

LONDON RESILIENCE



preparing for emergencies

LONDON REGIONAL RESILIENCE FORUM

LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

The Multi–Agency Debrief

**Lessons identified and progress since the
terrorist events of 7 July 2005**

September 2006

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FOREWORD

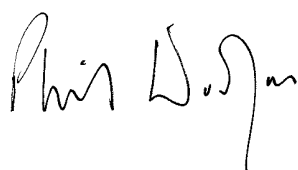
The events of 7 July were unprecedented in London, as was the challenge they presented. On that morning London's emergency services and transport workers mounted their biggest ever response to a terrorist attack. It was a response characterised by partnership and professionalism, and reflected the contingency plans that had been honed and tested over four years.

There were some incredible acts of bravery and everybody on duty from the emergency services, transport staff, health, local authorities, voluntary agency staff and Londoners stepped up and delivered their best on what was for all a day of unspeakable tragedy. There can be no doubt that lives were saved thanks to the efforts of everyone involved in the response.

Our policy on civil contingency planning is to continually seek out and act on any lessons we can learn from. The London Regional Resilience Forum plans are constantly being updated and improved. This approach means that criticisms are not just welcomed but invited. The downside of this policy is that the humbling bravery and professionalism of our people can sometimes be hidden. Also, the impression can be given that planning is not as huge and comprehensive as, in reality, it is.

All events are different. However, as far as we know, not one person lost their life because of a failure of the response. Many lived because of it. That is the true tribute.

Following the bombings, the London Regional Resilience Forum began a comprehensive multi-agency debrief process to ensure that essential lessons were captured and in October 2005 it started a programme of work to address the lessons identified. This report summarises the main findings and lessons. It focuses on the frontline response by London's emergency services and the other key agencies involved. A separate Government report looks at the response from the national and central government perspective.



Phil Woolas
Minister for Local Government & Community Cohesion
Chair



Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London
Deputy Chair

London Regional Resilience Forum

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The London Resilience partnership was set up immediately after the attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001 to assess London's capacity to respond to a similar incident, and to drive London's preparation for emergencies. The aim of the partnership has been to ensure that the Capital is as well prepared against emergencies as possible. London Resilience consists of Government, the Mayor, the Greater London Authority and all London's key responding agencies – police, fire, ambulance, health service, local authorities, the transport operators, the Port of London Authority, the utilities, voluntary agencies, plus the military, the London business community and representatives of London's main faiths. It is led by the London Regional Resilience Forum which is chaired by the Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion, Phil Woolas, with the Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, as Deputy Chair. Since May 2002 the Forum has overseen the development of numerous multi-agency pan-London emergency plans and an exercise programme to test and practise these plans.
- 1.2** On the morning of 7 July 2005, four separate but connected explosions occurred in central London when terrorists detonated bombs on the public transport system. Three explosions occurred on the Underground system and one on a bus. While each of these events was a serious incident in its own right, their unprecedented cumulative effect was to spread public confusion and speculation, particularly about whether further attacks were imminent. London's responders and emergency plans were tested in extremely difficult circumstances and were shown to be effective.
- 1.3** On 14 July 2005 the London Regional Resilience Forum (LRRF) met to consider the immediate lessons from the emergency response, how the consequences of the bombings would be managed and what action was necessary. At this meeting a number of key lessons were identified, mostly concerning problems with telecommunications on the day. The Forum commissioned a review by the London Resilience Team (LRT) with support from the Cabinet Office's Central Sponsor for Information Assurance on how telecommunications had performed on 7 July. Other issues raised included the fitness for purpose of the Strategic Co-ordination Centre, media handling difficulties, and issues around briefing the business community.
- 1.4** Individual agencies have each carried out their own debrief processes which has been complemented by a comprehensive debriefing exercise commissioned by the Forum. Multi-agency debriefings were held for the Gold/Strategic Co-ordination Group, the Resilience Mortuary, the Family Assistance Centre, and Media/Public Information arrangements. The main conclusions from these debriefs were examined on 30 September in a multi-agency workshop facilitated by the Emergency Planning College.
- 1.5** The Forum considered the results and recommendations at its meeting on 12 October 2005 where a work programme was agreed. Progress against this programme has been reviewed at subsequent meetings.

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

- 1.6** The Forum has also considered the findings and recommendations of the London Assembly's 7 July Review Committee's Report (which is covered in Section 4).

SECTION 2 – OVERVIEW

- 2.1** The Forum noted that while the response had by no means been perfect, the overall multi-agency emergency response to the 7 July bombings had been very successful. By quick, professional and effective action at the scene of each of the bombs, the situation had been contained and the potential additional loss of life and suffering considerably reduced.
- 2.2** Four years of planning and exercises had clearly paid great dividends. Co-operation and co-ordination between responders had been effective and there was a willingness to work through issues jointly to achieve a successful response. The events of 7 July did not exceed the capacity of the responding agencies to contain and deal with the situation. The response did, however, provide an opportunity to identify areas that required further work to increase London's ability to successfully deal with future emergencies on a similar, or greater scale.
- 2.3** The Forum particularly noted success in the following areas:
- a) Familiarity with roles and partners was evident. This was greatly helped by a long series of exercises and most recently Exercise Atlantic Blue in April 2005 (which included multiple attacks on the Underground).
 - b) The initial response by London Underground staff was exemplary - the result both of solid training and individual dedication and courage.
 - c) London Buses reacted quickly and effectively, by initially withdrawing services from central London and then maintaining staff morale in order to reinstate the network, other than in the incident areas, in time for the evening peak.
 - d) The emergency services' response was rapid and effective.
 - e) London emergency plans were successfully deployed including the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP) Major Incident Plan, Operation Benbow (joint operation by London's police forces), and the London Command and Control Protocol, Local Authority Gold Protocol, First Alert Protocol, Public Information Plan, Mass Fatality Plan and Disaster Fund Plan.
 - f) Hospitals were rapidly made ready and reserve capacity identified. 1200 hospital beds were made ready in three hours.
 - g) Mutual aid arrangements worked well. London Fire Brigade and London Ambulance Service's mutual aid arrangements were successfully triggered. London Ambulance Service was also well supported by voluntary sector ambulances.
 - h) London Underground's evacuation procedures worked well. This was only the second evacuation of the entire network in living memory (the previous was 23 December 1991 when a number of incendiary devices had been hidden under train seats both on mainline and Tube trains).

SECTION 2 - OVERALL

- i) The media cell (a group of press officers from across the London Resilience Partnership) was quickly convened, actions and roles agreed, a media centre established and the media briefed.
- j) A Gold Co-ordinating Group followed by a Strategic Co-ordination Centre were rapidly established with Gold level representation from all key partners.
- k) The 'Local Authority Gold' Protocol (under which one chief executive represents all 33 London local authorities at the Gold Co-ordinating Group) was successfully triggered and worked well. 'LA Gold' had an important role in co-ordinating the pan-London local authority response including providing advice to schools on 7 July, mobilising construction and staffing of the temporary mortuary, construction and staffing of the Family Assistance Centre, and co-ordination of flowers, tributes and books of condolence. Subsequently, 'LA Gold' ensured there were arrangements in place to manage the recovery period after the attacks. Fourteen chief executives took on the role over four weeks.
- l) The London Mass Fatality Plan worked well. The coroners, police, local authorities, pathologists and the London Resilience Team worked in close partnership to deliver a 'Resilience Mortuary' which was ready to receive deceased victims in 24 hours and fully functioning in 72 hours.
- m) Although no pre-prepared plan existed, a number of agencies came together (police, local authorities, voluntary sector, London Resilience Team, NHS and TfL) to rapidly put in place a Family Assistance Centre.
- n) Police and local authority arrangements for communication with minority communities worked well and community cohesion was maintained.
- o) Once the police had managed the initial incident, responsibility transferred to the local authorities to co-ordinate recovery arrangements, as outlined in contingency plans.
- p) The Disaster Fund Plan was implemented as per the London Resilience plan and worked very efficiently. The London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund raised £11.5 m in all, made its first payments within two weeks of the bombings, and had paid out £10.5m by 6 July 2006. The Fund won an award for effectiveness and was also recognised for the excellent work it had done in making payments speedily to the victims of 7 July.

2.4 The debrief was extensive and, whilst confirming the successful activation of contingency plans, it also revealed a number of areas where further work and improvement were required. The Forum particularly noted the exhaustion of staff in the days following the bombings and agencies' concern about responding to a sustained bombing campaign. Individual agencies were already acting on the lessons identified in their own debriefs. The Forum commissioned a work programme based on the key multi-agency lessons.

2.5 Under each of the following headings, the findings and actions are set out.
Annex A sets out progress and changes achieved so far.

SECTION 3 – KEY LESSONS

SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 While the exercise programme that had been run over the preceding years had proved invaluable to responders, many partners were concerned about whether they had sufficient staff trained at a senior level (particularly at the strategic 'Gold' level) to sustain a prolonged response and recovery period.

Lessons

- **Renewed training efforts to ensure each agency has a sufficient number of senior staff able to give strategic direction over a long period of time.**
- **The exercise programme should capture additional personnel within responding organisations who could provide relief to staff, thereby sustaining the tempo of operations over prolonged periods of activity. The exercise programme should also confirm the adequacy of training/refresher regimes.**
- **Mutual aid arrangements should also be revisited to review the scope for additional assistance in a sustained response.**

STRATEGIC CO-ORDINATION CENTRE

- 3.2 The early decision to establish the Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC) was assessed by practitioners to have been sound. The rationale was the significant nature and unknown potential for other incidents in London, or elsewhere. It soon became clear that there was a need to co-ordinate at a strategic level. Clearly the SCC would have assumed an even bigger role if there had been further attacks. Once the full extent of the challenges had been made clear and the emergency response was in place the Chair and other members of the SCC agreed to revert to more conventional Gold level meetings.
- 3.3 However, the level of representation at the SCC did not always meet the requirement to have senior representatives present, who were empowered and able to make decisions.
- 3.4 While accessible on the day, the location at Hendon was not easily reached by some responding agencies (although all succeeded) and also felt by some to be too distant from their own command & control facilities in central London.
- 3.5 Although a major effort had been made in recent years to pre-prepare the site for rapid conversion to use as an SCC, the facilities overall were assessed as insufficient to support the many users. The SCC site remained improvised, requiring conversion from day-to-day use. The Forum concluded that London needed an SCC that was immediately fit for purpose and 'ready to go'.

SECTION 3 – KEY LESSONS

- 3.6 The Forum debrief also noted that there were inevitably occasions when there were uncertainties over the respective roles and responsibilities of Gold and COBR and that these would benefit from greater clarification.

Lessons

- **The SCC role is crucial for the effective management of a multi-agency response to an emergency on a scale similar to 7 July. In view of the speed of response required to assert early control over an emergency situation, it is vital to have: the best possible site for the SCC facility (together with an alternative for resilience purposes; a fully-fitted facility with core staff permanently in residence to maintain and test the facility.**
- **Further common training in the Gold role for all agencies was identified as a requirement and would be beneficial.**
- **The respective responsibilities of Gold and COBR would benefit from greater clarity and wider dissemination.**

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

- 3.7 This was the greatest single area of concern. However, while the telecommunications challenges presented difficulties, they did not significantly affect the emergency services' ability to respond effectively.
- 3.8 The Forum considered the review in late July (summarised at Annex B). It was originally prepared by the London Resilience Team in consultation with the Cabinet Office, and fed into the national-level work on telecoms resilience subsequently led by the Cabinet Office.
- 3.9 **Overdependence on mobile phones:** On 7 July the mobile telephone networks did not crash but were heavily congested and users had extreme difficulty making calls. (If the operators had not managed the situation the effects would have been far worse). This made it impossible to establish reliable communications between mobile telephone users which had ramifications throughout the whole of the multi-agency response, and hindered strategic consultation between key London players.
- 3.10 Responders' overdependence on mobile phones raised major concerns. While this related mainly to managers (most front-line operatives of responding agencies used radios), there was nevertheless some reliance on mobile phones by frontline staff.
- 3.11 **Access Overload Control (ACCOLC):** The ACCOLC system was invoked for a short time in a one kilometre radius of Aldgate. It subsequently became evident that the ACCOLC system was not currently accessible by all Cat 1 and 2 responders that may have a critical need for it. In any event, the use of ACCOLC procedures could themselves be counterproductive because the public relies heavily on mobile telephones as their primary means of

communication and would want to use them in a crisis to reassure family and friends.

- 3.12 Public Education:** The Forum concluded that the mobile network was vital for public reassurance, but there was a need to educate the public to be disciplined in using their phones in a crisis (for example, use text messages to be brief, only use mobile phones for essential purposes, only make short calls to establish people's safety, then stay off the network).
- 3.13 Communication below ground:** This was a difficulty but did not significantly hinder the response. The London Underground radio communications system held up well for both London Underground and British Transport Police. Adequate interim arrangements exist but there will be significant improvement once a TETRA-based 'Connect' system on the underground is installed. This will link to emergency service Airwave radio systems.

Annex B outlines Telecommunications issues in more detail.

Lessons

- **Responders must not rely on mobile phones for critical functions in a crisis. Emergency responders need to have dedicated communications that will work in an emergency.**
- **Mobile Phones: diversify sources of supply. Do not rely on one single mobile phone provider.**
- **Fixed Phones: review requirements for incoming and outgoing lines in crisis, and compare with current capacity provided.**
- **ACCOLC: review the criteria and protocol for invoking ACCOLC. Train police Silver and Gold commanders in the criteria and procedures for requesting ACCOLC.**
- **Pagers: so long as they are sufficiently independent of other networks, consider using pagers for alerting and mobilisation, including pre-set pager groups, where this function is critical.**
- **Radio: action must be taken to make responders' primary means of communications (usually radio) fully capable of meeting their communications needs in a crisis. The possibility of wider use of TETRA based systems such as the Airwave Service for Category 1 and 2 responders (including individual strategic-level 'Gold' executives) should be investigated.**
- **General Public: educate public on need for phone discipline in a crisis, for example, only use mobile phones for essential purposes, make short calls to establish people's safety (to land lines where possible), then stay off the network.**

WARNING AND INFORMING THE PUBLIC

- 3.14** The Forum concluded that the London Resilience Media/Public Information Plan and First Alert Protocol had worked well on 7 July. The London Press Officers' First Alert Protocol had been triggered at 09.07 with all partners being alerted. Two telephone conferences had followed shortly afterwards (09.25 and 10.15) chaired by the Metropolitan Police (MPS) and involving all the key London partners and Government Departments (led by the Cabinet Office). Action had been agreed, a media cell convened and by late morning a media centre had been established, linked to the Gold Co-ordinating Group, at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre (with the help of the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) from which co-ordinated briefing was successfully delivered. The central government News Co-ordination Centre (NCC) was also activated, though the debrief concluded that this should have been done earlier.
- 3.15** Media coverage during the morning of 7 July was synchronized by the Media Cell with the key messages that were being given. The initial messages, including the key message to avoid travelling if possible, were successfully relayed to the public by the media. However, despite a steady flow of press conferences and briefings at the QEII Centre, subsequent information was not always used as effectively. In the afternoon some confusion arose over messages about the status of the transport system. In particular, it became evident that the media were continuing to use out of date information as if it were live, which created a misleading impression. As a result the message that the public should begin their journeys home was only conveyed in a very patchy manner. The Forum agreed that media monitoring was required to ensure that unhelpful messages were removed from the news media. It also agreed that the involvement of the media in future exercises could be useful in ensuring that they give accurate and timely information in the event of a future incident.
- 3.16** Press officer support had been provided to the Incident Coroner and briefing had been provided on the complexity of the victim identification process but only in response to media concern. The debrief identified these as areas for future pre-planning. Similarly, significant problems had occurred with the international media at some hospitals and action (including, if possible protocols) was required to encourage foreign media to use the media centre in future, and not gather at hospitals.
- 3.17** There was also a need to set up clearer agreements for the media's use of CCTV cameras and footage. This had been used extensively on 7 July due to the limited number of film crews in London, the majority being in Scotland for the G8 Conference.
- 3.18** Finally, although the media cell had succeeded in delivering a broad range of messages to the media and public, the debrief identified the need to pre-plan cascade routes, so that in future specific information can be targeted at different sections of the public (for example to local residents, commuters, minority communities, employers, schools, and off duty responders such as transport and emergency service staff).

Lessons

- **Interviews and briefings need to be visibly “time stamped”.**
- **More thorough media monitoring is required to pick up incorrect reporting.**
- **The media should be invited to participate in some future exercises.**
- **Support for the Incident Coroner and briefing on the victim identification process to be pre-planned.**
- **Work with the international media to ensure more appropriate behaviour at hospitals.**
- **Agreements to be set up for the media’s use of CCTV cameras and footage.**
- **Strong need to pre-identify key audiences and pre-tailor messages and communication channels.**

COMMUNICATION TO BUSINESS COMMUNITY

- 3.19** The business community has specific and significant information needs in an emergency. To enable them to make effective and wise decisions they need access to certain information quickly, ideally at the same speed or faster than news broadcasts.
- 3.20** The financial community, which is particularly vulnerable to events, is already well linked to the London command and control arrangements and representatives of the Treasury, Bank of England and Financial Services Authority attended the strategic co-ordination centre as observers attached to the Government Liaison Team. This arrangement from the Gold Co-ordinating Group to the financial community worked well.
- 3.21** The Forum concluded that more work should be undertaken with the London business community to ascertain the specific information that it (and its major components), requires in an emergency and the responsibilities and channels for ensuring this is delivered as rapidly as possible. One possibility already being pursued is to find a way of representing business on the Gold Media Cell.

Lessons

- **Business information requirements need to be understood and fulfilled to enable the business community to take informed decisions.**

SECTION 3 – KEY LESSONS

- **Once this is defined there is also a need for agreed arrangements to deliver rapid, authoritative messages to the wider London business community.**

COMMON INFORMATION PICTURE

3.22 An important objective in the command and control of any emergency response is to maintain a Commonly Recognised Information Picture (CRIP) to feed all information needs. Communication at the Gold Co-ordinating Group (GCG) and between Golds before the GCG met was effective. However, there was a lack of accurate, collated information to pass on to all of the responding agencies in the initial stages of the response.

3.23 The debrief recommended three linked actions to address this capability gap. The first was to review the flow of information during an emergency at the national level. The second was to address the London requirements, where the Forum had commissioned the London Resilience Team to produce the specification and protocols necessary for a secure London extranet for the London Resilience partnership. This is now well advanced and could provide the required facility for rapid dissemination and updating of a common situation report in an emergency. The third called for the Metropolitan Police to develop a joint multi-agency cell to collate and manage the flow of verified factual information to service the needs of the partners. This could be disseminated by the extranet.

Lessons

- **There is a need for an improved ability to develop a coherent view and share it among agencies in a timely manner and a need for an information management system to support this. A centralised joint multi-agency cell could provide this view.**
- **The London Resilience extranet could provide the secure vehicle for rapid dissemination of this information to partners and rapid multilateral communication between partners.**

CORDONS

3.24 The cordons at the four scenes worked well (as per the LESLP Major Incident Manual). However, staff that were not from police, fire or ambulance services did report difficulties in gaining access through the cordons for specific inspections (such as investigating and making safe fractured gas pipes underground, or carrying out structural surveys of bomb damaged tunnels), despite this having been pre-agreed at the Gold Co-ordinating Group.

- 3.25** There was also some anecdotal evidence from other agencies indicating a lack of appreciation and awareness of the roles and responsibilities of the multi-agency partners who had critical functions to perform during the immediate response phase.
- 3.26** It was particularly evident that police officers on cordon duties at some of the bomb sites were working to very precise rules that initially prevented other responders from gaining access to undertake crucial work, despite pre-agreement at Gold level.

Lessons

- **More work is required to ensure decisions agreed at the Gold Co-ordinating Group are communicated to frontline cordons.**
- **All responders should have an awareness of each others' functions, building on the success of Exercise Atlantic Blue in April 2005.**
- **The content of LESLP standardised procedures needs to be reinforced with all potential responders.**

CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL OR RADIOLOGICAL (CBR) CONTAMINATION

- 3.27** Contamination Control Arrangements: while not detected on this occasion, there was uncertainty among some responding agencies about arrangements for determining the presence or otherwise of CBR agents at the scene of an unexplained explosion.
- 3.28** Smoke and other pollution from the explosions in the tube tunnels made it difficult for detection and identification equipment to determine effectively whether there was contamination
- 3.29** While standard operating procedures were invoked by incident commanders on scene and worked well, unfortunately this was not communicated to those not on the front line. One hospital conducted chemical and radiological monitoring of all casualties before allowing them into its Accident and Emergency department. As patients arrived at hospitals, they underwent a medical consultation to assess whether any toxic substance was present from any unexpected chemical exposure.
- 3.30** This activity also revealed the need for a co-ordinated approach to environmental monitoring data. A cell was set up to advise Gold.
- 3.31** The Forum also agreed that in future there is a need to record the details of those present in the immediate vicinity of an incident, so that any risk of exposure to harmful substances can be registered. This will help to assess any possible future health implications. At the direct request of the Chief Medical Officer, such a Register was set up by the Health Protection Agency.

SECTION 3 – KEY LESSONS

Lessons

- It was agreed that arrangements for determining the presence or otherwise of CBR or other toxic material at the scene of an unexplained explosion, or other traumatic event, needed to be clearly promulgated to all responding agencies to ensure conformity of approach.
- The London emergency services are addressing the issue of early detection of CBR contaminants and have agreed to draw up a joint memorandum of understanding that will cover the range of detection and identification equipment carried by each service and its deployment at an incident.
- Hospitals need faster advice on whether contamination is present.
- ‘At risk’ register: It was also agreed that there should be a requirement to record details of those in close proximity to the scene of an incident (an exposure Register) for subsequent monitoring.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- 3.32** There was concern expressed by frontline services that responders dealing with the emergency (such as hospitals) had received large numbers of requests for information from government departments.
- 3.33** There was also felt to be a need for better understanding by central government of the role of the Gold Co-ordinating Group and the division of responsibilities between operators/responders and COBR (central government) over issues such as closure and re-opening of the transport system. Equally, responders understood the need for a full appreciation of the political and parliamentary responsibilities of COBR.
- 3.34** On funding, the local authorities were grateful to the Deputy Prime Minister for his early decision (on 8 July) that Government would meet their reasonable costs in responding to the emergency. They nevertheless remained concerned that clearer mechanisms and faster decision making was required for responses to applications for emergency funding.

Lessons

- Government requests for information should be channelled to responders’ Gold level representatives at the Strategic Co-ordination Centre through the Government Liaison Team.
- Clear pre-agreement was required on procedures for the closing and re-opening of the transport networks and the respective roles of operators and Government.
- Government should review the procedures and protocols for decisions on funding local authorities in an emergency.

FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTRE

- 3.35** Emergency Planning protocols dictate that, where practicable, uninjured survivors should be looked after at a Survivor Reception Centre. They also state that a Friends and Family Reception Centre should be created to provide a location where those seeking news of their loved ones may receive information. The need to set up a Family Assistance Centre was identified on 8 July, although there had been no pre-planning for this facility because the Guidance Document, which was in development, was still a draft document and not yet in the public domain, nor had it been seen by responders.
- 3.36** At the request of the Gold Co-ordinating Group on the evening of 8 July, the London Resilience Team convened a meeting of relevant partners. This was chaired by the Chief Executive of Westminster Council and included Westminster emergency staff, the Metropolitan Police (mostly present by phone), the British Red Cross, the London Resilience Team (including the Salvation Army secondee to LRT), and a liaison officer from the Civil Contingencies Secretariat of the Cabinet Office. The meeting designed the facility, and selected and inspected an initial venue (the Queen Mother Centre).
- 3.37** The Metropolitan Police and Westminster City Council then led the construction of the centre and it was opened by the Culture Secretary 14 hours later. This was the first time a Family Assistance Centre had been established in the UK. The centre was significantly improved and relocated to better premises (the Royal Horticultural Hall) on 12 July where it remained until 19 August when it moved to a smaller facility, in line with reduced demand for its services. The partners were grateful to O2 and Ikea for rapidly providing the centre with, respectively, mobile phones and furniture.
- 3.38** The purpose of the centre was to provide a ‘one stop shop’ to enable those affected to gain information about family members or friends, offer a range of facilities to enable families or survivors to make informed choices, ensure a seamless multi-agency approach to providing support, and help responders ensure that bereaved families, survivors and communities received co-ordinated, clear, compassionate and professional advice and assistance.
- 3.39** **Annex C** outlines Family Assistance Centre issues in more detail.

Lessons

- **The multi-agency debrief found that the word ‘family’ had been unhelpful and misleading, deterring some individuals from attending.**
- **It identified the need for formal guidance, a detailed London plan, and identification of suitable sites for Assistance Centres across the Capital.**
- **A whole range of other improvements were identified, including information gathering, arrangements for running the centre, the range of assistance to be offered and expertise required, the roles**

of supporting agencies and the welfare of staff working at the centre, both during and in the weeks after the period of the operation.

- A media and marketing strategy needs to be prepared with a pre-agreed budget to ensure that the existence of the centre is made as widely known as possible.

RESILIENCE MORTUARY

- 3.40** The London Mass Fatality Plan had been prepared over a number of years under the aegis of a multi-agency planning group which included representatives of all the key relevant agencies. It was approved by the Forum in March 2005 and formally circulated to all stakeholders at the end of June, just days before the bombings.
- 3.41** After initial preparatory work by the London Resilience Team (LRT), the Plan was triggered by the coroners at noon on 7 July and the decision was taken to set up a 'Resilience Mortuary' (a demountable structure). A Mass Fatality Co-ordination Team was set up as required by the Plan, consisting of the three coroners involved, the Metropolitan Police Senior Investigating Officer and Senior Identification Manager, Westminster City Council (as lead council), the military, the Anti-Terrorist Branch, LRT, the Home Office and the contractors De Boers who were formally requested to construct the mortuary.
- 3.42** The Plan worked well. The coroners, police, local authorities, pathologists, LRT, Home Office, NHS, and others worked in close partnership to deliver a 'Resilience Mortuary' which was ready to receive deceased victims in 24 hours and fully functioning in 72 hours. An existing stockpile of £130,000 of mortuary equipment (purchased and stored by LRT and jointly funded by the Home Office and the British Airports Authority) proved invaluable in the rapid deployment of the mortuary. The mortuary included facilities for bereaved families to view their loved ones. The Salvation Army provided many valuable services at this facility.
- 3.43** Annex D outlines Resilience Mortuary issues in more detail.

Lessons

- The London Mass Fatality Plan had only just been circulated when the bombings took place and many at the Gold Co-ordinating Group and among local responders were unaware of the Plan. There is a strong need for wider dissemination of the Plan and for middle management in key organisations such as the police and local authorities to be aware of it.
- The three coroners involved worked very closely and successfully together, despite the fact that there was no protocol to establish a lead coroner in a multi-site incident, or for coroners to work

together, or for agreement on the location of a mortuary. Such procedures would be helpful and could avoid confusion in a future multi-sited emergency.

- A need was identified for training and exercising of the Plan, particularly for the three police forces involved, Disaster Victim Identification and the local authorities.
- Radiological equipment had to be borrowed for the mortuary by the Association of Forensic Radiographers. There was a need for pre-allocation of radiological equipment.
- The Plan relied on military sites for a (demountable) ‘Resilience Mortuary’. There was a need to broaden the range of pre-identified and surveyed sites to include civilian sites such as Royal Parks and local authority sites.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR

3.44 The voluntary agencies played a significant role. They responded to the incident sites, assisted at the temporary mortuary, set up and provided staff for the Support Helpline, set up First Aid Posts at main line stations, and provided personnel at the Casualty Bureau.

3.45 They also played an important role in establishing and providing ongoing support to the Family Assistance Centre (and subsequent 7 July Assistance Centre), working with Westminster City Council and the Metropolitan Police Service. The agencies provided invaluable expertise and assistance. Key players included the British Red Cross, the Salvation Army, St. John Ambulance, Disaster Action, Cruse Bereavement Care and Victim Support. However, it became clear that the various agencies had different funding expectations with some expecting (and needing) immediate reimbursement and others being opposed to funding as a point of principle.

Lessons

- The debrief agreed that London Regional Resilience Forum Voluntary Sector Sub-committee (which consists of the voluntary agencies involved in emergency response in London) should draw up a protocol to set out their potential roles in an emergency and their position on funding. The protocol was drawn up, approved by the Forum on 10 May and formally signed in the presence of the Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion on 16th June 2006.

DISASTER FUND

- 3.46** Preparation of a London Disaster Fund Plan was commissioned by the Forum and developed by the Greater London Authority as part of the suite of plans prepared under the aegis of the London Resilience banner. It is the only Fund endorsed and supported by the Forum. The intention was to cover any emergency occurring in the London area and to avoid a situation of several competing funds being established. Legal arrangements for the Fund were developed by the GLA and arrangements for its practical administration were developed for the GLA by the British Red Cross. The original version of the Plan was agreed in September 2003 and it was updated in early 2005. Fortuitously a workshop was held two weeks before the London bombings where, with the participation of a wide range of partners, the arrangements were rehearsed and remaining issues and roles resolved.
- 3.47** The Forum's 7 July debrief found that the London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund had worked very efficiently and effectively, raising £11.5 million in all and making its first payments within two weeks of the bombings, and paying out £10.5 million by 6 July 2006.

Lessons

- **The Fund has been very successful in meeting its goals and should be considered as a model for other cities, counties and regions.**

ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUTURE EVENT DEBRIEFS

- 3.48** The debrief arrangement set in place by the Forum was felt to have worked well. It was nevertheless agreed that to aid the process of identifying cross boundary lessons it would be helpful in future to have an agreed national procedure and facility for conducting multi-agency debriefs while the information is still fresh. This would need to be broadbrush to allow the flexibility required by widely-different incidents, but it would allow lessons to be addressed in a common way.

Lessons

- **Response plans should include arrangements for conducting immediate individual and multi-agency debriefs. This should be carried out as a matter of routine, so that lessons can be captured, and meaningful feedback can be given to all responders even while the recovery activity is ongoing.**

SECTION 4 – LONDON ASSEMBLY 7 JULY REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

Purpose of Report

- 4.1 The Review Committee describes the purpose of the report as being to identify lessons learnt from the events and aftermath of 7 July attacks, identify successes and failings and improvements, and ensure systems and communications are put in place to facilitate the best response to the needs of those caught up in an incident.

Terms of Reference

- 4.2 To review lessons to be learned from the 7 July bomb attacks on London, in particular looking at:
- a) how information, advice and support was communicated to Londoners;
 - b) how business continuity arrangements worked in practice;
 - c) the role of Broadcasting Services in communication; and
 - d) the use of Information and Communication Technology to aid the response process.

Approach

- 4.3 The Committee's approach is to consider the 7 July response from the perspective of a member of the public caught up in the attacks and response rather than that of the emergency planners and responders themselves. The Forum values this perspective and is concerned to take on board any areas of weakness not previously identified in earlier reviews.

Assembly Report Summary

- 4.4 The report concludes that ***“Undoubtedly the emergency plans and exercises that had been put in place during the preceding months and years contributed to what was, in many respects, an outstanding response.”*** It acknowledges that those responsible for co-ordinating the response on 7 July were faced with ***“a situation of extraordinary pressure, uncertainty and complexity”*** and the dangers of ***“twenty-twenty hindsight”***.
- 4.5 The report's main criticism of the 7 July response is a ***‘lack of consideration of individuals caught up in major or catastrophic incidents’***, the focus being on incidents rather than individuals, process rather than people. It suggests that plans should be recast from the perspective of the people involved rather than the emergency services.

Balance

4.6 Acknowledging the approach referred to in paragraph 4.3, it is nevertheless disappointing that the tone of the report is largely negative. There is, for example, little acknowledgement of the openness of responding agencies about the lessons learnt. Also, despite references to the unprecedented scale of the attacks and difficulties to be overcome, and occasional praise for the overall response, the report gives little weight to the effectiveness of the main elements of that response – evacuation of scenes, treatment and rescue of casualties, provision of 1000 hospital beds, evacuation of the entire tube network, mainline stations and the central London bus service, rapid triggering of media briefing arrangements and a media centre, rapid restoration of the transport system, setting up of the temporary mortuary and Family Assistance Centre, rapid but sensitive victim identification by the Coroners service, and the successful setting up and operation of the Mayor’s Disaster Fund.

Misunderstandings

4.7 The report was not shown to responders in advance of publication (despite an earlier undertaking to allow the London Resilience Team to check it for accuracy), and the Committee does not seem to have the benefit of informed ‘technical’ advisers. As a result there are a number of misunderstandings and inaccuracies that could have been eliminated, reducing responders’ concerns. For example, the report confuses the Press Officers’ First Alert mechanism with the initial consultation between responders’ Gold commanders. It also suggests that the timetable for installation of ‘Connect’ on the Underground will be a further 20 years whereas it is in fact a 20 year programme to install a new radio and communication system and then to maintain it. The new system is being installed currently and will be brought into operational service on a line by line basis and will be completed in 2007. (These issues are being dealt with in individual agencies’ responses to the report).

Assembly Concerns

- 4.8** The main areas of concern highlighted by the report are as follows:
- a) the telecoms difficulties experienced by some responders;
 - b) serious London Ambulance Service difficulties with telecoms and supply of medical and other equipment;
 - c) a need for non emergency hospitals near an incident to be briefed;
 - d) improvements in communication to the media, public, business and schools;
 - e) improvements to the Family Assistance Centre arrangements; and
 - f) failure to look after uninjured survivors and collect their details.

- 4.9** All except (c) and (f) were identified in the Forum’s debrief and are covered in its work programme. Point (c) was reviewed by the London NHS earlier this year. Point (f) has been accepted by the Metropolitan Police as valid feedback and will shortly be covered by detailed guidance to all police forces and local authorities which will be issued by the Department of Culture Media and Sport, and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Telecommunications Difficulties

- 4.10 Telecoms between emergency services:** The same difficulties were identified by the Forum on 14 July 2005 and subsequently reviewed in detail (see Section 3, paras 3.7 – 3.13). The situation was reviewed and addressed in London in the following months. In addition Cabinet Office has issued advice to responders and is also carrying out a national review of responders’ telecoms resilience. A specific review of ACCOLC (ACCess OverLoad Class) led by the Cabinet Office) was also set in train following the 7 July debriefs. Rollout of new digital based systems has already started to the Police, and will continue to the other emergency services with final completion expected by mid 2009. Once digital systems are in place it will be unnecessary for emergency services to use mobiles.
- 4.11 Underground telecoms:** The Assembly report criticises the continued inability of police (except British Transport Police) to communicate between above and below ground on London Underground, and the “failure” to implement the Fennell Inquiry’s recommendations following the King’s Cross underground fire in 1988 (that London Fire Brigade and British Transport Police should have compatible radios).
- 4.12** In fact, overall communications between the surface and below ground worked well on 7 July. Radio communication on the Underground is never ideal but difficulties did not significantly hinder the response. Both British Transport Police (BTP) and London Fire Brigade (LFB) were able to maintain effective communication between the surface and below ground. In addition:
- a) All police and LFB radios worked reasonably at the shallow tunnels (at Edgware Road and Aldgate).
 - b) At present, only BTP and LFB radios work on deeper Underground platforms (but not far into deep tunnels) and BTP can facilitate communications for the other emergency services. BTP radios worked well at King’s Cross and Russell Square, and LFB radios at King’s Cross mostly worked well (with some interference from a defective handset). BTP conveyed messages for London Ambulance Service at King’s Cross. LFB carry ‘leaky feeders’ and UHF repeaters which they could have deployed in the tunnels had they regarded this as necessary.
 - c) The new digital radio system (Connect) is already being installed as quickly as possible and is being brought into operation on a line by line basis. It will be fully in place across the Underground by August 2007. The Police Airwave system will follow on shortly after and by Spring 2008 it should be fully complete. It will be possible for the police to communicate by Airwave

digital radio between the surface and the deep tube tunnels. The other emergency services will follow. This will be much more resilient and it is expected that in a similar incident, communications underground would not be disrupted – but there can be no guarantees against the effects of an explosion.

- d) The Fennell Inquiry's recommendation for compatible BTP and LFB radios were carefully considered but not implemented because existing systems at local commander level are already compatible, and it was felt that front line police and fire officers communicate with each other verbally as a result of the close proximity of their work. Use of runners and radio communication between BTP and LFB worked successfully on 7 July.

Passenger Driver Communications

- 4.13** *“Passengers on the three bombed trains were unable to communicate with drivers to alert them to the explosion” and “a large proportion of underground trains don’t have any means for passengers to contact the driver.”* Responders do not believe this caused significant problems on 7 July. Nevertheless as new trains are introduced this will be dealt with: all new tube trains will have passenger to driver communications systems (Northern, Jubilee, Piccadilly & Central already have it and all others except the Bakerloo Line are planned to have it by 2014.) But there can be no guarantee or expectation that any communication system will continue to operate after an explosion.

Serious London Ambulance Service difficulties with telecoms and supply

- 4.14 Telecommunications:** Identified in the Forum debrief. Since 7 July, London Ambulance Service (LAS) has actively improved its response systems. It has issued pagers to all managers, put in place a major incident response that sends twenty ambulances and six managers immediately to a scene, reconfigured incident rooms and accelerated national roll-out of a digital radio system for ambulances.
- 4.15 Medical Supplies:** Identified in the Forum debrief. LAS did have problems getting back up medical equipment to scenes because of the unprecedented nature of the incident. All London Underground stations have medical supplies and supplies in major transport hubs are being further built up. There are now fully-stocked equipment support vehicles located permanently in central London, and additional supplies are also now being carried in twenty-five training officer vehicles across the capital.

A need for non-emergency hospitals near an incident to be briefed

- 4.16** Not an issue identified in the Forum debrief. On the morning of 7 July NHS Gold issued a statement via the five Strategic Health Authorities informing all NHS organisations of the major incidents, placing them on a preparatory footing.

- 4.17** On the whole communications were effective between London Ambulance Service, NHS London, receiving hospitals and the Department of Health. Hospitals received many requests for information from a variety of sources. It was agreed following 7 July that the flow of information needed to be streamlined and this is in hand (see Annex A).
- 4.18** **'Uneven' distribution of casualties:** The “uneven” distribution of casualties is a regular feature of any major incident. As the Assembly report notes, this had a minimal impact on the care of patients. The NHS across London had 1200 beds available within three hours and was prepared to receive many more casualties, including those requiring specialist care, such as people with burns injuries.
- 4.19** **Role of Great Ormond Street as a triage centre:** Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOS) made a valuable and significant contribution to the response on 7 July. GOS does not have an accident and emergency department but, as the Assembly report states, it is understandable for clinical staff to contribute to the immediate response. The London NHS is working with specialist hospitals in London to ensure there is an appropriate flow of information and to agree how they can support the acute hospitals during an emergency.

Improvements in communication to the media, public, business and schools

- 4.20** Similar issues were identified by the Forum debrief though there are some misunderstandings. Action on the issues identified has been taken forward by the London Resilience Communications and Business Community Sub-committees which include representation from all the key agencies involved.

Improvements to Assistance Centre arrangements

- 4.21** This was an issue identified by the Forum debrief (see Annex C). National guidance was issued by ACPO and the Cabinet Office on 28 September 2005, London guidance was issued by the London Resilience Team in February 2006, a London Assistance Centre Plan has been prepared by the London Family Assistance Centre Working Group (a multi-agency group) and potential sites have been identified across London by London's six Local Resilience Forums.
- 4.22** Updated national guidance on Assistance Centres is to be issued by DCMS and ACPO to emergency planners and London's FAC Plans will reflect this.
- 4.23** **Casualty Bureau:** The Assembly report finds that the MPS bureau was set up too slowly because of an avoidable error, that the volume of calls could never have been coped with, that new technology now being put in place will enable calls to be redirected to bureaux outside London (NB this was already the case), and that more could have been done by explaining the purpose of the bureau through the media to limit the volume of calls.

Failure to look after uninjured survivors and collect their details

- 4.24** This was not an area specifically identified in the Forum's debrief beyond the need to widen and improve the facilities and information provided by the Assistance Centre. The Assembly report points to a lack of planning for those survivors who were traumatised but uninjured.
- 4.25** Existing police practice is, wherever practicable, for uninjured survivors to be looked after at Survivor Reception Centres and for their details to be logged. Local authorities' role is to support the police by providing suitable premises near to the incident. Unfortunately on 7 July the pressure of events was such that this could not be done and priority was given to the rescue of the injured and (given the danger of further bombs) to evacuation of the sites.
- 4.26** The Family Assistance Centre which was set up on 9 July provided a great deal of assistance for both survivors and bereaved, but this was too late to provide the initial support and data gathering that would ideally have been provided.
- 4.27** London's police and other emergency services have, since 7 July, urgently reviewed existing protocols and practice. They have taken on board feedback from voluntary organisations such as Disaster Action, who have been in close contact with the survivors. They have also taken comments from their own Family Liaison Officers.
- 4.28** In addition, survivors and the bereaved have been invited to meetings with Ministers at the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Home Office. They have been consulted on their experience of 7 July and the support they received in the months that followed and their views have been fed into detailed planning.
- 4.29** The importance of, where possible, establishing immediate reception centres, the need to streamline the collection and sharing of survivors' personal data, and the value of getting basic information out to those affected quickly at the scene will be stressed in the guidance to be issued by DCMS and ACPO. However, responders' ability to provide this number of facilities and level of support must be subject to the circumstances of the emergency and response. The first priority must always be saving life, the rescue and treatment of the seriously injured, and protection from further danger.
- 4.30** The Assembly report also recommends that at least two potential survivor reception centres should be identified close to Tube stations, overground rail stations and major bus stations in central London. This would amount to at least sixty centres being identified, which is impractical. On 7 July, both Westminster City Council and the London Borough of Camden were able to rapidly provide suitable sites near to the bomb scenes. The fact that these were not used is down to pressure of events and concerns over further attacks rather than any difficulty in quickly mobilising suitable premises.

CONCLUSION

- 4.31** Since its inception in the dark days after the attacks on the United States in September 2001, the London Resilience partnership has striven to ensure that London is as well prepared for emergencies as possible. Key to this is learning lessons and acting to ensure that gaps are filled, and the ability to respond continually improves. The partnership has been determined to learn lessons from the tragic experiences of other countries (for example 9/11, Bali, Madrid and Moscow), no less than from our own.
- 4.32** The lessons from the response to the London bombings were quickly identified and, as Annex A to this report makes clear, they are being doggedly pursued. There is absolutely no room for complacency. We must continue to redouble our efforts to identify areas for improvement and to test and practice London's response.
- 4.33** The London Regional Resilience Forum will continue to monitor the threat to the Capital and to drive London's emergency response preparations as vigorously as possible. And, it will continue to do so as a solid partnership, reflecting the wider bonds of community and partnership that characterise the Capital city.

ANNEX A – PROGRESS SINCE 7 JULY 2005

A1. Introduction

All areas were comprehensively debriefed in August and September and a programme of action was agreed at the London Regional Resilience Forum on 12 October 2005. Lessons from the 7 July debrief are being incorporated into the London Resilience Exercises programme. Progress against the main areas identified by the Forum follows.

A2. Sustainability

- a) Work on the recommendations agreed by the Forum is in hand, and all partner agencies are addressing this in their planning.
- b) The Forum has reviewed Gold training and the London exercise programme is being revamped (following an understandable lull after July 2005) to reflect the need for more senior staff at Gold level, particularly among the agencies outside of the emergency services.

A3. Strategic Co-ordination Centre/Command & Control

- a) Work is proceeding on developing detailed proposals for purpose built SCC for the Capital, together with a fallback.
- b) **Command & Control:** The London Command & Control Protocol has been revised to take on board lessons of 7 July. A revised protocol was approved by the Forum on 10 May and is now in place.
- c) In November 2005 the Cabinet Office published advice on the management of emergencies and relationship between responders at different levels in its central guidance “**Emergency Response and Recovery**” underpinning the operation of the Civil Contingencies Act. It has also set out responders’ roles in “**Central Government Arrangements for Responding to Emergencies – Concept of Operations**”.
- d) **Emergency Closure and Reopening of Transport Networks:** The Department for Transport is discussing with partners how the roles, procedures and lines of communication for managing the closure and reopening of transport networks can be pre-planned, while ensuring operators and emergency services can still act quickly as and when they need.
- e) **Gold Training:** Multi-agency Gold training continues to be built into the London Resilience exercise programme. In particular, the Forum is looking at enhancing existing arrangements through linking into new exercising facilities being developed by the Cabinet Office’s Emergency Planning College.
- f) **Exercise Programme:** Arrangements have been put in place to strengthen the exercising capability. The Exercise Working Group has

reviewed its Terms of Reference and Membership and is addressing the exercising of risks identified at national, regional and local level. As part of this work, a database, complementing the national one developed by Cabinet Office, has been put in place to capture information on exercises taking place in London which impact on the wider Partnership so that maximum benefit can be gained from these.

A4. Telecommunications

- a) Alternative and fall-back radio-based communication systems have been progressed by response agencies following 7 July.
- b) A review of London Resilience partners' telecommunications resilience on 7 July was carried out by the London Resilience Team with the assistance of the Cabinet Office in August and September 2005 and endorsed by the Forum on 12 October 2005. The lessons identified are being acted upon.
- c) The Cabinet Office has issued advice to all emergency responders asking them to review their telecommunications provision against a range of vulnerabilities to ensure diverse, flexible and resilient arrangements.
- d) At the same time, the Cabinet Office is working through the regional resilience teams (in London the London Resilience Team) to review the resilience of multi-agency communications at a regional and local level.
- e) The Cabinet Office is also reviewing the operation of the ACCOLC (Access Overload Class) network management arrangement.
- f) The rollout of the new digitally based Airwave mobile radio systems has already started in London. Once emergency services have Airwave communications it will be much less necessary for them to rely on mobiles for operational command and control purposes.
- g) The British Transport Police already had Airwave when the bombings took place as did some units of the City and Metropolitan Police.
- h) The City of London Police completed migration to Airwave on 6 June 2006. Eight of the 32 Metropolitan Police Borough commands had migrated to Airwave by May 2006 and all will have done so by October 2007.
- i) Arrangements have been made for the London Ambulance Service to go live with Airwave in May 2007 and complete the change by early 2008.
- j) The London Fire Brigade will receive an early issue of Firelink Airwave terminals for strategic officers this year. The full programme will commence in May 2007 with the process complete by the 3rd quarter of 2009 according to current plans.
- k) Satellite mobile phones have been deployed to key London responders as a fallback network.

- l) The London Resilience Communications sub-committee has developed a catchphrase which advises the public on the use of mobile phones in an emergency.

A5. Underground Telecommunications

- a) Transport for London has been working as quickly as possible to improve radio communication on the Underground. Work on installing the state of the art 'Connect' digital radio system across the Tube is well advanced. Connect will link control centres, trains, stations, and depots. It is already installed on the East London Line, will be on three more lines by November 2006 and should cover the entire Underground network by August 2007. Much of the equipment has already been installed and staff are being trained.
- b) The Connect system will also improve communications between drivers on trains and rescuers.
- c) As part of the project there will be interoperability with the Police service's 'Airwave' digital radio system by Spring 2008. The Airwave radio system will then be able to operate above and below ground and will enable the Police to communicate on their own encrypted channels between the surface and deep tunnels.
- d) The 'Connect' system will also be able to deliver incident radio communications along the tunnels for London Fire Brigade.
- e) But although the new system will be much more effective and resilient to damage than the current Underground radio system, no system can be guaranteed against the effects of an explosion.
- f) PITO (the Police Information Technology Organisation) has contracted with O2 Airwave to provide an Interim London Underground solution. This has been available since March 2006 and consists of 3 emergency response vehicles that respond to major incidents on the Underground. These vehicles carry equipment that can link with the nearest surface base station and extend Airwave coverage underground via 'leaky feeder' cables (carried on trailers). This capability will be maintained once the 'fixed' Airwave solution is in place to provide fallback resilience.

A6. London Ambulance Service (LAS)

- a) London Ambulance Service has installed a new 'Gold' control suite designed to allow the service to deal with multiple, simultaneous attacks.
- b) LAS managers have all been given radio pagers which are resilient in a major incident.
- c) On 7 July, although technically LAS radios worked, the volume of traffic on their radio system made it difficult for managers to get through and speak to the control room. LAS has made changes to their internal procedures to address these problems,

- d) The new Airwave national digital radio system has been accelerated and will be introduced in summer 2007 and fully operational by early 2008. In the meantime, from July 2006, operational managers are being given digital radio handsets.
- e) LAS has now agreed with London Underground that they will provide two of their radios at each station for LAS staff to use when called to the station. This will allow them to communicate from ground level to the tunnel level.
- f) The amount of equipment carried on emergency support vehicles has also been reviewed and more supplies are being carried on 25 training officer vehicles.
- g) Since 7 July, LAS has put in place a new automatic major incident response that sends twenty ambulances and six managers immediately to a scene.
- h) **Medical supplies:** Network Rail, London Underground, London Ambulance Service and the Department of Health are working together on the storage of forward medical supplies at key London rail locations for use in emergency situations across the London transport network. These supplies will be in addition to the stations' standard first aid provision (deleted words) and will principally be used by ambulance and other health or advanced first aid staff responding to an incident. This was first suggested following 7 July when a number of people (off duty doctors, nurses, etc.) came forward to assist victims before the emergency services arrived.

A7. Warning & Informing the Public

- a) **Public Information Planning:** The London Resilience Public Information Plan is being updated in light of 7 July lessons and will be brought to the Forum for approval on 19 October 2006.
- b) **Targeting Information to Business:** A piece of work is underway, led by London First, to look at how the communications network across business should function in the time of an emergency. The aim is to agree how to inform the business community of relevant Gold command information during a major incident and also how to feed issues and concerns back. This has been well received by business, in particular, in providing an authoritative source of information alongside the media.
- c) **Targeting Information to Other Audiences:** The information cascade to businesses will shortly be tested. If successful, this will be used as a model for other key audiences. Press officers across the London Resilience Partnership have filled in 'desktop instructions' identifying their own role in an emergency and highlighting the sectors and umbrella groups they each have contact with. Once the business cascade has been implemented, further cascades will be developed and tested that

include the health and voluntary sectors, commuters, schools, minority groups and others.

- d) **Schools:** As part of the work on targeting specific audience, the Association of London Government will prepare plans to ensure that when an incident occurs that causes a combination of parental anxiety and widespread disruption of the transport network, local authorities across London provide schools with rapid and consistent advice.
- e) **Foreign Media:** The Metropolitan Police and the Cabinet Office are working with the Foreign Press Association to ensure that its members have a greater understanding of emergency response and the arrangements made for media during a major incident. This should make for a more orderly response from the Foreign Press in a future incident.
- f) **Timing of Information:** The Cabinet Office and Metropolitan Police are working through the National Media Emergency Forum to ensure that messages released to the public are current and accurate, and where interviews are repeated at a later time in the day, the media make it clear that they are broadcasting an earlier recording.
- g) **Media Monitoring:** The police and Cabinet Office have also set up improved arrangements for monitoring broadcasts to identify incorrect and unhelpful information, and speedily correct this through the media.
- h) **Support to the Coroner:** Protocols are being created for press officer assistance to coroners and mortuaries in an incident and pre-preparation of explanatory material to allow for early media briefing on issues such as victim identification and other forensic work.
- i) **Support to Assistance Centre:** DCMS press office assisted in handling the centre's media calls over the 7 July anniversary period and proactively managed a publicity campaign to publicise the centre's helpline and website. Communications and marketing need to be an integral part of the future Assistance Centre Plan, and DCMS and Westminster are due to discuss the future arrangements for the centre's communications, with a view to preparing a communications strategy.
- j) **Guidelines for Use of Traffic Cameras by Media:** Well established protocols exist between Transport for London (TfL), the Metropolitan Police (MPS) and two media organisations regarding the use of images from traffic cameras. The existing CCTV feed is provided on condition that it is only used and broadcast for traffic information purposes. This protocol was breached by some media agencies on 7 July and TfL wrote to all relevant media agencies last year to reiterate the terms of the protocol. This states that no general news transmission or recording may be made from traffic camera feeds without express prior permission of TfL.
- k) **Media Involvement in Exercises:** LFEPA and LRT are currently planning an exercise, 'Safer City', to test local authority command and control arrangements. It is hoped the media will be involved as players in the exercise, and a bid has been made to members of the LMEF. This

will also be an opportunity to test the revised arrangements for providing information to schools in an emergency.

- l) **Mayor's Role:** A considerable amount of work has gone into preparing a Mayor's Media Protocol, defining the Mayor's role during an incident. This has been agreed at a senior level and by the Mayor's Office, and will be formally endorsed by Government in the next few months, with a view to signing it off at the October meeting of the LRRF.
- m) **Internet:** The London Prepared website (www.londonprepared.gov.uk) has been redesigned to provide more up to date information on the work of the London Resilience partnership, public advice about emergencies aimed at residents, commuters and visitors to London, and business continuity advice for businesses. It will be re-launched in Autumn 2006.
- n) **Evacuation:** A communications strategy for evacuation plans has been prepared by the London Resilience Team (LRT) and agreed by the evacuation working group. This is ready to be implemented as soon as central government has released its national guidance.
- o) **Training on Civil Contingencies Act for Local Authority Press Officers:** LRT and the Association of London Authorities (ALG), are organising a series of workshops to be held in the autumn of 2006 for local authority emergency planning officers and their press officers, to inform and practise their roles and responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act for warning and informing the public. Additional workshops will be held for other responding organisations.

A8. Common Information Picture

- a) The London Regional Resilience Forum meeting on 18 January 2006 agreed that an extranet should be implemented in London. This will be a useful tool for communicating across the partnership both in slow and fast time.
- b) Protocols have been developed by the London responders for the use of the extranet in an emergency to give all partners a rapidly available common information picture.
- c) The Cabinet Office has agreed, in principle, subject to contract negotiations, to fund linked extranets for each of the nine English regions.
- d) The London extranet specification has been agreed with the other English regions and will now be procured by the Department for Communities and Local Government on behalf of the Cabinet Office.

A9. Chemical, Biological and Radiological

- a) Detailed planning and exercising continues.

A10. Access Through Cordons

- a) The difficulties which arose on 7 July have been reviewed by a multi-agency group led by the police and as a result minor changes are being made to the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel's Major Incident Procedure Manual.

A11. Mass Fatality Planning

- a) The London Mass Fatality Working Group has been extended to ensure that a wider range of organisations are aware of The London Resilience Mass Fatality Plan.
- b) The Plan has been revised to take on board lessons from 7 July. The revised version will be put to the next meeting of the London Regional Resilience Forum in October 2006 for formal endorsement by the partnership.
- c) A significant number of new temporary mortuary sites have been identified and are currently being surveyed.
- d) Following the dismantling of the temporary mortuary used for the bombings, the London Resilience mortuary equipment stockpile has been completely replenished and, through the efforts of the Home Office, Westminster City Council, and MITIE, significantly improved.
- e) Three additional stockpiles of mortuary equipment have now been established and being held in other parts of the UK.
- f) The Home Office has entered into a call-off contract for the use of demountable temporary mortuaries in an emergency.
- g) A dedicated national Disaster Victim Identification Team has been established.

A12. Humanitarian Assistance Centre Planning

- a) DCMS has interviewed many survivors and this information has been fed into London's detailed planning for London Humanitarian Assistance Centres.
- b) The London Resilience Family Assistance Centre Working Group has completed a detailed London Assistance Centre Provisional Guidance Document which could be used in an emergency now. The Forum put a draft plan out to final consultation on 13 July and will formally approve it on 19 October 2006. Potential sites have been identified by all six of London's Local Resilience Forums.
- c) Draft national guidance was issued by the Association of Chief Constables (ACPO) and Cabinet Office in September 2005. Further guidance will be issued by ACPO and the Department of Culture Media and Sport shortly which will dovetail with a training programme to be run

by the Government's Emergency Planning College for local emergency responders who would set up and staff Assistance Centres.

- d) Specific services, such as the 7 July Assistance Centre were set up after 18 August 2005 and the London trauma screening programme will be evaluated in the coming months to see whether such a model will work in the future.

A13. Survivor Arrangements

- a) Following 7 July, police and emergency services have urgently reviewed existing protocols and practices. They have taken on board feedback from voluntary organisations such as Disaster Action who have been in close contact with the survivors as well as from their own Family Liaison Officers. In Government, DCMS has taken the major role in reviewing arrangements for survivors.
- b) **Survivor Reception Centres and Family & Friends Reception Centres:** Further guidance will be issued by ACPO and DCMS shortly to all police forces and local authorities and will recommend that people are provided with information on where to go for support in the first crucial hours after an incident, either at the scene or by other means such as TV and radio announcements. It will also provide a template for a basic information leaflet to meet this need.

A14. Casualty Bureau

- a) Following the 7 July attacks the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has increased its capability to efficiently collate casualty information from receiving hospitals and from those persons affected who present themselves at designated survivor reception points. This has been done by securing portable systems for remote data collection, linked directly to CasWeb and then a secure connection to the MPS HOLMES2 Casualty Bureau. The MPS is now examining options as to how this capability can be further increased within London.

A15. Recovery Management

- a) A London Resilience Recovery Management Protocol was approved by the Forum on 10 May 2006 and is now in place.

A16. Voluntary Sector

- a) A London Resilience Voluntary Sector Protocol, drafted by the voluntary agencies, is now in place. It was approved by the Forum on 10 May 2006 and formally signed in the presence of the Minister for Local Government and Community Cohesion.

A17. British Transport Police

- a) One of the range of options being used by the BTP is an increased use of Section 44 TACT searches in conjunction with security measures being implemented by the rail industry and Transec.
- b) BTP has expanded its proactive counter terrorism capability and has done a lot of work in regard to hostile surveillance. It has developed a behaviour assessment screening training package which is being rolled out to officers.
- c) BTP has enhanced its guidance to its Special Response Units with regard to CBR surveying at reported incidents.
- d) BTP has expanded its Special Branch capability, forging close links with the Metropolitan Police Anti-Terrorist branch. BTP officers attend daily intelligence meetings and contribute to the weekly Security Review Committees.
- e) BTP, as part of its debrief process, has reviewed and developed its Gold Support function.

A18. Security Briefings

- a) There is a continuing programme of ongoing stakeholder briefings on security and the threat level, between (London) police agencies and partners, notably the business and transport sectors.

A19. Transport

- a) The Department for Transport (DfT) has undertaken a trial of more thorough security check processes and equipment (including body scanners) on London Underground, Heathrow Express and National Rail.

A20. Transport for London (TfL)

- a) TfL has invested in more British Transport Police officers over the past two years – now funding 670 (an increase of 200). The annual TfL policing budget has increased by 10% since 7 July.
- b) TfL has now installed 6,000 CCTV cameras on the Underground network and will double that figure by 2010.
- c) London Underground has also increased staff visibility on stations capitalising on greater 'Oyster' take-up and the reduced need for ticket office staff at certain locations.
- d) The vigilance campaigns are regularly refreshed for transport staff and passengers, utilising spoken word announcements and poster campaigns.

- e) TfL has been working closely with Government and emergency services on transport security issues.
- f) Over the next five years every station on the London Underground network will be refurbished or updated with over 30 (more than 10%) having been modernised during the last year. This includes security improvements (including digital CCTV), help points and improved lighting.
- g) On London Underground, links have been installed to enable the NOC/MICC to remotely monitor activity at 80 stations using the existing CCTV equipment. On buses, options for remote monitoring of vehicle interiors using CCTV are being evaluated. Remote monitoring of key bus interchanges via CentreComm, the bus control centre, is also possible.
- h) An emergency equipment review has been undertaken – larger first aid kits will be supplied to stations following consultation with the NHS as well as other emergency equipment such as “hands free” torches, paper overalls and masks to prevent dust inhalation.
- i) The challenge is achieving the right balance between running a mass public transit system that keeps London moving whilst introducing proportionate security measures that deter and prevent terrorist attacks.

A21. National Health Service

- a) Since 7 July, the London NHS Emergency Planning Team has held a major exercise testing its response, once again, in the event of several big attacks on London.
- b) A template has been developed for situation reports, which would enable hospitals to report information on a regular basis to the NHS strategic co-ordination centre.
- c) A notification cascade protocol has now been put in place to ensure that all NHS organisations are informed in the event of a major emergency in London. An exercise took place on 26 April 2006 to test the protocol and communications response from all London NHS organisations. With the advent of the new Strategic Health Authority for London, this protocol is being reviewed.
- d) On telecoms, the NHS is currently engaging in both internal and external reviews to develop more resilient ways of communicating.
- e) The National Institute for Clinical Excellence has produced guidance for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (www.nice.org), which recognises that overall people are resilient and will recover from an event such as 7/7 without long-term problems. However, for those who symptoms do not subside over time, e.g. 2 months, they may require professional support. NHS London established NHS Trauma Response Project to

co-ordinate the establishment of a screening and treatment programme drawing on resources from most of London's mental health trauma services. This work continues.

A.22 Health Protection Agency

- a) Long term health follow-up: Following the bombings, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) agreed with the Department of Health (DH) that a long-term health follow-up be established for those individuals at potential risk of delayed effects on their health. No prior protocol existed for such a follow-up in the UK so this process represents a pioneering activity. A protocol is being developed, and those who were involved in the attacks are being informed of its existence and encouraged to take part. In the longer term, the findings of this follow-up will inform a national protocol for the public health response to major incidents in the future.

A.23 Environment Agency

- a) Since the London Bombings the Environment Agency has stepped up its engagement with Civil Contingency Act category 1 responders and professional partners, and has increased staff training in incident management. The agency is also increasing the number of staff with security clearances to increase the level of integration in multi agency planning.

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ANNEX B – TELECOMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

B1. What Happened to the Networks?

- a) **Mobile Phones:** GSM networks experienced very high levels of traffic over a wide area. Demand was managed by network providers. Networks did not “collapse”, nor were they “turned off”. Callers either could not get through, or they could only get through after multiple attempts.
- b) **Fixed Phones:** High traffic levels were managed by network providers.
- c) **999 Calls:** Demand did not affect 999 calls, but callers who were denied access because of congestion, could not make 999 calls.
- d) **Consultation:** From 1200 hours, CSIA, OFCOM, DTI, and telecomms companies conferred to exchange information and discuss mutual support. London utility companies conferred from approx 1130 hours.
- e) **SMS Text via Mobile:** Text messages pass information more efficiently than voice, but the (fixed) allocation of channels for text is less than for voice. On 7 July, congestion seriously delayed delivery of text messages. Encouraging people to send more text messages instead of making voice calls in such circumstances would cause longer delays in text delivery.
- f) **Mobile data:** GPRS (GSM Packet Radio System), uses separate channels on the same radio networks as voice and text. Some systems were affected by congestion on 7 July, but others operated well.
- g) **ACCOLC:** (ACCess OverLoad Control) bars the public from the networks except for 999 calls. It was applied at the request of the City Police in a 1km radius of Aldgate on the O2 network from 1210 hours to 1646 hours. An earlier request to apply ACCOLC on the Vodafone network was refused.
- h) **3G:** “3G” is the new mobile phone technology being rolled out, starting in London, which will eventually replace GSM. Although there were some reports of congestion on 3G networks, it caused no particular difficulties.
- i) **Satellite Phones:** Cabinet Office satellite phones (satphones) were issued to LRT on 7 July, 14 July, and 21 July. None were deployed on 7 July but some have since been deployed to key London organisations.
- j) **Pagers:** Designed to alert and inform, most pagers provide one-way communications only, with no confirmation of receipt. They can enable messages to get through when mobile phone networks are congested. LFB uses an LFB-owned system and a public service. Both worked normally on 7 July. COLP successfully used its pager

alert scheme on 7 July to provide key business personnel with incident progress information.

- k) **Radio:** British Transport Police (BTP) officers, some Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) officers, and some City of London Police (COLP) officers used Airwave. MPS and COLP also used their older radio systems. Mutual aid specialist officers from other forces used Airwave. MPS and COLP radio worked, but LAS and LFB radio nets were extremely busy. The London Buses radio system, fitted to all buses in London, worked well. Airwave performed well, deployed underground solutions to Russell Square and Kings Cross, and loaned handsets to LU to assist with recovery underground.

B2. Key Problems/Issues

Category 1 and 2 Responders

- a) **Mobile phones:** Responders must not rely on mobile phones for critical functions. LAS officers were out of contact at critical periods. LFB had difficulty contacting key staff. London Buses at times had difficulties in contacting some field staff.
- b) **Fixed phones:** Some fixed phone lines in the Health sector were reported to be so congested as to be unusable.
- c) **999:** No difficulties were reported on 7 July.
- d) **Text Via Mobile:** LAS unable to alert officers by text.
- e) **GPRS Mobile Data:** National Grid Transco (NGT) gas engineers mobile data system alarmed at 0930. NGT reverted to manual tasking for emergency calls until 1600, and ceased non-emergency work in London. LAS ambulance mobile data terminals worked satisfactorily.
- f) **ACCOLC:** Perception that the wrong people have ACCOLC SIM cards. One view: all police officers should be issued with these cards as any officer could be at the scene of an incident. Opposite view: mobile phone systems must be fully available for public use.
- g) **3G:** Currently under-used 3G capacity may present a temporary opportunity during the roll-out of 3G networks.
- h) **Satellite phones:** Issues: handset size, usability in cities, unknown capacity constraints, status of overseas gateways.
- i) **Pagers:** Very soon after 7 July, LAS purchased pagers to alert and inform key roles without relying on mobile phones.
- j) **Radio:** LFB radio network was busy, but procedures were in place to enable priority radio traffic to take precedence. LAS radio networks were very busy. Recognising some of the communication difficulties experienced on 7/7, Bus Inspectors (road staff) vehicles have been equipped with radio and Airwave handsets will be issued to road staff in the near future

B3. General Public and Business.

- a) Unable/difficult to get through to loved ones on 7 July morning.
- b) Importance of mobile networks for public reassurance.
- c) Possibility of using mobile network for mass public messages in 7 July congestion situations, perhaps by utilising “cell broadcast” facility.

B4. Recommendations

- **Mobile Phones:** Diversify sources of supply.
- **Fixed Phones:** Review requirements for incoming and outgoing lines in a crisis, and compare with current capacity provided.
- **ACCOLC:** Review the criteria for invoking ACCOLC, the decision-making protocol, and training for police silver and gold commanders.
- **3G:** Buy 3G phones to bypass GSM congestion in the short term, if the benefit outweighs the cost.
- **Satphones:** Acquire them where advantages outweigh disadvantages.
- **Pagers:** So long as they are sufficiently independent of other networks, consider using pagers for alerting and mobilisation.
- **Radio:** Action must be taken to make responders’ primary means of communications (usually radio) fully adequate to meet their communications needs in a crisis. Make wider use of TETRA based systems such as Airwave for partners, including senior staff working at the strategic level.
- **General Public:** Educate public on need for phone discipline in a crisis, e.g: only essential purposes, make short calls only to establish people’s safety, then stay off the network. Consider use of “cell broadcast”.

B5. Conclusions

- a) No networks collapsed, thanks to providers taking timely and coordinated action, but services were unreliable.
- b) Key features of the impact were that management tiers were more affected than operational tiers, and that communication between agencies was inadequate, especially outside the emergency services and among senior colleagues at a strategic level.

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ANNEX C – FAMILY ASSISTANCE CENTRE (FAC)

C1. Background

- 1.1 At the time of the London bombings on 7 July, there was no Family Assistance Centre Plan in existence. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) led on the Humanitarian Assistance Guidance Document which was still in draft form and not yet in the public domain.
- 1.2 The requirement to establish a Family Assistance Centre was identified on 8 July. There had been no pre-planning for this facility because the guidance document was in development and had not been seen by responders.
- 1.3 The purpose of a Family Assistance Centre is to:
 - a) enable those affected to gain as much information as is currently available about missing family members and friends;
 - b) offer access to a range of facilities that will allow families and survivors to make informed choices according to their needs;
 - c) ensure a seamless multi-agency approach to provide support without duplication; and
 - d) help local responders to ensure that bereaved families, survivors and communities receive professional advice and assistance that is co-ordinated, consistent and clear, that meets individuals' needs and is offered in a sensitive and compassionate manner.

C.2 7 July Bombings

- 2.1 At the request of the Gold Coordinating Group, the London Resilience Team convened a meeting of relevant partners on the evening of Friday 8 July. This was chaired by the Chief Executive of Westminster Council and included Westminster Emergency Planning Staff, the Metropolitan Police (some contributing to the meeting by telephone), the British Red Cross, the London Resilience Team (including The Salvation Army secondee to LRT) and a liaison officer from the Civil Contingencies Secretariat of the Cabinet Office.
- 2.2 The group identified and inspected the initial venue (the Queen Mother Sports Centre). The Metropolitan Police Service and Westminster City Council then led the construction of the facility which was opened by the Culture Secretary at 2pm on Saturday 9 July, just fourteen hours after the initial planning meeting.
- 2.3 The FAC was subsequently relocated to more suitable premises at Lindley Hall (Royal Horticultural Hall & Centre) in Vincent Square, Westminster, London SW1, which opened at 2pm on Tuesday 12 July. This became known as the '7 July Assistance Centre' after considerable negative reaction in respect of the name 'Family Assistance Centre'.
- 2.4 The centre was set-up for all those affected by the events of 7 July – in particular to relatives and friends of those who died, and survivors, whether or not physically injured. It aimed to provide an integrated multi-agency

response, in the form of a secure and private focal point for assistance from a range of professional and voluntary services. This was in addition to existing local support arrangements.

- 2.5 During the time the FAC was open, support was provided to over 600 visitors. In the initial period the FAC was fully staffed for 24 hours per day but this was reduced to 8am to 10pm, seven days a week. A small team of Police Family Liaison Officers and Local Authority Social Services Staff were present at all times the facility was open.
- 2.6 The FAC was complemented by a *7 July Family Assistance Helpline* which aimed to assess callers' needs, offer on-the-spot emotional support and listen to concerns and offer advice and practical support by signposting callers to other organisations that could provide more in-depth assistance.
- 2.7 Westminster City Council led on the creation of an *Assistance Website* which went live on 5 August and launched on the 7 August to coincide with the one month anniversary of the incidents. The website is intended as an accessible, one stop source of information on support services available from all agencies.
- 2.8 The 7 July Assistance Centre closed on the 19 August and moved to a smaller facility in the Westminster area in line with reduced demand for its services.

C3. Debrief

- 3.1 Following the FAC debrief it was identified that a process of pre-planning should be instigated with a view to the publication of a London Family Assistance Plan.
- 3.2 The multi-agency debrief found that the word 'Family' had been unhelpful and misleading, putting some individuals off from attending.
- 3.3 It identified the need for formal guidance, a detailed London plan, and identification of suitable sites for Assistance Centres across the Capital.
- 3.4 A whole range of other improvements were identified including initial 'triage' on entry, information gathering, arrangements for running the centre, the range of assistance to be offered and expertise required, the roles of supporting agencies and the welfare of staff working at the centre, both during and in the weeks after the period of the operation.
- 3.5 To ensure that the existence of the centre is made as widely known as possible, a marketing strategy needs to be prepared with a pre-agreed budget.
- 3.6 The debrief agreed that London Regional Resilience Forum Voluntary Sector Sub-committee (which consists of the voluntary agencies involved in emergency response in London) should draw up a protocol to set out their potential roles in an emergency and their position on funding. This protocol was drawn up, approved by the Forum on 10 May and formally signed in the presence of the Minister for Local Government & Community Cohesion on 16 June 2006.

C4. Progress and Current Position

- 4.1 **National Guidance:** Since 7 July, National Guidance for the establishment of Family Assistance Centres has been made available (28 September 2005). Due regard and consideration of this guidance will be taken into account in the development of a London Assistance Centre Plan.
- 4.2 An **Interim Guidance Document** was prepared by LRT and issued in February 2006.
- 4.3 A multi-agency London Assistance Centre Working Group has been formed to work with LRT in the development of a London Assistance Centre (LAC) Plan. Each of London's six Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) is represented by an Emergency Planning Officer.
- 4.4 On 15 May 2006, the London Resilience Team (LRT) hosted an FAC Workshop designed again to debrief the events of the 7 July 2005 in relation to the implementation of the Family Assistance Centre. It was designed to identify aspects of good practice and opportunities for professional learning. The workshop was successful and acted as the catalyst for the inclusion of a number of elements in the developing LAC Plan.
- 4.5 A 'working draft' plan was presented to the London Regional Resilience Forum (LRRF) on 13 July 2006. As part of the consultation process, the working draft of the LAC Plan is now with stakeholders.
- 4.6 In addition, LRT has co-ordinated the identification of suitable venues for any future London Assistance Centre. These venues have been identified by the EPO representative from each LRF. Members of the working group are currently visiting these elected sites in order to confirm their suitability as FAC venues.

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ANNEX D – RESILIENCE MORTUARY**D1. Background**

- 1.1 The London Mass Fatality Plan was approved by the London Regional Resilience Forum of March 2005. It was printed and published at the end of June 2005 and circulated to all key stakeholders including the emergency planning officers for each London Borough, the London Coroners and emergency services. The events of 7 July therefore occurred only a few days after the plan had been distributed.

D2. 7 July 2005

- 2.1 On the morning of 7 July 2005, after the scale of the events was recognised, the London Resilience Team (LRT) Mass Fatality Team contacted key representatives of partner agencies to prepare for activation of the London Mass Fatality Plan. The representatives included the central London Designated Mortuary Managers (at St Pancras and Westminster) and the three relevant Coroners (Dr Knapman - Westminster, Dr Reid – Camden and Mr. Matthews – City of London.)
- 2.2 At 12 noon Dr. Knapman hosted a teleconference of the relevant Coroners and they decided that a 'Resilience Mortuary' would have to be established as it was likely that the capacity of existing mortuaries would be exceeded.
- 2.3 The London Mass Fatality Plan calls for a 'Mass Fatality Co-ordination Team' to meet. The first meeting was held at 14.00 hosted by the LRT at the Government Office for London and chaired by Dr. Knapman. A second Mass Fatality Co-ordination Team meeting was held at 16.00, again hosted by the LRT and chaired by Dr. Knapman. This meeting was attended by all three London Coroners, the police Senior Investigating Officer, the police Senior Identification Manager and representatives from the Home Office, Westminster City Council, the military, the police Anti-Terrorist Branch, LRT and DeBoers (the provider of the Resilience Mortuary). It was at this meeting that a formal request was made to DeBoer to construct the Resilience Mortuary.
- 2.4 A number of sites listed in the London Mass Fatality Plan were considered for the location of the mortuary and, following advice from London District (military), the Honourable Artillery Company (HAC) in City Road, EC1 was selected. As per the plan, a 'Mortuary Management Team' was formed to discuss the tactical decisions around the establishment of the facility. This team included the police Mortuary Operations Manager and the Local Authority Mortuary Facilities Manager.

D3. Construction of the Mortuary

- 3.1 The focus for the LRT Mass Fatality Team then fell to the HAC where the Resilience Mortuary was erected overnight. The plan required the facility to be ready to receive and store victims within 24 hours of a request being made and this deadline was met. The first deceased victims arrived on the evening of 8 July and the first identification examinations were made the next morning.

- 3.2 Within a few hours one of the largest mortuaries in the world was constructed with approximately 250 staff being on site at any one time. Facilities included:
- a) A covered area where victims could be removed from vehicles transferring them from all four scenes
 - b) Four reception areas for the deceased¹
 - c) Four refrigerated victim storage areas¹
 - d) Four refrigerated examination areas for police forensic teams¹
 - e) A large autopsy suite with six fully equipped workstations, a large working area for fluoroscopy and radiography, and work areas for the odontologist, police photographers, Scenes Of Crime Officers (SOCOs) and Coroners Officers.
 - f) Staff changing, shower and toilet facilities
 - g) An exhibit handling and storage area
 - h) A multi-agency Site Co-ordination Centre
 - i) A 24-hour canteen
 - j) A Family Viewing Area to accommodate families who wished to view their loved ones.
 - k) Meeting rooms and offices for key staff.
 - l) All areas were air conditioned and well lit to provide good facilities.
- 3.3 Over the next few days, the LRT Mass Fatality Team worked closely with all agencies but, in particular, the Metropolitan Police Service and Westminster City Council to ensure that the site was constructed effectively and in accordance with the agreed plan.

D4. Mortuary Operations

- 4.1 In the initial development of the plan and associated equipment stockpiles, LRT had assisted in procuring equipment for the initial running of the mortuary. The stockpiling of equipment was jointly funded by the Home Office and British Airports Authority. This equipment was fully used and was found to be essential for the set up of the facility which, in turn, enabled a speedy identification of the deceased. Mortuary teams from the Metropolitan Police Service, British Transport Police and City of London Police worked long hours to ensure this was done accurately, effectively and with respect and dignity. Radiographers released from the NHS also assisted with this process. Mortuary examinations ran from 8am to 8pm but with meetings, site maintenance and security there was activity at the site 24 hours a day.

¹ Four areas required due to four different scenes of crime. This ensured that there was not cross-contamination of evidence.

- 4.2 Despite the site being overlooked by offices and residential accommodation, disruption to local people was kept to a minimum due to an effective communication strategy by Westminster City Council.
- 4.3 The facilities provided for families visiting the mortuary to view their loved ones were highly praised by expert visitors and faith leaders, but most importantly by the families themselves. This important aspect of the plan benefited significantly from the services of The Salvation Army, whose dedication and hard work were important to the success of the Family Viewing Area in its role as the mortuary's principal public interface.
- 4.4 The LRT provided an on-site contact point during the whole period of the mortuary operation and on many occasions were called on to broker meetings. They attended every Mass Fatality Co-ordination Team meeting and every Mortuary Management Meeting. Partnership working by all the organisations involved was essential to the successful delivery of the facility.

D5. Debriefs

- 5.1 It is important that, in such ongoing operations, the lessons learned are quickly disseminated (in this instance further terrorist attacks could not be ruled out) and, therefore, a number of individuals and agencies were conducted around the mortuary when operations were completed as part of a rapidly designed and implemented Resilience Mortuary Awareness Programme. Amongst the visitors were members of the Royal Family, Government Ministers, Faith Leaders, senior officers and planners from the emergency services and many additional Category 1 & 2 agencies under the Civil Contingencies Act. The Lord Chancellor who attended described the facilities as setting a "gold standard" in the care of victims and the pursuit of forensic evidence. The programme was mainly targeted at practitioners from across the country and consisted of three one-day seminars with speakers drawn from subject-matter experts who had actually worked at the site. Over 600 people attended these events.
- 5.2 A mortuary debrief for those who had been involved was later held by Westminster City Council and Chaired by the Head of Emergency Planning of London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). The London Mass Fatality Plan was particularly praised by all parties including HM Coroners with some small concerns being offered in respect of the plan not being fully disseminated prior to the incident.
- 5.3 Concern was also raised that the Honourable Artillery Company site was actually owned by a Private Charitable Trust and not by a public body. This meant that an agreement had to be brokered between the HAC, Westminster City Council and the (then) Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to ensure that the site owners would be fully reimbursed for the use of the site for the three months it was in use as a mortuary. All parties have now been fully compensated. In addition the London Mass Fatality Plan has now been amended so as not to rely on military premises as venues for the Resilience Mortuary. Many more sites have now been identified across London including locations at Royal Parks and Local Authority open-spaces.

- 5.4 A further general multi-agency debrief was held on 30 September 2005 - again chaired by LFEPA. The London Mass Fatality Plan and mortuary facilities were roundly praised with relatively minor areas for improvement being identified.

D6. Progress Report

- 6.1 The London Resilience Team and many of the personnel who worked at the Resilience Mortuary have worked closely with the National Mass Fatality Working Group of the Home Office and other organisations across the UK. As a result a number of new developments have been put in place. These include arrangements for the provision of an 'Emergency Mortuary' (a facility of a very similar nature to the aforementioned 'Resilience Mortuary'), a dedicated national Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) Team and three further stockpiles of mortuary equipment held across the UK.
- 6.2 The London Mass Fatality Working Group has met on several occasions and has now been extended to ensure that a wider range of organisations are sighted on the mass fatality plan for London. At their next meeting in September 2006, they will review Version 2 of the London Mass Fatality Plan with a view to presenting a draft version to the next meeting of the London Regional Resilience Forum in October 2006.

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GLOSSARY

E1. Terms used in the report

Access Overload Control (ACCOLC) – the ACCOLC system is a government-authorized scheme whereby the major mobile telephone companies can reserve exclusive use of available channels for the emergency services and local authorities at the scene of a major incident. It allows for calls to be made without being interrupted by overloaded radiotelephone networks.

Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) - is a UK Government coordination facility which is activated in cases of national or regional emergency or crisis, or during events abroad with major implications for the UK.

Casualty Bureau – the Metropolitan Police Service Central Casualty Bureau provides a central contact point for all records and data relating to people who have or are believed to have been involved in an incident.

Category 1 and 2 responders –

- a) Category 1 responders are the main organisations involved in most emergencies - the emergency services, Local authorities, health bodies (Primary Care Trusts, Acute Trusts, Foundation Trusts, Health Protection Agency) and Government agencies (Environment Agency).
- b) Category 2 responders are also likely to be heavily involved in some emergencies - utilities and transport companies, health bodies (Strategic Health Authorities) and Government agencies (Health and Safety Executive).

CBR - Chemical, Biological and Radiological.

Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 - the Government Act which delivers a single framework for civil protection in the United Kingdom.

Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) – CCS sits within the Cabinet Office. It works in partnership with government departments, the devolved administrations and key stakeholders to enhance the UK's ability to prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

Connect – a state of the art radio system which will be installed on a line by line basis by the end of 2007 connecting all London underground staff on a single radio system. It will also be used by the British Transport Police.

Crip – Commonly Recognised Information Picture - a method by which partners can access information, e.g. an extranet.

Emergency Planning College – Based in the Civil Contingencies Secretariat of the Cabinet Office, this is the Government's centre for running short seminars, workshops and courses basis in the field of crisis management and emergency planning.

Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) – an officer in a Local Authority responsible for dealing with emergencies.

Emergency Response and Recovery – this document describes the multi-agency framework for responding to and recovering from civil emergencies in the United Kingdom under the Civil Contingencies Act.

Exercise Atlantic Blue – exercise that took place in April 2005 between UK and USA to test resilience in an emergency.

Exercise Working Group – a Group which reports to the London Regional Resilience Forum. Its objective is to exercise risks at national, regional and local level.

Family Assistance Centre (FAC) – A one-stop shop for survivors, families and those affected by disasters, through which they can access support, care and advice. (subsequently renamed as Humanitarian Assistance Centre).

Family Liaison Officer (FLO) – police officers who are specifically trained in Family Liaison who are investigators and who will be an integral part of the police investigation.

Fennell Inquiry – The inquiry into the 1987 King's Cross fire.

First Alert Protocol – a system by which press officers are “tipped off” when an incident occurs. This alert is followed by a teleconference to ensure that communications are co-ordinated during an emergency.

Forum – meaning “London Regional Resilience Forum” (see below).

Global Systems for Mobile Communications (GSM) – the most popular standard for mobile phones in the world.

Gold – Gold is the commander in overall charge of each organisation, responsible for formulating strategy for an incident.

Gold Co-ordination Group (GCG) – the GCG is responsible for determining the strategic aims, objectives and priorities of a Major incident. It is made up of Gold level representatives (see Gold above) from appropriate agencies and is chaired by a Senior Police Officer.

Gold Media Cell – this is part of the arrangements to support the Gold Co-ordination Group. Usually provided by the Metropolitan Police Service, it is responsible for media group representation and co-ordination.

Government Liaison Team (GLT) – the role of the GLT is to provide the link between the Gold Co-ordinating Group and the Central Government overview and response provided at COBR.

GPRS (GSM Packet Radio System) - GPRS is defined by 3GPP (Third Generation Partnership Project) and is employed to connect mobile phone users to PDN (Public Data Network).

GSM (The Global System for Mobile communications) - A second generation cellular telecommunication system which was first planned in the early 1980s. Unlike first generation systems operating at the time, GSM was digital and thus introduced greater enhancements such as security, capacity, quality and the ability to support integrated services.

Leaky feeder – A special type of coaxial cable which can be used to provide radio coverage inside buildings and tunnels.

Local Authority Gold Protocol – an agreement which exists between the thirty three London boroughs which allows the Chief Executive on duty to represent the other boroughs in the event of an emergency.

Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) – the principle mechanism for ensuring multi-agency co-operation at local level. In London there are six Local Resilience Forums.

London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund – fund set up to give help and support to the victims of 7/7.

London Command & Control Protocol – protocol setting out command and control arrangements in London.

London Emergency Services Panel (LESLP) – LESLP was formed in 1973 and consists of representatives from the Metropolitan Police Service, City of London Police, British Transport Police, the London Fire Brigade, the London Ambulance Service and local authorities.

London Mass Fatality Plan – the plan provides the basis for an integrated emergency response to an incident in London involving large numbers of human fatalities. It may also be used to cater for the response to an incident overseas which calls for the identification and repatriation of large numbers of UK nationals.

London Media Emergency Forum (LMEF) – The regional branch of the National Media Emergency Forum (see NMEF).

London Prepared – London Resilience website providing public advice about how to prepare for emergencies. www.londonprepared.gov.uk

London Regional Resilience Forum (LRRF) – a partnership of all London’s key responders (emergency services, local authorities, transport agencies, health service, utilities, voluntary services, military and the business community) and the key Government Departments. It is chaired by the Minister for Local Government with the Mayor as deputy Chair.

London Resilience Team (LRT) – multi-agency team made up of civil servants and secondees based in the Government Office for London. In an emergency, LRT acts as the Government’s principal channel on consequence and recovery issues.

Mayor’s Disaster Fund – the Fund is a registered charity - Registered Charity No. 1110400. Its purpose is to provide support and help for victims of the London bombings of 7 July 2005. Otherwise known as London Bombings Relief Charitable Fund.

Mayor’s Media Protocol – a document providing an overview of the communications role of the Mayor of London in the event of a serious incident or emergency.

Media cell – The group of press officers from across the London Resilience Partnership who ensure that during a major incident there is a coordinated strategy for handling the media and communicating with the public.

MITIE - One of the UK's leading support services companies. It services, maintains, manages and improves buildings and infrastructure for a wide range of private and public sector customers.

National Media Emergency Forum (NMEF) – An ad hoc group of senior media editors, government representatives, local authority emergency planners, emergency services and private industry. The aim of the Forum is to strengthen the resilience of mass media communications and to improve the shared government/media responsibility for keeping the public informed in an emergency.

News Co-ordination Centre (NCC) – Co-ordinates the information activities of the various government departments and agencies involved in an incident, by pulling together briefing from the different expert bodies for ministers and ensuring that interview bids for ministers are handled appropriately.

O2 Airwave – a secure digital radio network dedicated for the exclusive use of the UK's emergency and public safety services.

Operation Benbow – a joint operation carried out by London's police forces.

PITO (Police Information Technology Organisation) - A non-departmental public body (NDPB) that manages a large ICT (Information and Communication Technology) portfolio, helping to solve crimes and save time, money and even lives across all areas of policing, including major civil emergencies such as terror attacks, train crashes or floods.

Public Information Plan – a plan to deal with communicating with the public in an emergency.

Safer City – an exercise being held on 18th October designed to test the activation of Local Authority Gold structure organised by LFEPA.

Scene of Crime Officers (SOCOs) - civilian personnel employed by Police Authorities to investigate crime scenes in order to recover evidence by use of fingerprints, photographic and forensic techniques.

Strategic Co-ordination Centre (SCC) – the SCC is designed to provide the enhanced facilities and additional accommodation for the Gold Co-ordinating Group to operate.

Section 44 Tact - Section 44 of Terrorism Act 2000.

Step 123 – this is a process used when emergency service personnel encounter people collapsed or unconscious with no obvious physical reason for their injury. Its purpose is to ensure that emergency responders recognise early indicators of possible chemical attack.

Survivor Reception Centre – secure area to which uninjured survivors can be taken for shelter, first aid, interview and documentation.

TETRA – Terrestrial Trunked Radio is a digital trunked mobile radio standard developed by the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI).

Transec – Transport Security and Contingencies Directorate, within the Department for Transport.

E2. Organisations

ALG – Association of London Government

ACPO - Association of Chief Police Officers

BAA – British Airports Authority

BTP – British Transport Police

CasWeb - Community Advice Service

CISA – Certified Information Systems Auditor

COLP – City of London Police

DEFRA – Department for the Environment, Foods and Rural Affairs

DCLG – Department for Communities and Local Government (previously ODPM)

DCMS - Department for Culture, Media and Sport

DfT – Department for Transport

DoH – Department of Health

DTI – Department for Trade and Industry

GLA – Greater London Authority

ANNEX E - GLOSSARY

GOL – Government Office for London
GOS – Great Ormond Street Hospital
HPA – Health Protection Agency
HO – Home Office
LAS – London Ambulance Service
LFB – London Fire Brigade
LFEPA - London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority
LRRF – London Regional Resilience Forum
LRT – London Resilience Team
LU – London Underground
MITIE – Management Incentive Through Investment Equity
MPS – Metropolitan Police Service
NHS – National Health Service
ODPM - Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now DCLG)
OFCOM – Office of Communications
PITO - Police Information Technology Organisation
TfL – Transport for London
SHA – Strategic Health Authority (now NHS London)



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