



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority
Policy and Strategy Committee

MANCHESTER ARENA INQUIRY – VOLUME 2

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 27 January 2023

Purpose of Report:

To inform Members of actions being taken following the publication of the Manchester Arena Inquiry – Volume 2.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the contents of this report and endorse the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry.
- Agree to receive further reports to enable monitoring and scrutiny on the implementation of learning.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 22 May 2017, an Islamist extremist detonated a homemade device in the foyer of the Manchester Arena following an Ariana Grande concert, 22 people were killed and 1,017 were injured. Many of them children, several hundred more suffered psychological trauma.
- 1.2 The Honourable Sir John Saunders was appointed as Chair of the public inquiry to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the terror attack at Manchester Arena.
- 1.3 Volume 1 of the Inquiry was published in June 2021 and focused on the security arrangements at the Ariana Grande concert and identified the missed opportunities for detecting and preventing the attack and reducing the harm caused.
- 1.4 Although Volume 1 did not directly indicate any recommendations for fire and rescue services, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) reviewed known findings and implemented learning to improve preparedness within Nottinghamshire. This mainly focussed on interoperable working with Police and EMAS colleagues across National Inter-agency Liaison Officers (NILOs).
- 1.5 Volume 2 of the Inquiry was published on 3 November 2022. The inquiry focussed on the impact of any inadequacies in the planning and preparation by the emergency services and in the emergency response. This includes whether any inadequacies undermined the ability of the response to save life or contributed to the extent of the loss of life.
- 1.6 Volume 3 of the Inquiry is expected to be published in Spring 2023. This will consider whether Security Service and Counter Terrorism Police could and should have prevented the attack. It will examine whether, and if so, how the attacker became radicalised. It will set out the steps which led to him being outside the concert with an improvised explosive device and what opportunities there may have been to disrupt, deter or divert him.

2. REPORT

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- 2.1 Volume 2 recognises that the circumstances on that evening were incredibly challenging to all involved, and, many people displayed courage and distinction in their actions. However, the victims of the attack lie at the heart of the report. It rightly recognises that lessons are learned and, where necessary, practices are improved in order that the mistakes made before and during the incident do not occur again.
- 2.2 The inquiry's terms of reference were to assess the impact of any inadequacies in the planning and preparation by the emergency services, and in the emergency response. It found that '*the performance of the*

emergency services was far below the standard it should have been'. It also states that the ineffectiveness of the response to this incident could have led to the loss of life. A statement which was heavily reported by national media when the report was released.

2.3 The report outlines several areas of learning and improvement for authorities involved. These include:

- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP) is the doctrine which outlines the standards and policy which apply to emergency responders and their interoperability (including communication and co-location) at an incident. All Category 1 responders in attendance that night made mistakes in adhering to and completing tasks outlined by JESIP;
- Significant and multiple failures in communication occurred resulting in a lack of common understanding within the FRS, the Fire Control room, and with other partner agencies;
- Inadequate training within Fire Control and for NIOs in managing an incident of this nature compounded their ability to identify and/or overcome breakdowns in communication;
- Poor decision-making took place due to;
 - Voids of information due to poor or breakdowns in communication, both internally and with other partner agencies;
 - Risk aversion;
 - Lack of 'muscle memory' in managing an incident of this nature due to insufficient training and ;
 - Having procedures which did not provide the clear guidance required for decision-making under intense pressure.
- Failures in interoperability existed both relating to operational approaches and available systems;
- There was a lack of understanding by partner agencies of the capabilities, training, and equipment available to and of the FRS;
- Failures of incident command both procedurally and because of the above;
- Lack of understanding of Operation Plato which is the agreed national identifier for the response to a no-notice marauding terrorist attack (MTA).

SERVICE RESPONSE

- 2.4 NFRS is well practiced in reviewing and enacting national learning reports. For example, Members will recognise similarities in the approach being reported to those used to review and adopt the learning following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry.
- 2.5 The Service's Risk and Assurance Team (RaAT) has been appointed to lead on the review of the report and will also produce and oversee the Service's action plan.
- 2.6 The Service will review current operational policy and procedures relating to Marauding Terrorist Attacks.
- 2.7 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) is yet to respond to the report, however the NFCC Operations Committee has established a strategic board to ensure consistency in responses across all UK Fire and Rescue Services
- 2.8 To ensure a level of consistency across all fire services a national action plan is being developed that will be shared across the sector.
- 2.9 Internal scrutiny of the Service action plan will be reported to the Service's Community Risk Management Plan Assurance Board. This is chaired directly by the Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.10 The report highlights the need for multi-agency working and the Service is actively working with colleagues within the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum to implement the learning via a newly formed sub-group that will be led by NFRS.
- 2.11 Progress reports will be presented to Members, at key milestones.
- 2.12 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is expected to audit progress against the recommendations of the Volume 2 report during the next tranche of inspections.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Any costs associated with completing the recommendations within the Volume 2 report will be identified through the action plan. This will then be reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team as part of the budget setting and business planning process.
- 3.2 Specific MTA funding from government has been reduced, from £56,000 a year to £19,500 a year, commencing in April 2023.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are a range of recommendations with the Volume 2 report that will have training implications for Firefighters, Officers, Fire Control, Specialist Responders, NILOs and Incident Commanders. These will be defined further on completion of the action plan and overseen by the Service's Training and Assurance Board.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment (EIA) has not been undertaken because this report is designed to provide an overview of work to date. Where recommendations require a change to product, service or policy an EIA will be completed if required.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Service has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure the safety of employees and others affected by its activities. Implementing the recommendations will ensure the Service complies with these requirements.
- 7.2 The Fire Services Act requires the Service to resource to community risks including those associated with MTA and that adequate arrangements are in place to provide an effective operational response.
- 7.3 The Civil Contingencies Act requires that the Service has necessary plans in place to respond to a major incident which may include an MTA.
- 7.4 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on the Service to 'secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised'. The reporting of progress against these matters ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives, as set by the Fire and Rescue Authority, and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Effectively implementing the Volume 2 recommendations will ensure that the Service is well placed to ensure an effective operational response to MTA incidents. It will also serve to develop further assurance in the effective operational response to any type of multi-agency major incident.

- 8.3 The recommendations are likely to be a focus for HMICFRS during the next tranche of inspections. Effective organisational response to the Inquiry will mitigate the risk of a negative inspection result and the subsequent reputational risks that this poses to the Service.
- 8.5 Close media scrutiny of the Inquiry poses a reputational risk for the organisation were such an event to occur in Nottinghamshire.
- 8.6 Routine reporting of progress against the recommendations will be required to Home Office and NFCC. The Service needs to be in a position to respond in an assured and constructive manner to these consultations.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are significant collaboration implications related to implementing the learning within the Volume 2 report. This includes working with Tri-Service fire partners, partners across Nottinghamshire LRF, and national Fire working groups.
- 9.2 Operational policy and guidance relating to MTA have been developed regionally through the NILO network. A collaborative approach to implementation is required since any large-scale incident is likely to result in cross-border support being requested from neighbouring fire and rescue services. A common understanding of ways of working is required to ensure this response is effective.
- 9.3 Greater alignment and sharing of intelligence and risk information is critical to achieve with Nottinghamshire Police. Work is already ongoing to progress this with the focus created by the inquiry supporting such work.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the contents of this report and endorse the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry recommendations.
- 10.2 Agree to receive further reports to enable monitoring and scrutiny on the implementation of learning.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Craig Parkin
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