

OPUS2

Manchester Arena Inquiry

Day 134

July 15, 2021

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Phone: +44 (0)20 3008 5900

Email: transcripts@opus2.com

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

Thursday, 15 July 2021

2 (9.30 am)

(Delay in proceedings)

4 (9.36 am)

MR DAVID KEELAN (continued)

Questions from MR GREANEY

7 MR GREANEY: Good morning, sir.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Good morning.

9 MR GREANEY: As will be obvious to everyone we are starting
10 not with Mr Parry but with Mr Keelan, who we will
11 therefore be able to conclude today and, I would hope,
12 this morning. Mr Parry, as I understand it, will resume
13 his evidence next week.

14 As you will recall, Mr Keelan, at the end of
15 yesterday we had just turned to deal with the sixth area
16 of change implemented by the Fire and Rescue Service
17 after the attack and you had told us in summary that
18 policies have been updated to reflect what has been
19 learned from what went wrong on the night of the attack.

20 A. Yes, sir.

21 Q. We were just turning to deal with the guidance for the
22 CSR, the earlier version of which we looked at a number
23 of times and we were looking at some matters that had
24 changed. Could we restart that again because, as you'll
25 appreciate, some people weren't able to follow the

1

1 evidence you gave about that.

2 Mr Lopez, let's go back to that refreshed guidance,
3 {INQ032839/1}. Then if we go to paragraph 2,
4 {INQ032839/4}.

5 Under heading "Activation of the command support
6 room", paragraph 2 reads:

7 "The decision on whether or not to activate the CSR
8 will ordinarily be made by the duty assistant principal
9 officer (APO) in consultation with the duty group
10 manager (DGM)."

11 Do you agree with me that that is near to what
12 happened on the night of the attack but not quite?

13 A. I do, sir.

14 Q. Because as we've understood it, what happened on the
15 night is that the DGM, Mr Nankivell, decided to open the
16 CSR, the APO, Mr Etches, agreed and in the result he was
17 the person who opened it?

18 A. That's correct.

19 Q. One of the areas of concern which it might be thought
20 we have identified is that until the APO arrived at
21 force headquarters and entered the CSR, nothing had been
22 done to gear up for the response. Does that proposition
23 make sense to you?

24 A. It does, sir. And the procedure that was in place was
25 once either those individuals gave the instruction to

2

1 open the command support room, an admin member of staff
2 would be notified, who was on an on-call rota, they
3 would then proceed to headquarters to do that setting up
4 of the room, but obviously it depends on where they live
5 in the county of Greater Manchester on their travel time
6 into headquarters to open that room up.

7 Also I did --

8 Q. Could you pause for a moment? It might be thought,
9 bearing in mind that there is likely to be an urgent
10 need to open the CSR, that the Fire and Rescue Service
11 would have ensured that those who were on duty were
12 persons who could readily gain access to the location.

13 A. I understand and understand why you'd say that, sir.
14 It is very difficult with the staff that we have trained
15 to facilitate the command support room from an admin
16 decision logging perspective. They work in our
17 emergency response hub, which ordinarily deals with
18 day-to-day admin across our organisation. And as such,
19 when we appoint them to those roles, we don't specify
20 for them to live within a certain distance of our
21 headquarters. I can understand that that is an issue on
22 the travel time for them to open the room.

23 As I said yesterday, sir --

24 Q. In the result did that person open the room that night?

25 A. They arrived after the officers, sir.

3

1 Q. So let's just look at the timings. We have the CSR
2 starting to be opened at 11.30, which is almost exactly
3 an hour after the explosion and not far short of an hour
4 after North West Fire Control had been informed of it at
5 10.34. And there would be people who hear those facts
6 and say that is far too long for the starting of the
7 opening of the CSR.

8 A. I agree, and as part of our command support room
9 training for the officers for the likes of the duty
10 group managers who run those rooms, that is part of the
11 training around the early notification to enable the
12 early set-up of that room. But in all honesty, it is
13 difficult to achieve that room being set up immediately,
14 which is -- as well as other reasons that I mentioned
15 yesterday -- one of the reasons why the piece of work is
16 ongoing around relocating our command support room
17 within North West Fire Control.

18 Q. I was in fact just about to ask you about that.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: On the night, on 22 May, are you saying
20 that the technician, or whoever is the person is who
21 sets it up, was notified?

22 A. Yes, sir, they were, and they --

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: By whom and when?

24 A. I believe it was by Dean Nankivell -- I believe, sir,
25 I'd have to check on that -- when the decision was taken

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1 to open the command support room —
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Not after he'd arrived?
 3 A. No, sir. When he decided to open it, he informed that
 4 person and that person set off, but they didn't arrive
 5 because of where they lived until after Mr Nankivell and
 6 Mr Etches had arrived, I believe, sir.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And had set it up?
 8 A. And had set it up, sir.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Why is it necessary now to have
 10 a decision to activate being made in consultation
 11 between the duty assistant principal officer and the
 12 duty group manager? I ask that because it wasn't what
 13 happened on the night but it adds in or is capable of
 14 adding in further delay.
 15 A. Yes, sir.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So why has that been introduced?
 17 A. Because that's the team who are on duty that evening and
 18 they work throughout their shift on call very much
 19 hand-in-hand and it's vital for one person to know what
 20 the other is doing so they can support each other.
 21 I think on this occasion, and rightly so, Mr Nankivell
 22 took the decision to open the command support room which
 23 is what I would absolutely expect but then he did inform
 24 Mr Etches that he'd done so, sir.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, has (2) changed?

5

1 A. No, sir. To the best of my knowledge that is still
 2 within the policy, sir.
 3 MR GREANEY: Do you mean changed from May 2017?
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.
 5 MR GREANEY: We can look because we will look at the
 6 original document in due course.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If I read that, sorry to be pedantic,
 8 but if I read that literally it means that Mr Nankivell
 9 should not have given the order to open it, (inaudible)
 10 decided to open it, until he'd had consultation with the
 11 duty assistant principal officer.
 12 A. I understand what you're saying, sir, and on reflection
 13 I think that does need changing.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you very much.
 15 MR GREANEY: I am confident, sir, that in fact that is a new
 16 paragraph in the subsequent guidance.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 18 MR GREANEY: I just want to be clear: if this form of event
 19 were to occur in Manchester again, is there a material
 20 possibility that it would take that period of time for
 21 the CSR to start to be opened and that it would be the
 22 APO or the DGM who would start the work of opening it as
 23 opposed to the technician?
 24 A. It is, sir.
 25 Q. Do you agree that that's something which needs to be

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1 looked at and looked at urgently?
 2 A. It is, sir, and I give you my full undertaking that that
 3 will be looked at as soon as possible.
 4 Q. Paragraph 3:
 5 "The DGM will ordinarily take command of the CSR and
 6 become the command support room officer. The APO may
 7 choose to attend the CSR to support the CSRO unless
 8 mobilised to the incident by Fire Control."
 9 Would it be fair to say that that is not what
 10 happened on the night? Shall I tell you what I mean?
 11 A. Yes, sir.
 12 Q. In fact what happened is the principal officer turned up
 13 and he took command.
 14 A. Through the evidence that's been given, sir, that seems
 15 to be the case.
 16 Q. In your view, is that something that should not have
 17 happened on the night?
 18 A. Again sir, having listened to the evidence I think it
 19 was the right thing to do for the chief fire officer to
 20 do what he did, given where we currently were with the
 21 incident.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And actually the normal way you operate,
 23 which is actually different from police and ambulance,
 24 is as the more senior person comes, they take control.
 25 A. On the incident ground, yes.

7

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. So this is different?
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 MR GREANEY: Let's turn over the page, please, Mr Lopez, to
 4 {INQ032839/5}, at the very bottom of the page.
 5 Paragraph 7:
 6 "When the CSR is activated, the CSRO is not in
 7 command of the incident."
 8 A. Correct, sir.
 9 Q. So the CSRO is intended to be the duty group manager?
 10 A. Yes, sir.
 11 Q. Over the page to {INQ032839/8}:
 12 "The command of an incident is the sole
 13 responsibility of the incident commander at the scene."
 14 A. Correct, sir.
 15 Q. Essentially, I think, those two paragraphs together were
 16 within the earlier and May 2017 iteration of the
 17 guidance?
 18 A. Yes, sir.
 19 Q. They were just in a single paragraph, paragraph 3?
 20 A. Correct, sir.
 21 Q. But now we have, next we have, a new paragraph,
 22 paragraph 9:
 23 "Although the CSRO will not ordinarily be in charge
 24 of an incident, they may be aware of information which
 25 would inform the mobilisation of resources to incidents

8

1 or vary the service's response to incidents. In this
2 situation all relevant information must be discussed
3 with the incident commander at the incident. If the
4 CSRO directs the incident commander to change tactics on
5 the incident ground, the following must apply."

6 And there are a number of requirements before the
7 CSRO will make those decisions:

8 "(a) The CSRO must be senior in rank to the IC
9 at the incident;

10 "(b) The CSRO must communicate the reasons for the
11 direction to the IC at the incident and receive an
12 acknowledgement that the direction will not increase
13 risk to firefighters or members of the public at the
14 incident or reduce the effectiveness of our response to
15 the incident;

16 "(c) The CSRO must record their decision and their
17 ration real for directing the IC using the appropriate
18 decision log."

19 So am I right that that is a new paragraph post the
20 arena attack?

21 A. Correct.

22 Q. What was that intended to achieve?

23 A. It was intended to achieve situations like the arena
24 attack, where there was a vacuum and a void of
25 information at the scene, sir, or indeed at a muster

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1 point, rendezvous point. But also to take into account
2 things like the moorland fires that we've had more
3 recently where we have four or five incidents within
4 Greater Manchester happening at once, and he being in
5 the command support room, you have an overview of the
6 entire county and you will know what resources you have
7 where and what the priorities are and have more of
8 a picture that you'd need to manage the organisation
9 from a strategic operational perspective than perhaps an
10 incident commander would in one location when you have
11 four or five other incidents going on in the county.

12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I say, I well understand the reasons
13 for this. Can I also say that it is obviously being
14 looked at very carefully and I hope you won't feel it
15 insulting for me to ask questions about the possible
16 effect.

17 A chief fire officer comes on the scene and decides
18 that absolutely the wrong things are being done and
19 nothing essentially is being done to actually deal with
20 the emergency situation. This is capable of building in
21 delay before that chief fire officer takes a real grip
22 on the situation and would it also encourage maybe
23 defensiveness, risk aversion, by the chief fire officer :
24 I've got to discuss it, I've got to make sure we go
25 through all the reasons before we make a decision to do

10

1 anything?

2 A. I think, sir, the discussing it and giving the rationale
3 is what a senior officer would do before they made any
4 incident that affected an incident ground. They'd
5 consider what's going on, what the resources are, what
6 your tactical plan is before you made a decision.
7 I don't think this elongates the process at all, sir.

8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And of course, on talking about the
9 22 May, to the knowledge of Chief Fire Officer O'Reilly,
10 there was no incident commander?

11 A. Correct, sir.

12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But there will be in the future?

13 A. Yes, sir.

14 MR GREANEY: Sir, I'm quite sure you're right to point out
15 that although Mr Keelan has been pressed in relation to
16 some of those issues, it seems to me at any rate that
17 no one should doubt that work certainly has been done by
18 the Fire Service.

19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely. I hope it's not impertinent
20 of me to ask questions why, after considerable debate
21 and discussion, the Fire Service has come to these
22 conclusions. It's important that they should be tested.

23 A. I welcome your comments and thoughts, sir, thank you.

24 MR GREANEY: The last answer you just gave to the chairman
25 takes me to one paragraph of your witness statement that

11

1 does deal with policies that I didn't entirely
2 understand. Maybe you have dealt with it already, maybe
3 not. It's page 13 of your second statement,
4 paragraph 68, and you state:

5 "In the event of any future MTA, the GMFRS policy
6 now requires the mobilisation of an assistant principal
7 officer (area manager and above) to mobilise to the RVP
8 and to take incident command. This is in recognition of
9 the potential severity of an MTA incident and to ensure
10 that we make the best use of the experience within the
11 organisation."

12 So you seem to be talking about a policy which is
13 designed to ensure that, (1), you don't have a command
14 vacuum, the thought the chairman was identifying?

15 A. Correct.

16 Q. And (2) that you have a commander at an appropriate
17 level of seniority and experience?

18 A. Yes, sir.

19 Q. Which policy are you talking about there?

20 A. It's within the MTA guidance policy, sir.

21 Q. I understand that.

22 A. And also in one of action cards for North West Fire
23 Control it has got that area manager as someone that
24 would be mobilised to a rendezvous point in that
25 circumstance as the incident commander, sir.

12

1 Q. Which action card are you talking about?
 2 (Pause)
 3 If you need to go away and look at that —
 4 A. I'd probably just need to check in the break, if that's
 5 okay.
 6 Q. Sir, I'd finished asking about policies unless you had
 7 further questions.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No.
 9 MR GREANEY: Let's go to the seventh area of change,
 10 post-incident training. And this takes us to
 11 paragraphs 69 to 82 of your second witness statement.
 12 Did the night of 22 May and what certainly went
 13 wrong expose a gap in training?
 14 A. Yes, sir.
 15 Q. Because in simple terms, had exercises such as
 16 Winchester Accord started with a pre-established RVP and
 17 FCP?
 18 A. Sorry, sir, what was the question?
 19 Q. The gap that had been identified in training I think
 20 arose in this way —
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There's no training for mobilisation?
 22 MR GREANEY: You've got to it, sir.
 23 A. Correct, sir.
 24 Q. There's no training for actual deployment?
 25 A. Correct.

13

1 Q. Has that been put right?
 2 A. It has.
 3 Q. In what way or ways?
 4 A. We have done training to mobilise assets from stations
 5 or other locations to rendezvous points and forward
 6 control points. More recently, we have done a no-notice
 7 exercise to mobilise our MTA specialist responder
 8 resources and a command structure to a rendezvous point.
 9 Q. Have those exercises been successful?
 10 A. Yes, sir.
 11 Q. That was point 1. Point 2: have you continued to work
 12 with GMP to develop your joint working, including
 13 specific NILO training undertaken with both GMP and
 14 NWS?
 15 A. Yes, we have, and that continues today, sir.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Training to exercises, they can all go
 17 completely perfectly in which case they are a success,
 18 they can also expose existing problems, which can then
 19 be identified and dealt with. When you say they've been
 20 a success, into which category have they come or did
 21 they come into both?
 22 A. I think, without going into all the detail, the training
 23 we do with NWS and GMP on occasions quite often throws
 24 up areas that quite often we hadn't come across before.
 25 So because of the forums that we have and the work and

14

1 the relationships we have, we work through those issues
 2 to a point where we are comfortable with them, sir.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Because as we know from
 4 Winchester Accord, it is all very well having the
 5 exercise which identified the problem —
 6 A. Yes, sir.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: — but steps then need to be taken to
 8 put them right.
 9 A. Yes, sir. And leading on from that, sir, last year
 10 Greater Manchester Fire seconded an area manager into
 11 the local resilience forum. The task that individual
 12 was given was to review the coordination group for
 13 exercise and training that sits in the local resilience
 14 forum. We now have a new exercise and training strategy
 15 and a debrief procedure that ensures that any lessons
 16 that be identified through a multi-agency perspective
 17 that are debriefed through the LRF indeed are recognised
 18 as lessons to be learnt and then are managed with the
 19 organisations through to completion, which will then
 20 report back to the local resilience forum.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.
 22 MR GREANEY: That was point 2, working together with GMP and
 23 NWS to ensure that you all know each other's
 24 capabilities?
 25 A. Yes, sir.

15

1 Q. Point 3 —
 2 A. Sorry, sir, just to build on that capability, Greater
 3 Manchester Police commissioned a blue light video which
 4 details what each service's capability is and what you
 5 would expect them to be able to do. That video has now
 6 been — is now live. We've received it internally and
 7 are now going to push that out to all staff for all
 8 staff to watch and it will form part of our recruits'
 9 course and I believe the other blue light services are
 10 doing the same.
 11 Q. Point 3 under this seventh heading of post-incident
 12 training. Is it the position that your multi-agency
 13 training has not been confined just to work with GMP and
 14 NWS but has also involved taking part in a multi-agency
 15 exercise hosted by BTP?
 16 A. That's correct, sir.
 17 Q. Did that exercise take place on 18 April 2019?
 18 A. Yes, sir.
 19 Q. I'm now at paragraph 72. Was it known as, I mentioned
 20 yesterday, Exercise Largo?
 21 A. Yes, sir.
 22 Q. Which as I now know is a word meaning a slow tempo and
 23 dignified style.
 24 I'm going to take you to a document that was
 25 prepared by the GMCA in the light of that exercise.

16

1 It's a document I know you have seen because you refer
 2 to it in your statement. It is dated 15 July 2019 and
 3 is a report of Jon Nolan, a station manager with the
 4 Contingency Planning Unit.
 5 A. Yes, sir.
 6 Q. And I believe you know the document I'm referring to?
 7 A. I do.
 8 Q. Could we have this on the screen, please, Mr Lopez.
 9 I did say we'd come to this. {INQ032836/1}. This was
 10 an interesting exercise for a number of reasons.
 11 You were involved in this, BTP were involved in
 12 this; is that correct?
 13 A. That's correct.
 14 Q. Were GMP also involved in this?
 15 A. I believe so, sir.
 16 Q. What about NWSA?
 17 A. Yes, sir.
 18 Q. I'm not going to read out every word, but it begins:
 19 "Introduction. Exercise Largo took place on
 20 18 April 2019 and was designed to test the learning from
 21 the arena response."
 22 So it was very much focused on the issues that
 23 we are concerned with; do you agree?
 24 A. Yes, sir.
 25 Q. Then:

17

1 "The exercise provided the vehicle to address the
 2 following key recommendations/lessons from Kerslake and
 3 the multi-debriefs:
 4 "(a) Clarify MTA JOPS;
 5 "(b) Enhance Understanding of OP Plato;
 6 "(c) Examine the formation of a transport cell.
 7 A. Yes, sir.
 8 Q. Paragraph 2:
 9 "Exercise Largo also served to reinforce and embed
 10 other learning including:
 11 "(a) Increase understanding of agencies' procedures
 12 and priorities during first hour of a major incident;
 13 "(b) Confirm procedure for sharing METHANE messages;
 14 "(c) Common understanding of specific terms (RVP,
 15 FCP, etc);
 16 "(d) Encourage site operators to participate in
 17 training and exercise events;
 18 "(e) Raise awareness of Op Plato amongst cat 2
 19 responders and site operators."
 20 Then a series of findings are listed, there are
 21 a number of I want to ask you about. First of all (4),
 22 and let's remember that this is an exercise which is
 23 taking place very nearly 2 years after the events of the
 24 arena:
 25 "Operation Plato. GMP did not fully understand the

18

1 importance of an early declaration of Operation Plato to
 2 other cat 1 responders and insisted on using the
 3 active shooter. The active shooter declaration has the
 4 potential to get a mixed/delayed response from other
 5 cat 1 responders and their control rooms."
 6 I don't want to overstate this, but it might be
 7 thought worrying that a full 2 years after the arena
 8 attack and what had gone wrong in terms of communicating
 9 a declaration of Operation Plato, that it was thought by
 10 Mr Nolan that GMP still did not fully understand the
 11 importance of an early declaration of Operation Plato.
 12 A. Correct, sir.
 13 Q. Are you able to tell us any more about that?
 14 A. I know through talking to the team that participated in
 15 this exercise and the debrief that that was fed back to
 16 GMP, conversations were had, and GMP were to take that
 17 away and disseminate the proper procedure through their
 18 organisation to refresh people, sir.
 19 Q. Just in a couple of sentences, what had not worked
 20 properly in that regard during Operation Largo?
 21 A. Greater Manchester Police, instead of declaring Plato
 22 and then following that with a METHANE message, they
 23 just said there was an active shooter, which didn't give
 24 people complete clarity or give them the situational
 25 awareness that they needed, sir.

19

1 Q. Is it right to suggest that that is rather surprising --
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. -- 2 years after the events at the arena?
 4 A. Yes, sir.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And that would be from the FDO again?
 6 A. I think it was initially from the GMP on-scene
 7 commander, sir.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Thank you.
 9 MR GREANEY: (5):
 10 "Zonal working. The exercise did help to clarify
 11 the way in which the hot, warm and cold zones can be
 12 used and amended subject to dynamic risk assessments."
 13 So that was obviously a very welcome finding?
 14 A. Yes, sir.
 15 Q. (6) really takes us back to (4):
 16 "Agencies' first hour priorities. The lack of
 17 understanding that Operation Plato not being declared
 18 has a significant impact on other agencies."
 19 A. Yes, sir.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Again, perhaps I oughtn't to go into
 21 this too much, no doubt it's all being looked at, but
 22 of course Operation Plato can only be declared by the
 23 FDO?
 24 A. Yes, sir.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So the on-scene commander can't do that?

20

1 A. I think it was the information that the on-scene
2 commander provided to the FDO, sir.
3 MR GREANEY: I'm not sure it's right, sir, that only the FDO
4 can declare Plato. We'll check.
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I thought it certainly used to be.
6 MR GREANEY: I think the way in which it's put is only the
7 police can declare Operation Plato.
8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right.
9 MR GREANEY: I will check that. You may well be correct.
10 Then we get to (9):
11 "Comms channel to inform other agencies. This also
12 brought up that..."
13 This is the multi-agency channel we were talking
14 about yesterday?
15 A. Yes, sir.
16 Q. The name of which we don't mention even though I think
17 it has changed since:
18 "... BTP are not part of the daily test of [OS]
19 between the control rooms but this is due to them being
20 a national police service with a control room covering
21 the country."
22 I believe you told us yesterday that you think that
23 has been put right?
24 A. Yes, sir.
25 Q. Then over the page {INQ/032836/3} -- I'm sure I'm

21

1 passing over some things which revealed good practice.
2 A. Absolutely, sir.
3 Q. And if it's important, I'm sure it can be emphasised.
4 Paragraph 15 under "Conclusions":
5 "Overall, the exercise was well exercised but
6 highlighted shortfalls in understanding the pitfalls of
7 not providing effective communications. This was
8 highlighted on the initial lack and late declaration of
9 Operation Plato by the police. The MTA JOPs 1,
10 section 3.2, does state the importance of an early
11 declaration."
12 A. Absolutely, sir. And as I say, that was fed back in to
13 Greater Manchester Police.
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, 16, the force critical incident
15 manager? This is a new position that we have heard
16 about.
17 MR GREANEY: 16:
18 "Force critical incident manager, a role used by the
19 police to manage an incident, but this role was not
20 fully understood by other agencies and how they link in
21 with the FCIM."
22 Quite right, sir.
23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I probably got this wrong but my
24 understanding is the FCIM has been introduced post
25 22 May 2017 to deal with some of the problems caused.

22

1 MR GREANEY: Yes.
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And that hadn't been, it appeared,
3 understood fully or not communicated fully to other
4 agencies?
5 MR GREANEY: Other agencies, yes, wanted to know where the
6 FCIM was located and the relationship between the FCIM
7 and the FDO.
8 So it would seem that Exercise Largo identified some
9 issues that were not dissimilar from the issues which
10 eventuated on 22 May 2017?
11 A. Correct, sir.
12 Q. So it may be that we'll want to know what was done in
13 response to the learning points from this exercise.
14 That's all I propose to ask about Exercise Largo
15 unless you have any further questions, sir.
16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No. I would like to be corrected if I'm
17 wrong about the FDO being the person who declares Plato.
18 He, of course, becomes the immediate and interim
19 firearms --
20 MR GREANEY: ITFC, yes.
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So essentially, because that takes up
22 immediately you declare Plato, he's got to be pretty
23 quick if someone else declares it, but someone can find
24 out while we're going on the evidence.
25 MR GREANEY: I'm sure that --

23

1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not sure at all.
2 MR GREANEY: -- that generally it will be the FDO but it has
3 not been my understanding that for example the GATFC or
4 someone at the scene could not declare Operation Plato.
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. We will look into it. It's
6 important we're made properly to understand the
7 situation.
8 MR ATKINSON: Sir, if I can help on that, the JESIP JOPs
9 principles, 4.1, says that:
10 "Personnel from any emergency service should not
11 hesitate to report that an MTFA is underway.
12 Information should be shared with the emergency
13 services. The police are responsible for formally
14 declaring an MTFA is occurring."
15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much. It may be in
16 practice that that would normally be the FDO.
17 MR GREANEY: I am sure that's right, sir, it would in fact
18 be the FDO, but that doesn't exclude the possibility
19 that another --
20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Atkinson.
21 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much.
22 May I just consult with Mr Suter about something?
23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Of course.
24 (Pause)
25 MR GREANEY: Sorry about that, sir, it was something that

24

1 needed to be addressed straightaway.
 2 I'm now going to turn, still dealing with that
 3 seventh issue of post-incident training, and Mr Suter is
 4 leaving the room only so that he can address the issue
 5 that I've raised with him. I'm going to deal with some
 6 other post-incident training that has been implemented
 7 by GMFRS.
 8 I'm now at paragraph 76 of your second witness
 9 statement where you observe:
 10 "Plainly deployment was not the only challenge that
 11 arose in response to the arena attack. Another critical
 12 issue was communication."
 13 And that's a point the inquiry understands only too
 14 well. So what has been done in terms of training to
 15 address that issue?
 16 A. There has been a series of exercises through the local
 17 resilience's arena learning group, sir,
 18 Exercise Whispers, which is a cascade of information,
 19 using the channel we talked around before, to implement
 20 an incident such as Plato and then ensure cascade
 21 throughout all the blue light, and indeed cat 1
 22 responders is done.
 23 Q. That was I think -- I have slightly lost track --
 24 point 4.
 25 Point 5: does your training now also include

25

1 ensuring that your staff understand that it may well be
 2 non-specialist responders who are first at the scene,
 3 including at an MTA?
 4 A. Absolutely, sir, and we did some exercises at the
 5 Arndale Centre, which started with a fire crew getting
 6 called to an automatic fire alarm, the incident then
 7 changed to one that they believed it to be
 8 a terrorist-related incident, it was a multi-agency
 9 exercise, and that exercise used both specialist and
 10 non-specialist responders.
 11 Q. Next we know that you have taken steps to ensure that
 12 your non-specialist reserves know the capability of the
 13 NILOs.
 14 A. That's correct, sir.
 15 Q. And finally, so far as I'm concerned on this issue, it's
 16 one thing for GMFRS to learn lessons and implement
 17 change, but as we observed yesterday, these issues may
 18 be present across other Fire and Rescue Services around
 19 the country. So what has been done to ensure that
 20 lessons are learned and changes made, not just in
 21 Greater Manchester but elsewhere too?
 22 A. We have worked with the relevant groups that manage
 23 things such as the national JESIP team, sir, which
 24 culminated in the presentation for the JESIP training
 25 changing and the key changes were around understanding

26

1 what each emergency response's initial actions were
 2 in the first 30 minutes and what their capabilities
 3 would be. It also covers things like rendezvous point
 4 co-location and all the JESIP principles, sir.
 5 Also, with regard to the MTA JOPs, we have worked
 6 with the national team to pass learning on through the
 7 Arena Inquiry and what happened on the evening to
 8 subsequently make the changes to the current JOPs.
 9 Q. Sir, unless you have any further questions about
 10 training, I'm going to move on.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It may be related to training, it may
 12 not: you are here representing GMFRS generally and their
 13 views on matters related to 22 May as well. As we know,
 14 the chief fire officer did not send specialist crews and
 15 we've heard the explanation for why that happened. Does
 16 GMFRS have a view on whether he was right or the others
 17 were right or is that not a matter on which it was felt
 18 necessary to take a view or you'd prefer not to tell us?
 19 A. Sir, it is an organisational view that we absolutely
 20 wish our specialist responders would have been there in
 21 a much more timely manner than they were because we
 22 believe they could have made a big difference to those
 23 that needed us.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I well understand that view and it may
 25 be that no decision has been made in circumstances in

27

1 which the chief fire officer decided against the advice
 2 of others that it wasn't necessary to send specialist
 3 crews.
 4 A. Again, I think if firefighters had been there in the
 5 early stages of that incident, I don't think the zoning
 6 would have made a particular difference to firefighters:
 7 they would have been in there helping those that needed
 8 them.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.
 10 MR GREANEY: I had myself wondered about pressing Mr Keelan
 11 on that.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm not really -- this is no disrespect
 13 to you. I was not seeking his personal view about it.
 14 I just wondered whether GMFRS actually had a view which
 15 maybe affected training as to what to do. But it
 16 doesn't appear it does and I well understand saying,
 17 actually, the whole thing went wrong much earlier --
 18 A. Yes, sir.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- and that's when specialist crews
 20 would have been of real help to be there.
 21 MR GREANEY: So far as a personal view is concerned, it may
 22 be this will help others who are going to question, it
 23 seemed to me it wasn't appropriate to ask for a personal
 24 view from Mr Keelan give he wasn't there, couldn't judge
 25 the mood, and didn't know the information that was

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1 available .
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It was really whether there was a
 3 corporate view.
 4 Mr Warnock.
 5 MR WARNOCK: Sir, we left the point open because it seemed
 6 to us that it may depend on what view was taken about
 7 the different situational awareness different people
 8 had.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sorry to have forgotten that.
 10 Thank you very much, Mr Warnock.
 11 Mr Greaney, I'm sure this wouldn't happen for
 12 anything that wasn't significant , but if you want me to
 13 rise for 5 minutes, I'm perfectly happy.
 14 MR GREANEY: I think, sir, it would be helpful if you would
 15 rise for 5 minutes. It shouldn't take more than
 16 5 minutes.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm sorry to interrupt your evidence
 18 again, which you are getting used to by now.
 19 (10.12 am)
 20 (A short break)
 21 (10.20 am)
 22 MR GREANEY: Sir, thank you very much.
 23 Just in terms of an update about the timetable for
 24 today, we will conclude the evidence of Mr Keelan, I am
 25 confident. The next witness will be Mr Hopkins, who was

29

1 formerly the chief constable of Greater Manchester
 2 Police and held that position at the time of the arena
 3 attack. I expect to conclude my questioning of him
 4 today, but even if it means an early finish, as I expect
 5 it will, we will not call upon any core participant to
 6 ask their questions of Mr Hopkins today. That is, as
 7 I often say, for good reason, but very good reason on
 8 this occasion.
 9 We were turning to the eighth area and I'm not
 10 entirely sure this is an area of change, but it is
 11 confirmation of something that's important. Between
 12 paragraphs 83 and 89 of your witness statement, you deal
 13 with what I will describe, in I hope neutral terms, as
 14 a dispute between the FBU and the Fire and Rescue
 15 Service about the deployment of firefighters in MTA
 16 situations .
 17 A. Yes, sir .
 18 Q. I think there are just three points I would ask you to
 19 confirm because the chairman has no wish to involve
 20 himself in that dispute.
 21 First of all, that dispute made no difference on the
 22 night of the arena attack; is that correct?
 23 A. Absolutely none, sir .
 24 Q. Secondly, within Greater Manchester, that dispute has
 25 been resolved?

30

1 A. It has. We have a current MTA specialist responder
 2 capability, sir .
 3 Q. You've addressed the third point which is that you do
 4 have such a capability .
 5 There are just a few additional smaller points to
 6 cover off and then I will have finished with my
 7 questions.
 8 Ninth area: Greater Manchester site plans. Was one
 9 of the many experiences that the Fire and Rescue Service
 10 had arising out of the arena attack the value of the
 11 available plans?
 12 A. Absolutely, sir .
 13 Q. Which your crews were able to share not only with each
 14 other but also with other responding agencies?
 15 A. Correct, sir .
 16 Q. I'm now at paragraph 91 of your statement. How have the
 17 Fire and Rescue Service built upon that experience?
 18 A. We have reviewed our site plans for what we call iconic
 19 sites, which would be those that may be vulnerable to
 20 a potential terrorist attack, sir .
 21 Q. Obviously we won't identify those or even the number of
 22 them.
 23 A. All those plans are — each of the NILOs has a copy of
 24 those plans and there's a copy of those plans on the
 25 desk of the force duty officer, sir, as well as those

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1 being available on what we call a mobile data terminal
 2 on every fire engine.
 3 Q. And those site plans include, I believe, contact
 4 details?
 5 A. Correct.
 6 Q. Access points?
 7 A. Correct.
 8 Q. Evacuation strategies?
 9 A. Correct.
 10 Q. Hazards?
 11 A. Yes, sir .
 12 Q. Fixed installations ?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Other potential targets in the area of that location?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Details of the nearest fire station ?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. Cordons?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. And also suggested rendezvous points?
 21 A. Correct.
 22 Q. Together with other information of value to the Fire and
 23 Rescue Service?
 24 A. Yes, sir .
 25 Q. Sir, unless you wanted to ask about that, I was moving

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1 on.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.

3 MR GREANEY: Area 10, specialist equipment. Did the arena
4 attack serve to highlight a need for basic stretchers to
5 assist in the rapid evacuation of casualties?

6 A. It did. The learning taught us that the long board,
7 which, as I described yesterday, is a hard long board,
8 isn't as flexible in use, so we now carry what we call
9 a Ruth Lee canvas stretcher, which you can easily place
10 a casualty on, it has handles down either side and at
11 the ends, and you can more quickly extricate a casualty
12 from an area with these stretchers and there is one of
13 those on every fire engine in Greater Manchester.

14 Q. In area 11, and finally so far as your statement is
15 concerned, there are what I'm going to describe as
16 cultural issues and this is something you touched upon
17 yesterday. You deal with this at length at
18 paragraphs 96 to 105 of your statement. I think we can
19 cut through this. When you refer to cultural issues
20 within the Fire and Rescue Service as of May 2017, what
21 do you mean?

22 A. I mean those that were identified principally through
23 the Kerslake Review, being the difference between the
24 front line and leadership, and as we have touched upon,
25 the different groups of staff and the potential issues

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1 that that may cause across the Fire and Rescue Service,
2 sir.

3 Q. You told us yesterday about the programme for change;
4 is that relevant in this regard?

5 A. I think so, sir. Through the programme for change we
6 invested a lot of time and effort in engagement with
7 leadership at every level within the organisation to
8 shape our new mission, vision and values, which are now
9 within the organisation and beginning to come -- be
10 embedded. We understand we have some more yards to
11 cover, sir, but we have and continue to invest a great
12 deal of time in leadership and management at an
13 operational level, sir.

14 Q. Some might say some of these concepts sound a bit
15 woolly -- that's my word -- but are you satisfied, as
16 someone within the organisation, that there are real
17 changes and changes for the better in terms of the
18 culture of the Fire and Rescue Service?

19 A. Absolutely, sir, 100%.

20 Q. It just finally remains for me to ask you a series of
21 questions about the evidence that has emerged during the
22 course of this inquiry.

23 First of all, have you followed the evidence of the
24 inquiry?

25 A. Where at all possible, sir.

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1 Q. Is it your view that the evidence that we have heard has
2 identified issues above those which had been identified
3 previously?

4 A. I do, sir.

5 Q. Is it therefore your view that further change is
6 warranted or may be warranted?

7 A. Absolutely, sir.

8 Q. Have you thought about that?

9 A. I have, sir. I do have a list at the minute of things
10 that we are starting to look at and I'm sure we will
11 progress those issues around rendezvous points, forward
12 control points, more around the recording dictaphones,
13 et cetera. I think more around training and exercising
14 as well, sir. So I think there are many areas that have
15 been flushed out through this process, which has
16 highlighted other areas that we will look at in the
17 interim to the report coming out later on in the year.

18 Q. You've given us a taste of the kind of things you're
19 looking at. I'm now going to give you a number of
20 options. I'm genuinely not encouraging you to select
21 one over another, but you can either tell us in detail
22 what the areas are you're looking at, you can give us an
23 overview and the detail later in writing, or you can
24 just address these matters in writing. I'm giving you
25 these options; I ought to check with the chairman he

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1 agrees these are the appropriate options?

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely.

3 A. I think for completeness I would like to take some time
4 and reflect on my evidence as well and then provide
5 a written submission.

6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Can I just say one thing about
7 dictaphones and recording what happens. Of course it
8 has been really important for the inquiry and for other
9 people looking at what has happened in the past to be
10 able to look at recordings at the time and it's helpful
11 for people at the scene too to be able to actually go
12 back to what they were saying and what was being said to
13 them at the time, but I don't want something to develop
14 which means that it's actually going to delay the
15 response --

16 A. I understand.

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- because everybody is thinking,
18 "I need to be able to talk about this afterwards or
19 explain why I did this"; it's more important to get on
20 with the rescue.

21 A. Absolutely.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It is important we know exactly what
23 happened and it does help having the recordings, but it
24 has to be done in such a way that it doesn't actually
25 affect the rescue. I'm sure you'll have that in mind.

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1 A. Yes, sir.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just like police officers now going with
3 video recorders to incidents and things like that, that
4 clearly doesn't in any way delay their response and it
5 needs to be the same for the Fire Service.

6 A. I understand, sir, thank you.

7 MR GREANEY: Sir, would you bear with me for one moment,
8 please? I'm just going to check one document which
9 Mr Smith has helpfully drawn to my attention and which
10 it may be appropriate for me to deal with before I call
11 upon him, but I just need to pull it up. Are you happy
12 just to wait there?

13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely.
14 What I have just said is obviously blindingly
15 obvious, but sometimes the obvious needs to be said.

16 A. I agree, sir, thank you.

17 MR GREANEY: I'm just going to ask that we put on the screen
18 a document that we haven't looked at. If you need time
19 to consider it, you must tell me. This document is
20 a new standard operating procedure for the JESIP
21 emergency service inter-control Talk Group. Could
22 we have it on the screen, please? It's {INQ041600/1}.

23 Is this a document that you recognise?

24 A. Yes, I wouldn't profess to know the detail in it.

25 Q. Nor would I. Are you able to tell us in overview what

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1 this document is and when it was introduced?

2 A. I suppose, sir, this is the second iteration of the
3 communication channel that we talked about that wasn't
4 set up prior to the arena, sir.

5 Q. So this is -- if we go to {INQ041600/2}, we can see the
6 approval date of 20 November 2020. The issue date is
7 30 November 2020, and the live date, 1 December 2020.
8 So a further iteration that has occurred during the
9 course of the inquiry. Does this represent a review of
10 and an update to the tri-service interoperability talk
11 wave (sic) channel that we spoke about yesterday?

12 A. It does.

13 Q. While we won't go into the details of it, does it
14 represent further improvements on that?

15 A. It does. I think it also recognises the discussions and
16 learning that we fed back in at a national level, sir.

17 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much indeed. Those then are my
18 questions and I will turn to Mr Smith to ask his,
19 please.

20 Questions from MR SMITH

21 MR SMITH: Mr Keelan, could I take you, first of all, to
22 paragraphs 47 and 48 of your first statement, which is
23 {INQ026714/10}.

24 You make reference there to legislation which
25 affects the operations of the Fire and Rescue Services;

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1 is that correct?

2 A. That is correct, sir.

3 Q. That includes the Health and Safety at Work Act?

4 A. It does, sir.

5 Q. And you'll be familiar with sections 2 and 3 of the Act;
6 is that correct?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Given the public nature of the inquiry, those who are
9 not lawyers, I just ask you to agree, if you would, that
10 that imposes a qualified duty on an employer to ensure
11 that persons, whether in or not in their employment, are
12 not exposed to risks to their safety?

13 A. It does, sir, I agree with you.

14 Q. Do you agree that that duty extends therefore to the
15 Fire and Rescue Service in responding to emergencies?

16 A. Absolutely, sir.

17 Q. What I want to come on to is this: that the training of
18 firefighters and senior officers is what permits them,
19 do you agree, in responding to an emergency to operate
20 safely and in accordance with the legislation?

21 A. Absolutely, sir.

22 Q. So when an incident commander arrives on scene, he or
23 she, is this correct, will assess the risk; is that
24 right?

25 A. That's correct, sir, yes, by gathering information and

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1 seeing what's around them.

2 Q. He or she will assess the risk to the crew or crews in
3 terms of tackling the incident that they have responded
4 to?

5 A. They will, sir, initially in a dynamic manner and then
6 forming part of an analytical risk assessment.

7 Q. So in the case of the Fire Service, every day they will
8 be making dynamic risk assessments, will they not?

9 A. Absolutely.

10 Q. Arriving on scene, assessing the risks, and then
11 deciding two things, if I may suggest: (1), how they are
12 going to respond to the incident and tackle it, but
13 secondly, what information they can pass back to the
14 control room in terms of any further resources that may
15 be required? Have I got that right?

16 A. You have, sir.

17 Q. There can be no doubt, can there, Mr Keelan, in your
18 mind that had the control room mobilised to the arena or
19 to the cathedral car park promptly, they would have had
20 crews down there within minutes?

21 A. That's absolutely correct, sir.

22 Q. And those crew members would have achieved situational
23 awareness for the Fire and Rescue Service?

24 A. They would, sir.

25 Q. And in accordance with what I have just asked you to

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1 deal with, they would have identified what further
2 resources were required?
3 A. Correct.
4 Q. And they would have contacted the control room and
5 passed information back, based on the crew manager's
6 assessment of what was taking place at the scene?
7 A. That's correct.
8 Q. It may be that in those circumstances, your experienced
9 and professional judgement is that if that capability,
10 those resources, had been mobilised to the arena, the
11 delay would never have occurred?
12 A. Yes, sir.
13 Q. Do you also agree that that conclusion doesn't
14 necessarily answer the question of whether Mr Berry was
15 right or acted reasonably?
16 A. I think that's very difficult to say, sir.
17 Q. Difficult to say?
18 A. Absolutely, sir. I think, as I said in my evidence
19 yesterday, I think that there possibly could have been
20 a mobilisation to the arena initially but I do empathise
21 with North West Fire Control and I wasn't there, so
22 I don't know what information was coming in that -- as
23 you've described, the risk-based approach and taking the
24 information and understanding what the impact would be
25 on crews, the health and safety legislation you have

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1 covered, I really do empathise with North West Fire
2 Control. I am not saying they made the wrong decision,
3 but what I am saying is that if firefighters had
4 attended, we would have been there, helping people, sir.
5 Q. There's no doubt about that, is there? No doubt at all?
6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Smith, I just want to follow up on
7 something.
8 I well understand that about fire appliances
9 arriving on the scene, perhaps in small numbers to start
10 with, a risk assessment, and then the incident commander
11 saying what more we need. One of the features of what
12 happened on the 22nd was the lack of communication
13 between the different parties involved here. Suppose
14 you did have information from your other partners, GMP
15 and NWAS, of the sort of -- over the phone,
16 communications of the sort that you could have got from
17 an incident commander if you had an appliance there, so
18 it became perfectly clear that you needed, from the
19 information supplied, you need SRTs, you needed large
20 numbers of fire appliances.
21 Would you take that as being your risk assessment,
22 ie would you then send all those people that appears to
23 be required from what GMP are telling you or NWAS, or
24 would you still send a small number and get the incident
25 commander to make his risk assessment?

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1 A. No, all the information you have described would be
2 within a METHANE message and we would take that
3 information and act upon it. I think one of the things
4 that's important to highlight is that firefighters on
5 fire engines every day respond to incidents not knowing
6 what exactly they're going to turn up to. We don't live
7 in a black and white world, there isn't an action card
8 for every incident or a correct decision for every
9 incident, but officers are trained to see the
10 information and analyse the risk, to look at what
11 interventions and actions can be taken to improve the
12 outcomes for the people that we serve, sir, and they
13 make those dynamic decisions.
14 If a fire engine would have proceeded from
15 Thompson Street, I have no doubt that those staff on the
16 fire engines would have assessed the situation, have
17 seen thousands of people exiting the station at pace,
18 seen ambulances on scene and potentially police
19 officers, and then gone to seek the relevant
20 information.
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. I have no problem about that, but
22 GMP and NWAS, ring up NWFC and they give them lots and
23 lots of information and on the basis of that information
24 the predetermined attendance on the explosion card would
25 simply not be enough.

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1 A. No, sir --
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So what discretion do NWFC have to say,
3 "It says predetermined attendance, however many
4 appliances it is, a relatively small number, we'll
5 override that and we'll send far more people"?
6 A. North West Fire Control on many occasions have
7 information coming in from other agencies, and indeed
8 the public, that makes them realise an incident is
9 different and they have on other occasions increased
10 mobilisations to an incident. The work that we're
11 currently doing with them with regard to introducing
12 999 Eye, which is, as I said yesterday, taking over a
13 mobile phone, we are building that relationship with
14 North West Fire Control and instilling even more trust
15 within them to make improvements and additions to
16 a predetermined attendance based on better situational
17 awareness, sir.
18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. Do the operators at NWFC have
19 the sort of knowledge in order to do that? So to
20 actually analyse all that information and say, right --
21 can someone remind me what the predetermined attendance
22 is for an explosion card? We've lived with it for quite
23 a long time but I've forgotten. How many appliances are
24 sent to the scene?
25 MR SMITH: It's operationally sensitive, sir. It's

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1 described as such on the action plan.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right, thank you.
 3 MR SMITH: As OS, but there's a specific number of
 4 appliances.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. But it's not enough in relation
 6 to all the information and on what they're seeing from
 7 members of the public who are taking pictures. Are they
 8 sufficiently trained to make that sort of assessment?
 9 A. I believe they are, sir. Indeed, in some of the work
 10 that we have done with them since last September,
 11 we have built and given additional training to increase
 12 the ability to look at situational awareness from the
 13 999 Eye system that we're introducing so we have given
 14 them further input on fire behaviour, et cetera, et
 15 cetera, so they can look at the signs and symptoms and
 16 that can influence their decision-making.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And they wouldn't need to ring up a
 18 senior fire officer and say, "I think this needs X
 19 numbers of fire engines, this might leave you a bit
 20 short elsewhere"?
 21 A. No, sir, with the agreement and the conversations that
 22 we have had with regard to 999 Eye, they have
 23 the discretion to increase an attendance.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 25 MR SMITH: As usual the chairman is ahead of me.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you're doing ordinary cases,
 2 you have to wait until counsel have absolutely finished
 3 before you ask a question. But when it's an inquiry,
 4 I'm afraid I feel entitled to jump three steps -- I'm
 5 sorry if it interferes with --
 6 MR SMITH: Of course, sir. Who would disagree?
 7 I am going to come back to the issue of discretion
 8 shortly, Mr Keelan, if I may, because it's probably
 9 quite important. I'll come to it shortly if I may, but
 10 there's just one or two additional points I want to deal
 11 with.
 12 The very point you have just made is that
 13 firefighters face risks to their safety every day, every
 14 shift.
 15 A. Yes, sir.
 16 Q. But those risks have to be assessed, don't they?
 17 A. Yes, sir.
 18 Q. To take the example of the point you are making, had
 19 standard appliances arrived at the arena in accordance
 20 with the explosion action plan, it is likely that the
 21 crews on those appliances would have entered the
 22 station; is that correct?
 23 A. Yes, sir.
 24 Q. But they wouldn't have done so without assessing the
 25 risk, would they, or they shouldn't have done?

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1 A. No, I would have expected them to carry out a dynamic
 2 assessment and, in doing so, speak to other agencies
 3 that were there and look to see what interventions they
 4 could make that would make a difference to those that
 5 need it.
 6 And also, sir, on that specific occasion I probably
 7 would have expected the officer in charge to use
 8 operational discretion and commit crews where they were
 9 needed.
 10 Q. Because operational discretion includes within it saving
 11 life, doesn't it?
 12 A. Absolutely, sir.
 13 Q. And that's defined by the Fire and Rescue Service --
 14 A. Yes, sir.
 15 Q. -- as one of the bases upon which operational discretion
 16 can be applied?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. The control room, as it currently operates as North West
 19 Fire Control and on 22 May, even though it's an
 20 independent company, can perhaps be described as an arm
 21 of the Fire and Rescue Service?
 22 A. Absolutely, sir.
 23 Q. It discharges the mobilising requirements --
 24 A. It does, sir.
 25 Q. -- of Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service in

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1 accordance with the documents that you've mentioned in
 2 your first statement, the agreements that were made?
 3 A. Yes, sir.
 4 Q. Which bind North West Fire Control and the authorities
 5 to ensure that mobilising is conducted, not in
 6 accordance with North West Fire Control's views, but in
 7 accordance with the mobilising policies and procedures?
 8 A. Correct, sir.
 9 Q. Which are provided by each Fire and Rescue Service?
 10 A. That is correct.
 11 Q. This is where we might have to come back to the issue of
 12 discretion in a moment. But before we do that, do you
 13 also agree that North West Fire Control will owe duties
 14 pursuant to the Health and Safety at Work Act, just as
 15 every employer does?
 16 A. Yes, sir.
 17 Q. And those are duties, do you agree, to ensure the safety
 18 of people who may be affected by their actions?
 19 A. That's true, sir.
 20 Q. In particular, duties owed to Fire Service personnel
 21 arising in the course of responding to emergency calls
 22 who may be affected by the mobilising response?
 23 A. I do, sir.
 24 Q. The chairman has heard from Mr Gaskell that he used the
 25 expression, in terms of the guidance that he prepared

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1 for the purposes of training, that the mobilising
 2 response required of North West Fire Control can be
 3 considered to be cast iron in terms of Operation Plato.
 4 A. Okay, sir.
 5 Q. Cast iron. Do you understand the point that Mr Gaskell
 6 was making?
 7 A. I wasn't there at the training session, so it's
 8 difficult to completely understand the point Mr Gaskell
 9 made and the way it was portrayed.
 10 Q. May I interrupt you? It wasn't said at the training
 11 session: it's said by him in a statement by reference to
 12 the training. But do you understand the point he's
 13 making, that if it's a cast-iron instruction there
 14 should be no deviation from it? How does that sit with
 15 you?
 16 A. Again, sir, I understand what you're saying and if
 17 that is what was said during the training, I can
 18 understand in some respects what the response was if
 19 those individuals in the control room had received that
 20 training from Mr Gaskell.
 21 Q. Well, if the action plan and the incident type that has
 22 been selected from the system, forget cast iron, but
 23 let's say is clear, absolutely clear, with clarity,
 24 do you agree that under the arrangements that are in
 25 place, North West Fire Control must act in accordance

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1 with the requirements of the plan?
 2 A. I think I have articulated yesterday and today that
 3 it is very difficult for me to say exactly what I feel
 4 North West Fire Control should and shouldn't do because
 5 if I'm correct, when the first information came in to
 6 North West Fire Control, I believe they could have made
 7 the mobilisation based on an explosion. What I don't
 8 understand is -- I think there was about a 2-minute
 9 window -- I don't understand what happened in that
 10 2-minute window and the conversations that were had that
 11 made them utilise their professional judgement to do
 12 what they did. As I have said, I empathise with North
 13 West Fire Control and I am not criticising them. I am
 14 sure those individuals did what they felt was
 15 appropriate given the information they had, sir.
 16 Q. I'm going to quote you from the evidence of
 17 Michelle Gregson given to the chairman in this inquiry.
 18 The reference, sir, is Day 124, page 8 {Day124/8:3}.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 20 MR SMITH: Her evidence was this.
 21 "Question: In terms of the practical effect, you
 22 would have done exactly the same thing had you been
 23 thinking of that plan, explosion, as opposed to the
 24 'Bomb -- general' plan?
 25 "Answer: Yes, and as I briefly touched on

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1 yesterday, I didn't know exactly which plan it fitted
 2 into because the information was so vast and also at the
 3 same time so vague. So whilst it didn't fit for me into
 4 one particular scenario, it did fit to get the NILO,
 5 who's an expert and has the contacts to get that, to
 6 help with that decision."
 7 A. I understand what she's saying, sir.
 8 Q. I have this question for you, Mr Keelan, arising out of
 9 this: what happens in your professional view if the
 10 mobilising response required of North West Fire Control
 11 and as loaded on to their system is unclear to the
 12 control room staff -- that's their belief, unclear -- in
 13 the sense that following, for example, the explosion
 14 action plan would involve sending crews to a situation
 15 which exposed them to the risk of serious injury and
 16 they don't know in those circumstances whether that is
 17 what they should be doing? Let's just assume that's
 18 their state of mind. What should they do, in your
 19 professional judgement, in those circumstances?
 20 A. I think, sir, one of the vital pieces of information
 21 that they had that would inform their decision--making
 22 was a rendezvous point from Greater Manchester Police.
 23 I think that should have been taken into consideration
 24 by them. If there was then still hesitation around what
 25 to do, and I don't believe there should have been, I can

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1 understand why they picked up the phone to the duty
 2 NILO. And unfortunately, as I've said, the duty NILO
 3 didn't do what I would expect him to do from a critical
 4 questioning perspective and decision-making perspective.
 5 So that further compounded it, sir.
 6 Q. In the context of an emergency that's capable of putting
 7 fire crews at risk of fatality from a secondary
 8 explosion, I want to ask you to consider the distinction
 9 between that situation, fire crews arrive, a secondary
 10 explosion causes death of firefighters, as opposed to
 11 the risks that arise in tackling an incident. Do you
 12 agree in your professional capacity that you would
 13 expect the control room to have due regard to that risk?
 14 A. I would, sir. That is a scenario that, based upon prior
 15 knowledge and training, that could occur, sir. But
 16 I still refer back to a rendezvous point from a blue
 17 light agency, sir.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think the answer to the question is,
 19 "Yes, they should take into account the risk", but you
 20 think they came to the wrong conclusion once they'd done
 21 that?
 22 A. Yes, sir.
 23 MR SMITH: Do you agree that that is therefore putting the
 24 control room in a very difficult position? I'll explain
 25 why before you answer, if I may. On the one hand,

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1 there's the view that you have just expressed as to what
 2 they could have done and, I think in your judgement,
 3 should have done: mobilise to the rendezvous point;
 4 is that right?
 5 A. Yes, sir.
 6 Q. On the other hand, there arises the question of what
 7 does the explosion action plan tell them to do?
 8 A. I understand that, sir, but I think --
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Just so we understand -- obviously you
 10 understand, Mr Keelan, but just so everybody does --
 11 you're contrasting the action plan saying mobilise to
 12 the incident --
 13 MR SMITH: I am.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- which doesn't mention the alternative
 15 of mobilising to an RVP?
 16 MR SMITH: Exactly. Perhaps it might be helpful for all of
 17 us, for the whole inquiry, everybody in this room and
 18 everybody watching, if we ask Mr Lopez to put on the
 19 screen the explosion action plan, which is
 20 {INQ004404/1}.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Keelan, I'm well aware you understand
 22 the basis of the question being asked, it's so that
 23 everybody does.
 24 MR SMITH: What we can see there in the plan, as drawn at
 25 that time, is a series of send actions.

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1 A. That's correct, sir.
 2 Q. I won't ask for this to be put on the screen, but in the
 3 "Bomb -- general" action plan, there is reference, for
 4 good reasons, it's been dealt with already by
 5 Mr O'Reilly, there are good reasons why a rendezvous
 6 point is mentioned --
 7 A. Yes, sir.
 8 Q. -- for the command support unit, the pumps, the TRU --
 9 A. Yes, sir.
 10 Q. -- in order to protect crews --
 11 A. That's correct, sir.
 12 Q. -- from the risk, for example, of secondary action?
 13 It would make sense, wouldn't it, under the "Bomb --
 14 general" plan where there's the threat of a bomb not yet
 15 exploded?
 16 A. Yes, sir, and I think, for absolute clarity, the
 17 explosion action card now does say that if a rendezvous
 18 point has been declared by a blue light agency, to send
 19 the predetermined attendance to that rendezvous point.
 20 So we acknowledged the difficulties that the control
 21 operators had on the evening through what could be
 22 described as some ambiguity within the action cards.
 23 And again, not wanting to criticise and not being in the
 24 room of North West Fire Control, if the control
 25 operative and the team leader felt that it wasn't

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1 appropriate to send the explosion action card and PDA,
 2 I would have expected them -- there was three Plato
 3 actions at the time. I would have expected them --
 4 because that's the reason why they have not sent it
 5 because they think it is a Plato-type incident. I would
 6 expect them to open the Plato card, which I don't
 7 believe they did on the night, but that would have
 8 resulted in speaking to the NILO, which was their
 9 actions.
 10 Q. So just standing back and looking at the three sets of
 11 cards, if you like, the third one you've mentioned, the
 12 "Operation Plato -- standby" action plan, as it was then
 13 referred to, the first action --
 14 A. It is, sir (overspeaking) NILO.
 15 Q. -- of North West Fire Control is inform the duty NILO
 16 pre-mobilisation?
 17 A. And as I've stated on several occasions now, sir,
 18 I understand why the control operatives took the actions
 19 they did.
 20 Q. And of course for the assistance of the inquiry as well,
 21 under the "Operation Plato -- standby" action plan,
 22 North West Fire Control was required to act in relation
 23 to a firearms incident at that time, wasn't it?
 24 A. Yes, sir.
 25 Q. That's how the action plan was headed?

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1 A. It was, because that was in line with the JOPs at the
 2 time.
 3 Q. Now, under JOPs 1, the situation is completely
 4 different, isn't it?
 5 A. It is. Now we have two Plato cards, which is an
 6 implementation and a stand down card, so they have
 7 changed also as a result of learning, sir.
 8 Q. Thank you. Can I come to a scenario that I would like
 9 you to consider, please.
 10 A. You can, sir.
 11 Q. It's been raised before, but I'll deal with it again.
 12 It was raised with Mr Fletcher. In the context of these
 13 two action plans, the explosion and the "Bomb --
 14 general" action plan, a bomb has exploded in a public
 15 place, causing a substantial number of casualties. The
 16 immediate and sensible assumption is that it has been
 17 caused by terrorist action.
 18 A. Are we talking about --
 19 Q. This is a scenario that I'm putting to you to consider.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: A hypothetical.
 21 MR SMITH: All of the emergency services recognise the risk
 22 of a secondary device as does the control room.
 23 A. Sir, if I may just interject? I'd want a little bit
 24 more information before I just presumed it was
 25 a terrorist incident. I'd want to be asking you some

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1 critical questions around the location, the time of day,
 2 et cetera, et cetera, which would give me a better
 3 understanding of what you're describing and the impacts
 4 that could potentially have.
 5 Q. I'm sure that's the case, but what I am asking you to do
 6 is just deal with a question I have asked you when I've
 7 completed putting this hypothetical series of facts to
 8 you. I would like you to proceed on the basis that this
 9 series of facts is established for the purposes of this
 10 question.
 11 A. What series of facts, sir?
 12 Q. The ones I've just been going through. Shall I do it
 13 again?
 14 A. Yes, please.
 15 Q. A bomb has exploded in a public place, causing
 16 a substantial number of casualties. The immediate and
 17 sensible assumption is that it has been caused by
 18 terrorist action. All of the emergency services
 19 recognise the risk of a secondary device, from a bomb
 20 that has not yet exploded, obviously. So too does the
 21 control room. Deployment of unprotected appliances and
 22 crews to the scene carries with it a risk that the crews
 23 will be exposed to the risk of fatality from a secondary
 24 or even more explosions on arrival. Which action plan
 25 applies in those circumstances, taking the two plans

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1 current at 22 May? The explosion action plan for a bomb
 2 that's exploded or the "Bomb — general" action plan for
 3 a bomb that has not yet exploded?
 4 A. Based on the information that you've provided me, sir,
 5 and the information that the control operatives got and
 6 the obvious communication they've already had with the
 7 different blue light organisations to gather that
 8 information, I would suggest that the Plato card needs
 9 to be opened, sir, and we'd need a lot more information
 10 before we formulated our plan. I would expect that
 11 given the information that you've described, one of the
 12 blue light agencies has someone on scene that has some
 13 situational awareness. I would expect at least
 14 a METHANE message to follow, potentially a Plato
 15 message, sir, and that will build up situational
 16 awareness and will allow us to come up, between the blue
 17 lights, with the rendezvous point, gather at
 18 a rendezvous point, and then, following further
 19 conversations, have a forward command point where
 20 we would move forward and make interventions.
 21 Q. Does it follow from that that your view that the
 22 "Operation Plato — standby" action plan would be
 23 appropriate is based on the mere fact, if I can put it
 24 that way, there's a reason why I put it that way, that
 25 a bomb has exploded as a result of terrorist action with

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1 a risk of further explosions rather than a report of
 2 a firearms incident?
 3 A. Could you just repeat that, please, sir?
 4 Q. I'll make it as clear as I can.
 5 A. That would be helpful, sir.
 6 Q. We've already looked at the fact that the
 7 "Operation Plato — standby" action plan required
 8 a firearms incident to be reported to North West Fire
 9 Control before the plan was put into action. On the
 10 scenario which I have just put to you, the hypothetical
 11 series of facts and to which you have just answered,
 12 there is no firearms element. Are you saying that
 13 nonetheless, the Plato standby plan would be the right
 14 plan to implement?
 15 A. Probably based on the information you have given me and,
 16 obviously, the communications you have had with the blue
 17 lights, probably the activation plan, sir.
 18 Q. The activation plan?
 19 A. Yes, sir.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just want to analyse this for
 21 a moment. What Mr Smith perhaps has demonstrated, if it
 22 wasn't already clear to all of us, is actually no action
 23 plan can cover every set of circumstances.
 24 A. Absolutely not, sir, no.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But they do try to do that, don't they,

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1 and in some ways they purport to do that?
 2 A. Sir, I think it's always been recognised that you cannot
 3 write an action plan for every incident because there's
 4 incidents that we turn up to every day that are out of
 5 the ordinary.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So do NWFC operators have the necessary
 7 degree of knowledge to exercise the degree of discretion
 8 which has to occur?
 9 A. It's my understanding that they do.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Did they on 22 May 2017?
 11 A. They operated some discretion, sir, and made actions
 12 based on the information they had, sir.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: With respect, I'm not sure that's an
 14 answer. Were they sufficiently trained —
 15 A. I believe they were, sir.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: In May 2017?
 17 A. Absolutely, sir.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: As you will always have to adapt
 19 situations and exercise discretion, is there much point
 20 in having the action cards at all and do they cause more
 21 harm than good?
 22 A. I think the action cards are a framework for deployment
 23 that help both us and North West Fire Control, sir.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right, secondary devices. If you have
 25 a bomb gone off, and depending on time of day and

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1 siting , there may well be a suspicion that it 's
 2 a terrorist bomb. So let's assume it's at 10.30 at
 3 night and it's at where like the arena, so immediately
 4 there's a suspicion of a terrorist bomb. One of the
 5 side effects of a bomb going off is there's
 6 a considerable mess everywhere. Once a terrorist bomb
 7 goes off, there is always going to be worries that
 8 there's a secondary device there if you go in. And
 9 actually, being satisfied there isn't a secondary device
 10 is extremely difficult and takes quite a long time.
 11 A. I would say it's nigh on impossible, sir, and we'd be
 12 relying on our police colleagues to inform us of that.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So how do GMFRS react in that situation?
 14 There's considerable rubble, mess, whatever. People
 15 have left their belongings all over the place almost
 16 inevitably. We can't guarantee you there's no secondary
 17 device and we've got to go through everyone's bag to
 18 make sure there isn't one. Does that mean you don't go
 19 in?
 20 A. Absolutely not, sir. We work with our partner agencies
 21 to understand the risk, we look at what the threat to
 22 life is and how we can save saveable life, sir, and
 23 we would take those steps to do that.
 24 MR SMITH: We have heard, and in fact you may have heard as
 25 well, Mr Keelan, some compelling evidence from police

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1 officers who recognised the risk from those bags
 2 everywhere, but nonetheless that didn't deter them --
 3 A. Absolutely not, sir.
 4 Q. -- in seeking to assist causalities.
 5 A. I'm confident if we'd have been on scene our
 6 firefighters would have been there helping, treating and
 7 removing casualties.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Keelan, let me make it clear: I'm not
 9 suggesting that firefighters are not just as courageous
 10 as every other blue light agency. Please don't take it
 11 that way. I'm just asking how do you as a matter of
 12 practice sort out as a matter of policy when you're
 13 inevitably in a situation where you can't rule out there
 14 being secondary devices.
 15 A. No, sir.
 16 MR SMITH: So I would like to come back to this issue then,
 17 Mr Keelan, having reviewed these various points.
 18 Your view, is this correct, is that the control room
 19 team leaders were sufficiently trained and experienced
 20 to be able to exercise a degree of discretion; is that
 21 correct --
 22 A. Yes, sir.
 23 Q. -- in relation to mobilising?
 24 A. Yes, sir.
 25 Q. Isn't that what they did then?

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1 A. I haven't disputed that, sir.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Smith, the question always is, isn't
 3 it, just like with judges: if you have a discretion, the
 4 question is do you actually exercise it correctly?
 5 That's the issue.
 6 MR SMITH: That's the issue.
 7 Do you agree that it would be impossible to reach
 8 the conclusion, so far as your professional judgement is
 9 concerned, that North West Fire Control exercised their
 10 discretion wrongly at this time in deciding to seek
 11 advice rather than mobilise in these circumstances?
 12 A. I think, as I've previously stated, on the initial
 13 information I believe they should have mobilised, but
 14 I can understand why they exercised that discretion.
 15 Q. So is the answer that their decision could not, in your
 16 professional view, be categorised as an unreasonable
 17 one? It must follow, mustn't it?
 18 A. It's very difficult to answer that in hindsight because
 19 I know if we'd been on the scene, sir, the difference
 20 that we could have made.
 21 Q. Of course. But just analysing this, if you would,
 22 bearing in mind the terrible circumstances which
 23 affected so many people, just bearing in mind the need
 24 to analyse this issue, if you would --
 25 A. Sir, I come back to -- I think I've said it three times

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1 now -- I believe we should have mobilised but I have
 2 empathy with the control operator for making the
 3 decisions based on the information that she had.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think you might leave it to me now,
 5 Mr Smith.
 6 MR SMITH: I was going to, sir, yes.
 7 I think, Mr Keelan, you've done your very best, if
 8 I may say so, to deal with the point I've been making.
 9 Thank you.
 10 Can I move on to the issue of changes to the action
 11 plans, which I can now deal with very briefly. We know
 12 that the "Bomb -- general" action plan was changed on
 13 21 June 2017. That is almost a month after the attack.
 14 I think you were involved, weren't you, in the
 15 amendments that were actually made?
 16 A. Yes, sir. So following the work that the area manager
 17 and station manager did in the preceding weeks after the
 18 arena investigation, that led to a piece of work which
 19 was led by, I believe it was, Ben Levy, and I had some
 20 oversight of that.
 21 Q. Did GMFRS conclude of its own initiative that the "Bomb
 22 -- general" action plan needed to be altered?
 23 A. Yes, sir, we altered all the action cards.
 24 Q. The point I'm asking, and I probably haven't asked the
 25 question very clearly, of its own initiative, in other

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1 words without any input from North West Fire Control or
 2 any other party with a month of the attack, did you and
 3 your colleague Mr Levy, perhaps with other assistance as
 4 well within the Fire Service, decide that this change
 5 had to take place?
 6 A. It's my understanding, sir, that it was done in
 7 conjunction with those at North West Fire Control and
 8 following — listening to things like the voice
 9 recordings of calls, et cetera, et cetera. It wasn't
 10 done in isolation without any input from North West Fire
 11 Control. It was a sensible change that would impact
 12 upon assisting mobilisation in the future, sir.
 13 Q. Was it your understanding that the specific point of
 14 contact, Group Manager Levy, had discussed this issue
 15 with the operations manager, Janine Carden?
 16 A. I think that's correct, sir.
 17 Q. I would like to turn now to communications. If I may
 18 say so, Mr Keelan, you have given very clear evidence
 19 about why the iNet viewer was not used to look at the
 20 incident log at the time.
 21 A. Okay, sir.
 22 Q. You've made the point to the chairman, in answer to
 23 Mr Greaney Queen's Counsel, that you can get the right
 24 information more quickly by standard communications by
 25 telephone.

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1 A. Absolutely, sir, because through the information that
 2 the control room operatives gather and their ability to
 3 share that, sir.
 4 Q. Have you seen the evidence and listened to the evidence
 5 of other Fire and Rescue Service officers who have been
 6 asked the question: why didn't you look at the incident
 7 log?
 8 A. Some but not all, sir.
 9 Q. Certainly in your case, one very good reason would be
 10 that whatever information you needed, you could have
 11 obtained from other sources more readily?
 12 A. Absolutely. If you were to pick the phone up and ask
 13 the right questions, as I have stated in previous
 14 conversations in this room, I believe you can gather all
 15 information quickly and swiftly from an operative, sir.
 16 Q. But if you're off duty and you are actually responding
 17 to the incident, if you like by way of self-deployment
 18 or by way of agreement, and you have time and you know
 19 you're going to be proceeding to assist with the
 20 incident, would it be appropriate for an officer in that
 21 situation to look at the log if he or she has time?
 22 A. It would always be advantageous, sir, but as I said,
 23 I do believe that information is more swiftly gained
 24 from a control room operative.
 25 Q. North West Fire Control has acknowledged its failures to

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1 pass information to Fire and Rescue Service officers,
 2 but do you agree that these failures and the learning to
 3 be derived from them operates both ways?
 4 A. Absolutely, sir. I see our relationship with North West
 5 Fire Control as extremely important.
 6 Q. And do you agree that one of the problems, looking at it
 7 from the control room's perspective, and this is
 8 something the chairman may wish to consider and be
 9 assisted by later, is that each control room operator
 10 may not know what has been passed by a colleague at
 11 another pod to another Fire and Rescue Service officer,
 12 or even the same one, because if, for example, you,
 13 Mr Keelan, make a call into the control room and call
 14 again 15 minutes later, and speak to different control
 15 room operator, that control room operator may not be
 16 aware at all what his or her colleague has passed to you
 17 at an earlier stage?
 18 A. I acknowledge that. I would expect an officer, when
 19 speaking to North West Fire Control, to give them a very
 20 small précis: I found this information out 10/20 minutes
 21 ago, can you inform me if there's been a further
 22 informative message, if any more resources have been
 23 deployed, et cetera, et cetera? It's a two-way
 24 responsibility, sir.
 25 Q. This is what I want to come to. But before I do, have

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1 you ever watched the process in the control room of
 2 a control room operator receiving a call, speaking and
 3 typing on the system?
 4 A. I have been in North West Fire Control at mainly spare
 5 condition times or on large incidents where I have seen
 6 that happen, sir.
 7 Q. So when asking for an update on information, the control
 8 room operator has to listen to you, read the log, and
 9 convey that information over the telephone?
 10 A. Yes, sir.
 11 Q. And that is a challenging exercise, isn't it?
 12 A. It can be in some circumstances, sir.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Smith, may I say that I readily
 14 understand this and it's been something which has been
 15 concerning me as to how it is best to get information,
 16 and indeed the other way, as Mr Nankivell said, fire
 17 officers don't necessarily actually do everything
 18 through North West Fire Control themselves and you have
 19 and things like NIOs having their own radio, they just
 20 communicate directly and it doesn't go through NWFC. So
 21 there are these issues. They must be perfectly apparent
 22 and you're saying by implication: actually, it'd be much
 23 better if some of you looked at the log and then you're
 24 bound to know everything and things won't be missed.
 25 And you're really saying: no, let's pick up the phone,

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1 it's so much quicker and easier.
 2 Why haven't these been ironed out? The issues are
 3 there apparent, aren't they, and must have been
 4 apparent? Or am I being unfair about this?
 5 A. You're entitled to be unfair, sir. That's what you're
 6 there to do.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, I'm absolutely not entitled to be
 8 unfair.
 9 A. The logs have a lot of information in because that's how
 10 the system works when it sends and mobilises resources,
 11 when different people are involved, everything is logged
 12 on it. It does take skill to navigate that and pick out
 13 the salient areas, which is why I would always say the
 14 best person to speak to is a control room operative.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right. It's just things may get --
 16 anyway. It does seem to me that sorting out this
 17 problem between --
 18 A. Yes, I think, sir, for some of the more salient
 19 information like Plato, METHANE messages, the systems
 20 have been put in place with the other platforms that
 21 we've talked around and also Resilience Direct, it is
 22 a lot easier for other people to get concise
 23 information. So if we were to have an incident this
 24 evening and a METHANE message was produced, the officers
 25 that were on duty would have an email link to it, they'd

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1 be able to click on it, they'd see the METHANE message
 2 with all the information on, they wouldn't have to call
 3 North West Fire Control if they didn't need to, they
 4 wouldn't need to listen to any other communications,
 5 it'd be there for them concisely, sir.
 6 MR SMITH: One question might be: should everything go
 7 through the control room?
 8 A. I think, sir, if you are an incident commander on the
 9 incident ground, it's absolutely vital that all your
 10 informative messages, decision-making, requests for
 11 resources are done via Airwave radios to the control
 12 room operatives that are logged and recorded and
 13 actioned appropriately.
 14 Q. Because if you're a NILO, you may need to share
 15 sensitive information with GMP or another NILO; is that
 16 correct?
 17 A. Or the other way round, yes.
 18 Q. Because of the ability of the NILOs to gather, receive,
 19 and disseminate information that is sensitive?
 20 A. Correct.
 21 Q. Which the control room doesn't enjoy, is that correct --
 22 A. Yes, sir.
 23 Q. -- for obvious reasons?
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: How often in practice does that arise in
 25 an incident where a bomb or a fire has happened that the

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1 NILOs are talking sensitive information in the middle of
 2 all this?
 3 A. Not very often, sir.
 4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Ever?
 5 A. Yes, potentially, sir, depending on what else is going
 6 on from a national perspective.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Potentially. Has it ever happened?
 8 A. To my knowledge, yes, sir --
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.
 10 A. -- but not regularly.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No.
 12 A. We do get involved in other things with Greater
 13 Manchester Police, other operations that they carry out,
 14 that we wouldn't want to be recording on the log of
 15 North West Fire Control for everyone to see.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: They may not relate to getting fire
 17 appliances to the scene and getting the right people to
 18 scene.
 19 A. None of that information is at all sensitive, which why
 20 it's contained within a METHANE message and shared with
 21 every cat 1 responder.
 22 MR SMITH: Just coming now as I said I would to the
 23 questions: you have on a number of occasions now used
 24 the term "if you ask the right questions". What we have
 25 seen with the communications coming into the control

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1 room, which is in the sequence of communications, which
 2 I'm sure you've had an opportunity of looking at,
 3 is that Fire and Rescue Service officers say to the
 4 control room, "Have you any updates for me?"
 5 Now, that does raise the problem, doesn't it, that
 6 the control room operator then has to think of what
 7 updates should be provided rather than enquiring of the
 8 Fire and Rescue Service officer, "Do you already have
 9 the following information?" So would it be preferable,
 10 looking at the circumstances on 22 May and what
 11 happened, if there were clearer demands made through
 12 questions of the control room and the control room
 13 recognised the importance of ensuring that the Fire and
 14 Rescue Service officers understood fully what
 15 information had already come into the control room?
 16 A. I think that's what I said some time ago.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So do I. I think he's already agreed
 18 that.
 19 MR SMITH: I just wanted to have that absolutely clear for
 20 the chairman, if I may.
 21 I want to turn finally to the control room, your
 22 observations on proposed improvements, and this question
 23 that things aren't what they used to be. There is
 24 a danger, isn't there, within adopting an approach that
 25 it's not as good as it used to be?

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1 A. I don't think they have been my words, sir.
 2 Q. And that wouldn't reflect your view, would it?
 3 A. I think things are different, sir.
 4 Q. And do you agree that the way forward is to achieve
 5 improvement where it's needed?
 6 A. Absolutely, sir, which is why we have, since September
 7 last year, a group manager working full-time on North
 8 West Fire Control work and more recently a station
 9 manager. Granted, they haven't been within the control
 10 room space as much as we would have liked, but that is
 11 because of COVID restrictions. But we are committed, as
 12 a Fire and Rescue Service, in investing time, effort and
 13 working alongside and in conjunction with North West
 14 Fire Control to make what we have as good as possible.
 15 Q. There are advantages, aren't there, to the current
 16 system? I'm going to enumerate them if I may. There
 17 are not many, but these are the important ones.
 18 A. Okay, sir.
 19 Q. First of all, financial constraints impact on the Fire
 20 Service, don't they?
 21 A. Unfortunately, sir, they do.
 22 Q. So there is sense, isn't there, if wasted expenditure or
 23 unnecessary expenditure can be avoided by the type of
 24 control room that is currently operating?
 25 A. Yes, sir. One of the main drivers for us moving to

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1 North West Fire Control was the efficiency element.
 2 Q. The second aspect that I wanted to raise is the ability
 3 for four authorities to provide the finance, even though
 4 GMCA provide the bulk, the finance for improved
 5 technology so that systems can be activated rapidly and
 6 mobilising response through their current systems using
 7 the best current technology available.
 8 A. Yes, sir.
 9 Q. And that's another advantage, isn't it?
 10 A. Yes, sir.
 11 Q. With the introduction of the specific point of contact,
 12 which was Mr Levy at one time and is now Station
 13 Manager Berry; is that correct?
 14 A. Group Manager Berry, sir, yes.
 15 Q. Forgive me, Group Manager Berry. There is a real
 16 liaison, isn't there, between Greater Manchester Fire
 17 and Rescue Service and the control room?
 18 A. Absolutely.
 19 Q. Do you have knowledge of where the operations support
 20 group works?
 21 A. Within North West Fire Control?
 22 Q. Within North West Fire Control.
 23 A. Yes, sir.
 24 Q. There is liaison with all four Fire and Rescue Services;
 25 is that correct?

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1 A. There is, yes.
 2 Q. The Fire Brigades Union is also involved, isn't it?
 3 A. I believe there's a rep within North West Fire Control,
 4 sir.
 5 Q. And there's also now a mobilising and communications
 6 group, isn't there?
 7 A. There is.
 8 Q. Which is designed to deal specifically with the two
 9 important issues of improving, where necessary,
 10 mobilising responses and improving communications
 11 between the Fire Service and the control room?
 12 A. Absolutely. We are working jointly with yourselves to
 13 do exactly what you've just described.
 14 Q. So of course taking the point that you would recommend
 15 a tri-service control room, and that's your --
 16 A. I think my words were a gold standard within
 17 Greater Manchester would be a tri-service control room,
 18 which encapsulated all the JESIP principles and enabled
 19 us to work cohesively with the other blue light agencies
 20 more efficiently in my mind.
 21 Q. But in the absence of that being put in place, the
 22 effort must be, do you agree, to make sure that the
 23 control room operates efficiently and safely?
 24 A. Absolutely, sir, and we are 100% committed to ensuring
 25 that.

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1 Q. 100%?
 2 A. 100%.
 3 Q. And do you agree that the control room is also 100%
 4 committed?
 5 A. Absolutely, sir.
 6 Q. So it's now a question of ensuring that that continues
 7 to work?
 8 A. It is, sir.
 9 Q. On this subject, and before I end my questions, North
 10 West Fire Control has sent to the inquiry legal team
 11 this morning an email sequence by way of additional
 12 disclosure, which you haven't seen. I'm not going to
 13 ask you to look at it unless you need to. That's not
 14 the purpose, it's to be disclosed. But you may be able
 15 to bring it to mind that in August of 2020, you raised
 16 with North West Fire Control a number of concerns that
 17 Mr Topping had identified in relation to mobilising
 18 responses based on the action plans in place and
 19 what was said to be a failure to pass a METHANE message
 20 on. Do you remember that?
 21 A. I do, sir.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it's better if the witness sees
 23 it actually. If you're going to be asked questions
 24 about it, do you want to have it to look at?
 25 MR GREANEY: It's a simple point that emerges from it.

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1 I don't think that the witness will consider that he's
2 being treated unfairly .
3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you do want to look at it --
4 A. That's fine, sir . If I don't feel I can answer the
5 question --
6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What may seem to be simple questions are
7 not always simple to answer.
8 MR COOPER: Sir, I'm sorry to intervene here, but if there
9 has been material sent to the inquiry legal team --
10 I shouldn't be on mute. I've unmuted myself.
11 MR GREANEY: We can hear you now.
12 MR COOPER: If there is material that's been given to the
13 inquiry legal team this morning, I would like to see it
14 before I ask questions. I would also like to see what
15 material has been handed to the witness, please.
16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Nothing has been handed to the witness.
17 It was going to be handed to me, I declined to have it,
18 because I said perhaps the witness needed it more than
19 I did. The witness then said he doesn't need it, so
20 nothing has been handed to the witness. You will get
21 this before you ask questions and you'll have time to
22 look at it .
23 MR COOPER: I am grateful, sir, thank you.
24 MR GREANEY: Just so Mr Cooper isn't in a state of concern,
25 the position is that it was necessary to make certain

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1 redactions to the document. Those have just been dealt
2 with and within, I would have thought, 5 minutes or so,
3 the document will be provided to core participants, so
4 Mr Cooper can rest assured he will have it before his
5 questions.
6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
7 MR SMITH: I think we'll find in a moment, Mr Keelan, that
8 it is a very simple question. If you can just not bring
9 to mind the detail but the fact of the correspondence.
10 A. Yes, sir .
11 Q. Do you agree that you raised the matter with North West
12 Fire Control and that they responded appropriately and
13 took the view that of course it had to be dealt with and
14 provided you with answers?
15 A. Yes, sir .
16 Q. And that's the spirit in which both of you were working;
17 is that correct?
18 A. Absolutely, yes. It's a partnership, sir .
19 MR SMITH: Mr Keelan, may I thank you for your answers to my
20 questions and your assistance.
21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If we're going to have a mid-morning
22 break, we need to have it. I know we had -- we could
23 perhaps make it 10 minutes.
24 MR GREANEY: We've been sitting again for an hour and
25 10 minutes. The next advocate that I will call upon is

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1 indeed Mr Cooper, so if we have a break of, can
2 I suggest, 15 minutes, that will give him a chance to
3 read the document and, moreover, it will give the
4 stenographers a chance to have the break that they need.
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you should have a copy of the
6 document because you won't know what you're going to be
7 asked about, so you should have a copy of the document
8 as well. Thank you. A quarter of an hour.
9 (11.30 am)
10 (A short break)
11 (12.05 pm)
12 MR GREANEY: Sir, I'm sorry that was a longer break than
13 I intended. There were some things I had to deal with.
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm afraid I added to it by leaving my
15 bundle behind, so that was further delay.
16 MR GREANEY: I will now call upon Mr Cooper. I know that he
17 will not conclude his questions before 1 o'clock, so can
18 I ask him please to identify a time at around 1 o'clock
19 for our lunch break.
20 Questions from MR COOPER
21 MR COOPER: Thank you.
22 Mr Keelan, as you know, I ask questions on behalf of
23 the bereaved families. Can I begin by getting some
24 context of the equipment that was actually at the
25 disposal of the Greater Manchester Fire services on the

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1 night in question and take you to paragraph 70, please,
2 of your statement, {INQ026714/18}.
3 There you see, Mr Keelan:
4 "GMFRS is the one of the largest Fire and Rescue
5 services outside of London with more than 1,800
6 employees around 1,400 of these of uniformed employees.
7 In May 2017 there were 41 fire stations with 56 front
8 line fire appliances and 44 specialist vehicles. In
9 2019 there are now 50 fire appliances."
10 These are significant facilities are they not,
11 Mr Keelan, available for deployment in
12 Greater Manchester, should there be a need?
13 A. Yes, sir .
14 Q. And it's the sad fact, and you've acknowledged it
15 fairly, that on the night of 22 May 2017, at least for
16 2 hours or so, not a single item listed in paragraph 70
17 was made available to stricken people in the arena;
18 is that right?
19 A. Absolutely, sir . It is an absolute travesty that
20 we weren't in attendance and we weren't providing help
21 and assistance to those that needed us. We all in
22 Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service deeply regret
23 not being there to help.
24 Q. It really puts it in stark clarity, doesn't it, when one
25 actually looks at the equipment and the facilities and

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1 no doubt add to that the trained and potentially
 2 courageous people available to help that all of this was
 3 simply, for reasons the inquiry is looking into,
 4 deprived of those people in the arena? That's right,
 5 that's the reality, in stark terms, isn't it?
 6 A. It is, sir, and it deeply saddens me and everyone within
 7 Greater Manchester Fire that that's the case.
 8 Q. Let's look at some equipment and I know it has been gone
 9 into, but this perhaps brings it home in stats.
 10 Let's look, Mr Lopez, please, at {INQ004317/1}.
 11 We can just see the equipment that was available to the
 12 fire services and if that could be enhanced.
 13 This is a standard inventory, isn't it, for
 14 instance? We're not going to go through it in any great
 15 detail, but this is a standard inventory of the sort of
 16 equipment that was available on a standard fire engine?
 17 A. That's correct, sir.
 18 Q. If we could look, please, {INQ004319/1}. I think it's
 19 a spreadsheet so it may need a double click from you,
 20 Mr Lopez.
 21 Again, this is again a further -- just scroll down
 22 if you can Mr Lopez, gradually scroll down.
 23 For instance, again this details, does it not, just
 24 in part, some of the emergency equipment? Go to the top
 25 again, please, Mr Lopez.

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1 A. Sir, I think you want tag "R5 (SRT)", sir.
 2 Q. We see for instance trauma equipment as well, don't we?
 3 A. Yes, sir.
 4 Q. All of this applied to vehicles and finally
 5 {INQ004314/1}.
 6 A trauma bag inventory, if that could simply be
 7 highlighted, please, so far as we can, or increased.
 8 Again, that actually gives the full content, doesn't it,
 9 of the trauma equipment that could have been available,
 10 particularly in relation to bleeding and burns, that
 11 could have been available to stricken people in the
 12 arena; is that right?
 13 A. Absolutely, sir, and if we'd been in attendance it would
 14 have been used and would have been of benefit to those
 15 that were hurt and injured.
 16 Q. I'm sure it would be, Mr Keelan. There's nothing I have
 17 to say which is meant to contradict that. I'm just
 18 highlighting what was actually available on the night so
 19 that we have some perspective as to what didn't get
 20 there. Thank you.
 21 You have told us that at the time of this atrocity,
 22 you were head of prevention; is that right?
 23 A. No, sir. I was the director of emergency response, sir.
 24 Q. Were you involved with prevention at all in any way or
 25 consideration of prevention at the time?

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1 A. No, sir. Geoff Harris was the director of prevention
 2 and protection.
 3 Q. Did you have any input into prevention and protection
 4 at the time?
 5 A. On various topics that came through the corporate
 6 leadership, sir.
 7 Q. For instance, and again I've dealt with this with
 8 Mr Harris and it may be I can do so with you in short
 9 order, but the focus as we've established at the time
 10 was on a Paris-style attack rather than for instance
 11 a lone wolf attack. I short circuit the evidence
 12 because we've heard a lot of it. You have no
 13 disagreement?
 14 A. Yes, sir, the training and input given to staff was
 15 based on events that had more recently happened, of
 16 which were the Paris or Brussels-style attacks, sir.
 17 Q. Would you agree with many of your other colleagues who
 18 have said that perhaps in doing so, an eye was taken off
 19 the ball, to put it that way, in relation to the sort of
 20 atrocity that this murderer had committed?
 21 A. I would say so. We were planning for events that had
 22 recently happened but one point I would like to stress
 23 is that the NILO course actually dealt with a pre and
 24 post bomb, single bomb scene too, sir, so the NILOs had
 25 had training in a single bomb scene.

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1 Q. That may be so. But in terms of overall planning,
 2 preparation and anticipation, the focus, as I think
 3 we've heard from many other witnesses, I'm asking you to
 4 agree if you can with them, the focus was on an attack
 5 of a different type that occurred on the night of the
 6 22nd; would you agree?
 7 A. Yes, sir. Through intelligence and through national
 8 risk assessments and other channels, yes.
 9 Q. Because if we look at your paragraph 15, please, of your
 10 statement, {INQ026714/3}:
 11 "The responsibility for Fire and Rescue policy in
 12 England was passed from the Department of Communities
 13 and Local Government to the Home Office in 1916 [as
 14 read]."
 15 Just so that we can understand this, would it be
 16 that the driver for perhaps the approach to policy
 17 in relation to terrorist attacks was coming from the
 18 Home Office?
 19 A. From 2016 onwards, sir, yes, that will have been fed
 20 into the doctrine, the national joint operating
 21 principles doctrines, that filtered down for the blue
 22 light emergency services to work towards and alongside.
 23 Q. So in many respects, although we have heard a lot from
 24 your colleagues and others testifying to the focus being
 25 on the Paris-style attack, the encouragement to do so

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1 was in fact coming from the Home Office?
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 Q. Thank you. Let's move on to another matter and your
 4 paragraphs 44 and 45 {INQ026714/9}, please.
 5 Dealing with the integrated risk plan to be produced
 6 by FRAs:
 7 "The framework requires FRAs to identify and assess
 8 the full range of foreseeable Fire and Rescue related
 9 risks in their areas and make provision for prevention
 10 and protection activities and respond to incidents
 11 appropriately. The framework also requires FRAs to
 12 produce an integrated risk management plan."
 13 And you referred the chair to a copy of the
 14 framework in place at the time for the Manchester Arena,
 15 which you attach at appendix 18:
 16 "The 2012 framework did not refer to capabilities
 17 for specific terrorist attacks such as MTFAs but did
 18 refer to terrorism generally. If gaps in the national
 19 resilience capabilities are identified, recommendations
 20 to develop a new capability may be made."
 21 And you go on to say:
 22 "Risks highlighted in the National Risk Register
 23 identified a gap in emergency service response
 24 capability, resulting in the establishment of the MTFA
 25 capability in some locations initially."

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1 Can I just ask you about — going back then to the
 2 top of that paragraph 45, again Mr Lopez, if you can put
 3 it back on screen for me again, please, going back to
 4 the top of 45:
 5 "The 2012 framework did not refer to capabilities
 6 for specific terrorist incidents such as MTFA."
 7 This was the framework in place at the time of the
 8 arena, you have said; that's correct, isn't it?
 9 A. I believe so, sir.
 10 Q. Thank you, Mr Lopez, you can take it down now.
 11 Can you explain why it did not cover MTFA?
 12 A. The framework was a national document, sir, which was
 13 informed by intelligence from the Home Office and
 14 security services. I wouldn't be best placed to answer
 15 that question.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, just remind me, will you,
 17 when the Paris-type attacks were? What year they were
 18 when perhaps MTFA came to the fore?
 19 MR COOPER: November 2015.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. And there was Mumbai before
 21 that, wasn't there?
 22 MR COOPER: There was, yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 24 MR COOPER: I haven't got the Mumbai date in front of me.
 25 Certainly Paris was November 2015.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: The Mumbai attack, so we don't get this
 2 out of context, was 2008, which was of course
 3 a multi-scene attack, when MTFAs perhaps first came to
 4 real notice.
 5 MR GREANEY: Multi-scene and multi-days in fact.
 6 MR COOPER: Can I add to that chronology, 7/7 was 2005,
 7 there was the attempted bombing of Glasgow Airport in
 8 2007. The Lee Rigby atrocity was 2013.
 9 Westminster Bridge was 2017. And Charlie Hebdo was
 10 January 2015.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 12 MR COOPER: So again, I understand your answer, Mr Keelan,
 13 concerning a national approach being taken, and going
 14 back to my earlier questions, a Home Office
 15 responsibility for this guidance, but is that really the
 16 top and bottom of it so far as you can assess, that
 17 at the time the Home Office were focusing, up to 2012,
 18 on other types of incident?
 19 A. That's what the evidence would suggest, sir.
 20 Q. And the 2012 document, I presume was drafted in 2012?
 21 It doesn't sound such a silly question if you know how
 22 legal documents are sometimes drafted. Do you know if
 23 it was drafted in 2012 or not?
 24 A. I don't.
 25 Q. I'll move on. Can I take you now on to, please, your

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1 paragraph 60 of your statement {INQ026714/13}.
 2 In your paragraph 60, I know Mr Greaney took you to
 3 it earlier but I want to do it in a slightly different
 4 way:
 5 "The aims of GMFRS can be grouped into six main
 6 themes, namely to save, protect, prevent, public value,
 7 people and principles. Specifically, the aims are
 8 to..."
 9 And this may be a difficult process for you, but
 10 looking at those specific sections, let's just look at
 11 them in relation to the performance of the
 12 Greater Manchester Fire services on the night of
 13 22 May 2017:
 14 "Save — plan and prepare for emergencies that may
 15 happen and make a high quality effective and resilient
 16 approach to them."
 17 That's a fail, isn't it?
 18 A. Sir, if I may, the whole of those areas on the night,
 19 tragically and with deep regret, Greater Manchester Fire
 20 and Rescue Service failed in all those areas.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I want to understand this for a moment.
 22 Are you accepting a failure to plan and prepare for
 23 emergencies that may happen?
 24 A. We planned and prepared, sir, but what we planned and
 25 prepared for didn't come to fruition.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Fine, I just wanted to understand that,
 2 because a number of people concerned with this sort of
 3 response have said they believe they were as well
 4 prepared as they could be.
 5 A. I do believe we were well prepared, sir, but —
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And that made the failure even worse.
 7 A. — what should have happened didn't come to fruition,
 8 sir.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, I understand that, sir.
 10 MR COOPER: Thank you, sir.
 11 Let me just go back to my own screen on that
 12 paragraph again, just to clarify a few matters in
 13 fairness to you. Looking carefully at that paragraph,
 14 and it might help again to put it back up again so
 15 Mr Keelan is not at a disadvantage.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's still there.
 17 MR COOPER: So looking at that carefully, Mr Keelan, you
 18 agree then, do you, that on the night, as far as GMFRS
 19 are concerned, it was a fail from (a) down to (f)?
 20 A. I'd say, sir, that we were planned and prepared, but
 21 what we had put in place didn't come to fruition and we
 22 didn't make the interventions and help people as
 23 we would wish.
 24 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think you're being asked to look at
 25 all those, (a) to (f), and do you agree they were all

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1 a fail?
 2 A. To (b), sir:
 3 "Influence and reflect the built environment."
 4 I don't think that was necessarily relevant to this
 5 incident, sir:
 6 "Prevent — engage with communities to inform and
 7 educate people in how to reduce risk from fires and
 8 other emergencies."
 9 I believe that we did and we continue to do that:
 10 "Public value — [managing resources flexibly,
 11 efficiently]."
 12 On the night we absolutely didn't:
 13 "People — work with people with the right skills
 14 and attitude to deliver high quality value for money
 15 services."
 16 I believe in the build-up to the arena incident we
 17 did indeed have people with the right skills and
 18 attitude to deliver, but on the night we did not deliver
 19 by any means.
 20 And:
 21 "Principles — operate in accordance with the law
 22 and our values."
 23 Again, sir, the planning was done to do that but on
 24 the evening we didn't deliver against our values.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think (f) overall is probably a fail?

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1 A. Yes, sir.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 3 MR COOPER: All right. I'll leave it there.
 4 Can I move on to another matter, please.
 5 Paragraph 63 {INQ026714/14}, please. You explain the
 6 changes you made and say:
 7 "This followed the postponement of some elements of
 8 GMFRS' Integrated Risk Management Plan 2016–2020 (IRMP)
 9 in December 2017 and significant change in senior
 10 management within the service."
 11 What was that significant change of senior
 12 management in service that you're referring to?
 13 A. I don't have the dates to hand, sir, but following the
 14 arena incident the then chief fire officer has
 15 subsequently retired, the deputy chief fire officer has
 16 subsequently retired, and the other assistant chief fire
 17 officer, Geoff Harris, has retired, sir.
 18 Q. Was there, and I'll try and put it as neutrally as
 19 I can, a degree of satisfaction amongst rank and file
 20 firefighters when those retirements took place?
 21 A. Not to my knowledge, sir.
 22 Q. Did, for instance, Mr O'Reilly immediately retire or did
 23 he go on gardening leave?
 24 A. He didn't immediately retire, nor did he go on gardening
 25 leave, sir.

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1 Q. He did go on gardening leave, did he?
 2 A. No, not to my knowledge.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think he's saying he didn't retire
 4 immediately after the incident, but there was a gap
 5 between that and the incident, rather than gardening
 6 leave.
 7 MR COOPER: Let me be specific in my question. Did he leave
 8 his post before he retired and go on gardening leave up
 9 to his retirement?
 10 A. Not to my knowledge, sir.
 11 Q. Well, you'd know, wouldn't you?
 12 A. Not necessarily, sir. I do not know — not to my
 13 knowledge, sir.
 14 Q. Would you be able to find out for us?
 15 A. Yes, sir.
 16 Q. Thank you. Let me go back, if I can, then, please, to
 17 some specific questions about action cards. Again, I'll
 18 try and short circuit this. It's paragraph 118
 19 {INQ026714/27} for those that want to follow it and you
 20 may want to look at it yourself, Mr Keelan.
 21 It seems that your overall assessment of action
 22 cards was that many were too complicated?
 23 A. I don't think that's what I've said.
 24 Q. No, I'm asking you. I'm focusing you on a paragraph and
 25 asking you: do you think many of the action cards were

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1 too complicated?
 2 A. No, sir.
 3 Q. Well, then let's look at your paragraph 118. How many
 4 action cards are there, for instance?
 5 A. Actual operational action cards relating to incidents,
 6 sir, I think we have around -- there are 78 and there
 7 may have been a couple of additions since this statement
 8 was written. There are other action cards for admin
 9 areas, but that is for operational incidents, sir.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Does that just relate to
 11 Greater Manchester or across all four areas?
 12 A. Greater Manchester, sir.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So we have 78 for Greater Manchester and
 14 I suspect they're the largest number because it's the
 15 largest authority, but there would be a number of
 16 different ones for the other authorities and, for
 17 reasons you have explained, you think it's impossible to
 18 rationalise it. Thank you, Mr Cooper.
 19 MR COOPER: Might it be worth thinking about reducing the
 20 number of action cards?
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: One thing we've looked at at the moment
 22 is whether they can be reduced by bringing them all
 23 together so all the areas have the same action cards,
 24 which may be possibly a part of a recommendation I make.
 25 The other part of it could be reducing the 78.

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1 Could you tell me which bit you're looking at with your
 2 question?
 3 MR COOPER: I have taken into account the former that you
 4 raised, that is clearly with the inquiry now. I was
 5 simply adding the extra as to whether there might be
 6 some assistance in reducing the 78.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 8 A. The 78 refers to different incident types, which will
 9 have, for the majority, standard operating procedures
 10 for -- it would be difficult to reduce the 78, sir.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Keelan, let me follow that up a bit.
 12 You've accepted, while Mr Smith was asking you
 13 questions -- I was about to say giving evidence, but
 14 of course he doesn't do that -- that there is going to
 15 be and is required to be a degree of discretion by the
 16 operators as to what they do and you've accepted that
 17 they have the necessary skills, in your view, to
 18 exercise that discretion. So if you allow the exercise
 19 of discretion at a broader ambit, you could reduce the
 20 action cards, couldn't you?
 21 A. Potentially over time, sir. How we work up what
 22 a predetermined attendance is, is we look at what
 23 actions need to be taken, undertaken, at a specific
 24 incident type to resolve that incident in a safe and
 25 effective manner. That task analysis would then come up

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1 with a number of firefighters that we would need on that
 2 incident ground. That then forms a predetermined
 3 attendance that's mobilised to it. It would be very
 4 difficult for a control operative to be able to have all
 5 that information and knowledge around what would need to
 6 be done at every incident type to successfully resolve
 7 them.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would I be right that in most cases --
 9 sorry for taking this over, Mr Cooper -- what is
 10 required of an action card is how many appliances you
 11 send to the scene?
 12 A. Yes, sir.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Because in almost all cases they would
 14 get sent to the incident?
 15 A. Yes, sir.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: What type of appliances are sent to the
 17 scene?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So how many, what type. Whether
 20 a particular rank of officer is required to go with
 21 them?
 22 A. Yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And any specialists?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's what they would normally contain?

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1 A. Yes.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Cooper.
 3 MR COOPER: Thank you, sir.
 4 I would like to, on the subject of discretion, which
 5 the chair just raised, follow on, on to operational
 6 discretion if I can and ask you to look at your
 7 statement again, starting at paragraph 149, please.
 8 I think it probably fits in logically with this area of
 9 evidence.
 10 If you look at your paragraph 149 and 150
 11 {INQ026714/33}, we see you say:
 12 "Operational discretion related to rare or
 13 exceptional circumstances where strictly following an
 14 operational procedure would be a barrier to resolving an
 15 incident or where there is no procedure that adequately
 16 deals with the incident. Examples of operational
 17 discretion include to save human life, taking immediate
 18 and decisive action to prevent escalation of the
 19 incident, and where taking no action may lead to others
 20 to put themselves in danger. GMFRS adopted operational
 21 discretion in 2014 and the service was one of the first
 22 emergency services to do so. However, it stipulates
 23 clear criteria as to when and how operational discretion
 24 should be used and states where there is an operational
 25 imperative, an IC may need to adapt SOPs and develop

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1 a tactical plan which balances the need to protect life
2 and property against the risk of inertia .”
3 And scroll down if you will , Mr Lopez, thank you,
4 and there we see the bullet points that are — I won’t
5 read them out, they’re there to be seen.
6 Mr Keelan, is that — what you say in paragraphs 149
7 to 150 just the sort of thing that should have been
8 happening on the night of 22 May 2017? This was one of
9 those rare and exceptional circumstances where
10 operational discretion could have been deployed?
11 A. It could have been, sir .
12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, again I’m going to take that
13 up, if you don’t mind.
14 When you’re operating in an incident which really
15 only requires the attendance of the fire or they are
16 taking the lead in it, then exercising a discretion
17 doesn’t affect anybody else?
18 A. That’s correct, sir .
19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: When you’re dealing with a multi–agency
20 matter then the exercise of a discretion , for example,
21 Mr Berry saying, “I don’t think we should go to that
22 RVP, we should go somewhere else”, actually affects the
23 whole multi–agency dynamic. So how do you do that, how
24 do you ensure that everybody else can fit in to the
25 exercise of discretion by fire officers ?

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1 A. By co–location and communication, sir.
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. If you’re not there at the time,
3 that doesn’t work either?
4 A. Exactly, sir .
5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Then it comes down to communication?
6 A. Yes. I think if you look at the arena specifically ,
7 sir , if all three agencies had been at a forward command
8 point, they may have decided to act outside what the
9 joint operating principles were at the time.
10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that. What I’m struggling
11 with slightly , I have to say, is the co–location that
12 you actually need to be standing next door to each other
13 to communicate when we’ve got all these communications
14 devices which could be used, which actually don’t
15 require you to be standing side by side.
16 A. I think it very much depends on the circumstances, sir.
17 I think it’s all very well and good talking over an
18 Airwave radio or whatever in different areas and
19 locations, but if you’re at scene and you can see what’s
20 in front of you, that makes a real difference to the
21 decision–making.
22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you, Mr Cooper.
23 MR COOPER: But on the back of that, let’s look at what an
24 Airwave Talk Group might have provided you with that
25 wasn’t there, following on from this line of

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1 communication.
2 Can I ask you, Mr Lopez, please, to put up
3 {INQ001033/1}. We’ll just heighten it up, please, so
4 I can read it myself. Thank you.
5 Here we see, sent on — again it’s about the Airwave
6 Talk Group that was set up a few days later that wasn’t
7 in existence on 22 May 2017. There is the clear
8 protocol laid down. You’re copied into it. Just
9 familiarise yourself with that and I want to show you
10 one other document before I ask you the question, which
11 is, please, Mr Lopez, {INQ015742/1}.
12 This is indeed the standard operating procedure as
13 far as the interim initial Airwave communication
14 protocol is concerned, dated 26 May 2017, approved by
15 you, Mr Hynes and Mr Hill. Scroll down, please,
16 Mr Lopez, so we can actually see in stark terms again
17 what it is .
18 Very much in the way when I started asking you
19 questions about showing you in stark terms what
20 equipment was available and wasn’t used, here again can
21 I suggest to you, looking at this document, in stark
22 terms this is that could have been used on the night,
23 isn’t it ?
24 A. It absolutely is and, as I have stated before, it’s with
25 deep sadness from a Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue

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1 Service perspective that this wasn’t put in place before
2 the incident.
3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That’s not just a Fire Service
4 responsibility : all three agencies are concerned with
5 that.
6 A. Absolutely, but we take our responsibility for that,
7 sir .
8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
9 MR COOPER: Just as other agencies have been asked about it,
10 I will ask you, with the permission of the inquiry to do
11 so, on behalf of the Fire Service, why do you say it
12 took so long for this to be put up and running and was
13 put up and running within 3 days of this atrocity? How
14 did it come about that it wasn’t up and running on
15 22 May from a Fire Service perspective?
16 A. I think from a Fire Service perspective, sir , we did
17 pursue our partners to try and progress this as quickly
18 as possible. I think we fell down perhaps in not
19 sharing that at a more strategic level to give it the
20 necessary push to get it across the line quicker, sir .
21 I think since — this came out of an exercise, that
22 exercise debrief was fed back into the coordination
23 group for training and exercise, which is a local
24 resilience forum group, and then I believe it reported
25 back to the resilience forum. I don’t believe enough

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1 was done by the exercise and training group, nor the
 2 local resilience forum, to drive these changes through
 3 in a timely manner, sir.

4 As I stated previously, subsequently to this, we've
 5 seconded an area manager over to the local resilience
 6 forum, who now chairs the coordination group for
 7 exercise and training, has just refreshed and taken back
 8 through the resilience forum a training and exercising
 9 strategy, and has reviewed and revised the debrief
 10 process. I now have — I'm confident, sir, that
 11 multi-agency debriefs will be assigned clear owners and
 12 tracked back through that coordination group for
 13 training and exercising and back in for ultimate
 14 governance and assurance through the LRF.

15 Q. This will be a theme of questions I'm going to put to
 16 you as I go on. And the theme is this: that's all fine
 17 and that's all hopefully reassuring, but why on earth
 18 wasn't it done before this atrocity? Let me ask you
 19 this preliminary question: if this Airwave channel had
 20 been in existence, it would have significantly helped
 21 the quality of service that the public were getting
 22 at the arena, wouldn't it?

23 A. Undoubtedly, sir. I do continue to apologise to those
 24 that have lost loved ones and those that were injured.

25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Keelan, thank you, I'm sorry, I'm not

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1 trying to stop you, I genuinely understand what you're
 2 saying, so please forgive me for stopping you.

3 Mr Cooper, it wasn't given sufficient priority by
 4 any of the agencies, I think that's the preliminary
 5 conclusion I have come to. I'm not sure Mr Keelan is
 6 going to be able to say any more than that, really, are
 7 you?

8 A. No, sir.

9 MR COOPER: Can I make it clear that the purpose of my
 10 questions is not to keep eliciting from Mr Keelan his
 11 apology, which is well received and I am not asking him
 12 — he doesn't need to keep doing that, it's taken and
 13 it's understood, if that puts his mind at rest. The
 14 only purpose of my question on this issue is just to
 15 deal with why there was a continuing theme here, not
 16 just with Airwave channels, but a continuing theme here
 17 of things being put right and it took the atrocity to
 18 isolate it, as it were. That's the only theme, sir,
 19 that I'm developing here on this.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand that, but on this
 21 particular incident, as I say, my preliminary conclusion
 22 is it simply wasn't given the amount of priority it
 23 should have had.

24 A. Yes, sir.

25 MR COOPER: Then I shall move on.

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1 I want to ask you again, please, Mr Keelan, about
 2 the night in question and the workings of the NILOs and
 3 about the function of North West Fire Control. And
 4 without going over the evidence that you've already
 5 given as a result of questions from other counsel,
 6 I want to try and bring some of it together, if I can,
 7 to help me and those I represent to understand exactly
 8 what was going on.

9 So what we have to begin with is we have a NILO from
 10 Wigan, 22 miles away, who's acting as incident
 11 commander, is that right, on the night?

12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry, I don't think he's incident
 13 commander as such. I agree he is running what goes on,
 14 but I don't think he would have the title at that stage,
 15 Mr Cooper.

16 MR COOPER: I'm going to come on to that as to whether he
 17 thought he was incident commander and whether other
 18 people thought he was incident commander, so perhaps
 19 I'll deal with that later.

20 But certainly we have a NILO from Wigan who's
 21 22 miles away and you've already accepted that was wrong
 22 and that has been corrected; is that right?

23 A. That's correct, sir.

24 Q. You told us in your evidence that now the nearest NILO
 25 is mobilised and they can work from home with telephone

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1 or laptop to obtain proper situational awareness.
 2 That's where we are now, isn't it?

3 A. The nearest NILO would be mobilised and the duty NILO
 4 would remain at home, sir.

5 Q. Again, it's this theme that I'm adhering to.
 6 That isn't — that's an absolutely sensible thing to do,
 7 but did it really take the Manchester Arena atrocity for
 8 you and your colleagues to work that out?

9 A. Regrettably, sir, yes.

10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, just take it — sorry. Just to
 11 take it down a step from that, in a way, on the night,
 12 bearing in mind the exercise of the discretion and
 13 flexibility, why didn't someone think at the time: this
 14 is not working, having him coming in from 21 miles away
 15 and not being here by now? Why wasn't that flexibility
 16 there? There were plenty of people, firefighters, on
 17 the station, ready to be very flexible.

18 A. Yes, sir. I think there are incidents that I could
 19 evidence where NILOs have made dynamic decisions like
 20 that for various reasons, but on the night in question,
 21 sadly that wasn't done.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, thank you.

23 MR COOPER: There lies the problem: that it seemed to have
 24 worked. It only takes one time for it to go wrong and
 25 it can be catastrophic, can't it?

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1 A. Yes, sir.

2 Q. Again, I will persist with this line of questioning.

3 Your solutions, sensible and well received no doubt,

4 they are simple and common sense solutions which could

5 have been come to well before 22 May 2017, couldn't

6 they?

7 A. And I wish they would have been, sir.

8 Q. I know you do and I take all that as read. But I want

9 to try and drill down here on behalf of those

10 I represent as to why it didn't happen.

11 All these exercises, we've had Winchester Accord,

12 we've had exercises all over the place for years. It's

13 not that tests weren't carried out. How does it come --

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Sorry to stop you. I think we need the

15 right factual basis. It's already been accepted that

16 the exercises were flawed because they started -- they

17 didn't start with mobilisation. So on an exercise, you

18 had the NILO actually in position ready to go before the

19 exercise started. So that's one problem. Are you all

20 right?

21 A. Yes, I'm fine, sir.

22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay.

23 MR COOPER: Mr Keelan, can I just make it clear to you? I'm

24 not asking -- making a personal attack on you, I'm

25 trying to ask some difficult questions that people want

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1 resolved.

2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I know you're not making a personal

3 attack on Mr Keelan, I well understand that and I'm

4 grateful for it, but you'll be aware that he, as do many

5 of the senior officers in the Fire Service, do feel very

6 much personally, being members of a Fire Service who

7 did, as they accept, fail significantly on the night.

8 So obviously the questions you're asking are

9 bringing home to him again and again --

10 MR COOPER: I understand.

11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- the failure, just so you understand

12 why Mr Keelan is unsurprisingly affected by the

13 question --

14 MR COOPER: Let me try and deal with this more succinctly

15 for you, Mr Keelan, and I'll simply put questions to

16 you, bald questions.

17 We have a NILO from Wigan coming 22 miles away.

18 Simultaneously, there's no one in the control centre at

19 that time; that's right, isn't it?

20 A. That's correct, sir.

21 Q. And not only is the incident commander 22 miles away in

22 Wigan, but previously, in the control centre in the

23 command room, there used to be a degree of command

24 function before North West Fire Control; is that right?

25 A. To some degree, yes.

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1 Q. But on this occasion, because of the way North West Fire

2 Control is set up, there was no command function;

3 is that right?

4 A. Sir, the command function also includes the duty group

5 manager and duty assistant principal officer, which I've

6 said previously I don't feel they gave enough scrutiny

7 to the actions that had and were being taken, sir.

8 Q. I'm just bringing together what many would say is almost

9 like a perfect storm here of things going wrong on this

10 particular moment: the distant NILO, no one in the

11 control centre, no one with a command function at North

12 West Fire Control. So far, that's right, isn't it?

13 A. The North West Fire Control -- I suppose there wasn't

14 a command function but there was like a team leader and

15 a command function for the management of North West Fire

16 Control, sir.

17 Q. Again, still with North West Fire Control, I'm dealing

18 with this moment as Andy Berry's travelling from Wigan,

19 getting lost, this is the period I'm talking about. At

20 the same time, North West Fire Control are working on

21 action cards and speaking to NILOs. That's how they're

22 operating, working on action cards and speaking to

23 NILOs; is that right?

24 A. In addition, sir, they were speaking with other

25 emergency services.

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1 Q. What I'm suggesting to you globally by putting all that

2 together in that first critical period of time is that

3 between the NILO travelling a distance and getting lost

4 and getting frustrated and there being little command

5 function in North West Fire Control and there being

6 no one in the control centre, the system was failing

7 right from the beginning on three fronts, wasn't it?

8 A. On that evening, sir, yes.

9 Q. I'll paraphrase a question Mr Smith put -- I think it

10 was Mr Smith -- some time ago: for major incidents,

11 in the early stages, someone who can command needs to be

12 in the control room because that's where the information

13 is. I think that was the tenor of it. Would you agree

14 with that?

15 A. No, not necessarily, sir. I think that the likes of the

16 NILO, or indeed if we would have had an incident

17 commander, would have and should have asked critical

18 questions to the control room to gather that information

19 to be able to make more informed decisions, sir.

20 Q. I want to take you now, and I don't know how easy this

21 is going to be because it involves going to that email

22 that I was shown over the short adjournment. I don't

23 know whether it's possible even to put it on the screen

24 at the moment given that we only had it this morning.

25 I will bow to the technology on that but I do want to

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1 refer to it.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If you want it on the screen, we can do
 3 that.
 4 MR COOPER: Thank you.
 5 MR GREANEY: You should have the INQ, Mr Cooper.
 6 MR COOPER: I'm afraid I don't have the INQ, I just simply
 7 had the email emailed to me.
 8 MR GREANEY: If you bear with us one moment, we'll get the
 9 reference.
 10 (Pause)
 11 It's {INQ100072/1}.
 12 MR COOPER: Thank you very much, Mr Greaney. Mr Lopez, if
 13 you could put that on to the screen, please.
 14 I want to focus if I can, once it's on the screen ...
 15 (Pause)
 16 It's firstly the dates I want to focus on first,
 17 please, and let's go to the bottom, as one does with
 18 emails, the last (sic) page, please. Let's get some
 19 perspective. This is an email from you dated
 20 28 July 2020. You say:
 21 "I have caught up with Alan and got an update on
 22 control activity issues, which has given me concerns.
 23 I have listed some below of the recent issues."
 24 Who is Alan again, please?
 25 A. Alan Topping, who was the single point of contact for

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1 North West Fire Control at that time.
 2 Q. Thank you:
 3 "I have caught up with Alan and got an update on
 4 control activities which has given me some concerns.
 5 I have listed below some of the recent issues Alan has
 6 been working through with Paula..."
 7 Who is Paula?
 8 A. Paula Parkes who was our sort of point of contact from
 9 Greater Manchester Fire within North West Fire Control.
 10 Q. "... which I presume you are aware of."
 11 And without going through the email in detail, you
 12 deal with number of issues which concern you, for
 13 instance dealing with mobilising enquiries, providing
 14 operational support and guidance, updates NWFC action
 15 plans and guidance information and so on and so forth.
 16 Then we see if we go to the top of the page,
 17 Mr Lopez, please, of that {INQ100072/1}, and I'll refer
 18 to the response from Sarah Wilson of North West Fire
 19 Control, who we are going to hear from next week, and
 20 she responds to you. If we look at the penultimate
 21 paragraph — this is dated 7 August 2020, and so she
 22 says this:
 23 "The issues you have raised in your email below are
 24 good evidence of why this review of strategic planning
 25 and governance is necessary in order to develop more

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1 robust strategies outlining and agreeing how our
 2 services from hereon in will be delivered. This will
 3 include the role currently carried out by the SPOCs..."
 4 What's the SPOC?
 5 A. Single point of contact, sir.
 6 Q. Thank you, of course it is, now you say it:
 7 "... in both our organisations. There are good
 8 examples supporting the need to introduce tighter change
 9 management processes to establish better ways of working
 10 for our operators, to manage the divergence that is now
 11 prominent among the FRS partners, and to ensure that
 12 North West Fire Control is resourced sufficiently to
 13 manage change within its organisation as well as in
 14 response to your FRS needs. Meeting with Sarah will
 15 hopefully provide me with some valuable information that
 16 can feed into these strategies."
 17 My question is simply this: why is this discussion
 18 still going on in August 2020?
 19 A. Because, sir, we continue to learn from different
 20 incidents that occur.
 21 Q. If I may put it this way — sorry.
 22 A. Obviously, following the tragic events of the arena, we
 23 followed up actions and did work with North West Fire
 24 Control, but other things come up now and again through
 25 either incidents, training or debriefs, so we continue.

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1 That's the reason why we have a single point of contact.
 2 We continue to work with, in a collaborative way, North
 3 West Fire Control to make sure that where we need to
 4 resolve issues or make changes, we do so together. So
 5 this is a process that continues, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, I just want to come in, if
 7 I may. What might concern me most from that email is,
 8 and I can't remember the exact words, but the
 9 divergences between the four agencies involved in this
 10 which are becoming, it's suggested, more prominent, so
 11 the divergence between the practices of each of the four
 12 fire services are getting more, which can lead to more
 13 confusion — why are you diverging?
 14 A. I think, sir, this is comes back to an area that
 15 I discussed yesterday, the idea of North West Fire
 16 Control was that we converged on a lot of areas. That's
 17 not happened for all the reasons that I said yesterday
 18 in all the areas that we would wish. Things like
 19 Grenfell and the risks that are in Greater Manchester
 20 from high rise are absolutely miles apart from the
 21 issues in high rise in Cheshire and Cumbria, et cetera.
 22 So for instance, we've got an evacuation procedure
 23 that is different. So that sort of thing from an
 24 operational perspective has exacerbated that issue of
 25 convergence and that is why there was discussions at

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1 board level and chief fire officer level, which
2 commenced the review, which I'm sure Sarah Wilson will
3 be able to update you on when you see her, sir.

4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay. Thank you, Mr Cooper.

5 MR COOPER: But going back to that email if I can, please,
6 and going back to Sarah Wilson's response to it, you'll
7 understand that I'm only working on something I've seen
8 less than an hour ago, so bear with me if I haven't the
9 minutiae of it.

10 Going back to Sarah Wilson's response to you in the
11 penultimate paragraph, and I'm focusing here on why on
12 earth it comes to be, given all your evidence about the
13 lessons learned and the things you've done and the
14 changes you've made, can I suggest to you, looking at
15 what Sarah Wilson is saying, particularly in that
16 penultimate paragraph, it seems that very little has
17 changed at all as far as North West Fire Control is
18 concerned. And Sarah Wilson seems to be suggesting that
19 their needs to be another review of strategic planning
20 and governance. What she says is:

21 "The issues you have raised in your email below are
22 good evidence of why this review of strategic planning
23 and governance is necessary."

24 Mr Keelan, I thought that had taken place very soon
25 after 22 May 2017.

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1 A. No, sir, not a review to that level around the
2 governance and issues of how the four services operate
3 in North West Fire Control. That's what Sarah Wilson is
4 talking around there. The things that did absolutely
5 happen was those areas that impacted and affected
6 operations from the Fire and Rescue Service with regard
7 to Greater Manchester, sir.

8 Q. But is it apparent from these emails and the exchange
9 between you and Sarah Wilson that despite what you say,
10 it seems that still, change is sluggish, in particular
11 in relation to North West Fire Control?

12 A. I don't believe it does, sir. I think this is more
13 around other issues that have come up that aren't arena
14 related, such as more difference in operational policy
15 in Fire and Rescue Services that Sarah is trying to work
16 through from a strategic perspective, hence the planned
17 chief fire officer collective working, and the review —
18 the wider review on the governance, et cetera, that has
19 commenced.

20 Q. All right. On the subject of North West Fire Control,
21 I want to put a few propositions to you, much in the way
22 Mr Smith put the positives to you for your agreement of
23 North West Fire Control, I would like to put to you
24 potential negatives to see if you agree with them as far
25 as North West Fire Control is concerned.

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1 This is all based upon the evidence that we've heard
2 and obviously I want to hear your views. First of all,
3 this, again in relation — it's all in relation to North
4 West Fire Control. Would you agree that it is
5 impossible for control room operatives or team leaders,
6 or if not impossible difficult for them, to build up
7 local knowledge and familiarity with the whole regions
8 they are dealing with?

9 A. With the whole regions, yes, sir.

10 Q. And that that could be a disadvantage?

11 A. In certain mobilising situations, yes, sir. I did state
12 earlier around how we are trying to use technology to
13 give greater situational awareness, which would improve
14 that.

15 Q. And for instance, in cases of no-notice major incidents,
16 it's likely that they are making or ordering
17 mobilisations into areas they don't know well?

18 A. I think the technology that North West Fire Control have
19 gives them some insight, the use of specific mapping,
20 satellites, et cetera, does give them some assistance,
21 sir. I even think if we had a control room back in
22 Greater Manchester, a control room operative couldn't
23 know every area within Greater Manchester, sir.

24 Q. No, no, but of course you may have heard the evidence of
25 various individuals from the control room who said that

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1 it was a key tool in their toolbox, that they knew the
2 local area and were able to deploy because of their
3 knowledge in the local area. You'll accept, won't you,
4 that that can be helped to be got over, I take your
5 point, but it's no substitute, is it, for local
6 knowledge of the region?

7 A. I think local knowledge of an area would assist.

8 Q. And on that same subject, again based on evidence that
9 we have heard, given the present structure of North West
10 Fire Control, would you agree that it's virtually
11 impossible, or at least difficult, for a CRO or team
12 leader to build up a close working relationship with
13 Fire Service officers around the entire region?

14 A. I think relating back to old control rooms within a FRS,
15 I suppose the advantage being within the FRS is crews
16 could more readily attend for familiarisation and
17 awareness at that location. But a lot of the
18 relationships that are built up with watches
19 specifically are done so over the phone.

20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I've been thinking about this issue
21 somewhat, and your evidence yesterday was — and I will
22 probably paraphrase it incorrectly, so just tell me if
23 I do — as far as you're concerned the gold standard for
24 Manchester would be locating all three control rooms,
25 I now know I was wrong about that, for the ambulance,

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1 fire and police all in the same place.
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Why is that such an advantage when
 4 you have the tri-service Airwaves now operating? So
 5 they are actually in direct — why do they need to be
 6 physically close to each other as well?
 7 A. I think you have mentioned a few times, sir, plan A,
 8 plan B, et cetera, et cetera. I don't think you can
 9 underestimate the value of being in the same room,
 10 having the operational knowledge and experience from
 11 across the blue lights together in one place, sir.
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Would you expect to have officers from
 13 all the three blue light services located near the
 14 control room or in the control room?
 15 A. I think, sir, if they were within Greater Manchester in
 16 a central location, you would automatically get
 17 officers, we'd use it as a hot-desking facility for our
 18 officers, et cetera, and you would get greater
 19 interaction across the blue lights.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Without in any way minimising the
 21 importance of that, are there other advantages that you
 22 would see to it, which means you say that's the gold
 23 standard rather than what we have got at the moment,
 24 although we are improving what we've got?
 25 A. I think Greater Manchester Police have the ability to

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1 have greater situational awareness because of the
 2 volumes of officers they have on the streets. So
 3 I just — the benefit that that could bring to increase
 4 situational awareness very early on in an incident stage
 5 would be of huge benefit, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. So you're doing your best to
 7 improve what you have at the moment, but if you're going
 8 for absolutely what you really wanted, that's still what
 9 you would prefer?
 10 A. Yes, sir.
 11 MR COOPER: Sir, would that be a convenient moment?
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It would, yes. 2 o'clock. Thank you.
 13 (1.02 pm)
 14 (The lunch adjournment)
 15 (2.00 pm)
 16 (Delay in proceedings)
 17 (2.16 pm)
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Greaney.
 19 MR GREANEY: The reason why there has been a delay of
 20 15 minutes is because Mr Cooper and I have been working
 21 to achieve a solution to an issue that did not require
 22 a restricted hearing. We consider that we have
 23 achieved — because a restricted hearing of course does
 24 cause delay because it takes time both to cause them to
 25 happen and to work out of them at the end.

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1 We have found a solution. The solution will involve
 2 me asking a series of questions with Mr Cooper's
 3 agreement. Can I make plain this is an issue that
 4 Mr Cooper has wished to be raised. He would be dealing
 5 with it himself save because of the sensitivity involved
 6 in the issue.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right.
 8 MR GREANEY: So I hope that's satisfactory for Mr Cooper's
 9 purposes. Can I also say that I have, with Mr Cooper's
 10 consent, dealt with this issue with Mr Keelan outside of
 11 court so that he knows what is coming and isn't
 12 concerned with the sensitivity of it.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Good. Thank you.
 14 Further questions from MR GREANEY
 15 MR GREANEY: Mr Keelan, we can deal with this in just a
 16 couple of minutes.
 17 First of all, I am looking at a —
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Are we now connected or have we always
 19 been connected?
 20 MR GREANEY: We've always been connected, sir.
 21 Mr Keelan, I am now looking at a document,
 22 substantial portions of which are regarded as
 23 operationally sensitive. I can, however, give the title
 24 of the document. It is a Greater Manchester Fire and
 25 Rescue Service document. It is a risk assessment, dated

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1 14 December 2012, relating to "Manchester Arena,
 2 Victoria Exchange, 21 Hunts Bank, city centre."
 3 I'm going to ask that one page of this be put on the
 4 screen. Sir, nothing on this page is operationally
 5 sensitive and indeed is available on Magnum. That page
 6 is {INQ004174/4}.
 7 This is a part of that document, Mr Keelan, you'll
 8 be able to confirm?
 9 A. Yes, sir.
 10 Q. You'll be able to confirm that the hazards that are
 11 identified are:
 12 "1. Uncontrolled evacuation, possibly 30,000 people
 13 to be evacuated."
 14 A. Yes, sir.
 15 Q. "4. Site hazard. Loophole type doors. Identify
 16 locations of doors."?
 17 A. Yes, sir.
 18 Q. I know you'll be able to agree with me, (1), that this
 19 risk assessment does not consider the City Room?
 20 A. Yes, sir.
 21 Q. And (2), that in particular, it does not consider the
 22 glass roof of the City Room?
 23 A. That's correct.
 24 MR GREANEY: Thank you very much, Mr Keelan.
 25 Mr Cooper, I hope that that deals adequately with

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1 the points that you wished to be explored and I'll
2 invite you to rejoin us.

3 Questions from MR COOPER (continued)

4 MR COOPER: I'm very grateful to Mr Greaney, and indeed, as
5 you've seen, sir, through cooperation we've managed to
6 deal with this efficiently for you.

7 Can I just follow on, without referring to the
8 document, on that, Mr Keelan, if I can. This particular
9 assessment of the arena included looking at the
10 City Room, didn't it? It wasn't that the City Room was
11 ignored?

12 A. The City Room forms part of the floor plan. The risk
13 assessment is specifically for the arena. That's my
14 understanding, sir.

15 Q. Are you surprised that perhaps things like the glass
16 ceiling, which features to a degree in this inquiry,
17 were not even considered in a risk assessment?

18 A. As I've stated, it's my belief that that risk assessment
19 is for the arena per se. It does have the outline and
20 the escape routes from the City Room on it because it is
21 part of the same building, but it is my understanding
22 that the risk assessment is for the arena, sir.

23 Q. Are you aware as to whether -- it's a yes or no, I'm not
24 getting into any sensitive issues -- any risk assessment
25 specifically was done for the City Room?

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1 A. I'm not aware, sir.

2 Q. Again, as far as what's identified, and we've seen
3 already as far as the risk assessment is concerned, the
4 uncontrolled evacuation was a matter of concern and
5 limited evacuation points, was in any way it
6 considered -- the stairways considered or the steps
7 considered as an evacuation hazard? I ask for
8 a particular reason obviously because of some of those
9 I represent.

10 A. I think it would have been encapsulated in the
11 evacuation hazards, sir, if a fire or emergency would
12 have occurred, just the volume of people exiting the
13 arena.

14 Q. What about the difficulty of getting people downstairs
15 on stretchers or cardboard boards or even metal
16 railings? What about that sort of risk assessment?

17 A. Sir, for more detail on it, I would have to speak to the
18 person that undertook the initial assessment and then
19 the review of the assessment, sir.

20 Q. I'm going to suggest to you, subject to anything else
21 you may say, that absolutely no consideration was given
22 to the evacuation of individuals who may be
23 incapacitated, such as a number of those that
24 I represent.

25 A. Whilst, sir, there isn't within that risk assessment --

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1 if I could draw your attention to the Greater Manchester
2 generic response plan and the Greater Manchester
3 evacuation plan as well, those things consider things
4 like that, sir.

5 Q. Yes, but I'm asking you about the Greater Manchester
6 Fire service risk assessment. Whether other people deal
7 with it is not a matter I'm asking you about.

8 (overspeaking) -- I am sorry, sir, am I interrupting
9 you?

10 A. I think, sir, I've been quite clear that I would have to
11 go away and find out some additional detail from someone
12 to be able to answer your question fully. I have given
13 you what I believe my response to be.

14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Right, would you like to do that for me,
15 Mr Keelan --

16 MR COOPER: (Inaudible: distorted).

17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: -- and supply it to us in writing to us
18 in the first instance?

19 We will get that information for you, Mr Cooper.

20 A. I apologise.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, you can't know everything.
22 Mr Cooper, before you go on, I'm very grateful
23 you've been able to deal with this without having to
24 have a restricted hearing. It's very important that
25 we have cooperation from everyone for the smooth

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1 hearing. Please continue, and that actually is the best
2 way we are going to arrive at proper conclusions, so
3 thank you for that.

4 MR COOPER: I'm grateful, thank you.

5 Mr Keelan, can I take you back to where we were
6 before the short adjournment and it's on North West Fire
7 Control again. I was putting to you a number of maybe
8 disadvantages that the NWFC may have to counterpoint the
9 advantages that were put to you by Mr Smith.

10 Let me put to you a third issue if I may, that
11 you have commented, perfectly fairly, about the effects
12 of austerity and cuts to funding to the Fire Service and
13 the impact this would have had on the provision of
14 services.

15 The organisational leanness, if I can put it that
16 way, of the NWFC also meant, for instance, that those
17 working there didn't have much or any access to external
18 specialist training or exercises; that's right, isn't
19 it?

20 A. I'm not sure what you mean by external training and
21 exercising, sir, but as an example, we carried out an
22 exercise in 2016, Exercise Triton Force 2, which was
23 a large scale, multi-agency, using regional and national
24 assets and the military. North West Fire Control were
25 fully involved from start to finish within that

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1 exercise. I think we've heard evidence from individuals
2 that have delivered certain aspects of training to North
3 West Fire Control as well, sir.

4 Q. We've also heard evidence and a number of witnesses
5 giving evidence that there was a heavy reliance upon
6 self-training, internal teaching and internal training
7 over and above external specialist training as a result,
8 perhaps, of the way North West Fire Control was set up.
9 If that is the case, that's a concern, isn't it?

10 A. I think, sir, I wouldn't be the person that would be
11 able to detail the training that control operators would
12 have. As part of the agreement we have with North West
13 Fire Control they carry out their training and we do and
14 will always augment that and assist where we can, sir.

15 Q. All right. I'll move on from North West Fire Control
16 and go on to some other issues with you now, if I can.
17 I'm going back now to the 22nd itself. Again,
18 I don't shirk from revisiting the issue of your first
19 response to this when you first were notified of the
20 matter. And you have indicated, and obviously I've
21 heard what you have said, and I don't want to labour the
22 point about you went back to bed to refresh yourself.
23 With hindsight, I simply ask you this: with such
24 a catastrophe developing at the time, unrefreshed or not
25 unrefreshed, would it perhaps not have been better to

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1 get there at the scene immediately to give some command
2 structure which was sorely lacking at the time whether
3 you were fatigued or not?

4 A. Sir, on reflection, and obviously knowing what I know
5 now, there are very few days that go by where I don't
6 wish that I hadn't gone to the scene to assist.

7 Q. All right.
8 You were on a WhatsApp (overspeaking) --

9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I understand what you say and you have
10 seen what's happened, can I make it clear that in the
11 absence of any further evidence or further submissions,
12 from my point of view I consider, having heard your
13 initial explanation, Mr Keelan, that your actions were
14 entirely appropriate in what you did.

15 A. Thank you, sir.

16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Cooper, I hope you don't mind that
17 clarification, but I think it's important that it is
18 made.

19 MR COOPER: Not at all, sir, but it was also important that
20 I raised the issue.

21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Absolutely.

22 MR COOPER: I didn't want to be seen to be --

23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think it's important that you did do
24 it more formally now, yes.

25 MR COOPER: Thank you.

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1 Can I go on to a matter of communications when the
2 scene and when the problem was developing. You were on
3 a WhatsApp group, weren't you, with Mr O'Reilly,
4 Mr Argyle and Mr Harris?

5 A. Yes, and some other members of the corporate leadership
6 team.

7 Q. That would have provided you with immediate access to
8 communicating with these potential key players or people
9 of experience if nothing else; is that right?

10 A. Yes, that's correct, and as you're well aware and have
11 seen the link, I did put the Sky News link on there, and
12 there were other communications that followed.

13 Q. In terms of establishing, for instance, situational
14 awareness and other important signals or signs as to
15 what was happening, did you attempt to use that facility
16 for that purpose?

17 A. Yes, sir. As I think I've said in other parts of the
18 inquiry, conversations via WhatsApp with the corporate
19 leadership team or indeed the NILO cadre was common
20 practice. Since the arena, we have introduced some
21 other methods of more secure communication, with
22 guidance as well, sir.

23 Q. As far as your communications with senior colleagues on
24 that particular WhatsApp group, I presume we have seen
25 or the inquiry legal team have seen all the products of

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1 those conversations and discussions that were taking
2 place; is that right?

3 A. To my knowledge, sir, yes.

4 Q. All right. You became aware, of course, of the
5 difficulty of communication with the FDO, didn't you?

6 A. Yes, in the early hours of the preceding morning, sir.

7 Q. I think it's right -- I'm right to say from hearing the
8 tenor of your evidence so far that you must have been
9 shocked when you heard of those developments?

10 A. Very shocked, sir.

11 Q. If you had been in the position immediately of command
12 on the scene and had failed, though attempting
13 correctly, to contact the FDO, what would you have done?
14 What would you have done when you concluded that perhaps
15 contacting the FDO was failing?

16 A. Are you talking for instance if I was the NILO, if I was
17 Andy Berry at the time?

18 Q. Yes. That's probably a good way of putting it, yes.
19 What would you have done?

20 A. Personally, sir, I think I would have spoken to the
21 other NILOs or the duty group manager, informed them
22 much earlier of the difficulties I was having, probably
23 the location I was, and looked to let someone else try
24 and get greater situational awareness or indeed, sir,
25 I would have gone to the scene.

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1 Q. Again, common sense, isn't it?
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Again, I want to take this up,
 4 Mr Cooper, just a bit.
 5 Were you aware of the critical role that the FDO
 6 plays in these sorts of hopefully very unusual
 7 incidents?
 8 A. Not to the magnitude that's become apparent, sir. I was
 9 aware that the force duty officer was utilised by the
 10 NILOs for certain situations.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You're not alone in that. The chief
 12 fire officer said he wasn't aware, Dean Nankivell said
 13 he wasn't aware.
 14 A. I was aware that we did contact the force duty officer
 15 on occasions, sir. I wasn't aware of any previous
 16 issues.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I'm so sorry, okay. So it does seem to
 18 have been an information gap in their knowledge of how
 19 these sort of operations pan out and quite surprising.
 20 That is not without criticising them.
 21 A. That was surprising to me too, sir.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Has that been remedied? Does everybody
 23 actually know?
 24 A. I think the knowledge that everyone has got of this
 25 incident now that it has been remedied, sir.

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1 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And there was a reference earlier to
 2 another person, and I'm forgetting what his initials
 3 are --
 4 A. Critical incident manager for Greater Manchester Police.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. The knowledge of that is now
 6 spread throughout relevant people and the important part
 7 they can play?
 8 A. Yes, sir.
 9 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 10 MR COOPER: Is it right to say, Mr Keelan, that on the
 11 night, actual no one was performing a tactical role at
 12 all that evening? A tactical advisory role that
 13 evening.
 14 A. Not for a good period of time, sir.
 15 Q. And building on that, the NILO's role was to be
 16 a tactical adviser; am I right?
 17 A. Yes, sir.
 18 Q. But the NILO wasn't in fact advising anyone?
 19 A. No, sir.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think they were advising each other,
 21 perhaps.
 22 MR COOPER: Well, maybe advising each other. Apart from
 23 advising each other, were they advising anyone else?
 24 A. No, sir.
 25 Q. In short, how did that impact on delivery of service on

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1 the night, the fact that no one was performing
 2 a tactical role on the evening and the NILOs, apart from
 3 advising amongst themselves, were not advising anyone
 4 else? How, in short, did that impact upon provision of
 5 service that evening?
 6 A. We didn't provide any service, sir.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: That's being slightly unfair to the
 8 NILOs and a cheap remark, really. They did discuss
 9 things between them and then Mr Levy made himself
 10 incident commander, although that didn't seem to be
 11 known by Mr O'Reilly, and then the other NILOs would
 12 have been undoubtedly advising him at that stage.
 13 A. Yes, sir.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: But it all went wrong as to who was
 15 actually going to be incident commander after that.
 16 A. Correct, sir.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I just wanted to correct.
 18 MR COOPER: Not at all. The chair has just developed what
 19 I was going to put to you about Mr Levy. On top of
 20 that, about Mr Levy appointing himself incident
 21 commander, Mr Berry didn't think he was incident
 22 commander, did he?
 23 A. No, sir.
 24 Q. Yet a number of other people thought he was incident
 25 commander?

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1 A. That's correct, sir.
 2 Q. Again, I'm doing what I did just before the luncheon
 3 adjournment, amalgamating all the evidence we've got and
 4 putting it together in one short paragraph. Absolute
 5 fiasco, wasn't it?
 6 A. Yes, sir, it didn't go as we planned it to go, sir, and
 7 so yes, sir.
 8 Q. Yes, absolutely. But it would be right to use the word
 9 "fiasco", wouldn't it?
 10 A. It would, sir.
 11 Q. That's very decent of you to accept that. I know this
 12 is hard and no one is suggesting anything other and
 13 you're a thoroughly decent man, please understand that.
 14 I do have to ask you these questions. You do understand
 15 that, don't you?
 16 A. I understand that, sir.
 17 Q. During the course of that night, we've heard, perhaps
 18 sometimes as a result of me and others asking the
 19 questions, about the interchange between Mr O'Reilly and
 20 Mr Hynes. I'm not going to go into that, we've done
 21 that with others. But you've also heard evidence that
 22 a number of people found Mr O'Reilly intimidating. It's
 23 an issue that I've raised and again I don't shirk from
 24 developing it.
 25 These people, I think you're agreeing, they could

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1 have found Mr O'Reilly intimidating? You actually agree
 2 with that, don't you?
 3 A. I think given the situation that the chief fire officer
 4 found himself in with being a long way into an
 5 operational incident of such magnitude with little, if
 6 no, action taken by the Fire Service, he, rightly so,
 7 took it upon himself to speak to an individual to gain
 8 situational awareness and I'm sure, with the best
 9 intentions in the world, he wanted to get an attendance
 10 and to assist and make some intervention at the
 11 incident.
 12 Q. I understand your answer, but I'm suggesting, and I'm
 13 just dealing with culture a little more widely than just
 14 simply on the night, that Mr O'Reilly was considered by
 15 many to be intimidating, wasn't he?
 16 A. I don't believe that to be the case, sir.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Has anybody ever said to you, "I've been
 18 intimidated by Mr O'Reilly"?
 19 A. No, sir.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So if it was a general view, it hadn't
 21 been transmitted to you?
 22 A. No, sir.
 23 MR COOPER: On the back of that question, can I ask you, are
 24 you aware of anyone making complaints to anyone about
 25 him being intimidating or a bully?

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1 A. No, sir.
 2 Q. I see. And you're certainly not intimidated by him, are
 3 you?
 4 A. No, sir.
 5 Q. All right. Again, during the course of your evidence,
 6 you have told us of steps that have been taken since and
 7 indeed progress being made. I want to ask you a little
 8 now, please, about the evidence you gave this morning
 9 about iconic site measures. Do you remember giving
 10 evidence about a developed procedure now in the
 11 protection of iconic sites?
 12 A. Yes, sir.
 13 Q. Again, anything that I ask you which is in any way
 14 sensitive, you must immediately tell me and I will
 15 withdraw from pursuing it. Is one of these iconic sites
 16 Manchester Arena now?
 17 A. I think it'd be politically sensitive.
 18 Q. All right then. I thought that was a safe question, but
 19 there it is.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If we can ask for it for you, we will.
 21 We'll find out what the sensitivity is about it and
 22 then, Mr Cooper, we'll try and inform you.
 23 MR COOPER: Not at all. One can make assumptions,
 24 I presume, but I will leave the particularity of it
 25 there.

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1 Again, Mr Keelan, you tell the chair, as you did
 2 this morning, that some very sensible measures are now
 3 in place, developments around rendezvous points,
 4 sensible measures, for instance, about knowing the
 5 details, contact details and locations of the nearest
 6 fire station and other such matters. But can I put to
 7 you what I put to you this morning in relation to
 8 another area: this is all pretty obvious stuff, isn't
 9 it? Did it really take an atrocity such as that
 10 occurred on 22 May 2017 for this to occur?
 11 A. If I may, sir, the vast majority, if not all, of the
 12 information that's contained within those new plans was
 13 always set within policy, procedure and guidance. So an
 14 evacuation zone for different things was within
 15 a standard policy. Rendezvous points are part of the
 16 major incident guidance and JESIP training. What we've
 17 done is pull them all together for different locations
 18 so that it's easier to look at something for one
 19 particular area without having to rely on lots of
 20 different bits of information, policy and procedure.
 21 Q. So are you saying that the material that is garnered
 22 together under this iconic site measure is guidance that
 23 existed before 22 May 2017?
 24 A. In various different locations, sir.
 25 Q. So my question is even more stark to you: if all this

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1 existed before 22 May 2017, it's even more astounding,
 2 isn't it, that a lot of it wasn't followed?
 3 A. It is extremely disappointing, sir, that what was in
 4 place in different policies and procedures wasn't pulled
 5 together.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Keelan, I've heard about a huge
 7 number of plans, policies and all the rest of it, and
 8 every now and then one gets a feeling actually we've got
 9 rather too many. Adding another one for specific
 10 locations, as you've done by drawing those bits --
 11 is that going to add to the number of documents there
 12 are out there or will it assist?
 13 A. I don't believe so, sir. I think it will be a very
 14 useful document, as I've said before, it is sat on the
 15 force duty officer's desk as well as all the NILOs
 16 having a copy. It's something -- you can open the page
 17 and lots of information is in one place, sir.
 18 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it should simplify the procedure?
 19 A. Yes, sir.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Cooper.
 21 MR COOPER: When you say it's being pulled from different
 22 areas, you mean outside Greater Manchester, nationally?
 23 It's all being amalgamated together into one document?
 24 A. No, the ones that we have, sir, are just for those
 25 locations within Greater Manchester.

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1 Q. I see. When you say pulled together, you mean pulled
2 together from within the region or the regions?
3 A. Just within the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester.
4 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Let me clarify. No doubt some of the
5 stuff which is in there will be stuff that comes out of
6 national guidance, applied to Manchester.
7 A. Yes, sir.
8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it would be right to say part of it
9 comes from national guidance, part of it comes from
10 local guidance, but it's applying it all to a specific
11 location?
12 A. Correct, sir.
13 MR COOPER: Thank you, sir. That's assisted.
14 I ask the question again. Why wasn't this done
15 before? This is not, forgive me, rocket science.
16 A. It should have been utilised before, sir.
17 Q. Well, why wasn't it? It's not that the Fire Service and
18 the other emergency services weren't very conscious of
19 exercises and training and protocols and policies. Why
20 didn't it happen before? I take your point, and am
21 grateful for it, that it should have happened, but why
22 didn't it happen? Was it simply forgotten about or were
23 people being passive about it? Why didn't it happen?
24 A. I think, sir, of some of the actions that the initial
25 NILO took, he knew about things like cordons, rendezvous

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1 points, et cetera, et cetera, but for whatever reason,
2 and one that I can't answer for him, it wasn't in line
3 with what we should have done.
4 Q. To be fair to the NILO, it wasn't just the NILO who
5 failed here as far as -- or might be found to have
6 failed here because of lack of knowledge or lack of
7 appreciation, it cut through the whole service, didn't
8 it, of things being ignored, things being forgotten
9 about?
10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, Mr Keelan -- Mr Cooper, I'm sorry
11 to interrupt (overspeaking) --
12 MR COOPER: I don't mean to be overtly unpleasant, honestly
13 (overspeaking).
14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No, no, it's not for that reason. The
15 reality appears to be, from the evidence I've had, the
16 Fire Service believe they were properly prepared.
17 Events have shown that they were not. What actually the
18 cause of that is is quite difficult to ascertain. Maybe
19 people just didn't think of things. But I think I'm not
20 going to be helped by Mr Keelan being put on the spot to
21 try and explain things that he can't actually explain
22 any longer. I say it is a perfectly permissible line
23 but I think I've heard enough, if that's all right.
24 MR COOPER: Then I'll move on, sir. The only issue I was
25 going to deal with was complacency, but if you have

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1 heard enough, I will move on.
2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. And out of fairness to the
3 witness, too, in light of the concessions he's already
4 made.
5 MR COOPER: Of course.
6 One of the reassuring, if I may, on a brighter note,
7 Mr Keelan, reassuring aspects of this icon -- iconic
8 site investigation is that there have been improvements
9 in relation to stretchers, haven't there, you were
10 telling us about?
11 A. Yes, sir. Every front line fire engine, in addition to
12 a long board, has another canvas stretcher, sir.
13 Q. Would that have assisted, perhaps, some of the
14 unfortunate people who, when stricken by this atrocity,
15 were being carried, for instance, with great difficulty
16 down the stairs and over difficult terrain if this
17 atrocity, heaven forbid, happened in the future?
18 A. They would have been utilised in addition to the
19 facilities that North West Ambulance Service had, sir,
20 yes.
21 Q. I'll move on from that. I've nearly finished my
22 questions of you, Mr Keelan, if it helps you calibrate.
23 If you'll bear with me.
24 Did you have any involvement in Winchester Accord?
25 A. I didn't participate in the exercise, sir.

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1 Q. But I think in short you'll accept again that the
2 lessons again displayed by Winchester Accord were either
3 forgotten or ignored?
4 A. I think I covered that earlier in my evidence, sir.
5 I do also think, having read the debrief, sir, that the
6 language in it probably doesn't highlight what's come
7 out through this inquiry either around the problems with
8 the force duty officer, and again that's something that
9 the area manager that we've seconded in to the local
10 resilience forum that is doing the work around debriefs
11 is taking into consideration to make sure that when we
12 do identify lessons, it is done so in a manner that is
13 absolutely crystal clear what the issue is, so that
14 we can then turn those identified lessons into lessons
15 learned.
16 Q. All right.
17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: This sort of exercising is so expensive,
18 so difficult to organise, it interferes with normal
19 business, that actually the maximum possible use has to
20 be made of them to benefit from them?
21 A. I absolutely agree, sir.
22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I think we're all left with the view in
23 Winchester Accord that didn't achieve that. Thank you.
24 Mr Cooper, thank you.
25 MR COOPER: Thank you.

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1 This is really my concluding reference for you,
 2 please, Mr Keelan.
 3 Mr Lopez, could I ask you, please, to take us to
 4 {INQ004201/1}.

5 Again, if it could be enhanced, that would be
 6 helpful. This is a document -- again, can it get any
 7 bigger, please, Mr Lopez? That's much better,
 8 thank you.

9 To the bottom of that series of documents, please.
 10 Can we scroll to the bottom, please, so we can get
 11 perspective?

12 This is a series of emails, as you'll see,
 13 Mr Keelan, of which you are copied into. It's the
 14 aftermath now we're dealing with, a short period of days
 15 after the aftermath, including investigations or the
 16 lack of them. I just want to ask you about the
 17 paragraph at the top there.

18 It's sent on 28 May 2017, to Mr Argyle, and it's
 19 from Mr O'Reilly, and you are copied in. And this:
 20 "I think we need to be careful around the mayor's
 21 wishes. Of course we all want our people to know
 22 everything, but if we act outside his expectations we
 23 won't win easy support. Gathering as much as we can
 24 helps and some debriefing to add to it won't hurt."
 25 This is the reference I'm interested in with you:

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1 "Anything that smells like an investigation won't go
 2 down well. Need to ensure the FBU know that also."
 3 What did you interpret that expression:
 4 "Anything that smells like an investigation won't go
 5 down well?"

6 I just want to clarify what you interpreted that as.
 7 A. Yeah, I know, sir. I was very keen to do a debrief with
 8 staff. As I managed the emergency response department
 9 as you'd imagine, I was having quite a few emails from
 10 members of staff that were involved and, rightly so,
 11 wanted to know what happened and why. Conversations
 12 were had between me, Mr Argyle and Mr O'Reilly around
 13 carrying out a debrief. We'd already commenced the work
 14 that the area manager and station manager were doing
 15 around fact-finding and gathering, so we could make any
 16 initial changes that we needed to. But I was keen to
 17 progress a debrief in such a way that we would do for
 18 any operational incident that needed one.

19 The chief, Mr O'Reilly, at the time, I know, was
 20 having constant conversations with the mayor's office,
 21 and it's my belief that the mayor didn't wish us to do
 22 any form of formal debrief process because he didn't
 23 want it to impact and influence any future or further
 24 investigations by Greater Manchester Police, an
 25 independent inquiry, or anything else that was going to

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1 be done on the back of the arena.
 2 Q. That clarifies that. Thank you for that. There was to
 3 be a joint investigation by GMFRS and the FBU, wasn't
 4 there?
 5 A. Yes, sir.
 6 Q. Did that investigation take place?
 7 A. We gathered information from lots of members of staff,
 8 policies and procedures that were accurate and concise
 9 at the time, voice recordings from North West Fire
 10 Control, et cetera. As much information as we felt
 11 would give us a clear picture of the events and how it
 12 unfolded. We commenced that alongside the FBU and then,
 13 I can't remember the exact point, but the Kerslake
 14 investigation was initiated and all the information we
 15 had was on a SharePoint site and we gave access for all
 16 that to the Kerslake Inquiry team.

17 There were some things around action cards, NILO
 18 guidance and a few other bits that we actually made some
 19 changes to policies and procedures and guidance, so that
 20 if we were to have another attack, we'd taken on some
 21 initial learning, sir.

22 Q. So obviously from what you're saying, the joint GMFRS
 23 and FBU investigation was subsumed, if you will, into
 24 Kerslake?
 25 A. That's correct.

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1 Q. And from your knowledge, has all the material that you
 2 gave Kerslake, that was garnered by that investigation,
 3 been provided to this inquiry legal team? Has it been
 4 passed on, as it were?
 5 A. I believe so, sir.
 6 MR COOPER: Thank you, sir. I have no further questions.
 7 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much.

8 In case anyone misunderstands any of that, the
 9 reason for not having a detailed investigation by the
 10 Greater Manchester Fire Service is because it was
 11 anticipated that a much more formal inquiry, the
 12 Kerslake Inquiry, would be set up and no one wanted the
 13 waters muddied.

14 A. Do you mean debrief, sir?
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes, debrief.
 16 A. That's correct.
 17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So it was left to Kerslake to look at it
 18 afresh without everyone having gone over the ground
 19 beforehand?
 20 A. Yes, but we did end up having a facilitated debrief
 21 at The Hive. I can't remember the dates between that
 22 and --
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: July, wasn't it?
 24 MR GREANEY: I think it was, sir.
 25 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And I think we heard that wasn't very

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1 satisfactory .
 2 MR GREANEY: In a moment I will invite Mr Warnock to ask his
 3 questions on behalf of GMCA, but first I know
 4 Mr Atkinson wishes to say something on behalf of the
 5 families he represents.
 6 MR ATKINSON: Just on behalf of those I represent, and
 7 I know other families beyond that, it is no part of what
 8 the families seek to put anyone on the spot,
 9 particularly in relation to things that were not their
 10 responsibility at the time, but to find answers and to
 11 learn lessons and they are very grateful to you for the
 12 help you have given in that process and the candour with
 13 which you have addressed —
 14 A. Thank you.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Atkinson.
 16 MR GREANEY: So Mr Warnock, please.
 17 Questions from MR WARNOCK
 18 MR WARNOCK: Mr Keelan, I don't have much, you'll be pleased
 19 to hear.
 20 Firstly, the explosion action plan. You have
 21 described how at the time of the arena event, it could
 22 be described as having had some ambiguity as to whether
 23 you mobilised, if you were given a rendezvous point, to
 24 the rendezvous point or to the scene, and that since
 25 then, the action plan has been amended to clarify that.

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1 A. It has, sir, yes.
 2 Q. Is that a case of spelling out something which you would
 3 have expected to happen anyway or was that a significant
 4 change?
 5 A. It's spelling out something that I would have thought
 6 should have happened, sir.
 7 Q. You may have heard, I don't know if you heard, the
 8 evidence of Mr Harris. For the inquiry's reference,
 9 it's the transcript, Day 130, page 198, line 23
 10 {Day130/198:23} to page 199, line 3 {Day130/199:3}.
 11 What he said was, when asked about the fact that
 12 there hadn't been a mobilisation to the rendezvous
 13 point, that he was surprised because:
 14 "... it is something we do all the time with our
 15 emergency service partners: we set an RVP and people go
 16 to it for many, many kinds of incidents — and I'm
 17 thinking firearms incidents but it's broader than that."
 18 Is that something you would agree or disagree with?
 19 A. I'd agree with that, sir.
 20 Q. The next issue I wanted to ask you about related to
 21 a question the chairman asked about information being
 22 provided to the control room by other emergency services
 23 and whether that could impact on decisions made as to
 24 what should be mobilised by the Fire Service. And
 25 specifically, I would like to ask you about what might

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1 occur if a METHANE message was given.
 2 Could I trouble Mr Lopez to put up {INQ014270/1}.
 3 You see there the text of a METHANE message.
 4 A. Yes, sir.
 5 Q. And the E, the last E of METHANE relates to:
 6 "Emergency services present and those required."
 7 A. Yes, sir.
 8 Q. Where it says, "Those required", does that mean that
 9 other agencies may say to the fire control room,
 10 "We would particularly like the following type of
 11 resource from the Fire Service"?
 12 A. It could in some instances if the person transmitting or
 13 who has put the METHANE message together had that
 14 knowledge and understanding. If they didn't have the
 15 in-depth knowledge and understanding of what we had,
 16 they would just ask for us, sir.
 17 Q. In certain circumstances they might be able to ask you
 18 for a specific type of resource or indeed a specific
 19 number of resources?
 20 A. Yes, sir.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Mr Warnock, can you help me? I'm well
 22 aware that BTP set out a properly set out METHANE
 23 message. NWS also had much of the information but
 24 perhaps not in that formal way and I'm well aware that
 25 they were not conveyed to anyone, in particular GMFRS.

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1 Did either or both of those indicate that the Fire
 2 Service were required? We can check.
 3 MR WARNOCK: As far as I can recollect, they didn't, but
 4 I wouldn't want to be held to that in case I'm wrong.
 5 MR GREANEY: Do you mean in the METHANE messages themselves?
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.
 7 MR GREANEY: No, I don't think —
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: E is "Emergency services present and
 9 those required" —
 10 MR GREANEY: Certainly the NWS message that was passed by
 11 Mr Ennis did not. I would need to check to be certain
 12 in relation to the BTP message, but my recollection
 13 accords with Mr Warnock's, that not.
 14 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Obviously it would be even more
 15 surprising if they weren't shared with GMFRS if there
 16 was actually a specific request for them, but I just
 17 wanted to check.
 18 Thank you, Mr Warnock.
 19 MR WARNOCK: One final issue, Mr Keelan. Could I ask
 20 Mr Lopez to kindly put up {INQ040022/1}.
 21 You've been asked, and indeed I think there's been
 22 some reporting in the papers, about the fact that you
 23 didn't go to the arena, and you weren't on duty. May
 24 I make plain, as indeed the chairman has made plain,
 25 there is absolutely no reason why you should have done.

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1 A. Correct, sir.
 2 Q. And indeed there are good reasons why you shouldn't,
 3 because of the need to maintain operational resilience,
 4 and the inquiry has heard about that.
 5 A. Yes, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: And you took over at 3 o'clock in the
 7 morning?
 8 A. Yes, sir.
 9 MR WARNOCK: Do we see at the very top of the document, and
 10 the timing is slightly cut off, but it looks like it's
 11 23.40, you WhatsApped Mr O'Reilly and said:
 12 "Let me know if you need anything."
 13 A. Yes, sir.
 14 Q. So is there any question, if anybody had asked you to
 15 help —
 16 A. No, sir.
 17 Q. — you would have immediately responded?
 18 A. If I would have been asked, sir, absolutely.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I absolutely accept that, as I've made
 20 clear already. Thank you very much.
 21 MR GREANEY: Sir, do you have any further questions of
 22 Mr Keelan?
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: I don't.
 24 I am also really grateful. You've been thoughtful
 25 and considered and, as was already said, a very candid

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1 witness. Obviously I will need to review your evidence
 2 with care, but so far I can't see how any personal
 3 criticism attaches to you for what happened on the
 4 night.
 5 A. Thank you, sir.
 6 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: If that changes, you'll be told.
 7 I think we need a 5-minute break, don't we?
 8 A 10-minute break?
 9 MR GREANEY: We probably need a 15-minute break. If we're
 10 ready sooner, I'll let you know.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Okay, 15 minutes.
 12 (2.59 pm)
 13 (A short break)
 14 (3.21 pm)
 15 MR IAN HOPKINS (sworn)
 16 Questions from MR GREANEY
 17 MR GREANEY: Could you begin, please, by telling us your
 18 full name?
 19 A. Ian John Hopkins.
 20 Q. Mr Hopkins, on the night of the arena attack, were the
 21 chief constable of Greater Manchester Police?
 22 A. Yes, I was.
 23 Q. In a moment I'm going to deal with your background, your
 24 professional background, but before I do that, I know
 25 that there is something that you wish to say.

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1 A. There is indeed. If I may stand, thank you.
 2 I wish to address this to the members of the
 3 bereaved families, those that are in court and those
 4 that are watching and listening. I have met many of you
 5 in person, not all of you but many, and listened to the
 6 hopes and dreams and aspirations that you had for your
 7 loved ones and how they were ripped away from you.
 8 I also saw your immense grief. All that will never
 9 leave me.
 10 I and my colleagues responded on 22 May with the
 11 absolute intention of doing our very best in the most
 12 challenging circumstances. In many ways, we achieved
 13 that, but I absolutely recognise that we did not always
 14 achieve our best. I listened to Deputy Chief Constable
 15 Ian Pilling offer condolences and apologies for the
 16 failings of Greater Manchester Police. I may no longer
 17 be the chief constable of Greater Manchester Police, but
 18 I wish too to be associated with that apology and those
 19 condolences.
 20 Thank you.
 21 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you, Mr Hopkins.
 22 MR GREANEY: Mr Hopkins, did you commence your career as
 23 a police officer in Staffordshire Police in
 24 January 1989?
 25 A. I did.

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1 Q. Did you move to Northamptonshire Police in
 2 September 1991 as a constable?
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. And, while serving in that force, rise to the rank of
 5 chief inspector?
 6 A. That's correct.
 7 Q. In which rank performing the role of staff officer to
 8 the chief constable?
 9 A. I did, yes.
 10 Q. Was your final posting as chief inspector in charge of
 11 control rooms and call handling?
 12 A. Yes, it was.
 13 Q. In that post, did you become familiar with the role of
 14 FIM?
 15 A. It was called something else, but yes, I did become.
 16 Q. Did you move to Cheshire Police on promotion to the rank
 17 of superintendent in June 2003?
 18 A. That's correct.
 19 Q. And achieve subsequent promotion in that force to the
 20 rank of chief superintendent?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Did you then move to Greater Manchester Police on
 23 promotion to the rank of assistant chief constable in
 24 April 2008?
 25 A. Yes, I did.

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1 Q. In that position, did you have responsibility for the
2 specialist operations branch?
3 A. I did indeed, yes.
4 Q. And did that mean, as we know it did more recently,
5 having responsibility for the operational communications
6 branch?
7 A. They were separate at that time, but I did have
8 responsibility for both, yes.
9 Q. As a result, having become familiar earlier in your
10 career with the predecessor to the FIM role, did you
11 become familiar with the role of FDO in Greater
12 Manchester Police?
13 A. Yes.
14 Q. In December 2011, were you promoted once more, this time
15 to the rank of deputy chief constable of GMP?
16 A. Yes, I was.
17 Q. And in that role, what responsibilities did you have?
18 A. So I had corporate communications, but also force
19 performance and external relationship branch. My
20 primary focus during that time was that of austerity and
21 dealing with the significant cuts that Greater
22 Manchester Police faced.
23 Q. I'm going to ask you to keep your voice up, I think some
24 are struggling — you are quite softly spoken. Maybe
25 move nearer to the microphone. So you had

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1 responsibility for the corporate communications branch
2 you told us?
3 A. Yes.
4 Q. And for other departments but your principal role was
5 dealing with the cuts which were imposed upon Greater
6 Manchester Police from Central Government?
7 A. That's correct.
8 Q. Just give us an idea, in terms of a figure, what were
9 the savings that you were required as an organisation to
10 make?
11 A. In real terms, and what I mean by that, sir, is taking
12 into account inflationary pressures, they were around
13 £200 million over the period from 2011 to the period of
14 the arena attack. What that meant in real terms, and
15 I know Ian Pilling gave evidence on this, was the loss
16 of 2,000 officers from Greater Manchester Police,
17 a number of police staff, and then subsequently PCSOs.
18 In 2010, Sir Dennis O'Connor, who was the very
19 well-respected Chief Inspector of Constabulary, said
20 that the police service could cope with around about 12%
21 cuts if there was significant reorganisation. He went
22 on to say if that didn't take place there would be an
23 impact on emergency response and visibility of officers
24 on the streets.
25 What it meant to GMP was over that period of time,

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1 it was actually a 24% reduction in officers, compared to
2 a 14% reduction as an average in England and Wales, and
3 those are HMIC's figures, they're published, and in the
4 public domain. The reason for that is that there are
5 two elements that make up the budget for Greater
6 Manchester Police. One element comes directly from the
7 government grant, and one element from precept. And as
8 is with most major metropolitan forces, the vast
9 majority of our budget came from government grant, it
10 was around 81%, and 19% from the local council precept.
11 For example, in Surrey, 48% comes from government grant
12 and 52% from the council precept.
13 All of the cuts were on the government grant, which
14 is why you've got the anomaly that Greater Manchester
15 Police faced 24% as opposed to the average in England
16 and Wales of 14%.
17 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Was that true of other metropolitan
18 forces?
19 A. It's roughly similar figures, yes.
20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
21 MR GREANEY: We're going to this slightly earlier than
22 I expected and that's nobody's fault. Obviously whilst
23 all of that is of general interest, it will only be of
24 particular interest to the chairman if it has something
25 to do with the events of the night of 22 May. So I'm

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1 going to ask you whether perhaps for two broad reasons
2 it may have had an impact or even be likely to have had
3 an impact, the first of those being something which
4 might be quite difficult to describe but the energy of
5 the force.
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. Does that term mean anything to you?
8 A. It very much does. The whole focus for the 5 years up
9 to 2017 was about trying to re-organise the organisation
10 and deal with the impact of losing that many staff. It
11 has an emotional impact. I remember us sitting down
12 with 3,500 members of police staff at Bolton Wanderers
13 football ground and telling them that they were in
14 danger of losing their jobs. But it's the energy of
15 trying to re-organise, reassess service levels and
16 continue business as normal, with different demands
17 coming in and a changing nature of crime in terms of
18 cybercrime, things like digital forensic submissions,
19 I think we had something like a 52% increase over that
20 time, so you're making very difficult investment
21 decisions against that background. So it took a huge
22 amount out of the organisation.
23 Q. I'll come to the second issue in a moment, but is a way
24 of looking at it that it's difficult, maybe even
25 impossible, to draw a line between that loss of energy

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1 and what happened on the night or didn't happen on the
 2 night of the 22nd, but when you stand back from it, as
 3 you can now, it seems to you likely that there is some
 4 form of relationship between the two?
 5 A. I think not in terms of the immediate response on the
 6 night because I would still say there were some really
 7 impressive elements of that, particularly from our front
 8 line staff. But I think in terms of the background that
 9 has been discussed in this inquiry around policies and
 10 policies being updated and the speed at which change was
 11 brought about, I absolutely think that has had an
 12 impact.
 13 Q. It seems as if the two points, as I was going to break
 14 it down, might be one or at least they overlap. I was
 15 going to put to you the suggestion that when one looks
 16 for example at what was happening in the specialist
 17 operations branch as a result of cuts, it's quite
 18 difficult to see how that didn't have an impact on what
 19 went wrong in terms of planning, plans, lack of
 20 resilience around the FDO and so on.
 21 A. Absolutely. We had to take our large numbers of staff,
 22 we weren't able to recruit new officers, which is why we
 23 came down by about 2,000. But that also meant the loss
 24 of leadership posts across the force. So by way of an
 25 example, when I said that I used to have the OCB and

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1 specialist operations when I was an ACC and they were
 2 two separate things, they were both headed by
 3 a chief superintendent, and one of the things we had to
 4 do subsequently was bring them together under one chief
 5 superintendent in the same way that the two cities and
 6 the eight metropolitan Boroughs of Greater Manchester
 7 were all headed by a chief superintendent and we had to
 8 go to one chief superintendent running three areas.
 9 That leadership impact as well is quite profound,
 10 I think.
 11 Q. And as you will no doubt be aware, we have heard about
 12 that from a number of officers, including Mr Giladi, and
 13 as for a particular officer who I won't name, we know
 14 that the pressure that was placed upon him as a result
 15 was quite profound and he had to move somewhere else
 16 entirely. But that's just perhaps an example of what
 17 you are not only agreeing with but describing.
 18 In October 2015, having been the deputy for nearly
 19 4 years, were you appointed to the post of
 20 chief constable of Greater Manchester Police?
 21 A. Yes, I was.
 22 Q. The role, of course, that you had on the night of the
 23 attack?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Of course, in the course of your career, you will have

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1 received much training; am I correct?
 2 A. Yes, sir.
 3 Q. I just want to pick up on a few aspects of that
 4 training. Had you received accreditation as a tactical
 5 firearms commander?
 6 A. I had, and then as a strategic firearms commander --
 7 yes, as a tactical firearms command in Cheshire and then
 8 as a strategic firearms commander in Greater Manchester.
 9 Q. That's certainly what you've recorded in your statement.
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Had you also received accreditation as a Gold commander?
 12 A. Yes, I have.
 13 Q. On occasions, had you performed those roles?
 14 A. Yes, most definitely. On numerous occasions for some
 15 very large events in Greater Manchester.
 16 Q. Did you maintain those accreditations up to and
 17 including the rank of deputy chief constable?
 18 A. I did, albeit as the deputy I did less and less. It was
 19 more around filling in for cover for the assistant
 20 chief constables to give them some support rather than
 21 being on the rota, doing it week in, week out when I was
 22 assistant chief constable.
 23 Q. But those accreditations, I believe, lapsed at the point
 24 at which you were appointed chief constable?
 25 A. Yes, the reason being that the chief constable in

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1 Greater Manchester doesn't perform those roles because
 2 it's too difficult to maintain the accreditation and
 3 your professional skills, but also because it's such
 4 a large organisation, the potential of the chief being
 5 embroiled in all of those operational things would
 6 distract from the job.
 7 Q. That makes sense, but no doubt it would nonetheless be
 8 correct to say that you understood that the demands of
 9 those firearms roles?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. Just as you understood the demands of the role of the
 12 FDO?
 13 A. Absolutely.
 14 Q. And would it be fair to say that as these cuts started
 15 to hit, you will have been aware of the impact that they
 16 were likely to have upon the specialist operations
 17 branch and the firearms department?
 18 A. I was very conscious of that, but of course in the
 19 latter years, I can't remember exactly when, but funding
 20 started to come through the Counter-terrorist Network
 21 which enabled us to start to put some uplift into our
 22 firearms capability. So we were in the difficult
 23 position that the rest of the organisation was shrinking
 24 rapidly, but firearms was an area where we were starting
 25 to grow with the introduction of the counter-terrorist

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1 firearms officers and the building of that network from
 2 the national perspective.
 3 Q. Although, it might be fair to say, not quickly enough to
 4 make a difference on the night?
 5 A. Absolutely, yes.
 6 Q. Just to bring your career up to date, in December 2020
 7 you ceased to be the chief constable of Greater
 8 Manchester Police?
 9 A. That's correct.
 10 Q. Let's turn, having dealt with your background, sir,
 11 unless you have any questions about it --
 12 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: No.
 13 MR GREANEY: -- to the events of 22 May. You've dealt with
 14 them in detail in your witness statement but I'm going
 15 to take it fairly shortly because I believe it would be
 16 fair to say that you did not intend to and did not in
 17 fact perform a role of command in the emergency
 18 response.
 19 A. No, I didn't see the role of the chief constable as
 20 stepping into the Gold command role because of the
 21 discussion we've just had about accreditation, and
 22 we have on duty 24 hours a day an assistant
 23 chief constable that is accredited and operationally
 24 competent and that was Debbie Ford. I very much saw my
 25 role as supporting Debbie and being able to create space

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1 by dealing with some of the major stakeholders that I've
 2 outlined in my statement, dealing with the media, and
 3 trying to think about some of the wider issues, not only
 4 in terms of my own organisation but the sort of forward
 5 thinking around community impact and such.
 6 Q. Did you first become aware of the attack at 22.57 when
 7 ACC Ford, as she was, telephoned you?
 8 A. That is correct.
 9 Q. Where were you at that time?
 10 A. I was at home, I was just about to get into bed,
 11 actually.
 12 Q. Did she inform you, and this is just a summary, that
 13 there had been a bomb at the arena?
 14 A. She did inform me that there'd been an explosion at the
 15 arena. At that stage there was some confusion. There
 16 was a suggestion that it may have been a musical
 17 explosion, in terms of some of the equipment, but
 18 I think she was starting to get a clearer picture that
 19 there had been some sort of fatal explosion. It was
 20 a relatively short conversation, but a very serious one,
 21 because I think, even at that stage, she knew and was
 22 portraying to me the real seriousness of what had taken
 23 place.
 24 Q. Indeed, in your witness statement you record that she
 25 told you that what had happened was being treated as

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1 a terrorist attack?
 2 A. That's correct.
 3 Q. That there were fatalities?
 4 A. That's correct.
 5 Q. And you recall, as you recalled when you made your
 6 statement, that she told you that she was on her way to
 7 force headquarters?
 8 A. Yes, which is what I would have expected her to be
 9 doing.
 10 Q. So did you understand, probably before that call, but
 11 certainly in it, that she was to be Gold commander or
 12 strategic commander for the response?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Did you then, whilst still at home, take steps to
 15 contact or attempt to contact leadership figures both
 16 within your own organisation and more broadly within the
 17 region?
 18 A. I did indeed.
 19 Q. Including, and we don't need to go into for my purposes
 20 the details of this, the mayor?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. The chief executive of Manchester City Council?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Joanne Roney?
 25 A. Yes, that's correct.

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1 Q. The leader of Manchester City Council, Sir Richard Lees?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. And your deputy, Ian Pilling?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And just overall, expressed in an overall way, what was
 6 your purpose that making those calls?
 7 A. It was very apparent that there was going to be a much
 8 wider response needed than just Greater Manchester
 9 Police, which was effectively why Manchester City
 10 Council were high upon my list. The mayor clearly had
 11 a political leadership role and whilst I didn't see the
 12 necessity for him to be rushing into Greater Manchester
 13 Police headquarters, clearly there was going to be
 14 a role for the mayor and for the leader of Manchester,
 15 a very important role, as events unfolded over the
 16 night.
 17 Q. During this period, did you also receive a text message
 18 from Peter O'Reilly, the chief fire officer --
 19 A. I did.
 20 Q. -- for GMFRS. Did you see any of his evidence?
 21 A. I haven't seen the evidence of Peter O'Reilly, no. But
 22 I have been shared the extract in relation to the text
 23 message.
 24 Q. So you know the issue?
 25 A. Yes.

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1 Q. A loose end was left that it was thought you could tie
 2 up for us. So we'll look at the message, perhaps not
 3 the biggest point in the case, but if you can help us,
 4 I know you will.
 5 {INQ019098/1}. 22 May, 23.21. This is from
 6 Peter O'Reilly to you:
 7 "Ian, heading into our command room at FSHQ. Keep
 8 in touch, Pete."
 9 You replied:
 10 "Okay, see you there."
 11 Now, Peter O'Reilly explained to us that when he
 12 wrote FSHQ he meant Fire Service Headquarters, and that
 13 recollection seems certain to be correct because that is
 14 where he went in fact. You replied:
 15 "Okay, see you there."
 16 We know that you didn't go to Fire Service
 17 Headquarters and perhaps wouldn't have been expected to.
 18 So can you explain what was happening here?
 19 A. I can. I was obviously very busy at the time and
 20 preparing to leave to come in. I think the text message
 21 arrived in between calls. I responded to it and the
 22 meaning behind, "Okay, see you there", was my
 23 expectation was that Peter or another senior fire person
 24 would be going to Greater Manchester Police
 25 headquarters. I misread the FSHQ as the abbreviation

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1 from GMP as FHQ because my expectation was we would be
 2 there providing a combined multi-agency response and,
 3 whether it was Peter or whether it was somebody else,
 4 that there would be senior fire representation there by
 5 the time I got there.
 6 Q. So we've seen documents that refer to GMP HQ as force
 7 headquarters. That's how you read it and so you thought
 8 he was telling you he was going there and you were
 9 saying, "I am going there, I will see you there"?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. I see. So was it in fact your intention, once you dealt
 12 with those calls, to go to GMP Headquarters?
 13 A. Absolutely. It was always my intention that that's
 14 where I'd be going as the chief constable, yes.
 15 Q. Bearing in mind that you had no intention of assuming
 16 Gold command or indeed any command position, why did you
 17 decide to go there?
 18 A. Well, the first thing I think it would have been
 19 irresponsible to have stayed at home given the nature of
 20 what was taking place. I needed to provide support to
 21 the Gold commander, Debbie Ford, and I knew that the
 22 wider demands on the organisation would be huge, which
 23 they turned out to be, and that it would need me to deal
 24 with those to create a space for Debbie to deal with the
 25 operational side of issues, none of which I could have

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1 done from home, nor would I have ever wanted to do it
 2 from home. It just would not have been appropriate.
 3 Q. In the result, did you leave your home at about 11.30?
 4 A. That's correct, yes.
 5 Q. How long did you expect it, I'm certainly not asking you
 6 where you lived then still less where you live now, but
 7 how long did you expect it to take you at that time of
 8 night to get from where you were to force headquarters?
 9 A. About an hour, I would suspect. Maybe slightly longer,
 10 but it's a 50-mile journey.
 11 Q. Did you arrange to have a driver in order that you could
 12 continue to make calls and send messages whilst
 13 en route?
 14 A. I did. That was actually a member of my family that
 15 drove me there so I could do that, as well as scanning
 16 the media and picking up all the other things that were
 17 going on, but primarily it gave me the space to make
 18 those phone calls and to be thinking about what I was
 19 going to be dealing with.
 20 Q. In the result, did you arrive at force headquarters at
 21 about 00.35?
 22 A. I think so, yes.
 23 Q. And go immediately to the command suite?
 24 A. That's correct.
 25 Q. I am going to deal next with the role that you performed

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1 over what was in the end to be many hours.
 2 A. It was many hours, I didn't leave again until around
 3 about 10 pm on the 23rd.
 4 Q. In terms of the role or, I should say, roles that you
 5 performed, they break down I think into three areas.
 6 First of all, liaising with and briefing key strategic
 7 stakeholders?
 8 A. That's correct, yes. So that would have ranged from
 9 national government, to national counter-terrorism, to
 10 local political leaders and local officers such as
 11 Joanne Roney.
 12 Q. And in your statement you deal with the fact that among
 13 senior members of government nationally that you spoke
 14 to were the Home Secretary?
 15 A. That's correct.
 16 Q. And the Minister of State for Security and Economic
 17 Crime?
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. So that was role 1. Role 2, ensuring the welfare of
 20 your own staff?
 21 A. Yes, very much so. We suffered a tragedy in 2012 when
 22 two of our officers were brutally murdered, and I recall
 23 the impact that that had on the organisation at that
 24 time and how unwell some individuals were made, so
 25 welfare was an incredibly important part of this for me

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1 as well.
 2 Q. That, I believe, involved ensuring that a superintendent
 3 was appointed welfare Bronze?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And also, yourself contacting the Police Federation?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. Which is the organisation that represents the rank and
 8 file police officers --
 9 A. That's correct.
 10 Q. -- up to and including the rank of inspector? And was
 11 that to ensure that the Federation would support their
 12 officers?
 13 A. Very much so, and also they have people that are
 14 specifically trained in trauma and debriefing trauma,
 15 and it was important to get their expertise and support
 16 at an early opportunity as well.
 17 Q. And role 3, being the face of Greater Manchester Police
 18 for the media?
 19 A. Very much so. In fact, the policing protocol that sets
 20 out the role of the chief constable and the role of the
 21 Police and Crime Commissioner talks about the
 22 chief constable being the operational voice of policing
 23 in their force area, so that was clearly always going to
 24 be a role that landed with me.
 25 Q. So someone might say you're the chief constable, you're

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1 the boss of this organisation, weren't there better
 2 things for you to be doing than giving interviews to the
 3 media, so I must give you an opportunity to address
 4 that.
 5 A. During the night, I did the first one at around 3 am,
 6 the second one at 7 am. That was not my primary focus.
 7 Clearly, it was an important part of explanation and
 8 communication more widely. But most of my time was
 9 focused with various stakeholders, particularly with
 10 Mark Rowley and the National Counter-terrorism -- it was
 11 receiving briefings from the Gold commander, it was
 12 supporting people like Superintendent Chris Hill
 13 in relation to the difficulties we were having with
 14 Vodafone and the casualty bureau, which was causing me
 15 an awful lot of concern at the time.
 16 So those were the three sort of key areas
 17 I articulated in my statement, but there was a myriad of
 18 things beyond that that I was already involved in doing.
 19 Q. Did you spend your time within the command suite or
 20 elsewhere?
 21 A. Mostly within the command suite. Obviously sometimes
 22 I stepped out and went to my office when I was preparing
 23 some of the other things and thinking about it, but
 24 mostly within the command suite talking to the senior
 25 leaders that were in there as you would have expected.

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1 Q. We know that the strategic coordinating group meeting
 2 did not take place within that suite until 4.15 in the
 3 morning.
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Obviously, approaching 6 hours after the attack at the
 6 arena. Were you aware that it was not until that stage
 7 that the SCG took place?
 8 A. I wasn't. I obviously became aware quite soon
 9 afterwards, but what I saw in the room was people in the
 10 main that had worked on major operations, pre-planned
 11 operations, key partners from Manchester City Council,
 12 from other agencies, that were working together, and on
 13 the face of they seemed to be communicating and having
 14 conversations, and it didn't strike me that there was
 15 the space at that point to have stepped out of the room
 16 to hold a strategic coordinating group.
 17 Q. And overall, did you view the tasks that you were
 18 involved in as important ones?
 19 A. Very much so, yes. As I said, the primary focus of that
 20 was to try and create that space for people like
 21 Debbie Ford to be able to do the things that she was
 22 doing, because had I not undertaken those tasks, all of
 23 those enquiries would have been falling on the
 24 Gold commander and I think that is inappropriate.
 25 Q. That's, if I may say so, an interesting way of putting

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1 it. One of the important issues that we've been
 2 exploring, as you know, is the lack of resilience around
 3 the FDO on the night of the arena attack, so support
 4 from people who knew what tasks they were supposed to be
 5 doing. I think what you're -- am I right in suggesting
 6 that what you're describing to us is that you were
 7 performing a role that was designed to provide
 8 resilience around the Gold commander?
 9 A. Absolutely, and to take that step back and do some
 10 thinking about what next, not only in terms of the
 11 immediacy, bearing in mind when I arrived the evacuation
 12 of the casualties was pretty much complete, but the next
 13 12, 24, 36 hours, because we were obviously starting to
 14 make arrests and we had the rest of the organisation to
 15 maintain a service across Greater Manchester. So I was
 16 very much focused about thinking about those things as
 17 well to allow that space and, as you said, create that
 18 resilience for the Gold commander.
 19 Q. One of the things you were doing was performing roles
 20 yourself that might otherwise have fallen to the
 21 Gold commander?
 22 A. Very much so, yes.
 23 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Can I just go back to the -- sorry,
 24 I don't want to stop your questions. Go back to the SCG
 25 and the fact that you thought it's all -- it didn't

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1 occur to you that they need to have an SCG. One of the
 2 disadvantages of not having it so early, or having it
 3 that late, is that people like Peter O'Reilly regarded
 4 that they would be called to police headquarters for
 5 that purpose. It was in fact somewhere around 2 o'clock
 6 that he went as he was told there was going to be one.
 7 If it's desired to have the Gold commanders all
 8 under one roof, either you need to change the policy and
 9 say it's not just to come for an SCG, it is to be there
 10 to discuss it or you need to actually say: right, we're
 11 having an SCG as early as possible.
 12 A. I think with hindsight, sir, and I think Debbie Ford in
 13 her evidence said this, she had made attempts to do it
 14 earlier, but it had not been possible. I think all of
 15 us with hindsight would like to say it should have been
 16 done earlier, but that communication was going on in the
 17 room around the immediacy of what was happening and
 18 that, at that time, felt like it was working.
 19 Events have shown that there was clearly areas that
 20 weren't. Whether an SCG would have pulled that out at
 21 that immediate point, I can't say.
 22 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Really my point was you didn't get the
 23 most senior people there as a result, certainly
 24 in relation to fire.
 25 A. Certainly in relation to fire, yes. But I mean, I don't

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1 know the timings, people like Geoff Little, who was one
 2 of the deputy chief executives of Manchester City
 3 Council, was there before Joanne Rowley, so there were
 4 people of that level in that room in the early hours of
 5 the morning.
 6 MR GREANEY: Did it strike you that Peter O'Reilly, with
 7 whom you'd been in touch and who you had thought, after
 8 the text message, was going to force headquarters, that
 9 you didn't see him for probably about 2 hours after your
 10 arrival?
 11 A. To be honest, it didn't at the time. I didn't --
 12 because of the things I was involved in, I wasn't
 13 specifically looking for the fire chief. There was
 14 somebody from fire in that room, I believe, when
 15 I arrived.
 16 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: There certainly was, yes.
 17 MR GREANEY: Yes, he arrived probably a short time before
 18 you.
 19 Just to go back to the point I was making and then
 20 I'll be finished with the events of the night, you can
 21 obviously see and did see on the night that for the
 22 Gold commander to have there someone who was experienced
 23 and able to take tasks away from them was of great
 24 assistance to her?
 25 A. I hope that that was the case and I hope that that's

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1 what she felt, yes.
 2 Q. And equally, therefore, you won't require any persuasion
 3 to accept that for the FDO that night to have had
 4 someone who was similarly experienced and able to take
 5 tasks away from him would have been of real value?
 6 A. I have to concur with that. I thought at the time,
 7 because of the team that was around the FDO and the
 8 force duty supervisor, that there were sufficient people
 9 there to be able to delegate tasks to, as busy as
 10 it would have been. We've all learned that that wasn't
 11 the case and steps have been taken, as Mr Pilling has
 12 given in his evidence, to rectify that position.
 13 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: It's actually -- it may be theoretically
 14 possible to delegate on the night, but actually it's
 15 quicker to do it yourself because you have to take
 16 someone through what they have to do and so you might as
 17 well get on and do it. That may be what the FDO was
 18 thinking that night. They need to be delegated before
 19 it happens?
 20 A. Yes, probably, yes.
 21 MR GREANEY: This is the whole point around about where you
 22 accepted -- we know that there have been plans for
 23 action cards, so those within the OCR would know that
 24 they were to take tasks away from the FDO and, to say
 25 the least, to adopt a phrase that Mr Pilling chose,

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1 those had not been embedded by the night of the attack.
 2 A. Yes, my understanding is they'd been emailed around and
 3 that Mr Sexton had in fact himself put together an
 4 aide-memoire that he had shared, but it clearly hadn't
 5 been embedded, no.
 6 Q. For those like Mr Myerscough, who ended up with
 7 important role, it might be that the first time he saw
 8 the action card was when he was in the position you're
 9 currently in.
 10 Just to go back really to where we started with
 11 22 May, you did not perform any command role that night?
 12 A. That's correct.
 13 Q. But to be fair to you, you had no intention of doing so?
 14 A. No.
 15 Q. That, sir, unless you have any questions, is all
 16 I propose to ask about the night of the 22nd.
 17 There is, however, one other area that you do need
 18 to help us with, and that is your involvement with
 19 Lord Kerslake's process.
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. You had, we understand, a discussion with Lord Kerslake
 22 and Alan Goodwin of his team on what from the notes
 23 appears to have been 8 November 2017.
 24 A. I believe I had two discussions, one being 8 November,
 25 one being 22 December, yes.

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1 Q. And that accords with the annotations on the notes.
 2 There seems to be no recording of those discussions but
 3 we do have some handwritten notes, I'm not going to take
 4 you to them, but I'll give the INQ references in case
 5 others wish to next Wednesday when you return.
 6 {INQ000641/46}. That is the note of the meeting of
 7 8 November.
 8 {INQ000642/5}. That is the reference for the
 9 meeting of 22 December.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: While we're talking about Lord Kerslake
 11 and the notes, I'm aware that we have been now informed
 12 that in relation to the notes of Mr O'Reilly's
 13 interview, that where the NB appears, that was done by
 14 the interviewer and not put there by — it wasn't
 15 Mr O'Reilly saying NB as it were, a comment.
 16 MR GREANEY: I had in fact meant to deal with that yesterday
 17 and I forgot. You are entirely right. Dr Deeming has
 18 emailed us to say that where NB appears, that is a note
 19 of his and not a response of Peter O'Reilly's.
 20 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you. Just so everybody knows
 21 that.
 22 A. I am aware that there are written notes, sir. I saw
 23 them for the first time at around 5 pm last night. I'm
 24 also aware that there are typed notes which I saw within
 25 the last week to 10 days, but with both of those that's

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1 the first time I've ever seen those notes. They've
 2 never been shared, I was never asked for clarification
 3 or for any further comment by myself.
 4 MR GREANEY: So you've never signed off on their accuracy is
 5 the point you're making?
 6 A. Absolutely not, no.
 7 Q. They are legible. I'm not going to ask you about them.
 8 It may be that Mr Weatherby questions you about them on
 9 Wednesday. I will leave him to deal with that. What
 10 I am going to ask you about are two letters that were
 11 written in your name —
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. — and I have chosen that phrase carefully — to
 14 Lord Kerslake on 9 March and 19 March 2018. I am
 15 confident you've had a chance to look at those letters?
 16 A. Yes, I have, sir.
 17 Q. The references for those are {INQ000633/1} and
 18 {INQ000631/1}.
 19 When those letters were written to Lord Kerslake,
 20 did you have an understanding that it was important to
 21 provide information that was accurate within them?
 22 A. So when we engaged with the Lord Kerslake review —
 23 Q. That's probably a yes—or—no answer if I may say so.
 24 A. I wanted to say that I put a team in to engage with
 25 Lord Kerslake for exactly that reason. One of my

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1 strategic aims was to try and make sure we absolutely
 2 gave the most accurate information we could at the time
 3 because I was incredibly conscious that at some point
 4 there would be a statutory review, whether it be an
 5 inquest or a public inquiry, as we find ourselves in
 6 today, and I was concerned about timescales and not
 7 being able to provide accurate information that would
 8 subsequently be found to be not accurate, so I did wrap
 9 a team around it with legal support and advisers.
 10 Q. I probably shouldn't have said it was a yes or no,
 11 because your answer does help. You clearly were aware
 12 of the importance of accurate information?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. And you took some steps to seek to achieve that?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And just as you'll have been aware of the importance of
 17 providing accurate information, you'll also no doubt
 18 have been aware of the need to make points that were
 19 fair and balanced?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. We'll look in a moment at the first of those letters,
 22 dated, as I said, 9 March 2018. So about 9.5 months
 23 after the attack.
 24 By that stage, as we know, and as you will know,
 25 there had been numerous debriefs within the force, had

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1 there not?
 2 A. There had, yes.
 3 Q. So let's have the first of those letters on the screen,
 4 please. {INQ000633/1}.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: So some time after you've been
 6 interviewed by Kerslake, these letters are?
 7 MR GREANEY: What has happened, sir, is the interviews have
 8 taken place with Lord Kerslake and Mr Goodwin. Then
 9 what we would describe as warning letters have been sent
 10 out, including to the chief constable, as he was, and
 11 the assistant chief constable, as she was. And we're
 12 going to see letters which were a response to — I think
 13 they're described as "fair notice letters". So that is
 14 what has happened.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 16 A. So we're looking at the one from 9 — oh, it's in front
 17 of me now.
 18 MR GREANEY: I'm just going to be picking out some parts and
 19 I hope that I'm doing so in a way that is fair. But
 20 I know that Mr Horwell will be keeping his eye on me and
 21 if there are other parts that need to be put, he will do
 22 that in due course.
 23 The first point is the third paragraph down and it's
 24 really just to emphasise a point you have made:
 25 "I acknowledge [you say] the number of issues I will

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1 raise is significant . I am mindful, however, of the
2 need to ensure that the response provided is
3 a comprehensive one, as once the report is published
4 it is likely to become evidence in the coronial process
5 and possible other inquiries and proceedings."

6 So it appears, as you recognise now, that you
7 understood at the time the importance of this letter was
8 not just because obviously Lord Kerslake's work was
9 important but also because of the prospect that what you
10 were saying would find its way into a report that might
11 become evidential in the inquests or in an inquiry, or
12 in other proceedings indeed?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. There are a number of other points that I'm going to
15 just identify, then seek your views about, so just bear
16 with me whilst I take you through them.

17 Over the page, please, to the top of that page. The
18 letter reads:

19 "In summary, I believe that my responses are
20 evidence that ..."

21 And are you talking about your responses during the
22 course of the discussions you'd had with the Kerslake
23 team?

24 A. No, I think it's the responses in this letter.

25 Q. I see. Fine.

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1 Yes, that makes sense. There are then four bullet
2 points:

3 "The decision to not hold an SCG until 4.15 am was
4 the correct one."

5 I'm not particularly going to ask you about that,
6 it's the other three. The letter says:

7 "Relevant emergency service partners were informed
8 of the declaration of Operation Plato. Although the FDO
9 was under considerable pressure and managing many
10 demands, he was not overwhelmed. There was no detriment
11 to the overall effectiveness of the operation caused by
12 any of the above decisions/issues."

13 Next page {INQ000633/2}, please, second paragraph:

14 "Paragraph 5.15 [this is a reference to the fair
15 notice letter] states that there was confusion between
16 partners. GMP can evidence that GMFRS, NWS and the
17 military were informed of the Plato declaration via
18 specified routes within a few minutes of its
19 declaration."

20 Then under the heading "FDO/control room":

21 "It is accepted that this was an exceptionally busy
22 period for the FDO, but we would challenge any claim
23 that he was overwhelmed, as suggested elsewhere in the
24 report. By using other staff within the OCB he was able
25 to complete his key tasks, including the notification of

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1 Operation Plato."

2 So what I'm going to suggest is there are a number
3 of problems with these passages. I'll identify what
4 I suggest they are and then I will give you a chance to
5 give your explanation.

6 First, the proposition that the declaration of
7 Operation Plato was communicated within a few minutes to
8 partners was wrong and at least, on an organisational
9 level, GMP knew that. To take just one example,
10 a different INQ, {INQ041168/1}, this is an
11 Operation Manteline debrief questionnaire, created
12 27 July 2017, so about 8 months before the Kerslake
13 letter was written.

14 Over the page, {INQ041168/2}, this is the
15 questionnaire of Dale Sexton, the force duty officer,
16 and if we enlarge the bottom half of the page, please:

17 "I declared Operation Plato some 20 minutes from
18 being made aware of incident. However, due to demand on
19 the FDO role and limited experienced comms operators,
20 I was unable to make contact with North West Ambulance
21 and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service."

22 As I said, that's 8 months before that letter in
23 your name.

24 So how did it come about that in a letter that was
25 of obvious importance and which you recognised should be

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1 accurate, that something was said that was wrong?

2 A. The only explanation I can offer is that I obviously
3 passed under my deputy chief constable a team of GMP
4 senior people with legal support to be able to construct
5 that draft letter for me and that I know that Mr Pilling
6 had various discussions and debriefs with them
7 in relation to that information, and I was assured that
8 that information was correct. The debrief notes I've
9 never seen until the last couple of days. How they were
10 missed, I do not know.

11 I absolutely accept it was a very grave error
12 in that original letter to Lord Kerslake. The only
13 solace I can take is that letter, I believe, was sent on
14 a Friday and that by the Monday we had rectified that
15 position with an email from Deputy Chief Constable
16 Ian Pilling apologising.

17 Q. Can I assure you that you will not leave the witness box
18 today without it being clear to everyone that this
19 misinformation was rectified within a short period of
20 time.

21 A. Thank you.

22 Q. But nonetheless, here we have a letter in which GMP is
23 saying it can evidence that partners were told within
24 minutes, and as you've accepted, that was a very grave
25 error?

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- 1 A. It was, sir, and I sit here and it's inexplicable, and
 2 I can only apologise for that. I don't know why it was
 3 in such strong terms that there was evidence of it.
 4 From memory, I recollect a conversation in relation to
 5 call data, being able to provide that evidence, which
 6 should have been provided and verified before the letter
 7 was sent. It clearly wasn't. But over that weekend
 8 from the Friday to the Monday, it was clearly — a lot
 9 of work was done and it was identified that it couldn't
 10 be verified and that was rectified and there was an
 11 apology to Lord Kerslake from Deputy Chief Constable
 12 Ian Pilling on the Monday.
- 13 Q. It wasn't a case of someone just failing to uncover one
 14 debrief document, all anyone needed to do was to speak
 15 to the FDO, listen to his dictaphone recording, ask
 16 GMFRS or the Ambulance Service, "Were you told?" That
 17 really just provides the context for how bad a mistake
 18 this was, do you agree?
- 19 A. I agree, and from my perspective, I asked a team of my
 20 senior people to provide that support to Lord Kerslake
 21 and to provide the relevant evidence and we failed to do
 22 it and I can only apologise for that.
- 23 Q. Who was it who assured you that the information in this
 24 letter was correct?
- 25 A. The deputy chief constable drafted that letter with

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- 1 a team of people which he, I understand, checked and
 2 double-checked with, and it would have been therefore
 3 the deputy chief constable that assured me that that
 4 information was correct. I would not have sent it had
 5 there been any doubt. With hindsight, I should have
 6 perhaps spent more time seeking to see that evidence
 7 myself first — hand.
- 8 Q. The second suggestion I'm going to make to you, and
 9 I believe your answer will be the same to each of these,
 10 I'm sure it will be, the proposition that the FDO was
 11 not overwhelmed was not something that GMP was in
 12 a position to state with confidence, to put it
 13 neutrally.
- 14 A. I think that's a fair point. I think that we felt that
 15 with the teams around the FDO and the resources
 16 available that whilst they would be incredibly busy,
 17 there were key decisions that they should have made that
 18 could have been made regardless of everything else that
 19 was going on that it now turns out that they didn't. It
 20 was inevitable, I think, that they were going to be
 21 extremely busy, but we felt at the time that they had
 22 the resource to support them.
- 23 Q. So that's an answer to a different, albeit important,
 24 question, namely whether the FDO was overwhelmed. What
 25 I'm suggesting is by the time this letter was sent to

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- 1 Lord Kerslake it certainly was not safe to say the FDO
 2 was overwhelmed because, for example, there was this
 3 debrief document in which the FDO was making clear that
 4 he was so busy he couldn't get in touch with people.
- 5 A. And as I've said, I'm struggling to answer that having
 6 never seen the detail in those debrief documents and was
 7 relying on a team of people to do that work and provide
 8 me with accurate information to be able to give to
 9 Lord Kerslake.
- 10 Q. The third suggestion, which really follows on from the
 11 first two, is that it was simply wrong, or at least not
 12 safe, for that letter to state that there was no
 13 detriment to the overall effectiveness of the operation.
- 14 A. I've thought long and hard about that because one of the
 15 things that I think is incredibly important is the
 16 actions of my front line colleagues on the night, who
 17 ran into the danger and provided the support and
 18 assistance that they could, and the fact that the
 19 casualties were evacuated in just over an hour. I think
 20 what we know now, and if I'd known that at the time
 21 we would have included it, was that had fire been there,
 22 it would have been a much more effective response from
 23 all of us.
- 24 Q. And it will be for the chairman to decide whether what
 25 went wrong caused the detriment to the overall

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- 1 effectiveness of the operation, but it's not difficult
 2 to postulate certain things that went wrong that seemed
 3 to have done, such as the inability of the Fire and
 4 Rescue Service to get in touch with the FDO. That seems
 5 to have had an impact upon whether they turned up, don't
 6 you agree?
- 7 A. Absolutely, and I think partly what was in the back of
 8 my mind about the response as well and that lack of
 9 detriment at that time was the medical people saying
 10 that the ambulances got the casualties to six different
 11 hospitals within a very rapid period of time, and as
 12 a result of that, there was effective treatment given
 13 and lives undoubtedly were saved. I don't know whether
 14 that's the case, but that was the conversation that was
 15 going on at that time.
- 16 Q. So I think that really, for the reasons you've given
 17 already, you are acknowledging that it was not safe at
 18 that stage for GMP to be asserting positively that their
 19 decisions had not been to the detriment of the overall
 20 effectiveness of the operation?
- 21 A. I agree, and the only explanation I can give is that
 22 there was a myriad of other things that we were involved
 23 in and that perhaps it wasn't given the care that it
 24 rightly deserved.
- 25 Q. As I said, we need to put this in proper perspective, so

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1 I am going to ask that the letter of 19 March be
 2 displayed. It's {INQ000631/1}. This is 10 days later.
 3 Under the heading "Operation Plato":
 4 "However, I have written separately to acknowledge
 5 that we cannot categorically say that we informed GMP
 6 and GMFRS of this."
 7 Meaning Operation Plato:
 8 "However, I believe the question the public will ask
 9 is what difference this made."
 10 And in short, the letter goes on to indicate none.
 11 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: You had seen a draft copy of the report?
 12 A. We'd seen a draft copy of, I believe, it's chapter 2,
 13 sir, which was all that was shared with us, not the
 14 overall report.
 15 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 16 MR GREANEY: It is clear from the first letter you hadn't
 17 seen the whole of the report.
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. You were saying you'd like to.
 20 So that was that letter. It's plain from that
 21 letter, which again we can see if we need to, that was
 22 in your name, that you had written separately. I think
 23 you have -- I say you, the GMP team have worked hard to
 24 try to identify this separate letter that had made that
 25 clear at some stage between the 9th and the 19th.

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1 Although you can't have complete confidence that the
 2 letter we are now going to look at, or email, is the
 3 answer to the point, I believe your view is that it's
 4 likely to be the answer? Have I summarised your
 5 position?
 6 A. You have.
 7 Q. So let's look at this. It's an email sent not from you
 8 but from your deputy Ian Pilling on 12 March to a member
 9 of the Kerslake team. {INQ032785/1}. This was on
 10 Mr Pilling's evidence proposal:
 11 "Further to our conversations earlier, as discussed
 12 there has been extensive work over the weekend regarding
 13 the informing of other agencies by GMP regarding
 14 Operation Plato. The briefing I had last week was that
 15 we had definitive evidence that the force FDO or his
 16 team had informed GMFRS and NWAS of this. I've
 17 scrutinised this and I am now of the opinion that we
 18 cannot categorically say that this was the case."
 19 Then some evidence is referred to, which might
 20 provide some support for the proposition that they had,
 21 but it goes on to repeat:
 22 "The fact remains that we cannot categorically say
 23 that this notification was done using the word Plato by
 24 the FDO or his team."
 25 So I think it would be fair to summarise the

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1 position in this way, tell me if you disagree, that you
 2 had initially on 9 March said, "We can evidence that we
 3 told our partners within minutes". Here, you were not
 4 expressing the accurate position as we know it to be, or
 5 Mr Pilling wasn't, namely that you didn't, but you were
 6 saying something midway between the two, namely, "We've
 7 looked at the evidence and we can't say categorically
 8 that we did"; is that fair?
 9 A. That's correct.
 10 Q. Would it also be fair to say that when you look back at
 11 this particular period of time, you regret that accurate
 12 information was not provided to Lord Kerslake?
 13 A. Oh absolutely, absolutely.
 14 MR GREANEY: I was at this stage going to ask you about the
 15 impact of austerity, but, sir, unless you think I
 16 haven't, I consider we've probably dealt with that
 17 adequately and that concludes the questions that I have
 18 for Mr Hopkins.
 19 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you.
 20 Mr Hopkins, I think for reasons you've already been
 21 told, or you may have been told, in the words of
 22 Mr Greaney, for very good personal reasons, we can't go
 23 any further today.
 24 When is Mr Hopkins coming back?
 25 MR GREANEY: Mr Hopkins is coming back, I believe, on

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1 Wednesday of next week.
 2 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Is that all right for you?
 3 A. Absolutely, and I fully understand and have every
 4 sympathy.
 5 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Thank you very much for your tolerance.
 6 MR GREANEY: I have explained the reason to Mr Hopkins, it's
 7 nothing to do with Mr Hopkins.
 8 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes.
 9 MR GREANEY: So, sir, 9.30 on Monday morning, please.
 10 SIR JOHN SAUNDERS: Yes. Thank you very much, everybody.
 11 (4.17 pm)
 12 (The inquiry adjourned until 9.30 am
 13 on Monday, 19 July 2021)

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1 I N D E X

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3 MR DAVID KEELAN (continued)1

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