

Meeting: Fire Services Management Committee

Date: 9 December 2022



Manchester Arena Inquiry

Purpose of report

For decision

Summary

On 3 November the Manchester Arena Inquiry published its second report into the attack at the Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017. The report made a number of recommendations of relevance to Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs). This paper outlines those recommendations and sets out at paragraph 13 a suggested programme of activity for the LGA in response to those recommendations from the Inquiry.

Is this report confidential? No

Recommendation/s

That Fire Services Management Committee:

- (a) Note the publication of the second report from the Inquiry;
- (b) Agrees the work programme outlined in paragraph 19; and
- (c) Considers if officers should undertake any further work in response to the Inquiry's recommendations and conclusions.

Contact details

Contact officer: Mark Norris

Position: Principal Policy Adviser

Phone no: 020 7664 3241

Email: mark.norris@local.gov.uk

Manchester Arena Inquiry



Background

1. The Manchester Arena Inquiry was established in October 2019 by the Home Secretary to investigate the attack on the Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017. The Chairman of the Inquiry, the Honourable Sir John Saunders, was asked to consider whether the attack could have been prevented, the attack itself, the security arrangements at the Arena, the response from the emergency services and the experiences and immediate cause of death of each person who died.
2. The Inquiry published its first report in June 2021. This looked at the opportunities to prevent the attack, the attack itself, and the security arrangements at the Arena.
3. The second report from the Inquiry was published on 3 November 2022 in two volumes. These begin by remembering those who died, then provides a summary of the emergency response and what went wrong, before looking in detail at the preparedness and the response from each of the emergency services involved, including British Transport Police, Greater Manchester Police, North West Ambulance Service and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. The first volume also includes an assessment of the preparedness of the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum.
4. The two volumes concludes with 149 recommendations. Many are directed at specific organisations, but some are national in their nature. A number are of direct interest to Fire Services Management Committee.

Recommendations of interest to FSMC

JESIP

5. The Inquiry concluded that significant elements of the emergency response on the 22 May 2017 went wrong. The framework under which the emergency services were supposed to operate was the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles or JESIP. Although JESIP originated in Lady Justice Hallett's 2011 report after the July 2005 terrorist attacks, where there were repeated failures by the emergency services to work together, the Inquiry stated many of the problems JESIP was designed to resolve recurred on 22 May. Later in the report the Inquiry notes that there have been other incidents where JESIP has failed. The aim of the recommendations in the report is to ensure that JESIP works in practice and not just in theory.
6. The report starts with the joint doctrine underpinning JESIP and recommends that the Home Office, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the College of Policing, Fire Service College and JESIP should

review the joint doctrine, related guidance covering marauding terrorist attacks, and agree a national format for all plans.

7. The Inquiry then looks at multi-agency preparedness and recommends the Home Office and the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) along with bodies like HMICFRS, the College of Policing and the Fire Services College should ensure there are robust national and local plans for recording the lessons from multi-agency exercises, there are effective debriefing sessions after exercises, consideration is given to 'high-fidelity training', all the emergency services are aware of the others specialist capabilities, and there is guidance on where commanders should co-locate during a major incident.
8. Problems with communication between the emergency services are a theme in the report, and the Inquiry makes a number of recommendations specifically around multi-agency communication. These include preparing, training and exercising how to maintain effective radio communications, consideration of whether an app could provide contact details for all on-duty and on-call commanders, and that the Fire Services College and the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) consider devising training packages for control room operators so they can provide guidance on basic trauma care to 999 callers. To aid communications the inquiry recommends that common terminology is developed for the emergency services in zoning hazardous areas in major incidents, with the terminology differing between those used for marauding terrorist attacks and those used for other incidents. It also recommends that the Home Office, HMICFRS and the Fire Services College develop a system to ensure the duty command structure in each fire and rescue service has notice of any significant pre-planned event.

Local Resilience Forums

9. The Inquiry has a number of recommendations related to Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) themselves, which echo themes that have come out of the development of the new National Resilience Strategy and the review of the Civil Contingencies Act, which the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board contributed to. The Inquiry suggests the government consider introducing an independent inspection regime, with forums monitoring attendance at LRF meetings and having the ability to compel attendance from Category 1 and Category 2 responders, while government looks at the funding and staffing of LRFs.

The Care Gap

10. One particular focus for the Inquiry in 2022 has been the Care Gap. As the report outlines it is unlikely in the event of a terrorist incident that a large number of ambulances will be deployed to the scene and the injured then treated immediately. The report identifies four reasons for this:

- 10.1 Ambulance services do not keep large numbers of ambulances waiting to respond to a terrorist incident, so at the time an attack occurs many ambulances will already be deployed on other duties.

- 10.2 The first paramedic to reach the scene of an incident is expected to become the incident commander, assess the scene and establish command and control rather than treat casualties.
 - 10.3 Established practice is to triage the injured to assess who is most in need of medical intervention.
 - 10.4 In the event there is a suspected marauding terrorist attack there will be an impact on the time it takes for casualties to be treated.
11. The consequence is that there will be an inevitable delay in paramedics and other healthcare staff arriving at the scene and commencing treatment, creating a Care Gap. The Inquiry considered how the Gap could be made as short as possible, and how those present at the scene can provide life-saving interventions before clinical healthcare staff arrive – ‘filling the Gap’.
 12. The Inquiry concluded that the provision of healthcare services at the event were inadequate. The Chairman of the Inquiry is keen to ensure that in the future provision of the healthcare services by events’ organisers improve. In the longer term the Inquiry recommended the Department of Health and Social Care should set a standard for event healthcare services required at a particular event, and these standards should be enforced by the Care Quality Commission. However, the report points out achieving this change will take time, and identifies the licensing regime as a vehicle for improving the provision of event healthcare services.
 13. As well these recommendations about event healthcare provision, the Inquiry suggests that in order to spread knowledge around first responder interventions the government consider amending the law to impose a duty on employers to train all employees or certain categories of employees in first responder interventions.
 14. In addition to training for the public and employees the Inquiry also makes recommendations about training for emergency personnel, so that those who are first at the scene of a terrorist incident are able to provide first responder interventions. The report identifies firefighters as having a vital role to play given their expertise in evacuating casualties and first aid skills. The report recommends firefighters should be given first responder intervention training, in particular the specialist teams trained to respond to a marauding terrorist attack. The Inquiry recommends the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) devises a training scheme.
 15. The Inquiry also made recommendations relating to the Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) for dealing with marauding terrorist attacks, which sits under the Joint Doctrine interoperability framework. Responding to evidence from the NFCC, the Inquiry suggests the JOPs should contain specific references to reducing the Care Gap.

Implications for FSMC and FRAs

16. The Inquiry’s findings suggest that although there has been work over nearly a decade now to embed JESIP principles in all three emergency services, this programme of activity has not yet achieved the changes in operational procedure needed. Ensuring that the JESIP principles become operationally embedded in services is a role for chief fire officers and the services themselves. However, FRAs will want assurance from their service that it is working to ensure the JESIP principles are integrated into

the service, and it is able to work effectively with the other emergency services at an incident.

17. Earlier in the year the LGA was invited to attend the JESIP ministerial oversight board alongside bodies such as the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the National Police Chiefs Council and the NFCC. The oversight group did not meet over the summer, but now that the Inquiry has produced its final report it is likely these meetings will resume. Given the failures to follow JESIP's Joint Doctrine identified by the Inquiry, it is likely that a major focus of the oversight group going forward is how the Joint Doctrine can be consistently embedded in at least the emergency services, and possibly other Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Category 1 responders.
18. As the NFCC outline in their update paper to the Committee, the NFCC has established a MAI Oversight Group that links into the NFCC Operations Committee. This group will oversee the fire and rescue service response to the Inquiry's recommendations.
19. With the NFCC focusing on responding to the sector specific and multi-agency recommendations, it is suggested that FSMC concentrate on supporting FRAs to assure themselves their service is responding to the Inquiry's recommendations and has successfully embedded the JESIP principles in the way it works. Members are therefore asked to agree that FSMC:
 - 19.1 As part of its wider work on governance, FSMC develops and publishes guidance for Fire and Rescue Authority members on scrutinising their services response to the recommendations from the Manchester Arena Inquiry and the embedding of JESIP principles in the way their services prepares, trains and responds to major incidents where it works alongside the other emergency services.
 - 19.2 Where appropriate FSMC engages with the National Fire Chiefs Council's work in response to the Inquiry's recommendations.
 - 19.3 Work with the Home Office and HMICFRS to inform any work they undertake in response to the Inquiry's recommendations.
20. Members may also wish to consider asking for an update report from the NFCC specifically on its response to the Inquiry's recommendations at a future meeting.

Implications for Wales

21. As has already been described the Inquiry report makes a number of national level recommendations, but makes no reference to how those actions might be taken forward by devolved administrations. Many of the recommendations of direct interest from a FSMC perspective are ones that in Wales come under the responsibility of the Welsh Government. It is not clear at this stage how the Welsh government might respond to the publication of the Inquiry's reports, but we will liaise with the WLGA if that is appropriate.

Financial Implications

- 22 The Inquiry's recommendations may have financial implications for FRAs, but until the government responds to the publication of the Inquiry's report it will not be clear the extent of those. We will look to inform the development of government policy in response to the Inquiry's recommendations so that account is taken of the financial implications on FRAs.
- 23 The work outlined in paragraph 19 of the report will be met from existing LGA resources, as will any additional areas of work members decide the Board should undertake in response to the Inquiry's report.

Equalities implications

- 24 The Inquiry's report and recommendations do not raise any specific issues for councils under the Equalities Act and the public sector equality duty.

Next steps

- 25 Subject to members' agreement officers will taken forward the work programme outlined in paragraph 19, and seek to inform the development of government policy in response to the Inquiry's recommendations to ensure the interests of FRAs are represented.