heard about it on the radio and he
 24 self —deployed, which is not something that GMFRS
 25 permits. But he wasn't told not to go. No message went

227

1 out from GMP, "Do not go to this incident". So that's
 2 GMP.
 3 NWAS. We know that Mr Ennis was monitoring calls
 4 coming in and he decided to self —deploy, again different
 5 to GMFRS. But he spoke at 23.38 to say that he was on
 6 his way and the response of the control room operative
 7 that he spoke to was, "I'll leave it with you".
 8 At this time, GMP and NWAS also had information that
 9 it was a bomb.
 10 Can you just help us, bearing in mind the attitude
 11 of their control rooms as against North West Fire
 12 Control, what do you think the reason for the divergence
 13 of approach is?
 14 A. I would say that the control room operators were —
 15 well, the team leaders would certainly be looking at the
 16 risk to the unprotected crews that would have gone to an
 17 attendance for an explosion. They are not trained to
 18 actually assess that risk for the actual personnel that
 19 would be going into that sort of situation. So
 20 therefore, the decision was then made to put that
 21 decision to a member of the Fire and Rescue Service, who
 22 is specifically trained to evaluate that risk.
 23 Q. I think we might come back to something that has been
 24 mentioned a few times that if such a decision —maker was
 25 present in the control room, that might have speeded up

228

1 communication and it might've meant that those in the
 2 control room knew what was going on.
 3 A. It could have assisted and the only thing I would really
 4 say around that is that if there was someone in the
 5 control room of an operational level, they clearly would
 6 be able to know what things were being considered
 7 in relation to that risk. Whether it would have
 8 effected an immediate response, I can't say that
 9 definitely would have happened. It may have still
 10 required contact with a specific officer in a Fire and
 11 Rescue Service in relation to what sort of resources
 12 that they wanted to commit or whether it would be
 13 appropriate to commit them immediately to the scene.
 14 We can actually call an officer into the control
 15 room if we wanted to do that and calling an officer into
 16 the control room is something that's written into some
 17 of the plans.
 18 Q. I would like to conclude my questioning by just giving
 19 you the opportunity to speak to the recommendations that
 20 you have in mind and, in the interests of transparency,
 21 we discussed this before you came in. You were unsure
 22 about whether to do it orally or in writing. And what
 23 I have made clear to you is that you should do it in
 24 a way that you think is best going to communicate it to
 25 the chairman, subject to his view.

229

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. So do you want to tell us by way of introduction what
 3 you would like to say?
 4 A. Yes. I think that -- so at the time when we looked at
 5 delivering that training, there was no specific national
 6 occupational guidance for the control rooms. So
 7 therefore in relation to the training, I think now --
 8 at the time we thought that it was adequate for the
 9 control rooms. At North West Fire Control we tried to
 10 take it down to the control room operator level as well
 11 so that it wasn't just aimed at the supervisors and the
 12 watch managers.
 13 I think that information and evidence that has been
 14 gleaned from the inquiry has certainly identified that
 15 there are certainly failings and gaps in relation to the
 16 control room's ways of working. There are things that
 17 we've already introduced which we did at North West Fire
 18 Control to try to ensure that some of these things
 19 wouldn't be able to happen again, and we tried to do
 20 that through the introduction of the major incident
 21 action plan that we have in North West Fire Control.
 22 So some of those questions that have been
 23 identified, sir, in your questions to me would be the
 24 answers to -- a lot of that information would actually
 25 have been gained and so that situational awareness would

230

1 have been shared immediately and making sure that it's
 2 shared with different people at the different locations
 3 so that if we were to expect that a specific operational
 4 plan was going to be followed, as we know now that
 5 Operation Plato had been declared, if there was ever any
 6 expectation that that type of plan should have been
 7 implemented, we would be actively seeking that
 8 information from the other emergency services and from
 9 the Fire and Rescue Service themselves.
 10 Again, in relation to the major incident declaration
 11 through a METHANE message, again we're going to make
 12 sure that that would always be chased, so it wouldn't be
 13 around just waiting for that information to come in.
 14 But if you've recognised that the type of incident
 15 that is ongoing would warrant that sort of information
 16 coming into the control room, which would then need to
 17 be shared to ensure that there was a timely response,
 18 that we are actively sharing that.
 19 And I think as well, looking at the training now,
 20 I think the focus of that training has been very much
 21 around that co-location. I think some of the things
 22 that we haven't necessarily really focused on enough in
 23 the JESIP principles -- and I am aware that I think
 24 there has been some updates to that, and possibly even
 25 since I left. Is that -- not to be process-led so that

231

1 you can have a lot of dynamic thinking that's going on
 2 within seeking the information.
 3 There needs to be that national training for all of
 4 the control rooms, so everybody actually does gain from
 5 that.
 6 The fire control room does work differently, I think
 7 you alluded to that, sir, at the beginning, in that we
 8 don't have separate call takers and dispatchers. Our
 9 control operators are call takers, they do the
 10 mobilising, they are radio operators and they also
 11 effect incident support. So again, I think that we have
 12 to ensure that the training captures everything from
 13 everyone's perspective.
 14 The expectation, I have to say, I think, was that
 15 each control room would share that information and that
 16 anything that they received in their control rooms that
 17 would be shared -- and I think that that has become
 18 abundantly clear that that didn't happen. I think
 19 we have to look very much at ways that we can ensure
 20 that that does not occur again. I think that very much
 21 involves engaging and bringing in the thoughts and the
 22 feelings of what it's like to work in a control room.
 23 I think that that's been articulated by quite a number
 24 of the operators, the fact that you're working in such
 25 a really busy environment.

232

1 Work has been going on or it is currently going on
2 as well in North West Fire Control to try to have a way
3 of making sure that the control room is managed a lot
4 more effectively .

5 There is, from a national perspective, going to be
6 a control command course that is being run nationally
7 and that's just gone out for consultation. I think that
8 would very much help with the information gathering,
9 some of those points that we've actually touched on
10 today, to make sure what is deemed key information, the
11 Fire and Rescue Services and other agencies communicate
12 what they deem to be the absolute key and critical
13 information that they would actually need to receive
14 that would influence the way that they are going to make
15 their response.

16 There are a lot of things that can be put into the
17 JESIP principles. I know, sir, I heard on one of the
18 days that you put the question: should JESIP just be
19 thrown away and started again? I think in essence the
20 principles of JESIP are there, I think they just need to
21 be greatly enhanced so that everybody has that
22 absolutely fundamental understanding of what their
23 requirements are to meet the needs of every
24 organisation.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm afraid I can't say the date when

233

1 JESIP first came in but it has been going —
2 MR DE LA POER: 2012 is when it became the programme and it
3 became the principles in 2015 and at point it was rolled
4 out nationally .

5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So quite a long time. But it still
6 requires refining ?

7 A. I have to say, sir yes, it does.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

9 A. And I think one of the things as well is very much about
10 the exercising. I know that has been talked about in
11 great detail. I think that — I know that Ms Carden
12 alluded to that this morning in talking about the
13 principle of the no—notice exercise. I think that
14 that is something that absolutely has to be brought in
15 and — not a no—notice exercise that certain key players
16 do know is going to happen, but I think that that would
17 be an absolutely fundamental requirement to test the
18 principles so that maybe the planners know exactly what
19 the scenario is going to be, but then it is actually put
20 out there as a true no—notice exercise and regardless —
21 because an incident of this type could come in any time
22 of the day, any time of the shift, and every control
23 room and every organisation would have to be able to
24 deal with that with the resources that they have
25 available to them.

234

1 Would you like, sir — I have got quite a...

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'd be quite happy to have it in
3 writing. I'm getting information overload at the
4 moment.

5 A. I understand that, sir, yes.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you wouldn't mind, that would be
7 helpful.

8 A. Yes.

9 MR DE LA POER: I'm sure you'll be assisted in doing that.
10 That therefore, brings my questioning to a conclusion.

11 Sir, I know that your intention was not to sit past
12 5.00, but I think we may have time, subject to what
13 Mr Warnock says and indeed what Mr Horwell says, if
14 Mr Warnock doesn't use all of his time allocation.
15 We'll see how we get on.

Questions from MR WARNOCK

16 MR WARNOCK: Given your senior position within North West
17 Fire Control, I wonder if you could just help me with
18 this first of all. You've exhibited to your witness
19 statement part of the Kerslake Report. If I could ask
20 that to be put up, please. It's page 84 of the witness
21 statement, {INQ023880/84}.

22 I want to ask you about this and take you to these
23 two paragraphs. At 5.144:

24 "It is the panel's opinion that GMFRS's incident
25

235

1 procedures, as defined by action cards and standard
2 operating procedures, should be rationalised to the same
3 basic structure. In effect, the panel's opinion is that
4 a command structure of an incident commander, pumps and
5 crew, should be the standard response mobilised in the
6 first instance to any no—notice incident."

7 Then at 5.145:

8 "The panel understands that this would require all
9 GMFRS operational personnel to be sufficiently trained
10 and equipped to move forward at least as far as the
11 nominated multi—agency rendezvous point, if not further
12 forward. However, if the arena attack is to be taken as
13 an example of the multi—agency major incident working to
14 which GMFRS wishes to aspire then it must be noted that
15 of the service personnel from other agencies that were
16 represented at the cathedral car park RVP, and further
17 forward, on the night, many were only protected by their
18 standard workwear."

19 And in fact the reference to the cathedral car park
20 RVP may be wrong because it's not clear anyone went
21 there.

22 But the thrust of what's been said there, do you
23 agree, is that it was certainly the view of this panel
24 that if an incident like the arena occurred, resources
25 should be mobilised to the scene or to the RVP?

236

1 A. The circumstances around the incident type, that was
 2 where, from all the training that the staff had had
 3 in the North West Fire Control, determined that
 4 a mobilisation directly to the scene was something that
 5 they needed to run via the NILO.
 6 Q. I understand that. But the issue I want to ask your
 7 help with is this: since the arena incident, the inquiry
 8 has heard that the action plan for explosion has been
 9 amended to put beyond any doubt that there should be
 10 a mobilisation to the scene in the event of an
 11 explosion. The inquiry has heard evidence from two
 12 fairly recent but former North West Fire Control
 13 employees that they consider the idea that there should
 14 be a mobilisation to the scene to be, as one of them put
 15 it, shocking. I don't know if you heard that evidence
 16 given by Ms Carden yesterday. Ms Carden also described
 17 it as a knee-jerk reaction and I don't know if you heard
 18 that — you're nodding?
 19 A. I did, yes.
 20 Q. What is your view on that? Where do you stand on that?
 21 A. I agree with the view that they should not go directly
 22 to the scene and that the route of being able to speak
 23 to someone who has the operational knowledge and
 24 experience, knowing that it is an explosion that is
 25 actually caused by a bomb that has been detonated, that

237

1 a mobilisation to the scene would actually then put
 2 unprotected fire crews into the position by North West
 3 Fire Control, so I would say I would concur with the
 4 view.
 5 Q. Does it follow, therefore, that you disagree with what
 6 the Kerslake Panel were saying in those two paragraphs
 7 we've just looked at?
 8 A. That you should mobilise directly to the scene?
 9 Q. Yes, or indeed if not the scene, an RVP if there is one.
 10 A. Yes, I would not feel comfortable sending them directly
 11 to the scene.
 12 Q. The second issue I wanted to raise —
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, sorry. It depends perhaps a bit
 14 how far away the rendezvous point is. If you're worried
 15 about danger to people going there, if you have
 16 a rendezvous point which is sufficiently far away, then
 17 presumably you wouldn't have a problem with it.
 18 A. No, but I still do think that to actually just speak to
 19 an officer who has that experience, the operational —
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I've got that point.
 21 A. In relation to the risk and —
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I do understand that and you say that
 23 risk still applies even if the RVP is still far enough
 24 away?
 25 MR WARNOCK: Are you saying that risk still applies even if

238

1 the action plan puts beyond doubt that there should be
 2 a mobilisation? You'd still disagree with it?
 3 A. I wouldn't feel comfortable sending them directly to the
 4 scene.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't think action plans affect risk.
 6 A. No.
 7 MR WARNOCK: That's a fair point. A better question may be:
 8 are you saying you disagree with the action plan?
 9 A. I'm not — I wouldn't be able to make the operational
 10 decision in relation to assessing the risk.
 11 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service now have an
 12 action plan that instructs North West Fire Control to
 13 mobilise directly to the scene of an explosion that has
 14 been caused by an exploded bomb and North West Fire
 15 Control would follow the actions on that action plan.
 16 But if you're asking me my personal view about —
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Stop for a minute, sorry. What
 18 essentially GMFRS are saying is that risk assessment is
 19 not for you?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you get a call in, you send them in
 22 according to the action cards and you don't even
 23 consider the risk. Is that something you would feel
 24 comfortable with? You can say yes or no, maybe?
 25 A. No, I wouldn't feel comfortable.

239

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I thought you might, thank you.
 2 MR WARNOCK: The only other issue I want to briefly touch on
 3 with you is if we go to {INQ023880/12}, page 12 of your
 4 statement. You mention as one of the issues — it's the
 5 first bullet point:
 6 "CFO O'Reilly was attending the command support
 7 room. It would be normal practice for the principal
 8 officer to attend the force command module to engage
 9 with the SCG but CFO O'Reilly had decided to attend the
 10 CSR instead."
 11 I just wanted to ask you a little about that normal
 12 practice. Is that normal practice in fire services
 13 generally or are you talking specifically about
 14 Greater Manchester?
 15 A. I would say in fire services generally, sir.
 16 Q. The second point I wanted to ask about that before
 17 I look at a document briefly is: is that something you
 18 would expect after the SCG has been called or would you
 19 expect it to happen even before the SCG has been called?
 20 A. If an SCG had been called and it had been identified
 21 that they were going to have strategic commanders
 22 getting together.
 23 Q. You have exhibited to your statement, and it's
 24 {INQ023880/71}, the GMFRS guidance information for the
 25 command support room.

240

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Was that something you were familiar with at the time or
 3 is that something you have picked up simply in
 4 preparation for the inquiry?
 5 A. I'm sorry, sir, I can't quite hear you.
 6 Q. Is that something you were familiar with at the time or
 7 is that something you've been supplied with since the
 8 arena incident?
 9 A. No, that's the guidance information document that was
 10 available to everyone at North West Fire Control.
 11 Q. Thank you. It's just that if we look at this, and it
 12 may be that there's room for dispute as to whether the
 13 policy is right, if you look at point 2:
 14 "It is recognised though that there will be
 15 incidents of such magnitude, complexity or of special
 16 interest that a principal officer may decide to assume
 17 command of the CSR. In such cases, the PO will be
 18 assisted by the APO [that's the assistant principal
 19 officer] and the CSRO."
 20 So it seems, do you agree, that the
 21 Greater Manchester policy envisaged the principal
 22 officer going to the command support room?
 23 A. I think it says there that -- does it not say that he
 24 may decide to? That document has just been provided to
 25 us at North West Fire Control as a guidance information

241

1 document. Those instructions there are not necessarily
 2 for us to follow, it's just help with the information
 3 sharing and awareness that our staff could then get the
 4 understanding of what a command support room role would
 5 undertake.
 6 Those instructions are not necessarily -- they're
 7 not for North West Fire Control to follow, that's just
 8 been provided as an information document to help our
 9 staff understand what a command support room is. It's
 10 not like an action plan where we would be looking to
 11 follow that.
 12 MR WARNOCK: I think I have the point. Thank you very much.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 14 MR DE LA POER: Sir, unless you want (inaudible: no
 15 microphone) Mr Horwell --
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Horwell, if you can manage it in
 17 3 minutes, then we'll start you. If it's going to take
 18 longer than that, then tomorrow might be better.
 19 MR HORWELL: Sir, I can do much better than that. I have no
 20 questions of this witness. All the issues in which
 21 we have an interest have been covered.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much, Mr Horwell, I'm
 23 grateful.
 24 We will stop, but Mr Smith, I have remembered the
 25 question that I was going to ask. It's a question,

242

1 really, for Michelle Gregson and indeed for Lisa Owen.
 2 You will be aware that the inquiry, to an extent,
 3 was shifted off in the wrong direction by the first
 4 statements of both of them, which indicated that they
 5 decided to follow the bomb card rather than the
 6 explosion card, and we've gradually come back from that.
 7 I just was going to ask Lisa Owen for an explanation of
 8 how that came about.
 9 MR SMITH: Could I assist? There is some information in the
 10 second statement provided by these witnesses, which was
 11 designed to specifically explain the error in the first
 12 statement. I can't quite bring to mind whether it's in
 13 both statements, but it's certainly in one of the second
 14 statements.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let me make it clear that I don't attach
 16 the sort of significance that a criminal advocate in
 17 a jury trial would attach to a previous inconsistent
 18 statement because I'm well aware that things can be
 19 different. I thought that because it sort of did go
 20 down the line a bit and set, for example, Mr Horwell off
 21 in a wrong direction, that I ought to perhaps -- and
 22 I will look at the explanation and then will obviously
 23 make it clear in any report.
 24 MR SMITH: It is also for that reason that I asked the
 25 witness, Janine Carden, whether it had ever been

243

1 reported to her on her arrival that they had followed
 2 the "Bomb -- general" action plan.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I well understand the original
 4 statements may have been wrong. It's just I should have
 5 asked the witness to explain to me just in brief terms
 6 why it was that.
 7 MR SMITH: I certainly think you'll find some explanation in
 8 the second statements.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm grateful. If I need any further
 10 information, I'll ask for it.
 11 MR COOPER: I should say, sir, that was one of the questions
 12 I crossed out not to ask.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm very sorry if I've induced --
 14 MR COOPER: Not at all.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 16 I'm very sorry to get you back.
 17 A. That's quite all right, sir.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: 9.30 tomorrow. Thank you very much.
 19 (5.01 pm)
 20 (The inquiry adjourned until 9.30 am
 21 on Thursday, 1 July 2021)
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 23
 24
 25

244

1 I N D E X

2

3 MS JANINE CARDEN (continued)1

4 Questions from MR DE LA POER (continued)1

5 Questions from MR WARNOCK53

6 Questions from MR HORWELL53

7 Questions from MR COOPER64

8 Questions from MR SMITH101

9

10 MS LISA OWEN (sworn)136

11 Questions from MR DE LA POER136

12 Questions from MR WARNOCK161

13 Questions from MR HORWELL163

14 Questions from MR COOPER165

15 Questions from MR SMITH181

16

17 MS TESSA TRACEY (sworn)187

18 Questions from MR DE LA POER187

19 Questions from MR WARNOCK235

20

21

22

23

24

25

245

246