



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

MANCHESTER ARENA INQUIRY – VOLUME TWO

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 28 April 2023

Purpose of Report:

To update Members on the actions being taken following the publication of the Manchester Arena Inquiry (MAI)- Volume Two.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the contents of this report and support the approach 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 explosive device was detonated in the foyer of the Manchester Arena following an Ariana Grande concert. 22 people were killed and 1,017 were injured. Several hundred more suffered on-going psychological trauma.
- 1.2 Following calls for a public inquiry into the incident, the Honourable Sir John Saunders was appointed as Chair to examine the circumstances leading up to, and surrounding, the terror attack at Manchester Arena; including the planning, preparation and response of the emergency services.
- 1.3 Volume One of the Inquiry was published in June 2021. This focused on the security arrangements at the Ariana Grande concert. It identified the missed opportunities for detecting and stopping the attack, and reducing the harm subsequently caused.
- 1.4 Although Volume One did not directly indicate any recommendations for fire and rescue services, Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) reviewed the 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 Two 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 multi-agency response to save life, or contributed to the extent lives that were lost.
- 1.6 Volume Three of the Inquiry was published on 2 March 2023. This has considered whether Security Service and Counter Terrorism Police could and should have prevented the attack. It has examined whether, and if so, how the attacker became radicalised. It also sets 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. The recommendations concerning British Secret Service's will be held at 'secret' level and therefore not available for reporting.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 The Service is well practiced in reviewing and enacting national learning reports. Members will recognise similarities in the approach being reported to those used to review and adopt the learning following the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI).
- 2.2 The MAI Volume Two report makes 139 recommendations. Of these, 62 are relevant to NFRS. A further 51 are relevant multi-agency learning and will be addressed through the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF).

- 2.3 An action plan has been developed for both NFRS and the LRF. This is administered through an action tracker and follows the same approach as used following the GTI.
- 2.4 An initial high-level review of the recommendations indicates that the previous work carried out by NFRS has mitigated any immediate risks prior to the release of the report. As such, Members are assured that there are no high-risk areas of concern currently outstanding.
- 2.5 A high level summary of the report shows key learning has been identified in the following areas:
- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP);
 - Failures in communication;
 - Inadequate training within Fire Control and for national interoperability; Liaison Officers (NLOs) in managing an incident of this nature;
 - Poor decision-making;
 - Failures in interoperability relating to operational approaches and available systems;
 - A lack of understanding by partner agencies of the capabilities, training, and equipment available to and of the FRS;
 - Failures of incident command;
 - Lack of understanding of 'Operation Plato' which is the agreed national identifier for the response to a no-notice marauding terrorist attack (MTA).
- 2.6 Whilst work has already commenced, the timeline for delivery and assurance against all the recommendations is likely to be around 18 months for both NFRS and the LRF. All recommendations are expected to be completed by September 2024.
- 2.7 To deliver fire specific recommendations, a MAI working group has been established to co-ordinate improvements against the action plan. The Risk and Assurance Group Manager is the Chair of this group and is responsible for reporting progress to the Strategic Leadership Team.
- 2.8 To deliver the multi-agency recommendations, the Service is actively working with colleagues within the Nottinghamshire LRF, via a newly formed MAI subgroup. This new subgroup is being led by Fire and is chaired by an Assistant Chief Fire Officer.
- 2.9 Internal scrutiny of the MAI action plan will be through the CRMP Assurance Board, which will receive a progress report on a quarterly basis.
- 2.10 It is proposed that an update report is provided to this Committee at a frequency of no longer than 12 months, on delivery against key milestones, or by exception if required.
- 2.11 Progress against the MAI action plan is an area of focus for His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) during their Service inspection programme. NFRS's next inspection is

expected to be in Autumn 2023. By the time of this inspection, it is expected that notable progress will have been made against the detailed action plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any costs associated with delivering the recommendations within the Volume Two report will be identified through the action plan and reviewed by the Strategic Leadership Team as part of the budget setting and business planning process.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are a range of recommendations within the Volume Two report that will have training implications across NFRS and partner agencies. These will be defined further during scoping of the action plan and overseen by the Service's Training and Assurance Board, and the Local Resilience Forum training sub-group.

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.

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 our 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 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 Two 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.
- 8.2 The recommendations are likely to be a focus for HMICFRS during the next tranche of inspections. Effective organisational response to the Inquiry recommendations will mitigate the risk of a negative inspection result and the identified corporate risk of 'Service reputational risk' that this poses to the Service.
- 8.3 Close media scrutiny of the Inquiry poses a reputational risk for the organisation were such an event to occur in Nottinghamshire, however the actions undertaken by the Service, detailed in this report and the subsequent action plans, will help mitigate the risk of an unsatisfactory response to such an incident.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are collaboration implications related to implementing the learning within the Volume Two report. This includes working with regional and tri-service fire partners, partners across Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum, and national working groups.
- 9.2 Operational policy and guidance relating to terrorist attacks have been developed regionally through the National Inter-Agency Liaison Officer 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. Several working groups have been established to progress recommendations jointly where appropriate.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the contents of this report and support the approach being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry.

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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