

EU Exit Working Group – Thursday, 28 March 2019

Transcript of Item 5 – Panel 2 – Brexit: The Next Steps

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Can I now welcome Dr Fiona Twycross AM and John Hetherington, just to update us on London's preparations around Brexit? Is there anything you want to say to us in the beginning since the last time we met or shall we go straight into questions?

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): Thank you. We really feel that the situation is not much clearer than it was last time we came [13 February 2019]. Listening to your previous guest [Joe Owen], a lot of what he said around information and secrecy relating to the Government really rings true. We were sitting in the audience nodding while he was speaking.

The main issue from our end in terms of the planning is that piece around the Government and the fact that the Government is effectively in chaos with very large amounts of secrecy within and between departments. The continuing jockeying for position at the most senior level among the ministerial team is hampering the civil servants doing the job that we believe they would like to be doing in terms of providing the information. It is a complex task, as was discussed by the previous speaker, and anything that puts barriers in the way of information getting out in those information flows and people working constructively together on what is without doubt the most complicated constitutional issue any of us will see in our lifetimes - or at least we can hope it is - are unnecessary and a causing issues for everybody at every single level in terms of planning and finding a way forward.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Before we start your questions, on the issues of the non-disclosure agreement (NDA), is this something that has been helping or hampering London's preparations? Are you aware of any of the private sector or national organisations - I have seen an old number of those - in terms of that? Has it come up in conversations? In my view, they are creating insiders and outsiders. That is why barriers are coming up. There are clearly things that do need to be held, but I just want to clarify this and see. Is it holding us back? Is it an issue? I would like to pick it up at some stage.

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): With the NDA issues, you referred to them effectively replacing people having to sign the Official Secrets Act. Where there is no business need for people to sign them or where there is a clear business need for the information to be shared, the NDA issues are causing a problem. It is not just businesses or other organisations. London Resilience Group staff have had to sign them.

The [London] Resilience Forum has a duty to warn and inform. We have a duty to work with partners. When we are being told that we cannot share documents with partners who may be involved in the very detailed contingency planning - and these are people who are taking a very lead role in contingency planning for Brexit - this is clearly an issue. The flow of information continues to be to the Government, not back to local areas.

We do have a situation in which many partners in Local Resilience Forums are finding out more from the media than they will direct. For example, following quite a prominent leak in *The Observer* at the weekend, I was not involved in the conversation but I do understand that one Local Resilience Forum asked if they could share the document that was published by *The Observer*. Partners were asking if they could have a copy and had been

told no and then it was in the media. They were told that because the leaked document was not the most up-to-date version, they could not.

There are two issues there. One is that people then read the out-of-date version that was published in the media. You start breaking down trust, potentially. I do not think it is the case in London, but you have the potential for people thinking that some people are holding information that they need in terms of their planning. At the heart of strong Resilience Forums at a local level should be that trust between partners and ultimately the trust between the Government and Local Resilience Forums.

I would add that if it was an out-of-date version of the document, it definitely was not a Local Resilience Forum that leaked that document, and so the issue in terms of confidentiality in my view, in terms of Government documents, is not about Local Resilience Forums sending them off to *The Observer*. That leak clearly came from somebody who had access to it within the Government.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): John, do you want to add anything? You are an official in the sense of having to deal with and wrestle with these issues on a day-to-day basis.

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): As the Deputy Mayor said, our absolute premise and duty across all of our responders is to share information and co-operate with each other. They are laid-down duties under primary legislation and we are being inhibited from doing so. To sign NDAs, even in the way that we are asked to sign them on behalf of a Local Resilience Forum, which is a non-legal entity, how can you sign a document on behalf of a non-legal entity? It slows down the whole process of taking legal advice and working out who you can and cannot share with. It becomes overly bureaucratic and unreasonable, really. It inhibits our ability to pass that information on in a co-ordinated way and make sure that everybody is on the same page.

A lot of the issues were explained earlier. The scale and size of this and the secrecy that surrounds some of the issues really do hamper and do not allow people to understand the full range of issues that we are looking at. It is no longer about contingency plans being in place. It is about adaptation to a new normal of the entire motorway system, as it was put earlier, being able to change with everybody understanding their part in that. That is nigh-on impossible without the ability to share information openly and freely.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): What worries me - and I can only go on what I have read in the media in that sense - is the cavalier approach to a very serious issue because there are times when things need to be kept confidential. If it is used inappropriately and if one feels, "Hold on. We need a bit of common sense here", then it is going to be broken. There will be times when it is broken on much more serious issues that do need to remain confidential. I am slightly worried about this rushing out of multiple numbers of it that almost stop the important things you need to protect and are right to be kept confidential to the things that do not need to be kept confidential because they stop people planning or contributing in the right ways.

We may pick this up further because there are some issues. We have all grappled with issues. Particularly those of us in local government have grappled with what remains confidential and what does not in terms of transparency at a local level.

I cannot speak for this Working Group but I hope they agree and would support me. We hope you are taking a common-sense approach with the partners and that you are doing the right thing by preparing us for all eventualities and that you are not going to be blocked by some absurd approach. This blanket approach is not what is required. Some further thinking needs to come out from the Government on this.

We are very fortunate that last time we were here we had the National Health Service (NHS) and they were able to speak. I am told they are now closing down again in terms of the co-operation. Is that something where you have requested information?

My next question goes on about who is part of what and how you are collecting data. Are public agencies interpreting much more rigidly than maybe the common-sense approach we would like in terms of protecting Londoners?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): No, we do not resonate particularly with that in terms of an operational nature with the NHS engaging in London. They are entirely engaged and supportive of the London structures that we have in place now. They are an active member and have participated fully all the way through the process and continue to do so as we have moved into a response phase.

I understand where your points have come from. There is something within the Government's potential echelons of the NHS and not wanting to have information leaked through different routes. That is part of the bigger problem in this. This is an entire infrastructure problem across every part of the Government and, therefore, there are so many routes of information flowing around and different sources of interpretation that it is really difficult to get a single granular picture on any one issue because it has to go through so many routes and sources.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): Thank you for that. Can you brief us on the EU Exit Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG), which sits under the London Resilience Forum (LRF)? Who is on it and what is it tasked with doing? Just take us through that.

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): The EU Exit SCG aims to ensure that the London Resilience Partnership can work together to co-ordinate an effective response to civil contingency matters arising from a no-deal Brexit. It is now up and running and it is running to transition us from the preparation to a potential response phase. John Barradell [OBE, Deputy Chair, LRF] is the Chair of the SCG with Eleanor Kelly, Chief Executive of Southwark Council, acting as Vice Chair. John's [Hetherington] team at the London Resilience Group provides the secretariat. We have daily SCG meetings scheduled, although because of the delay we have stood down some of the meetings. We have also put in place other flexible arrangements to share information.

The London Resilience Group has also recruited a number of temporary staff to manage the Brexit reporting to the Government. Those are now recruited, trained and in place. A number of agencies are also being asked to report into individual Departments as well as through what we would view as normal resilience structures.

As I mentioned last time we came and spoke to this Working Group, we are putting in place arrangements to make sure that, as well as any potential disruption or incident relating to no-deal, the [London Resilience] Partnership can also deal with what we might regard as normal incidents that could occur at any point in London.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): At our last meeting we talked about the risks around food and fuel supplies to London. Has that position changed in the last month in terms of further work that you have done? We can include if we know about medicine and medical supplies what was told to us a month ago. Has the situation changed? We know there is a risk.

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): There has been no huge change in terms of the risk in terms of the food. The closer we get to the growing season, that limits the risk in terms of fresh produce, albeit marginally. With the scale and the breadth of the supply chain issues and the border issues, some of which we heard about earlier, it really does maintain a real threat to us.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): We are never going to be faced by these challenges again, but it does seem to me that we ought to learn some of the lessons of it. Are we collating stuff as we go along? Is someone recording issues so that if we ever face this type of challenge again, God forbid - and hopefully, the Government might do something differently - we may do things differently? Is that going on?

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): We have had a number of discussions. We have not formalised anything yet, but we will definitely be looking at what we can learn from the situation.

One of the most striking issues and the reason that we set up the Food Sub-Group is that very quickly it became clear that for food in particular or supply chains generally, the 'just enough, just in time' principle needs to be replaced with 'just in case'. We do not have any real resilience beyond two or three days, generally. That is a general issue; it is not just a London issue. We will definitely be looking more at supply chains and food.

As part of the 100 Resilient Cities project, we are looking to pick up some of that. Hopefully, we will be able to treat it as an exercise in how to put in place co-ordination arrangements. Hopefully, we will not have to test them, but the Partnership has also learnt a lot about what happens when structures that are designed for an individual incident or a short-term emergency are used for something that is not yet an emergency. We will be looking and hoping to have a proper and honest review with the Government about how we would need to look at changing arrangements or what we would need to do in the future. Since the end of July [2018] or the beginning of August [2018] all the partners are having to look at this. Was this the right way to plan? We do have good structures in place now, but we need to take the heat out of any review so that we can have an honest review.

The danger is that because Brexit is so polarised as an issue, people in the Government have that polarization and that decision not to talk openly. That comes from the higher levels of the Government and not from the civil servants dealing with it. We need people to set that to one side if we are really going to learn lessons from it properly.

Without wanting to unduly prolong the work of this Working Group, if we do get a deal and we do get a transition period, what you might see towards the end is a need to set up similar arrangements should there be some issues that have not been resolved through the negotiations during the transition period. Therefore, it is really important that we learn from what is happening now. There are lessons to be learnt about co-ordination arrangements and the previous guest did talk about that information piece and making sure that during the transition period information flowed more freely when appropriate out of the Government and within the Government, which was not an issue that we were quite so aware of. If no review is undertaken to identify where the blockages are in the short term, you would see that continuing and we would not learn lessons that we could learn that would be useful over the next year or so.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): What kinds of information is the Government asking you to collect in terms of our preparedness?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): We have a daily reporting rhythm that we have instigated in London. Within London we ask ourselves two questions, essentially. Firstly, is London OK? Are we as partners happy - 'happy' is perhaps the wrong term - and are we content that organisations can deal with any disruptions within their own means?

In terms of the information for Government, then we are we are asked to look at the impacts on borders and ports, transport implications, energy, vehicle fuel, food, water, environment, health, social care, law and order, community tensions and financial services. There is a broad range of areas to look at, some of which are easier said than done in terms of how to assess the business impact or the financial services impact for a city such as London through the means of data collection that we have and certainly how to do that on a daily basis. That is extremely challenging.

We have processes in place to give our sentiment as best as we can and they will complement other routes of information going directly into the Government and indeed their own analysis.

Caroline Russell AM: I want to come on to the issue of business. It seems to be a very mixed picture from what you read in the press and when you hear from businesses in terms of how prepared they are. Do you have any sense of the contingency planning that businesses are doing and whether it has firmed up over recent weeks?

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): Business is not just one homogenous whole. Big businesses are probably able to better put the resources into contingency planning for no-deal.

What we have not seen much evidence of is that small businesses have been able to do the same. A lot of people have been waiting for certainty on a week-by-week basis. All of us think that this week might be the week that we find out what is going to happen. Many small businesses simply do not have the reserves available to build up their stocks and, in any case, that would not be the option for small businesses that are dealing with food or, for example, food retailers or florists. Some of the incidents that have happened in London over the past few years have shown how vulnerable small businesses can be and many might struggle with just a few days of disruption. If there were to be a no-deal scenario, we could see small businesses struggle to survive.

We would really be looking to Government to step in and make sure that it assists small businesses to make sure we did not lose substantial businesses to what is not something that they could realistically have been expected to plan for or have the resources to put things in place in the same way that some of the bigger businesses might be able to.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Until there is actual certainty - which is laughable really at this stage - small businesses do not have the space to even cope with thinking, "What would we do differently?"

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): No. I spoke to the owner of a Scandinavian food import company. She said that it was almost impossible for her to plan because she could not plan for all of the different eventualities. For fresh food, even if she did have the storage space, she would not be able to stockpile or get a buffer. Even one day's delay would potentially break her supply chain. That is the sort of level people are looking at. They might be able to become more aware of what issues they might face but being able to put any mitigation in place as a small business using fresh produce is much harder than it sounds.

The key there would be to make sure we do not get a situation in which things get delayed coming through. That is the only mitigation that is outside small businesses' control, but it is the only thing that would help in preventing that break in the supply chain.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I wanted to get on to some specific sectors. If I could start with transport, since the last meeting we have heard that Transport for London (TfL) staff have been put on alert for travel chaos caused by border disruptions, fuel scarcity and public disorder, particularly if there is a no-deal Brexit. There is a leaked memo that has come out in the last few days that picks this up. It is particularly the staff in the high-tech control room.

Are you aware of this? Has TfL relayed concerns to you? Are they working with you on this?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): TfL is absolutely a key partner in all of this. I have not heard that term, that they have been 'put on alert'. We discussed last time the media piece about the [London] Ambulance Service and their potential. There is, as always with the media, some sensationalising around what is happening with this.

TfL is working closely with all of the other transport partners and is providing us with a feed-in daily in terms of the capability and the capacity of the transport network. We are working very closely with St Pancras [International], Eurostar and Heathrow Airport as well, in terms of the travel disruption that we are expecting there. From that perspective, we have been working through and have a high degree of confidence in their plans and their ability to do with disruption around the borders area in particular.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: We are going to come on to ports. One of my colleagues will pick that up, but just particularly in terms of TfL, staff leave has been cancelled in this control centre for the next few weeks. It is not just the border disruptions; they are concerned about panic buying of petrol at petrol stations, delays at airports and street protests causing congestion. Is that the sort of thing that you are overall preparing for?

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): What all organisations such as TfL will be doing is preparing and planning through reasonable worst-case scenarios, and all of the examples you have listed are things that they should be thinking about. How would they deal with that were it to happen in the context of no-deal?

Last time, we talked about fuel shortages. One of the things that would be most likely to cause a fuel shortage would be panic being caused by an individual petrol station. Most petrol stations at some point in the week have pumps that do not have fuel in them. If you have that in the context of people feeling alarm in the context of a no-deal Brexit, that could quite easily and quite quickly lead to panic.

People should be thinking through what might happen in those scenarios. It does not mean that that is bound to happen, but a lot of the things that could happen people really should think through as reasonable worst-case scenarios.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Have you done any further work to assess sector-specific risks - you just touched on transport a bit, but the utilities sector - since we last met?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): Since we last met, we had the LRF very shortly afterwards and we spent a great deal of time there. That was the majority of the focus of the meeting, asking individual sectors and agencies in terms of their assurance. We have continued to meet with the Brexit

Contingency Planning Group as well. Now that we have moved into holding SCG meetings, part of the purpose of that grouping is that it seeks the assurance and helps to identify cross-cutting issues that people are not able to work to themselves. So far we have had no impacts raised to us in terms of the SCG meetings and we have been back around the houses where we can in terms of asking for individual agency assurances for the mitigations.

We have to understand the scale, breadth and complexity of all of this. We just do not understand what is going to happen. We are asking to run the country in a completely different way. This is not about contingency plans, as we said before. This is about how organisations will adapt to a new normal and put in place new systems and processes and how quickly they can do that. We need to see how they will manifest and emerge, whether we get a deal or no-deal or whatever may happen over the next coming months.

Caroline Russell AM: You have given a lot of confidence in terms of your preparedness for what may come out of a no-deal scenario, but I just wonder what impact all of this preparation for no-deal and these various unknown scenarios we potentially face is having on the core work on London's resilience around threats like climate change, which is not going away, and whether all of that work is on hold at the moment or whether there is the capacity to keep doing that bigger-picture London resilience work?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): To change a phrase slightly, life is what happens when we are all busy making plans, and all of that work needs to continue. We have as far as possible maintained the basics of our work programme so that we can continue with a lot of that underlying work and trying to deliver on some of those. Without doubt, this has taken away resources from our ordinary planning and has taken a huge amount of headspace. As you will have seen in numerous newspaper articles and media releases, they cite the civil service always being asked to plan for two eventualities and so are we. We are being asked to plan for multiple eventualities in all of this, which takes up time, space, energy and effort that could be diverted to other resources.

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): That is where it comes back to the Chair's point about what we can learn from this. We really do need to make sure that we take learning from it and that we do not just park it and say, "Thank goodness that is over", when we get through this phase, but that we look at what we have learned and look at how that can improve our work on wider resilience. I have mentioned the 100 Resilient Cities project. Bringing in the extra staff to handle the reporting to the Government is what we have put in place through John's team to make sure that the London Resilience Group and the Partnership can still respond to other things, but there is a lot of ongoing work that Brexit has meant is slowed down a bit.

However, that is not to say we are not putting things in place. For example, a couple of times a year the London Resilience Group puts on strategic summits. There is one that is completely non-Brexit-related coming up in the spring [2019]. That will go ahead. Projects that they are involved in are going ahead, albeit that some of the work around that may have been slowed down a bit by people, understandably and rightly, focusing on this immediate issue of the potential for a no-deal Brexit, which both the Government and the Mayor have understandably asked the Resilience Partnership to look at, which has undoubtedly taken up a lot of time not just on the part of John's team but on the part of the partners in the LRF.

Caroline Russell AM: Then the other question I have, which comes out of the earlier session with Joe Owen [Associate Director, Institute for Government], was just whether you have any observations on London's readiness to hold EU elections if we find ourselves coming through what he described as the 'second pathway',

the one that comes out of the indicative votes. If that takes us to a situation where the EU elections need to be held, is London ready to do that?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): That is not directly for us to comment on. You would have to ask those who hold the elections themselves.

Caroline Russell AM: That would be the local authorities?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): I know that those conversations are happening and the date of 12 April [2019] to announce that we will take part in those elections takes it right to the wire in terms of enabling them to put those preparations in place. They are thinking about it now and there is dialogue between local government and central Government but, like everything at the moment, there is such uncertainty. How do people progress with any degree of clarity?

Caroline Russell AM: Yes. It is reassuring to hear that there is at least some dialogue on that. You have touched on the ports and points of entry to the UK. Can you update us specifically on any work that is taking place around the ports of entry to ensure as free a flow of people and goods as possible in the event of no-deal?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): Yes. The two main ports in London that we focused on are Heathrow and St Pancras [International]. That is not to say we have not engaged with London City Airport, but it was deemed a lower risk potential because of the volume of traffic and passengers it has, etc. Heathrow in terms of the movement of passengers has very good customer service preparations in place and has provided reassurance. There is a team working solely on Brexit and the Brexit Director has engaged with us directly to the SCG. Heathrow has also looked at its freight issues and the equivocal knock-on impacts we would see at Dover and the Calais Straits as Heathrow would face. It is an entirely different scale and magnitude of issue there because they already transfer freight outside of the EU and so it is only a proportion of its business in that respect that would be changed. There are extant plans in place and they are put into practice quite regularly. They are assured that they will be able to deal and mitigate with those issues. We have also engaged with the surrounding counties on that and also the transport authorities, local authorities and the Metropolitan Police Service. All of the relevant agencies have been engaged with Heathrow and have been extremely proactive in that work.

Likewise, we are working with the Border Delivery Group that Joe [Owen] mentioned early in terms of putting in place the plans. They have been closely linked in with the work with St Pancras [International] and we meet them weekly at least in terms of ongoing plans to mitigate against any excessive queues originating out of St Pancras. You may well have seen over the last couple of weeks that due to the French industrial action there were delays that were put in place on the Eurostar services and a number of trains cancelled each day and we did not see that spill out into a problem in London. That provides us with some assurance in terms of the methods that Eurostar has in place to deal with people and the communications to passengers. They work and will work into the future.

Caroline Russell AM: Thank you. My final question is: what advice are you giving to the Mayor on the work that he needs to prioritise to ensure that London is resilient to any possible shocks from a no-deal exit?

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): We have been giving assurance to the Mayor around the arrangements. At my regular meetings with the Mayor, I have talked through what we have in place. He held a Mayor's Advisory Group about a month ago, or a few weeks ago, on 1 March [2019] to

discuss no-deal preparations. This meeting included the Police, Fire and Transport Commissioners, borough and NHS representatives, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the resilience team and a number of Deputy Mayors.

The advice that has been provided to the Mayor is around the assurance piece to give him assurance that the arrangements are in place, that partners are putting the work in, and that all the arrangements we need to make are in place. As well as myself, the Mayor's Chief of Staff [David Bellamy] has been involved with and engaged with the SCG to ensure that there is that direct link from the SCG to City Hall and the Mayor so that he gets that assurance that we are prepared and we have things in place. Where we think there are risks - for example, around the food piece and around other issues - these are things that have been fed into the Mayor. Although some of these issues unfortunately he cannot do a huge amount about, he has put in place information streams around business advice and advice to EU citizens when they have some uncertainties around their rights post Brexit.

Caroline Russell AM: Is that mainly focused on no-deal preparedness? We heard from Joe Owen earlier about the need for some real structural changes in terms of how the Government works. If we end up leaving with a deal, is there a conversation going on about how the Mayor can support Londoners, support EU citizens and also support businesses in terms of navigating these new processes - it appears that there is so little information being shared about how they are going to work that even Government Departments are not communicating about it - and how Londoners can engage with what it is they need to be complying with and working with?

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): The Mayor has put a lot of work in. Immediately after the referendum result he launched the London is Open campaign. Under that campaign, you have a lot of information. You have a web portal for EU citizens, signposting people towards information. He is doing quite a lot of engagement directly with EU citizens, which we will see over the next few weeks. There is the Brexit Business Resource Hub, which is a web-based advice portal for businesses. I know that the Mayor and particularly Rajesh Agrawal in his capacity as Deputy Mayor [for Business] has also been engaging with and talking to businesses about what they need.

Ultimately, the Government has responsibility for sorting some of the issues out. In terms of business in particular, the continued uncertainty has been particularly problematic and, on an individual basis for EU or European Economic Area citizens, the uncertainty is also unsettling. Therefore, part of the Mayor's role is as reassurance to business and to EU citizens and also as a spokesperson on their behalf linking into the Government.

I would just go back to one point you made about whether there is a deal and indicating that that would be the end of it. I just want to make it clear that --

Caroline Russell AM: It is the beginning.

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): -- the deal is just on the framework for negotiations that would take place in the transition period. The advice we have been giving to the Mayor and what has been at the heart of the planning from other teams within the Greater London Authority as well is that, if we leave with a deal, that is not the end of it. It is actually the beginning of the next phase. As I said earlier, a lot of what we have learned we will then want to apply and come back to in the next phase during the transition period because we could end up in 18 months' time not knowing how things are going to be the next day, let alone the next week, in terms of where we are with the negotiations.

It is that uncertainty that is the most damaging because risks do not need to be real in order for them to have an impact. In some of the Government planning and in some of the Government rhetoric, there has been a lack of understanding that you can say, for example, that there will not be an overall shortage of food but there will just be a lack of choice, but that does not translate into consumers or businesses feeling confident. One of the things I have learned is that there is a huge lack of trust in terms of how people view what information is coming out from the Government. At every level of government within the country, we are going to have to work very hard to make sure that on some level we all work to restore that trust.

The constitutional crisis is not just about Brexit. It is about the relationship between politicians and people and how they view how things are being managed. It is so much more than just words on a piece of paper or the treaty. It is about fundamentally how we are going to move forward as a city and as a country.

Caroline Russell AM: The fact that we have seen the Confederation of British Industry and Trades Union Congress come together and write to express concern about the gravity of the situation we are in just shows that people representing people who work and people representing the businesses are both equally worried and are pairing up in a way that is probably unprecedented. Thank you very much.

Tony Devenish AM: I made the point earlier, Deputy Mayor. Can you send us a flow diagram of who does what, at least in London, in due course, please?

John Hetherington (Head of London Resilience): Again, to try to put that together just for London would be a task in itself. We did something in terms of communication lines for the Olympics and that filled an A0 sheet. We could potentially try but I cannot promise anything because it is extremely complicated.

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): If it is helpful, though, we could sit down with you at some point and talk through how things work in a bit more detail than is possible in this forum.

Tony Devenish AM: Sure. Thank you.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: I just want to pick up something from our last meeting. When we were discussing last time risk assessment, you told me you had written to central Government, the Prime Minister [The Rt Hon Theresa May MP], the Minister of Housing [The Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP] and the Minister for Food Security [David Rutley MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Food and Animal Welfare] and were awaiting responses. Have you had any responses back from the Government to the issues you have been raising?

Dr Fiona Twycross AM (Chair, London Resilience Forum): I know that the letter sent by the Mayor did not receive a response from the Prime Minister. We have had a response to a letter that I sent combined with John Barradell as Chair and Deputy Chair of the LRF. It took some time. The issue for me was that the letter had been leaked before we got a reply and so it felt like it was connected to the fact that it was clear that we had not had a reply that we got the response back. It is the time that it has taken to get formal responses.

John and his team and the Partnership have very good relations with the civil servants we deal with, but they should not be having to use informal workarounds to get information. There should be clear communication lines and we should get quicker and more substantial responses to information. That information flow is still an issue. It is not the civil servants who are at fault, in our view. It is that intense rivalry between various personalities that is causing quite a lot of problems, and also a huge desire on the part of the Government to

restate and state that it is expecting to leave with a deal. We had in communication lines quite recently that basically they are still sending people out absolutely insistent that the Government's priority is to leave with a deal. That might be the case, but in terms of communications with key partners who are planning contingency, it is not necessarily a helpful starting point for discussion.

Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM: Thank you.

Len Duvall AM (Chair): I feel that we may need to write to the Mayor on the last two sessions. There are two issues that come to mind, certainly about making sure that we are keeping control over the money and what we are spending and those issues because we need to learn those lessons. More importantly, there is this issue about non-disclosure and its use as a potential barrier to good work and good outcomes and keeping people safe. If that is enough of a brief for you to work on, we will come back to this issue. Thank you very much.