

GLA Oversight Committee – Tuesday 18 July 2017

Transcript of Item 6 – London Resilience’s Response to the Grenfell Tower Fire

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Welcome, Steve Hamm from London Resilience. Steve, do you wish to say anything in the first five minutes or can we go straight into questions?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): I am very conscious of time. Can I take just two minutes to set a few things out in context? Clearly the paper and the agenda item is about the response to Grenfell, but if I could spend a few moments putting where response sits in the bigger picture of resilience.

In fundamental terms, there is a preparation phase, which is the bulk of resilience. Then there is a response phase, which we are going to look at in the main this afternoon. Then we move into recovery. They are the general terms that are used. If I could spend a moment unpicking that first phase, the preparation phase, because much of that is the bulk of what the London Resilience Team do on your behalf. Unpicking that, there are three bits.

There is the complexity of the various components of the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA), Transport for London (TfL), in terms of the civil contingencies responsibility and I will deal with that very quickly.

Then there is the mechanics of what goes on a daily basis and where the resource is going into preparedness for London. Then I will move briefly to response. Hopefully, that will set the context for your questions.

The complexity piece: the Civil Contingencies Act is the driver for all of this. The MPS, I am sure everybody knows, the London Fire Brigade (LFB) as a fire and rescue service, and TfL, all have duties under that Act, as do other non-GLA and Mayor-related functions, the National Health Service (NHS), the Environment Agency (EA), and so on. The distinction that we need to hone in on in the preparedness phase is around the GLA, as distinct from the boroughs, as local authorities in terms of the Civil Contingencies Act, and from LFEPA which, as we know, is not just a fire authority; it is the Fire and Emergency Planning Authority. The GLA distinction is that after the demise of the Government Office for London (GOL), the GLA gained the responsibility for a number of the key functions for London that are unique to London in the guidance to the Civil Contingencies Act and its regulations. Primarily, that is around things like ensuring that there is a risk register for London, that the various risks, threats, hazards, and so on, from the National Risk Register, are combined with local risks for London so that we have an idea of the capabilities that we need in London for response and recovery.

Some other more mundane aspects of the GLA are things like the Secretariat to the London Resilience Forum (LRF), which is the convention of the partnership as we know it, in London, and, of course, all the back-office work that goes with producing the emergency plans that will then be deployed when those risks that we spoke about are realised.

That is the hub of the GLA's responsibilities. It does extend into some roles during a response phase.

It is worth touching on LFEPA as a functional body because the EP element of LFEPA brings in a Civil Contingencies Act duty to act in co-ordinating and support functions for the London boroughs. That is unique in the Civil Contingencies Act because of the complexity of the local authority structure in London - the other large metropolitan areas do not have borough-level resilience forums, as we do in London - and there is a need to co-ordinate that, which falls to LFEPA. Clearly, whatever happens in London, happens in a borough. That borough co-ordination function is one that obviously will, I am sure, be subject to some discussion this afternoon and it is worth singling out that it is the LFEPA responsibility. That is planned to transfer to whatever subsequent arrangements come from LFEPA.

With that said, the day-to-day mechanism of preparedness in London under those sorts of duties has changed in recent years. I have mentioned the demise of the GOL. That led to the creation of the London Resilience team in the GLA, where it lived for a little while. In 2015, that transferred to LFEPA, to sit alongside the resource that already existed in the LFB that dealt with LFEPA's statutory duty. That is history that makes logical sense.

Since that 2015 merger, the integration of those two teams has occurred. There is a whole host of detail around it, but suffice to say the function within LFB now is routinely producing the work, through what is known as the London Resilience programme, that is sanctioned and authorised by the LRF, which is the statutory forum.

The types of outputs that come from that programme are documents, protocols, and plans, generally. They tend to focus, or will focus, by definition, on the multiagency approach to managing emergencies in London. It is the co-ordinated joint approach between the various responding agencies. That clearly includes things like the blue light services for blue light emergencies, but there is a host of other responders in London, which obviously contribute to this.

The final piece on this, before we move into the response phase, which hopefully will set the scene for some questioning, is that the nature of how we are preparing in London is to produce plans and protocols that have a generic application. We are going to focus here, clearly, on a significant fire. We could also be talking about civil disturbance or terrorism acts, things like that, that we have seen in recent times. In any of those cases, it is the generic pre-determined plans that come into play. There are a number of those which fall into a category of supporting plans. The strategic co-ordination protocol is the probably the prime one. It describes how the various agencies in London can come together, how the London Resilience team can support them. We have recovery co-ordination protocols, which need to be implemented at the appropriate time. We have a range of specific plans. Some of the ones that been implemented in recent times - humanitarian assistance - we have seen those pan-London plans implemented for a range of things, such as terrorist attacks. At Grenfell that was a major consideration. Shelter and accommodation, that type of thing, is a strategic plan that can be implemented in London, as can mass fatalities, mass casualties, evacuation: they are all pre-determined plans.

That background might be useful to explain where the bulk of the day-to-day activity of London Resilience's resources goes. Then we move, of course, into a response and recovery phase, when an event such as Grenfell occurs.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Thank you very much. That is very useful. We are going to concentrate and focus on the post-initial operation - I know it is all operational - really about the support to victims and possibly relatives. In the immediate, early-hours, while the tragedy occurred, we have a number of people who need support in some way. That develops over the days. Who does what within that? That is what we are going to focus on.

Depending on this session, we may well be inviting some other people to come and talk to us. We want to get an initial view from your perspective.

Can we go back to the morning of Wednesday, 14 June 2017? At what point was the London Resilience Group (LRG) duty manager contacted and by whom?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Excuse me; I do need to refer to my notes. We were notified at 3.41am. That is the precise time. That notification came from an internal LFB notification. Clearly this is a fire situation; a representative of LFB, it was part of the operational Resilience team within LFB was working at the brigade co-ordination centre, so LFB being the prime responder in this case, it is their effective role to inform the London Resilience duty officer of what is going on. That was at 3.41am.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Once that call came through, did the LRG duty manager follow the procedures - we have this information - set out in the strategic co-ordination protocols, or did they use some other reference manuals? We want to understand what documents we should be looking at.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): There is the strategic co-ordination protocol, which is a protocol that has to fit a number of purposes. It is not a one-size-fits-all protocol. The protocol is used for significant civil emergencies, like Grenfell. It is also used for things that we can see coming, such as a rising tide event. It is used quite frequently, particularly in police-led operations, for some of the routine events in London. It is a protocol that is applicable to a range of activities.

The answer, though, is still yes. The protocol is followed but it would be somewhat of an oversimplification to think that it is just a linear process of progression through that protocol. There are certain components that will be more relevant to certain circumstances than others. There is, however, in more detail, which is probably something you have not had access to, a handbook for the London Resilience duty officer. That spells out things in much more detail, down to the telephone numbers and who to contact and in what order. That is the key reference that the London Resilience officer that was paged at that time on that morning will have followed.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can you take us through the immediate steps in relation to Grenfell that the duty manager took to inform and communicate with other partner organisations?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. In terms of the duty tier of officers within the London Resilience function, one is that pager-holder who receives that initial message. That is the duty manager. We also have a strategic adviser, who is also on call 24/7, to support that, and a duty supervisor. That supervisor role is if we have to implement the local authority borough-level co-ordination centres, so the London Local Authority Co-ordination Centre (LLACC). There is a supervisor on call who will make all of that happen. Those three people are the first people, post-notification, who become aware of the situation at Grenfell.

The next thing that has to happen - this would be the same for any emergency that has just been triggered - is the lead agency. Who is this? In this case, clearly, it is the LFB. There is a need to establish what the situation is, so starting to build the situation awareness. Clearly, the fire brigade is aware but the role of the LRG is to build that general situation awareness that will then have relevance further down the line when we get into co-ordination.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Clearly, it is a fast-moving situation and so we start off with it as a LFB lead operation, a major fire. We then get to the situation that it is X number of people we are dealing with, who survived. Materially, then the advice changes or the actions by people change. In your co-ordination role, as you are getting information, we have moved off. It is not the fire brigade's job to put blankets round people, give them something to drink, try and get them to a place of safety. How do we move from that, from an initial fire brigade, lead agency, to maybe, initially, one borough, but a multiagency approach in terms of that support to the survivors? How does that work? There is a health component, is there not; you have to check them over and are they going to go to hospital? What happens?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): To answer that, there are two parts. One is about the high-level strategic co-ordination to set the key strategy and objectives for resolving whatever the incident is, in this case, Grenfell, with all of those impacts beyond the fire, that you have just articulated. These things are happening in parallel. The first thing is the convention of a Strategic Co-ordination Group [SCG]. The first one took place at 5.00am, about an hour and 20 minutes after the initial notification. To make that happen, clearly the London Resilience function is bringing together the necessary people. That took place over the telephone. As the protocol would require, that is initially chaired by the prime agency, so LFB will have chaired that. In parallel with that, of course, is clearly a recognition, as you have described, that there is an impact here, there is a blue light response on the fire, but there is an impact that will inevitably come from this, just as in any other type of civil emergency. Clearly, that is a borough-related thing. We have previously mentioned LFEPA's duty under certain contingencies to provide local authority co-ordination. The point of contact there is the London Local Authority Gold (LLAG). In the same timeframe that we are talking about, the London Resilience officer would have spoken, and did speak, to the LLAG at the time.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): That would not necessarily be in the borough.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): No.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): That is someone in the pool, on the stand-by list.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. It is probably worth clarifying that.

LLAG is a resolution between the 33 boroughs that effectively nominates a Chief Executive from one of those authorities, at any one time, on a rota basis, to fulfil the role of Local Authority Gold. That is distinct from the role of Chief Executive, in this case, of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC). It could, by coincidence, have been the same individual at the same time, but it was not on this occasion. The concept there is that the local borough involved, RBKC in this instance, has a duty as a category 1 responder and it is the Chief Executive's responsibility to initiate responses for the factors that you highlighted there around displaced people and so on within the affected borough. The concept of the resolution for Local Authority Gold is based upon a recognition that in many cases there will be a need for either mutual aid or the event itself is impacting across more than one borough. That requires, clearly, co-ordination because if you have more than one borough involved in the response or mutual aid

arrangements to an event, it has to be co-ordinated, and that is the duty of LFEPA's. The conversation with LLAG and the affected Chief Executive in RBKC was going on, as were the arrangements for the 5.00am co-ordination meeting.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): The meeting at 5.00am in response, the blue light services would have declared a major incident before that, presumably, is that the blue light co-ordinating group set up or is that a different group? How does that work? What is its role? If it is a major incident, do they blur into one another? How does it work?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Within the protocol, there are five levels of strategic co-ordination in London. Level 4 and level 5 are very similar. If we looked at it in a linear progressive way, when we got to level 4, that is effectively the blue light emergency services and what is known as a Gold co-ordinating group. That happens on many occasions, where the full potential of a scenario has not been realised maybe, or it is a precautionary thing. In the case of Grenfell, we went to level 5 straight away, which is the full Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG). It is chaired, through the protocol, by the key agency, in this case, the fire service, but it was more than just the blue light services.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): That continued on and so the key meeting, the beginning of the recovery period, was the 5.00am meeting. Is that roughly it?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): It would have been before in different ways, but as you move from dealing with the incident - and in the time it takes to deal with everything there, you are starting then to know what you face, because you are dealing with the incident - but in that recovery period, another phase, I am not sure what emergency people would call it, it seems to me that you would start seeing where things are at.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. You are absolutely right. It is the recovery phase. It is not an absolute transition. There is clearly a building-up of recovery. Grenfell recovery, if we look at it right now, is still in train; there is a recovery co-ordinating group still running. There is no response activity, as it were, at Grenfell really. That transition depends on the nature, but certainly at Grenfell it was always going to be a long transition because there is a lot of response work to do simultaneous with the ramping up of recovery. The point to make is that within the protocol and the norm of a SCG, even in the heat of the moment, and so the very first time that the SCG meets and sets its strategic objectives, recovery is an agenda item. There is a standing agenda, but the agenda item for recovery is clearly generally a very quick consideration of recovery at that initial stage because in many cases you are still trying to get to grips with what the situation. Transition to recovery management and implementation of recovery management protocols, inevitably will be further down the timeline. As you say, late in the afternoon on the Thursday is when it became reality.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): In an answer to an Assembly Member, Andrew Boff, who has been talking to Jeff Jacobs [Head of Paid Service] about timelines, roughly the time taken to establish the LRG was about three hours. That is not unusual, is it, in a critical incident, where people come together, as they are dealing with the response and when we move to recovery? It is roughly about right?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. We need to be careful with terminology. The LRG is a function within the LFB. It does not have a command control role. The important one here is the SCG.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): It might well be that that I am referring to.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): That group, in this instance, the first one, albeit it was done by telephone because of the circumstances, 5.00am, in terms of notification it is an hour and 20 minutes. In terms of the incident, yes, about three, four hours in. That is par for the course, I would suggest. There are a number of comparisons we can use, just through 2017, with some of the other events that have happened in London.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Just take us through. We have the SCG at 5.00am. It then meets again at 6.30am and then at 8.30am, and of course the situation conversation may well change during that time. Can you give us a flavour of the changes that we might have expected during those meetings?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The tempo there is every hour and a half, two hours, which is usual. A lot happens in those two-hour windows, or thereabouts, and clearly the bulk of what happens is placed on a growing situation-awareness picture that is coming out of the scene and a growing understanding of what the impacts are going to be. What we would expect to happen in those SCG meetings is that as each one takes place the strategic objectives are continually reviewed but moreover, they are fleshed out into what actions are now needed in terms of a strategic co-ordination effort.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): At 5.00am the LFB is leading those discussions. Is it still leading those discussions later? I am getting a picture here. Does the meeting change chairs as the situation changes? Or does the LFB continue but do it in a multi-partnership way because the book says this is what needs to happen? I presume that earlier on that will have been decided. At 5.00am the MPS says, "We have secured the perimeter of a safe zone while you firefighters are still doing what you need to do", the Council is saying, "We have initially got something set up", and then we go through some of those issues. Is that roughly it, at 5.00am, and then we step up a gear a bit?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. The chairing of the SCG, the first one will always be the agency that has primacy.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): The lead agency.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): At that meeting, and even in advance of that meeting, in conjunction with the London Resilience officer, there will a conversation: "Who is going to chair this, going forward?" The LFB chaired the first one. Subsequent ones were chaired by the MPS and then we eventually got into chairing with recovery management groups as well, with local authority Chief Executives and so on. The chair changes and the chair can change according to circumstances. It is probably worth pointing out that in the majority of instances, when an SCG is called in London, it is a MPS chair because the MPS, by default, will be the lead agency because it is either related to some kind of event management in London, or some kind of counter terrorism-related issue or a public-order related issue.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): I am right in thinking that it does not matter who chairs the meetings because all the key issues that are going to be discussed are important in terms of relation to that incident.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Absolutely.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): There is going to be space and time at that meeting for someone saying, say, they want to bring a structural engineer on site, to work out an appropriate time, and someone can go and find one, or whatever. Do people share problems? Or do people solve problems, at these meetings? Do they say, "I am stretched here; I do not have this capacity and I need that" and people chip in, or not chip in, make suggestions? People with different experiences will have different views on things, because of the nature of what they bring to the table.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The SCG is primarily focused, as you would expect, on the key strategy for resolving the incident, identifying the key areas that need to be actioned and the prioritisation within that. There is a tactical level of co-ordination, which is where the much more detailed level of resource allocation and things like that take place. Then there is an operational level, which would be on site.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): On the tactical level, if I am supporting survivors and victims, one level of the NHS is supporting them because they need some health care and I have a number of people who are displaced by the incident, that would be dealt with within the local government family, and below the strategic sub-group can I envisage a little working group, working their way through the issues of what they may find in outcomes, i.e., "I have no money", which will not be an issue at 5.00am, that will come later, but there will be a sub-group, is what you are saying?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): If we go back to the fact that there are standing plans, humanitarian assistance is a plan. It has a scope and it has a pre-determined methodology and structure that could be stood up at the tactical level in an affected area. The lead for that, in the case of Grenfell, would have been RBKC. That tactical level of providing a focal point for humanitarian assistance at the starting point fits within the scope of that plan. The plan was initiated and led by RBKC at the locality. The SCG is located at distance; it is not at the scene. It is located in a MPS facility in Lambeth. The strategic focus in the SCG is all about keeping the high-level picture.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): I get the high-level picture, but if I am in RBKC my point person, if I call him that, sitting in Lambeth, will be the LLAG person, I presume, either at the end of a telephone or physically in that meeting.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): I am like the RBKC person there, because I am dealing with it on the ground, I am not going to send someone over there to do it. Maybe, but it is unlikely, is it not?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. I am going to have to say it depends, and I will have to explain why it depends.

In the SCG, absolutely there needs to be representation from the local authority affected. There are two scenarios that can pan out here. The first one is that the local authority concerned determines that it will not invoke the local authority gold arrangements, which involves the mutual aid and the gold resolution and that it will represent itself, effectively, at that SCG. That is what happened, certainly in the early stages, of Grenfell.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Hold on. Who is invoking what? Does it need RBKC to invoke the LLAG group?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): It needs RBKC.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Or do you say, "We have a problem here", and contact the LLAG representative to say, as the first point, because that is part of your reference group? Who invokes who?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The Chief Executive of the affected borough has to invoke the LLAG arrangements.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): That is interesting. All right. But you are still ringing those persons. I might say, "Thanks for the tip off, I will wait for a phone call". Is that how it works?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): In effect, my staff will get everything in place should the local authority Chief Executive concerned activate the LLAG arrangements.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Just before I pass on to colleagues, when did LLAG first take the chair of the SCG?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): They took recovery co-ordination on the Friday. Police chaired the SCG right the way through, because clearly it becomes a criminal investigation and that sort of thing. LLAG did step in, not RBKC, to chair the recovery co-ordination group, which stood up on the Friday.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Obviously you are going to do your learning-lessons bit, we will come back to that; RBKC are doing their learning-lessons bit. When did RBKC first meet to discuss the response? Do we know? Have you managed to find that out?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Within RBKC, on the morning of the fire, I could not give you that detail right now. I do not know.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): All right. We will need to come back to that.

Sian Berry AM: I want to ask a couple of questions about the humanitarian stuff on the ground. We can see from the run-down of each meeting that the first meeting that the British Red Cross were in was the 8.30am meeting. Can you explain to us who, and by whom, was tasked with supporting the survivors and setting up the rest centre, which became a focal point?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The humanitarian assistance plan will include pre-determined approaches that have been agreed by local authorities. I should mention that for each of the pan-London plans, or capabilities as we call them, there is a lead partner within the statutory partnership. The lead partner for humanitarian assistance is the local authority, so local authorities themselves own the plan, in the same way, for example, that MPS own the strategic co-ordinating protocol. There is a lead agency that by level of appropriateness looks after the various capabilities. Because the task of providing humanitarian assistance is going to fall to local authorities, it is local authorities that are the lead agency for producing that plan.

Sian Berry AM: Is that the same thing as the LLAG?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): No.

Sian Berry AM: It is the actual local authority, on the ground?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. The local authority concerned will be able to implement the humanitarian assistance plan.

Sian Berry AM: You assume, and you are hoping, that the local authority will be capable of doing that.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. Then, if we look at other events in London recently, if we think of something, for example, like the Croydon tram crash, Croydon will have implemented some form of humanitarian assistance. The issue is one of scale, clearly. There is a limit to the ability of any one borough to provide humanitarian assistance and there are metrics on that, but there is a limit to it.

Sian Berry AM: I am familiar that local authorities have a plan for, for example, rest centres. They are named. The British Red Cross is called in when it reaches a certain scale; is that right?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): There are two levels here. At the SCG level and the tactical co-ordinating group level. At the SCG level, dealing with that one first, when a SCG is called, the invitation goes to a pre-determined list. It is the entire representative of the partnership. The voluntary sector, including the British Red Cross, and others, will be part of that. There is an opportunity there, whether they can take it, at 5.00am is another matter, but certainly once you get into a normal tempo, representation at the strategic level will include all the relevant members of the partnership.

Sian Berry AM: That was straightaway?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. That mechanism to alert people is there. Of course, not every organisation is a 24/7 organisation.

At the tactical level, on the ground at RBKC, within the delivery of the plan for humanitarian assistance, which would then be instigated and resourced by that local authority, and the key decisions are made by the person in charge of that humanitarian assistance centre, the same principle applies. There is an ability to bring in the British Red Cross, the voluntary sector, and all of the other contacts that the partnership has.

Sian Berry AM: Even though they are on the SCG, they still have to be brought into the humanitarian side of it by the local authority.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): That is part of the implementation of the plan, yes.

Sian Berry AM: I have one more question, which is about the same thing, but about communication because it was very difficult to know who to contact. This is as a representative, someone who is a London-wide Assembly Member, a few days later this is, on about the 19th, I think it was, and I sent the message in on the 20th, people called me and said, "This is wrong. The local community need more traffic controls; there are not enough things of a certain kind at the rest centre" - I spoke to volunteers at the rest centre - people wanted me to pass on this information and I am their representative and I thought, "I will". I had no idea who to pass it on to and that was a real issue. In the end, I sent it to the British Red Cross, which was the only organisation I could speak to on the ground; I got it through the British Red Cross Gold commander, and I sent it to the Mayor's officer here, which sent it to the local authority Gold. I am not even sure, as I am talking to you, whether was right. Obviously, the message

did get through eventually; things were done in response to my queries. It is just an example, but there does not seem to be a way for people on the ground to raise issues in that sense of communication. I know that regular announcements are made from the central group, but how does anyone raise information they might have? They have 10 survivors in their church; how do they let people know? That side of communication does not seem to be there; it was not there. Should it have been? Was there a plan for that?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. There is a communications plan, clearly, for major emergencies in London.

Sian Berry AM: Does it go up as well as down?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes, it does. The example you give, if there is a significant, as opposed to an operational detail thing - for example, from your position as an Assembly Member, effectively the Mayor's office has a seat at the SCG.

Sian Berry AM: Yes, that makes sense to me.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): That is the routing there, for the sorts of things that are of a higher level. If it is an operational thing - there are some people in the church down the road, are you aware of that on the ground? - that really is something that needs to be co-ordinated at the local level by, in this case, RBKC, which is running their humanitarian assistance centre and co-ordinating information out to the public. We must not forget that local authorities are category 1 responders under the Act and therefore their duty, just as much as the GLA has a duty, which is a co-ordinating one, the nuts and bolts, I suppose, of an operational capability on the ground, the whole plethora of designated responders.

Sian Berry AM: It is impossible, really, for someone like me, therefore, or somebody who is running a church or something, to know who to contact. Should there not be some sort of standard procedure of some kind?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes, there should be, through the local arrangements on the ground. There should be something on the ground, through the local arrangements for humanitarian assistance, where there is an information gateway. It will take time to put that in place.

Steve O'Connell AM: At what point was the LLAG informed? I am getting a feeling it was at or around 5.00am. Who was the LLAG at that time?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): It was shortly before 5.00am, I think. Just bear with me for a second; 4.38am was the initial conversation between the London Resilience duty office and the duty Local Authority Gold. That Local Authority Gold - we have mentioned this before - was not from RBKC. The Local Authority Gold was the Chief Executive from Havering.

Steve O'Connell AM: Quite by chance the fortnightly possession of Local Authority Gold was changing at 9.00am that morning, was it not?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes.

Steve O’Connell AM: The Chief Executive of Havering had the first call and then they did their shift change, or whatever you call it, at 9.00am. Would that normally happen? I appreciate that is the scheduled change. Are there any disadvantages to that happening in the middle of an incident like this?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): There would have been had the LLAG arrangements been stood up but at that stage, if you recall some of the previous questions, the approach to this within RBKC is, “We will manage this within RBKC. We do not want to invoke the LLAG arrangements”. That was the decision at 9.00am.

Steve O’Connell AM: At that point, the LLAG was not having any impact, was not playing any role, is probably better, in what was going on.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The formal protocol had not been triggered. The LLAG was fully aware of what was going on because my people were talking to that Gold and the one that was scheduled to come on. Purely by coincidence, it was shift-change day at 9.0am and so both of those individuals were aware.

In response to your question, yes, it would absolutely have been an issue and I doubt if that transition would have happened had the LLAG arrangements been triggered, but the fact that they had not, both individuals were aware of the situation and aware of everything being ready should the trigger be actioned.

Steve O’Connell AM: When were the arrangements triggered?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): It was later, on the Thursday.

Steve O’Connell AM: Twenty-four to 36 hours after the first emergency call is when RBKC triggered?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): It was the afternoon of the Thursday, yes.

Steve O’Connell AM: When the SCG meetings were taking place, who was communicating with RBKC?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The first few SCGs, so the 5.00am, 6.00am, 8.00am ones on the morning of the fire, the Local Authority Gold from Havering, as we have discussed, was represented effectively by one of my officers because the thing had not been implemented. Then, officers from RBKC were present at the SCGs. Certainly the first one, remember, was on the telephone. They were representing RBKC from within their own staff.

Steve O’Connell AM: Was it suggested to them at any point on the morning of the Wednesday that they might want to consider triggering LLAG?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Certainly my officers had spoken, on numerous occasions I think, to RBKC and the two Local Authority Golds, either side of the shift change, to make the point that everything was in place; we had pre-stood up the local authority co-ordination centre so that it could hit the ground running, it was ready, it was staffed. The decision, however, remains clearly with the Chief Executive of the affected borough at the time.

Steve O’Connell AM: Who was taking over LLAG at 9.00am that morning?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): That was the Chief Executive from Barking and Dagenham.

Steve O’Connell AM: I am struggling somewhat and I think a lot of people are struggling. Was any rationale given by RBKC for not triggering that for such a long time?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. The rationale was that the impact of this event was contained within the borough, within RBKC. It is probably worth pointing out that if we look perhaps at other incidents, that is not unusual. Not always is the full Local Authority Gold structure initiated. For Westminster Bridge and for London Bridge and Borough Market, the local authorities concerned, so Westminster and Southwark, did not feel that they needed the LLAG because the incidents were manageable from within their own boroughs. That sort of topographical rationale is not uncommon. There are, perhaps, other elements to a decision. Clearly my role is not in the decision-making, but the rationale that was given was that the fire and the immediate area affected by the fire was contained within a single borough

Steve O’Connell AM: On the face of it, there is some plausibility in that argument; it clearly was in one borough and it was a very fast-moving incident, and hindsight is always wonderful, but had Local Authority Gold been triggered sooner, what material difference would that have made to the response on the ground? I do not mean the firefighting; I mean everything else.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The Gold resolution, the Local Authority Gold resolution, provides through LFEPA, with that statutory duty that we discussed earlier, a co-ordination centre for local authorities. Its fundamental purpose is where an event in London impacts over more than one borough and therefore the response from the boroughs needs to be co-ordinated, wide-area flooding, for example. The flooding in south London, in Croydon and Sutton and so on in recent years, is probably a good example of that. However, in terms of material difference, there is also clearly, in that co-ordinating structure, the ability to co-ordinate mutual aid. Mutual aid capability within boroughs is co-ordinated through that local authority co-ordination centre - apologies for all these long-winded words - that is overseen by the Local Authority Gold, if those arrangements are triggered.

Steve O’Connell AM: In that eventuality, what role would the, for want of a better phrase, host borough play?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): That can be determined between the Local Authority Gold concerned and the Chief Executive of the local authority. In many cases, you might find that the focus of the Chief Executive of the affected borough will be on the event in their borough, clearly. The Local Authority Gold, the whole rationale behind the resolution between all the boroughs, is that that then provides an additional layer of Chief Executive capacity with pre-determined delegated authority to spend on behalf of other boroughs, and so on. That has traditionally worked very well in London and it goes back to even 7/7 times, where the Chief Executives of Camden and Westminster were not necessarily involved in the Local Authority Gold that co-ordinated the broader, multi-borough effort to provide mutual aid to the aftermath of those events. The answer to your question is that it is always variable and there is discretion in there, but normally you would see the Chief Executive of the affected borough dealing with the event in the borough and the Local Authority Gold is doing exactly what the resolution does, which is oversee the efforts of co-ordination, including mutual aid.

Steve O’Connell AM: In this instance, when RBKC triggered the Local Authority Gold, what was their role after that point?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): We touched earlier on humanitarian assistance, the pre-planned humanitarian assistance stuff that was implemented in RBKC. They would have carried on with that. They have a number of other duties, clearly, as a local authority, that fall outside the civil contingencies arena. Certainly in terms of the emergency response phase, RBKC still had an active role in humanitarian assistance, evacuation and shelter, which is another of the key plans. They were involved in the management of that, as you would expect, because that is within the affected borough.

Peter Whittle AM: Thank you, Chair.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can you just remind me? Who was RBKC gold in the early hours?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): It was the Chief Exec.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): It was the Chief Exec, OK. Let us then move on. Peter [Whittle AM]?

Peter Whittle AM: Could you summarise for us what worked well in terms of using and working through the strategic co-ordination protocol that morning and what basically could have worked better?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): On the working well, the protocol that is in force now was signed off either at the end of 2016 or the beginning of 2017 at the LRF. It is a revised protocol. All the pan-London plans are revised, as you would expect, on a periodic basis. A couple of the changes that were implemented worked well, which I was pleased with. This is not the first time it was tested. It has clearly been tested through Croydon and the other events since then that have happened in London, in particular, this five-level approach that we have referred to and, in this case with Grenfell, we went straight to level 5. The understanding and acceptance of that within the partnership, we were very pleased with. What I am effectively saying, as a revised protocol, the revisions worked.

In terms of the front-end of it, the initiation, that worked well. The lead agency, the LFB, did what you would expect the lead agency to do. Once they knew they had declared a major incident, then clearly, they made the necessary call into the London Resilience team to the duty officer. I am very content that duty officer and the other two that I mentioned swung into action and did the necessary notifications; all the procedural stuff that you would expect in those early stages.

In terms of what could be better with strategic co-ordination, I would counter my answer inasmuch as this is probably a generic answer and it is not one that is just necessarily specific to Grenfell. With strategic co-ordination, the biggest challenge is convening that first SCG. It is even worse at 5.00am in the morning because, clearly, you have the 24/7 element of some agencies and you have the unavailable element of others.

Peter Whittle AM: Can I ask; you say that is very difficult? Just practically speaking, I am trying to get a picture, 5.00am in the morning or 3.00am, whatever it is, how is it done? Just stick it on the phone?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The mechanics of it is effectively there is a distribution list; there are pages, there are all the normal sorts of mechanisms that you would expect but all the members of the partnership that have an operational role, and we mentioned things like the bomb sector earlier, they will be notified of the convention of the SCG. As we said, the ability to get there and service it is difficult.

To complete that answer to your question though, the what could be better is a generic what could always be better? It is always a challenge to get an effective first group together and determine the number one priority; what are our strategic objectives here in a command control sense? Myself and my team play an advisory role in that because we are the people that clearly know the detail of the various plans and things for London but it is a very difficult thing. In this case, the first one was the LFB officer that was chairing. Subsequently, it was MPS commanders. In the early SCGs, it is always very difficult determining your strategic objectives because of the lack of a general situation of awareness. The biggest challenge always is what exactly is happening here from a strategic thing and what are the impacts that we are going to see 12 hours, 24 hours, 48 hours, three weeks, three months down the line? Getting that picture is the challenge.

I would not say that did not work well. I would suggest that is the challenge. The procedural side of the protocol, I have got no problem with. We always suffer in the early stages from a lack of the picture we would like to inform those strategic objectives.

Peter Whittle AM: Although you went to a level 5 quite quickly, did you not?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes. Purely because it was evidence from all the initial feeds, we were talking multiple people involved here. Let us not forget the media, as a source of the media information, all of us that were awake in the middle of the night there, it becomes, in many places, a trunk line in the office that this is a high impact event and it will require the full level 5 procedural organisation.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): That goes the heart of the problem of looking from the outside in, is it not? We have all the protocols from procedures and we have got one partner probably saying, "It is all going all right and I do not need some help. I think we can cope with this". What do the other partners do and when do the partners say, "Actually, mate, you do and no, we are not going to wait for those protocols because things are not working too -- or in the interest of dealing with this emergency"? How does that work then in the emergency world?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): That works, as you alluded to earlier. By the time we got to the afternoon of the following day, we got to a stage - or the SCG got to a stage - where within those strategic objectives, which are all about impact management and they include welfare and assistance to affected people, those objectives start to get fleshed out further and further through each SCG and it eventually becomes apparent that, in any one of those, if we need more resource, then more resource is required. It is a collective approach that naturally evolves those actions required until it becomes obvious where the pressure points are.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Just to help us in terms of understanding. In that subgroup you described, because they are parts of organisations and you work with those, we would be right in thinking where the council is not the landlord, that the housing association or whatever it is with tenant management organisation (TMO) in front of it, would be part of any emergency planning framework within a local emergency plan? They would be there? Should they be there? Will they be there? How does it work? What do your papers say in preparation to major disasters?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): I would find it difficult to answer that question because that is site specific planning. I would be --

Len Duvall AM (Chair): We live in a world of next-steps agencies, do we not? Lots of London boroughs now do not have a direct relationship with tenancy housing and tenancy issues. They have arm's-length agencies. If it is relating to a borough, is it not reasonable for me to assume that somewhere in the emergency plan, there is a category one responder getting my plan together - that is in the legislation - that we should have some response that somewhere, if people were willing to ask the question, there would people involved in dealing with an emergency, if it is appropriate, they would be there?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): If it is appropriate, and I really cannot speak for the content of individual emergency plans but, certainly, clearly, people who have control of key elements of a plan would need to be involved in the plan. That is the natural answer.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: The one thing I am not understanding is the RBKC Chief Executive saying, "I do not need any help", and was it Thursday afternoon?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: It shifted?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: When I went out to visit one of the centres, I was talking to a member of staff from Ealing who had, strictly off his own bat, it seemed to me, rocked up because he had done lots of work in other emergencies around London, saw there was issues, rocked up and said it was OK; he just took over and Ealing were running the centre. If you are saying that RBKC was still in charge of humanitarian, all this stuff on the ground, yet it seemed to me that the goodwill of officers in other boroughs just saw this and just went in and did that. Is that really what went on? It was OK them saying, "We are in charge". Actually, other boroughs were already coming in. Key tasks were being done by volunteers as well.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): There are two things there. Yes, you are absolutely right. What you have got there is mutual aid happening.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Without the Chief Executive of RBKC authorising it, effectively?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes and without the co-ordinating function, which is the one that the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) provides and that my staff have the ability to staff up and withstood to, without that being really drawn into assist with those things. It was a little bit ad hoc in those early stages, clearly, as you described.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Just before we move on to the role of the Mayor, when do you think you are going to have your learning lessons to them? How quickly do you get it back into your -- in case we have another Grenfell or similar catastrophe?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): What the partnership does; each individual agency clearly will do their own debrief on this. What the LRF does and what my team facilitate is we produce a report that then is taken to the LRF for signoff. They meet three times a year. There is one in October. The next will be in February. It is unlikely that we will get it into October. I would suggest that will go for formal signoff at the LRF first thing in 2018. To give you an idea of where we are with it, next Friday or Saturday, 22 September, whenever that is in a few days' time, that is the first meeting between the various agencies to debrief the strategic co-ordinating protocol. Not the bits

and pieces around individual agencies but everything we have been talking about this afternoon, the debrief on that and the initial meeting starts next week.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Just quickly, this is about the role of the Mayor. We have been told previously that the Mayor's Advisory Group is a reactive body that looks at incidents as they occur. Do you know if they met on that day?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Not to my knowledge, no, and I would normally be asked to attend. To my knowledge, the Mayor's Advisory Group did not meet.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Do you know if any government ministerial meetings took place on that Wednesday morning?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes, they did.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Was the Mayor there?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): The Mayor definitely had attended those. I could not tell you whether it was on the Wednesday or the Thursday without checking back but the arrangements are in place for the Mayor to attend Cabinet Office Briefing Room A (COBRA). Sorry, I am just thinking back. Certainly, the Mayor definitely attended COBRA and ministerial meetings when we had the post-Manchester move to critical stuff. I am not sure if the Mayor did attend ministerial meetings on Grenfell, sorry.

Bob Farley (Head of Information, Law and Security, Metropolitan Police Service): Can I help? We can check but the Mayor did attend COBRA. I do not think he attended on Wednesday as Steve [Hamm] was just saying and, normally, the Mayor attends by invitation.

Dr Onkar Sahota AM: Perhaps you need to look at it, Chair.

Len Duvall AM (Chair) on behalf of Keith Prince AM: Yes. Thank you. We have that. All right, Keith Prince AM is not here, I am going to do his questions.

We know the terminologies of gold. We understand that the Mayor has a gold cell - which is not the traditional gold, silver, bronze approach - convenes that morning. What do you know of that and are you involved in any of those arrangements around that?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): I am involved as a point of contact with that. If we look at the GLA and the Mayor's office as having duties under the Civil Contingencies Act, just like all the other partners, then clearly there needs to be arrangements in place for the Mayor's office and the GLA to speak either within a SCG or within the partnership generally. That gold cell that you refer to is effectively a couple of people in that, on a routine basis, are the point of contact. I know who those are right now and they know who I am and who our duty people are. It works.

In practice, it is probably just worth talking through how it works. I mentioned social media earlier. These days, when an emergency occurs in London, everybody knows about it straightaway normally. Very quickly, these days, what tends to happen is phone calls take place - if we talk about the Mayor's office and the GLA - between that GLA gold, as it is labelled now, and myself. Quite often those phone calls will take place before the declaration of a major incident because --

Len Duvall AM (Chair) on behalf of Keith Prince AM: This big picture, let us focus on the picture on this particular occasion. We did not need the Mayor's Advisory Group but we did have the gold cell group. We had the gold. Who is gold in the GLA in terms of proper gold, not made up gold?

Bob Farley (Head of Information, Law and Security, Metropolitan Police Service): There is a chair, duty gold officer whom I think Steve [Hamm] is referring to.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Who is attached to the GLA gold.

Len Duvall AM (Chair) on behalf of Keith Prince AM: There is a duty and they have individual discussions and, of course, the Mayor may well be having discussions with the lead responder, the LFB, the Mayor's Chief of Staff and there will be a level of activity, all three. For that bit, for this part of the meeting, do we know, between you, if ever, where the Mayor had any discussions of the need, not for us directly, but involved in a need to provide support for survivors, to victims and families? Has the Mayor raised any of those issues? Were there any conversations?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): At that early stage?

Len Duvall AM (Chair) on behalf of Keith Prince AM: It could be over the first three days, the way it is working here, between local government; the way it is has occurred as we drifted to some view if mutual aid was required.

Bob Farley (Head of Information, Law and Security, Metropolitan Police Service): I stand to be corrected on this. We can check easily. I do not think we were, as GLA, formally asked in any way to do that because this is a local authority gold arrangement. It is mutual aid as between local authorities. However, we did make some offers of help on an informal basis. For example, we provided some members of the housing team to go in early to provide some support and we also offered to provide, and it still exists, as I think you know directly, some people's help on a community and support side. They have a couple of people still there doing that. Beyond that, we were making contact to see whether or not any help was further needed.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): I do not think we need to know now but it would be nice to know where those discussions took place. We understand how that system works. Also, can you provide us; was the offer directly made to RBKC or through the local government gold, London Council's gold? Were there conversations direct with RBKC because it seems to me that is pretty crucial at the early stages before it moved to the local government gold?

Sian Berry AM: Team London are our volunteer squad effectively. Were they ever mobilised?

Jeff Jacobs (Head of Paid Service, GLA): Yes.

Sian Berry AM: At what point? When?

Jeff Jacobs (Head of Paid Service, GLA): When? I cannot precisely remember.

Sian Berry AM: Can we find out?

Jeff Jacobs (Head of Paid Service, GLA): We did offer Team London support.

Sian Berry AM: At one point, I did speak to one of the team, but I don't recall--

Jeff Jacobs (Head of Paid Service, GLA): Yes. It was a way after the initial issues.

Sian Berry AM: If we can find out when and find out if they can potentially be better or quickly mobilised in some situations like that.

Jeff Jacobs (Head of Paid Service, GLA): Yes, absolutely.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can we also find out if the Mayor or Mayor representatives, it could be GLA officers but also the Mayor's office, ever talked directly to London Local Authority Gold but also RBKC's gold; just to have that picture in our mind if those conversations took place?

OK. Any more on that section? I am now going to move into the final section which is about Lord Harris. Can you just tell me, who is leading for this work for London Council's Local Authority Gold? Who is the lead officer? Is there one lead officer? Is there a cooperative?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): John Barradell, Town Clerk and Chief Executive Officer, City of London Corporation.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): John Barradell, City of London, is the key person to go to whom we ought to talk to at some point.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Certainly from my perspective for London Resilience, he is the gateway to the boroughs. He is clearly the custodian of the resolution for local authority governance.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Excellent, that is very helpful. Let us move on to Lord Harris, then.

Bob Farley (Head of Information, Law and Security, Metropolitan Police Service): Do you mind if I just add a bit?

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Of course.

Bob Farley (Head of Information, Law and Security, Metropolitan Police Service): It does not affect what Steve [Hamm] has said, I do not think, in terms of talking to John [Barradell] but the up-to-date position is that the recovery work is effectively fully handed over to RBKC and Barry Quirk was on an interim basis doing the Chief Executive job and has now stood down from Lewisham and has taken on the permanent role at RBKC and, therefore, is the first and key point of contact at RBKC.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience)?: That transition happened on last Friday.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): OK. Lord Harris's preparations, he did his report. He also commented about the move from GLA to the LFB. Part of the reasons we understand - we know at the time because the report comes to this Committee - was about the benefits of siting the team next to LFB and local authority teams. How did the three teams work together to deal with the aftermath of the Grenfell fire? What decisions did the teams have to make then in terms of that post reorganisation?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Effectively, for practical purposes, it is one team now. That is the key message there. You might have noticed the subtle difference in the London Resilience Team was the GLA component that we have been discussing today. That used to be a team within the LFB that looked after the borough co-ordination. There are just inefficiencies of scale exercised there where combining them in one group, they effectively now, the way I have structured it, it has taken a couple of years but we have generic job descriptions and we have ability for each member of that team to do whichever functional role is required.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): In the Lord Harris 2016 review into Preparedness of Emergency Services, he found a general sense of confidence amongst local authorities that local authority gold arrangements would ensure that co-ordination of assistance across the Capital would be effective. Now, this is a very difficult question I am going to put to you but it is one that is going to be asked at some stage, therefore, we might as well ask it now. Given the widespread sense that maybe there could have been a slightly different response from the local authority response, others would say it was slow but it is more complex than that, do you still have the confidence in the local authority gold arrangements? Can I just add to that because this is one of our formal meetings? More about the triggering of mutual aid and when; is that not something we could start to ask questions about now? This is not about blame. It is not about beating someone up over the head. It is about trying to learn the lessons fast.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Yes would be the short answer but I will need to qualify it. Yes, as much as there is absolute faith in the local authority gold arrangements, I certainly would not want to see those undone. Is there room for an expansion of the nature of those arrangements? My professional view would be probably yes. If you do not mind, if I could just bring in a couple of other factors that might qualify that. There are a number of considerations, I suppose, about local authority capacity to respond which is not just borne out of Grenfell. There is clearly a focus on that within the Cabinet Office and the Civil Contingency Secretariat (CCS) there that ultimately the eye over the Civil Contingency Act and how it manifests itself in localities. Certainly, David Bellamy [Mayor's Chief of Staff] and myself were asked to visit CCS last week to talk through, in outlined terms, our views on perhaps what might be better arrangements in the future for local authority; not just co-ordination but moreover capacity to respond. Obviously, there are a number of views that I have and others have on that but suffice to say, it is a live agenda around local authority capacity arrangements for mutual aid, not just in London, but across the nation, right up to a national level, within that sort of context.

I know that certainly John Barradell is looking at - the word is 'reviewing' - the arrangements with local authorities in London. I have not yet met him since Grenfell but that is due somewhere in the next few weeks. There is already a momentum perhaps around, not in a critical way but in a realisational way that this is not just about where an incident takes place and which borough it is. It is about where the capacity comes from to handle it. If it gets really significant, as we saw with Grenfell, then sometimes that capacity may need to come from not just within London but from elsewhere.

There are similar approaches to that level of preplanning for capacity certainly in blue light services; police, fire, NHS, mutual aid arrangements on a national basis; there is an agenda there. I have some ideas and views on how that might manifest itself in London. Clearly, that extends up to a departmental level for how it might work across the country.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): We would like to see those views in writing. Even if you want to say these are initial views and they have to be shared and they are of your team, we would welcome that. Could you also add to that about self-improvement? I am a great believer in self-improvement and peer review but clearly sometimes, self-assessment, peer review might not well be good enough in terms of some of these issues. We would like your thoughts on that in terms of how do you know that your organisation is fit for purpose or really up to tackling some of the tasks that you are going to face?

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): That question is one that again I have some views on. I am not alone in these views. The Civil Contingencies Act is an absolutely fine piece of legislation. It creates a local resilience partnership. It convenes through a forum and it puts duties on those that need to be there but that is where it stops. There is no assurance over what happens. I am certainly keen, because this is London as much as anything else, that we have some kind of assurance

regime over that. I say I am not alone in that. One of the things that I am involved with, along with some colleagues, is the Cabinet of CCS are developing a British standard. The British Standards Institution (BSI) works, I am on one of those committees. We are making progress on a standard for city resilience. That was never there before but clearly, a British standard is the first building block of some kind of an assurance regime.

Developments of relationships with other similar risk profile cities in the UK, particularly Manchester, we have got a very good working relationship with them. Lots of parallels with London in terms of borough level sorts of need for co-ordination and so on. Beyond peer review, yes, the development of standards that are involved in city resilience; there is probably a more beyond peer review is something that perhaps we could do with other metropolitan authority areas, particularly I mentioned Greater Manchester and others. There are national and international frameworks as well to perhaps look towards in terms of a measure of where London is compliant. The United Nations have a very good resilience framework that asks a number of questions. In London, we have never really been through the process of assessing ourselves against those and using the resources that come from things like the United Nations and Rockefeller and others that are involved in the city resilience world these days.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): It is fair to say, in the way that you have answered questions this afternoon, that there will be changes to the way that we work or further guidance, maybe further testing about that recovery phase and then about the crucial issue of intervention, mutual aid; who triggers which. Is that fair to say we are going to be looking at that? We are not going to be waiting for inquiries to do that. If we need to make those changes because we can do a better job, then we are going to be doing that. Is that where your partnership body is moving towards in February or whenever because it sounds like the conversations are taking place? You sound pretty realistic to me about that albeit in a bit of code in terms of everyone watching what is going on in other places but that is where we are probably heading to.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Without using code, it is inevitable that the LRF meetings over the coming year or so, there is going to be three or four of them in the next 12 to 15 months they will be taking papers with recommendations for change. Yes, I think that is fair.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Other questions then because we have reached the end. Almost certainly, when we come to reflect and thank you very much for engaging with us, we are, we can say your part, we are very pleased that you are there. Londoners should be pleased that you are there, to be honest, and doing the work that you are doing and co-ordinating with partners and doing some of that work that you outlined earlier on because the testing and preparation issue is key here. We do need to learn the lessons pretty quickly of what took place and what we can do better. We will be doing another session on this and we will certainly consult with group leaders, individuals about what that other session looks like and how we bring people together. Please, we would like as much information as possible to share because we want to support you in your work, to be honest. If we can give that support, we will continue to do that.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Thank you. I would certainly be keen to bring something back on -- we spoke about ideas about local authorities but also the assurance side of things as well for Londoners.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Thank you very much.

Steve Hamm (Head of Programmes, London Resilience): Thank you.

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