Kerslake Arena Review

Progress report on the work of the independent panel – 12th January 2018

1. The bomb which was detonated at the Manchester Arena on the night of 22 May 2017 killed twenty two people and left many more with injuries both physical and psychological. The independent review panel would like to pay their respects to all those whose lives have been lost or forever changed. The panel is grateful to all those who have come forward to make contributions to the Review. We would like to pay tribute to everyone who responded on the night and in the days, weeks and months following.

2. The Kerslake Arena Review was set up at the request of Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester. The Mayor is keen to learn as much as possible and to share this learning across Greater Manchester and beyond. The purpose of the Review is to look into the response to the Manchester Arena terrorist attack on 22 May 2017 and to consider how well prepared Greater Manchester was. The objectives are:

   To assess the preparedness of Greater Manchester for the Manchester Arena Terrorist Attack including multi-agency planning and capacity development.

   To explore the effectiveness of the working relationships, cooperation and interoperability between all of the agencies involved during the response to the Manchester Arena Terrorist Attack.

   To identify and share good practice to enhance future preparedness and any future response to a terrorist attack both within Greater Manchester and beyond.

   To identify any gaps or other opportunities to increase preparedness and strengthen any future response to a terrorist attack in Greater Manchester and propose actions to address these.

3. The Review will not address issues concerning ‘the cause of death of the individual deceased, the immediate circumstances in which each of the deceased died, and any question of the potential survivability of the injuries by any of those who died as these fall within the remit of the Coroner’. The panel is seeking advice throughout the review process from the Coroner, the North West Counter Terrorism Unit and from lawyers.

4. The Review is being undertaken by an independent panel chaired by Lord Bob Kerslake. The panel started work in September 2017. This is an update to report on progress so far. The final report will be published in March 2018 and will cover the findings of the panel and its recommendations.

5. The Review is looking at multi-agency planning and training to prepare for a possible terrorist attack undertaken before the Arena attack. It is also exploring the effectiveness of joint working in the response phase which goes from the attack on the 22 May to 31 May 2017 when the recovery phase commenced.

Panel Members

6. **Lord Kerslake (Panel Chair)**
   Lord Kerslake is a former Head of the Civil Service and is President of the Local Government Association. He is Chair of Peabody, Chair of the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Chair of London CIV. He was made a life peer in 2015.
7. Margareta Wahlström
Margareta Wahlström has over thirty years of international experience in humanitarian relief operations in disaster and conflict areas. She is President of the Swedish Red Cross. In 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced her appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction.

8. Hugh Deeming
A research consultant whose principal interests include community resilience. He is an advisor to the Cabinet Office on community resilience and recovery issues and a Senior Research Fellow at the Emergency Planning College.

9. Alan Goodwin
Alan is the former Deputy Chief Constable for Derbyshire Constabulary. He has been the UK national policing lead for civil emergencies, contingency planning and Disaster Victim Identification. Alan was awarded the Queen’s Police Medal in 2012.

10. The Venerable Karen Lund
Appointed as Archdeacon of Manchester in February 2017, Karen was ordained in 1994 in the Diocese of London and has held various ministerial roles including prison chaplaincy and Bishop’s Advisor. She has over twenty years’ experience as a priest in the Church of England.

11. The only full time member of the review team is the administrator. The panel receives support from staff within the Greater Manchester Civil Contingencies and Resilience Unit.

Listening to the public and those directly affected

12. From the outset, the panel wanted to put the experience of those who were directly affected at the heart of the Review. The panel has listened to the views of bereaved families, those present on the night of the attack and many who played a role as members of emergency and health services. Members of the panel have met, listened to, spoken with and heard first hand from many of the bereaved and injured from Manchester and across the UK. Panel members have undertaken a number of visits to relevant sites and travelled to see bereaved families in their home towns. Panel members have also held numerous individual and small group conversations with front line staff and senior leaders from organisations involved on the night and in the days following. The views of relevant businesses and community groups are also forming an important part of the panel’s understanding. The panel found that many of the conversations provided further possible contacts and so the numbers invited to participate has grown; some seventy individuals have shared their experience individually in face to face meetings with panel members. At the time of writing, the panel has covered most of the relevant organisations and anticipate having completed all meetings and conversations in the next few weeks.

13. In order to give everyone who wanted to contribute an opportunity, the Review commissioned the NSPCC charity to run a phone line and receive emails. NSPCC counsellors have also supported the panel in attending face to face and group meetings, in Greater Manchester and beyond, with people who have been bereaved, injured or otherwise impacted by the attack. The NSPCC work was extended an extra two weeks, finishing on 24th November 2017, to enable more people to participate. Information and views given to the NSPCC are still filtering through for the panel to consider. The NSPCC will be providing a report to the panel on the responses received. Over 170 people have participated in the Review via the NSPCC including many young people who were at the Ariana Grande concert on the night of the attack.
Information gathering and fact finding

14. The panel has been looking at the way the different public bodies and organisations responded and how they worked together. It is considering how well plans worked for individual organisations and for the multi-agency response and where there may be areas that could be improved.

15. The panel has met together on four occasions in Manchester. Since the panel’s work started in September, over 400 documents have been submitted for consideration such as individual organisational debrief reports, tactical and strategic multi-agency debriefs, individual agency timelines and relevant plans and policies. The panel has no statutory powers to investigate and has relied entirely on people agreeing to share their experiences. As more discussions and meetings have been held over the months, a clearer picture has begun to emerge. Contributions have come not only from emergency services and NHS staff but also for example from council leaders and workers, charity workers, staff from Victoria station and many who attended the Arena as concert goers on the night.

16. The panel is also looking into the role of both mainstream and social media during the response phase.

Events subsequent to the commencement of the Review

17. Since the panel commenced their work at the beginning of September, there have been a number of new media articles and programmes with a focus on issues related to the Attack.

18. On 1 November 2017, Greater Manchester Police announced that they have been granted a warrant for the arrest of the perpetrator’s brother and that it has been requested that Libyan authorities consider his extradition back to the UK.

19. On 24 November 2017, Manchester’s senior coroner spoke at a brief pre-inquest hearing into the 22 deaths and adjourned the hearing until 15 June 2018 explaining that it would be “highly likely” that inquest proceedings would be delayed by the ongoing criminal investigation.

20. On 5 December 2017, an independent report compiled by David Anderson QC was published which included the Manchester Attack in its bringing together of nine internal reviews by MI5 and counter terrorism police which looked at the terrorist attacks in the UK between March and June 2017. The report says that MI5 “came by intelligence in the months before the attack” which would have caused an investigation into the Arena bomber to be opened “had its true significance been understood”.

21. In November, the report on the experiences of the Hillsborough families, ‘The patronising disposition of accountable power’ was published. The panel is mindful of this report’s findings and relevance.

22. Following meetings and discussions with some of the bereaved families and some of those who were injured in the Attack, the panel is also looking at the role of the media in relation to the families.

23. The panel will seek to address these emerging issues where they are within the review’s agreed remit thus this will not include the issues regarding intelligence covered in the report by David Anderson, mentioned above.
Recommendation

24. The panel support the proposal contained in the Hillsborough report on the experiences of the Hillsborough families for a ‘Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy’. The panel recommends that leaders of public bodies in Greater Manchester and the rest of the North West, demonstrate their commitment by publicly signing up to and abiding by the Charter.

Charter for Families Bereaved through Public Tragedy

25. In adopting this charter I commit to ensuring that [this public body] learns the lessons of the Hillsborough disaster and its aftermath, so that the perspective of the bereaved families is not lost.

I commit to [this public body] becoming an organisation which strives to:

1) In the event of a public tragedy, activate its emergency plan and deploy its resources to rescue victims, to support the bereaved and to protect the vulnerable.

2) Place the public interest above our own reputation.

3) Approach forms of public scrutiny – including public inquiries and inquests – with candour, in an open, honest and transparent way, making full disclosure of relevant documents, material and facts. Our objective is to assist the search for the truth. We accept that we should learn from the findings of external scrutiny and from past mistakes.

4) Avoid seeking to defend the indefensible or to dismiss or disparage those who may have suffered where we have fallen short.

5) Ensure all members of staff treat members of the public and each other with mutual respect and with courtesy. Where we fall short, we should apologise straightforwardly and genuinely.

6) Recognise that we are accountable and open to challenge. We will ensure that processes are in place to allow the public to hold us to account for the work we do and for the way in which we do it. We do not knowingly mislead the public or the media.

26. In signing up to the charter, leaders of public bodies should put in place a plan to deliver the particular changes needed within their organisation to make the behaviours described in the charter a reality in practice. They should also make a commitment to review progress against that plan on a regular basis. When an organisation has signed up to the charter, it should declare this fact publicly.

Next Steps

27. In the next few weeks, the panel members will be completing the outstanding meetings and conversations with people who are making a contribution to the Review. They are also analysing all the many documents, policies and records of training from the numerous agencies and public bodies which have relevance to the response on the night of the 22 May 2017 and up to 31 May 2017 (the ‘response’ phase).

28. After considering all the many contributions to the Review and checking any outstanding questions, the panel will agree its recommendations which will be in the full report scheduled for publication at the end of March 2018.