

## GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Head of Paid Service

**Andrew Boff**  
Assembly Member  
London Assembly

**Our ref:** boff3108

**Date:** 31 August 2017

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your email dated 10 August with a number of questions about the Grenfell Tower incident. I am sorry for the delay in replying but I have had to seek input from other colleagues, which was necessarily impacted by the summer holiday season.

As you note, there is a full briefing on London Resilience planned for the GLA Oversight Committee meeting and I understand this is to take place on 14 September. Given this and the wider briefing below, you will understand that I will need to share the information below with the Committee Secretariat.

Before addressing each of your questions, I thought it would be helpful to provide some background about the London Resilience arrangements and the current activities in the GLA in response to a major incident.

#### **London Resilience legislative background**

The purpose of London's civil contingency arrangements is to ensure that appropriate organisations and bodies have proper tested plans in place to prevent emergencies arising and to ensure that they are able to respond to any emergencies that do arise. An emergency in this context is an event or situation which threatens serious damage to human welfare or the environment, or war or terrorism which threatens serious damage to national security.

The existing civil contingency arrangements in London are currently established and governed by:

- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004;
- The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) Regulations 2005/2042 (as amended);
- Statutory guidance, entitled *Emergency Preparedness*, which accompanies the legislation; and
- Various voluntary arrangements between organisations and bodies with civil contingency responsibilities in London.

The legislation places civil protection responsibilities on bodies and organisations defined as responders. Within the Greater London Authority (GLA) Group, the GLA itself, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA) are all

categorised as category one responders which means that they have a range of statutory duties including risk assessment and emergency planning. While these legal duties cannot be delegated, the legislation does allow for responders to enter into practical arrangements with one another for the delivery of those duties.

Transport for London (TfL) is a category two responder under the Act which means that it is classified as one of co-operating bodies under the legislation. It is less likely to be involved in the heart of planning work, but will be heavily involved in incidents that affect the transport sector.

### **London Resilience arrangements**

In the period immediately following the introduction of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Whitehall co-ordinated the London Resilience arrangements through the Government Office for London (GOL).

As part of a package of devolution measures, responsibility for London Resilience passed from GOL to the GLA in early 2011. As a consequence, the GLA became a category one responder and the Mayor was given the role of appointing the chair of the London Resilience Forum (LRF).

After a few years of functioning within GLA structures, the then Mayor took the view that there would be benefit for the GLA's statutory role to be undertaken by LFEPA on the GLA's behalf. Following consultation with the LRF and the London Assembly in late 2014, and general agreement among all interested parties that it was a beneficial proposal, the function transferred from GLA to LFEPA structures in early 2015. The following benefits were identified:

- The efficiency and effectiveness gains arising from the London-wide and London borough functions coming under the same management in the London Fire Brigade (LFB);
- The opportunity presented for an improved understanding of situational awareness;
- The additional capacity arising from a new senior level operational post; and
- A better synergy with Whitehall structures at a senior level.

### **London Resilience Forum**

The LRF acts as the capital's statutory resilience forum under the Civil Contingencies Act, has over 170 members and meets three times a year. The current chair is Fiona Twycross AM, who also chairs LFEPA.

The LRF comprises the following sector groups:

- Government;
- Emergency services;
- Local authorities;
- Sub-regional resilience forums and borough resilience forums;
- Business;
- Health;
- Utilities;
- Voluntary;
- Faith; and
- Transport.

The agreed strategy of the LRF is to ensure London is prepared to respond to, and recover, from emergencies, reinforcing London's position as a resilient city. Its activities are based on:

- Assessing risks to London's resilience;
- Building resilience through prevention and mitigation;
- Working together to prepare, respond and recover; and
- Helping Londoners to be prepared.

### **The Mayor's wider resilience role**

The notion of a 'resilient' city covers a very wide range of policy areas ranging from issues such as tackling cyber-crime to designing homes to minimise the threats posed by flooding.

The LRF assesses the risk of emergencies in London and defines what multi-agency capabilities are needed to respond to these risks. The most serious risks in London are from pandemic flu and flooding. Capabilities are documented in plans prepared by the Partnership then tested through exercises. Areas covered include co-ordination and information sharing, arrangements for communicating with the public and specific guidance on how to respond to events such as pandemic flu and flooding. A Recovery Protocol outlines how to manage the longer-term impacts of an emergency. Exercises and regular training ensure that strong working relationships exist between agencies in advance of an emergency.

Given the size of London and its status as the UK's capital city – and the threats posed to it by hostile groups – national government naturally retains a major role in overseeing resilience arrangements. When significant incidents occur in London, or are threatened, Ministers chair meetings of COBRA – the national crisis response committee – to assess how best to respond and recover. The emergency services and lead public agencies are represented at COBRA and the Mayor is also invited.

### **During an emergency**

Co-ordination arrangements for responders in London are set out in the Partnership's Strategic Co-ordination Protocol and the London Emergency Service Liaison Panel (LESLP) Procedures. These provide a framework for multi-agency co-ordination at the scene of an incident and across London. A Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) is formed for the more serious incidents, typically convened by the Metropolitan Police and often chaired by a senior police officer. The SCG includes senior representatives from across the Partnership who agree a common strategy. The arrangements are flexible and allow for the organisations participating and the structures employed to vary according to the circumstances. It reports to Government through a Government Liaison Officer.

In less serious incidents an SCG will meet via a teleconference and, in the most serious of emergencies, will meet at a specially equipped police facility. It is possible that the GLA may, on occasion, be expected to chair an SCG where there is no other appropriate agency.

Many issues arising are dealt with via routine information sharing within the Partnership.

### **After an emergency**

The LRP has a Recovery Protocol which outlines how action to manage the longer-term impacts of an emergency will be co-ordinated. This is normally led by local authorities. For major incidents there will also be a lessons learned exercise.

### **The role of the Mayor**

The role of the Mayor in such circumstances is to act as the "voice of London" to provide information and reassurance to Londoners.

Given the heightened security in which London is now operating, a decision was taken in Summer 2016 to establish an internal group, the Mayor's Gold Cell. This group is chaired by the Mayor's Chief of Staff and is made up of senior members of the Mayor's team, the Head of Paid Service and other GLA staff. Others attend as appropriate – so, for example, Fiona Twycross as Chair of the LRF and LFEPA was a regular attendee during the Grenfell incident.

The Mayor of London's Gold Cell is designed to ensure that the Mayor is well informed about any major incident or rising-tide situation in London and so allow him to carry out his role effectively in acting as the spokesperson for the capital as well as providing civic leadership and reassurance. It also provides support in co-ordinating the other responsibilities of the Office of Mayor of London during a crisis, e.g. establishing a Disaster Appeal Fund, and considering any impact of the incident on the GLA itself.

The activation of the Mayor's Gold Cell does not impact on the operational command and control of the incident. It is primarily a communication conduit designed to ensure that the Mayor receives relevant information and can relay agreed appropriate messages to the general public and COBRA. Briefing material will generally originate from the Strategic Co-ordination Group, from the London Resilience team or the police incident commander. It may also be relayed via the Press Bureau at New Scotland Yard. The name 'Gold Cell' was adopted as this would be meaningful to partner organisations.

The Mayor may also convene the Mayor's Advisory Group to ensure that the GLA Group and its partner bodies are doing all they can to mitigate the effects of an ongoing incident or to prepare for the impact of an incident. The Mayor's Advisory Group is comprised of Commissioners and senior staff from across the GLA Group and other key agencies eg the London Ambulance Service and Local Authority representation.

I hope this information is helpful in providing some context for a number of your questions. Appendix 1 specific answers to the questions you raised. Individual roles rather than staff names have been included where this is appropriate.

Yours sincerely,



**Jeff Jacobs**  
Head of Paid Service

## Appendix 1

### 1. Who was the London Resilience Group Duty Manager?

At the time of the start of the incident the London Resilience Group Duty Manager was the appropriate person as per the rota (name of individual available outside of public forum).

### 2. At what time and by whom, was the London Resilience Group Duty Manager contacted?

The Duty Manager was contacted via pager message received at 03.41 from an Operational Resilience Support Officer working in support of the Brigade Coordination Centre (BCC).

### 3. What information was passed to the London Resilience Group Duty Manager?

The pager message received at 03.41 requested that the Duty Officer contact an Operational Resilience Support Officer working in support of the Brigade Coordination Centre (BCC). Upon speaking, their conversation focussed on a request for a Structural Engineer from RBKC to attend the incident.

### 4. Who was detailed as being on the London Resilience Group Duty Manager roster in the 24 hours prior to the first contact regarding the Grenfell Tower incident.

The London Resilience Group Duty Manager was the appropriate person as per the rota (name of individual available outside of public forum).

### 5. When did the London Resilience Group Duty Manager notify London Local Authorities Gold?

04:38 by email then immediately followed up with phone calls.

### 6. When did the London Resilience Group meet?

The London Resilience Group is the name of the team hosted by LFB and jointly funded by the GLA, London local authorities and LFEPA to help deliver the work to achieve the goals of the London Resilience Partnership. This includes an emergency response role to provide a point of contact for the Partnership, coordinate the development of situational awareness, and provide the secretariat for the Strategic Coordinating Group in conjunction with the lead response organisation for the given incident.

The London Resilience Group does not meet during the initial response to an incident (unless staff happen to be together at the time of an incident notification during working hours). Typically, as per procedure, the LR Duty Manager, Duty Strategic Advisor and/or Duty Supervisor will speak to each other on the phone to consult and determine the course of action by members of the duty team. In this instance, the Duty Manager and Supervisor first spoke at 03.51. The Strategic Advisor and Supervisor first spoke at 04.17. The Strategic Advisor and Duty Manager first spoke at 04.19.

### 7. When did the London Resilience Group complete their joint assessment?

The purpose of the initial joint assessment between LRG and the partner organisation raising the issue to LRG (in this case LFB) is to inform a decision as to the appropriate strategic

coordination option. The LRG's initial joint assessment of the incident was based on a number of conversations with, and information feeds from, the London Fire Brigade and partner organisations in advance of the first Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) teleconference held at 05.00. In this instance, the LFB duty Assistant Commissioner and LRG Duty Manager agreed to hold an SCG teleconference (coordination level 5) at approx 04.09 and this course of action was agreed - effectively completing this initial joint assessment. A formal Partnership situation assessment was completed as part of the 05.00 SCG.

**8. Who were the members of the London Resilience Group?**

The initial response was supported by the Duty Strategic Advisor, Duty Manager, Duty Supervisor (all the appropriate persons as per the rota - names of individuals available outside of public forum). Additional members of the duty / on-call team and other members of the London Resilience Group responded later that morning.

**9. Which partner organisations were engaged as a result of the first London Resilience Group meeting?**

As noted above, there is no such concept as a London Resilience Group meeting in this context. Prior to the first Strategic Coordinating Group teleconference at 05.00, LRG Duty Officers had engaged with a range of partners including LFB, RBKC, LAS, MPS, NHS England (London), TfL, DCLG, GLA, London Local Authority Gold, Local Authority Chief Executive Liaison Officer (Resilience). The membership of the first SCG teleconference has been provided in response to question 19.

**10. When did co-ordination level 1 get triggered?**

Not applicable. Coordination levels are options rather than a sequence.

**11. When did co-ordination level 2 get triggered?**

As per Q10.

**12. When did co-ordination level 3 get triggered?**

As per Q10.

**13. When did co-ordination level 4 get triggered?**

As per Q10.

**14. When did co-ordination level 5 get triggered?**

Level 5 (SCG teleconference) commenced at 05:00 when the first Strategic Coordinating Group teleconference was held. It was 'triggered' at 04.09 when this coordination option was agreed between the LFB duty Assistant Commissioner and LRG Duty Manager.

**15. Which activation options were chosen and when?**

A number of phone calls were made to request participation in the 05.00 SCG teleconference. At 04:37 an email and mass message alert notification was sent to the London Resilience Partnership for attention and action by selected partners.

**16. Who requested the formation of the Strategic Coordinating Group?**

London Fire Brigade duty Assistant Commissioner.

**17. When was the first meeting of the Strategic Coordinating Group?**

05.00 on Wednesday 14th June 2017.

**18. Who was the chair of the Strategic Coordinating Group?**

London Fire Brigade duty Assistant Commissioner.

**19. Who were the members of the Strategic Coordinating Group at the time of the initial response and subsequently?**

See appendix 1 attached with list of members of each Strategic Coordinating Group meeting / teleconference.

**20. What was the strategy adopted at the first meeting of the Strategic Coordinating Group?**

A working strategy was discussed during the first meeting of the SCG at 05.00. A formal strategy was then agreed during the second meeting of the SCG at 06.30. Details of these meetings and the formal strategy are held on record (not considered suitable for release in a public meeting).

**21. Who was in the pan-London Tactical Coordinating Group?**

Relevant partnership representatives took part in the Tactical Coordinating Group located at MPS Special Operations Room. Details of participating organisations would need to be requested from MPS.

**22. Who were the tactical commanders?**

As per answer to question 21.

**23. When and by whom was the Recovery Management Protocol activated?**

Recovery is a standing agenda item for the Strategic Coordinating Group and was therefore considered from day one of the incident as part of the SCG meetings. The Grenfell Fire Response Team, led by London Local Authority Gold effectively acted as the Recovery Coordinating Group feeding into the Strategic Coordinating Group from Friday 16th June.

**24. What was the content and scope of the Recovery Management Protocol?**

The London Recovery Management Protocol is available on the GLA website at <https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/organisations-we-work/london-prepared/planning-emergencies-capital#acc-i-43125>



**25. Who was the London Local Authorities Gold at the time of the incident?**

The Duty LLAG as per the duty rota. This duty handed over from one LA CEO to another at 09.00 on Wednesday 14th June as per the rota (LA CEO's are on-call for two weeks at a time with the handover at 09.00 on Wednesday mornings). Names of individuals available outside of public forum.

**26. When did the Recovery Coordination Group come into existence?**

As per question 23, the Grenfell Fire Response Team performed this function from Friday 16th June. The handover of strategic coordination from the SCG to the RCG was agreed at the SCG meeting held at 12.30 on 23rd June 2017. It was agreed that the handover would take effect from 23:59 on 23rd June 2017.

**27. Who chaired the Recovery Coordination Group?**

London Local Authority Gold. Name of individual available outside of public forum.

**28. When did the Recovery Coordination Group assume responsibility for multi -agency coordination?**

At 23.59 on 23rd June 2017.

**29. Is the Recovery Management Group the same as the Recovery Coordination Group?**

Yes.

**30. When did the Mayoral Advisory Group meet?**

The Mayor's Advisory Group did not meet as the ongoing response to the incident was being managed by London Local Authorities and not a member the GLA Group, and any meeting would have duplicated the Government's ministerial meetings, which were attended by the Mayor and/or his Chief of Staff as well as senior police officers and Grenfell Local Authority Gold.

In terms of the immediate response (i.e. before it would be possible to convene a Mayor's Advisory Group), the Mayor was briefed directly via a series of telephone calls and in person by the Fire Commissioner and lead MPS officer on site at Grenfell Tower. The Mayor's Chief of Staff and other officers were also in frequent contact with the Mayor.

For information, the Mayor's Advisory Group last met in May 2017, to brief the Mayor on arrangements following the Government's decision to change the international terror threat level to 'Critical'.

**31. Who attended the Mayoral Advisory Group?**

See answer to question 30.

**32. What were the conclusions of the Mayoral Advisory Group?**

See answer to question 30.