



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

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

MANCHESTER ARENA INQUIRY – VOLUME TWO: UPDATE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 26 April 2024

Purpose of Report:

To update Members with progress in relation to the recommendations within Volume Two of the Manchester Arena Inquiry.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the update from this report and endorse the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry.
- Receive further reports for the monitoring and scrutiny of the implementation of learning through the Community Safety Committee.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 22 May 2017, a homemade 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, many of them being children, with several hundred more left suffering psychological trauma.
- 1.2 Volume Two of the Manchester Arena Inquiry was published on 3 November 2022. Volume Two 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.
- 1.3 An initial report was first presented to the Policy and Strategy on 27 January 2023 which outlined the approach the Service was taking to implement the identified sector learning. At that meeting, Members agreed to receive update reports to enable oversight and scrutiny against the Service's action plan.

2. REPORT

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE RESPONSE

- 2.1 Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (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.
- 2.2 The Service's Risk and Assurance Team led on the review of the report and is overseeing the Service's action plan.
- 2.3 The Service's action plan has 53 recommendations. Each recommendation is defined as to the action required to deliver the improvement and has a timeframe of completion.
- 2.4 Of the 53 recommendations, 32 have been completed and closed and 21 are being worked towards. Progress against all recommendations is on-track and are set to be completed by December 2024.
- 2.5 As an example of some of the learning that has been implemented, the Service has reviewed all of its operational policy and procedures relating to marauding terrorist attacks (MTA). Amendments have been made in collaboration with regional partners. The Service also has an agreed programme to roll out the new national guidance – Joint Operating Principles for MTA, Edition 3.
- 2.6 Internal scrutiny of the Service action plan is through the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Assurance Board which is chaired by the Chief Fire Officer.

- 2.7 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Operations Committee has also established a strategic board to ensure consistency in responses across all UK Fire and Rescue Services, with quarterly reporting established to track progress of individual fire and rescue services.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LOCAL RESILIENCE FORUM RESPONSE

- 2.8 The Service is actively working with colleagues within the Nottinghamshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to implement the learning via a specifically created Manchester Arena Inquiry sub-group.
- 2.9 NFRS chairs this sub-group, which has attendance from all Category One and relevant Category Two responders. This group has identified 55 recommendations from the Volume Two report with relevance to the LRF.
- 2.10 The LRF's action plan defines each recommendation and sets out the timeframe of completion for each. Whilst coordination and engagement across all partners has faced some initial challenges, full completion is anticipated to be by December 2024.
- 2.11 Of those 55 recommendations, 33 have been completed and closed and 22 are being worked towards
- 2.12 Scrutiny over the work of this sub-group is through the LRF's Resilience Working Group, with exceptions reported to the full LRF meeting.

CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENT

- 2.13 As well as learning from the Volume Two report, in February, colleagues from Manchester Fire and Rescue Service, who were involved in the Manchester Arena organisational debrief, came into Service and presented a case study on the incident. This presentation gave a real insight into events that happened on the night, as well as highlighting some further learning. This learning will be reviewed alongside the MAI action plan.
- 2.14 In March the Service undertook a full scale, 'no-notice', exercise to test the application of some of the learning from the MAI action plan. This exercise involved the evacuation of around 7000 people from a sports venue, then a realistic MTA scenario. This exercise involved all blue light partners.
- 2.15 The exercise is subject to a full review and formal debrief report. One key area of assurance already known was the effective response of the Service's MTA capability, supporting resources and Officers, and initial on scene multi-agency working. This is an area which received criticism in the inquiry report.

NEXT STEPS

- 2.16 The Service will continue to progress the recommendations internally and across the LRF, reporting progress via the governance structure highlighted in this report.

- 2.17 Progress reports will be presented to the CRMP Assurance Board and to Fire Authority Members, through the Community Safety Committee, at key milestones, with a proposed final sign-off to the Fire Authority in December 2024.
- 2.18 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is expected to audit progress against the recommendations of the Volume Two report during the next tranche of inspections.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Any costs associated with completing the recommendations within the Volume Two 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, as of April 2023. This reduction will lead to a requirement, after 2024, for the replacement of equipment and facilitation of training to be funded from Service budgets, which do not currently meet this requirement. This additional cost will be addressed as part of Service financial planning.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are a range of recommendations within the Volume Two report which have training implications for Firefighters, Officers, Fire Control, Specialist Responders, NILOs and Incident Commanders. These have been defined within the action plan and are overseen by the Service's Training and Assurance Board.
- 4.2 Learning will be assured through a variety of means, including audit and multi-agency exercising. The Service's approach to operational training and development ensures that personnel acquire, and maintain, required competencies to deal with incidents of this nature.

5. EQUALITIES AND ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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 as required.
- 5.2 The approach outlined in this report supports the Service's commitment to 'Putting Communities First' by ensuring that the Service learns from previous events and assures the approach of the Service in response to major incidents.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no environmental or sustainability 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 by ensuring that the Service is aware of, and has adopted, learning from national incidents of a significant nature.
- 7.2 The Fire Services Act requires the Service to resource to all foreseeable community risks and have adequate arrangements in place to provide an effective operational response. The Service's CRMP identifies the possibility of a terrorist related incident, and the Service addresses this threat through training and preparations.
- 7.3 The Civil Contingencies Act requires that the Service has necessary plans in place to respond to a major incident. These plans are reviewed and enhanced from the learning of other major incidents, including the Manchester Arena tragedy.
- 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 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 MAI 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 will mitigate the risk of a negative inspection result and the subsequent reputational risks 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.
- 8.4 Routine reporting of progress against the recommendations will be required to the Home Office and NFCC. The Service is in strong position to respond in

an assured and constructive manner to these consultations through the work that has been completed to date.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are significant collaboration implications related to implementing the learning within the MAI Volume Two report. This includes working with Tri-Service and regional fire and rescue service 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 being carried out 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 update from this report and endorse the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Manchester Arena Inquiry.
- 10.2 Receive further reports for the monitoring and scrutiny of the implementation of learning through the Community Safety Committee.

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

None.

Craig Parkin
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER