

Coroner's Inquests into the London Bombings of 7 July 2005

Hearing transcripts - 1 March 2011 - Morning session

1 Tuesday, 1 March 2011

2 (10.00 am)

3 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Coltart?

4 MR JASON KILLENS (continued)

5 Questions by MR COLTART (continued)

6 MR COLTART: Good morning, my Lady. Good morning,

7 Mr Killens. Before we pick up where we left off last

8 night, I'm just going to ask you to revisit one of the

9 answers which you gave yesterday afternoon about who

10 knew what and when in the Gold control room.

11 Do you recall we were looking at Dr Hines' report

12 and the situation as it pertained at 11.45 that morning,

13 and you floated the suggestion that this might have

14 represented the state of knowledge of Dr Hines and his

15 medical colleagues rather than the Gold control room as

16 a whole?

17 Can I ask you just to look again at that report at

18 the following page, which is [LAS48-6], and if we could

19 please enlarge the middle of that page, do you see

20 bullet point 3.4:

21 "LAS officers who had toured all the scenes by car

22 in order to gather information from the incidents

23 returned at 12.30 and provided a clearer update on the

24 incidents which had been difficult until then because of

25 the communication problems. King's Cross,

1 Russell Square and Edgware Road were all clear of
2 serious casualties and only walking wounded remained.
3 They confirmed there were no incidents at
4 Leicester Square or Euston."
5 Presumably, those cars had been dispatched on behalf
6 of Gold control as a whole rather than by the doctors?
7 A. That would be my understanding, yes.
8 Q. So is it fair, in fact, for us to assume that the state
9 of knowledge at 11.45 pertained throughout Gold control
10 and wasn't limited to those particular medics that we
11 mentioned yesterday?
12 A. It's certainly a possibility, yes.
13 Q. Thank you. We were looking last night, then, at the
14 position in relation to ECVs, and I just want to
15 complete that topic, if we may. Can we go back to
16 INQ9002, please, at page 19 [INQ9002-19]?
17 That's the image that we were looking at last night.
18 We've dealt with the technical capability of the ECV,
19 but if we go over the page [INQ9002-20], please, I'd like to consider
20 with you the role which they are supposed to play in any
21 major incident.
22 We can see this set out in the top of that page, if
23 we could just enlarge that, please, thank you:
24 "The ECVs are responsible for:
25 "Acting as the headquarters of the Ambulance

1 Incident Officer and the Medical Incident Officer."

2 So they are designed to be a focal point, aren't
3 they, an RVP -- at the risk of using yet another
4 acronym -- for where people are supposed to meet up;
5 correct?

6 A. Correct. They are -- if I can just elaborate on that
7 slightly for you, they are designed to -- or the
8 intention is that each of the services has a control
9 vehicle, command vehicle, focal point, whatever you want
10 to call it, which go together at the scene of an
11 incident.

12 But of course, we should have in our minds that
13 geography, location sometimes prevent that from
14 occurring. Essentially, the plan is that there is
15 a focal point for each agency.

16 Q. Exactly, because, in fact, all of you have one of these
17 vehicles.

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. You all call it something slightly different, but the
20 Fire Brigade have a Command Unit, as they describe it.
21 You have your ECV, and we heard from City Police, for
22 example, that they had a specialist major incident
23 vehicle. The theory was this, wasn't it: that these
24 would all converge at an early stage during the course
25 of a major incident and provide, firstly, enhanced

1 telecommunications; yes?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Secondly, they would act as a focal point for the
4 coordination of the response at that scene; yes?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. We can see, if we just go back to the list on page 20,
7 they would log all the UHF communications on-site, but
8 more importantly, perhaps, for our purposes, they would
9 assist Gold control with controlling the incident; yes?

10 A. Yes, that's what the document says, yes.

11 Q. And they would act as a focal point for medical, nursing
12 and ambulance staff and other emergency services at the
13 scene.

14 So a landmark that people can head towards in order
15 to meet up and liaise face-to-face with their
16 colleagues, which forms a vital part, doesn't it, of the
17 communication on-site?

18 A. It does, yes.

19 Q. They will assist the AIO to task on-site resources and
20 all the VHF movements will be controlled by Gold
21 control, though an effective communications system must
22 be instigated during an incident; in other words, Gold
23 to Silver, to Silver to Bronze and back in that order.
24 That plainly was what was supposed to happen on the
25 day?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Let's return to the Central Ambulance Control debrief,
3 then, please, if we may, to look at two final issues
4 which were raised during the course of the debrief.

5 This is LAS108 starting at page 5 [LAS108-5], please.

6 If we could enlarge the top half of that page, the
7 second entry is by a lady called Wendy Cox. She says
8 this:

9 "There were no crew reports. No one could get hold
10 of DSOs ..."

11 Which is duty station officers?

12 A. That's correct, yes.

13 Q. "... due to comms issues, and no vehicles booked on
14 scene."

15 Then this:

16 "There was no CHALET report provided to Gold
17 control."

18 Now, that is a worrying state of affairs, isn't it,
19 would you agree?

20 A. The CHALET report would be -- should be, should be --
21 provided by the responders to the scene and, if we
22 remember, yesterday, we were discussing the routine
23 operating of the service at the time, and indeed now, so
24 crews would have responded to the incident scenes,
25 resources would have responded to the incident scenes,

1 and reported on their local operating radio channel at
2 the time, and we spoke about channels 10 and 11
3 yesterday.

4 So those CHALET reports would have been passed to
5 the Central Ambulance Control, the main control room, to
6 the operators in the main control room, from the initial
7 responders to attend the scenes.

8 Q. But it's essential, though, isn't it, that you in Gold
9 have got oversight of the four scenes, in order that you
10 can allocate what are inevitably scarce resources as you
11 see fit between the scenes?

12 A. It's right to say that information should be passed from
13 the Gold control room to the Gold medic or others who
14 are responsible for managing the -- not only the
15 incident, but core business, so the routine 999 system
16 around London that's still going on, but the CHALET
17 report -- in response to the specific question, the
18 CHALET report would be passed to the main control room,
19 not Gold control.

20 Q. I'm sorry to press you on this. Given the importance of
21 the CHALET report -- and we can all remember what that
22 particular mnemonic stands for: casualties and hazards,
23 emergency, egress/ingress, treatment, number of
24 patients -- I mean, it's the essence, isn't it, of the
25 information which you require? Is it not essential that

1 that information, site by site, is passed on to you in
2 the Gold control room?

3 A. Can I clarify what you mean by Gold control room? Do
4 you mean the control room itself, or do you mean where
5 the Gold Commander is?

6 Q. Will you assist us by reference to the document, if you
7 don't mind? Wendy Cox, when she says there was no
8 CHALET report provided to Gold control, what would she
9 have meant by that?

10 A. She would have meant the control room. She would have
11 meant the control room, and I say that it is not -- it's
12 not the process for the CHALET report to be passed to
13 the Gold control room. It would be passed to the main
14 control room by the initial responders to the scene.
15 Information contained within that CHALET report,
16 number of ambulances required, type of incident, number
17 and type of patients, should be passed through to the
18 Gold control room so they can enable the ongoing
19 management of the incident.

20 But in terms of the initial CHALET report, that
21 wouldn't go to the Gold control room.

22 Q. I see. I'm sorry, we were at cross purposes.
23 I completely accept that the initial radio message is
24 transmitted to the Central Ambulance Control
25 operators --

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. -- but the essence of that information should then be
3 passed on to you in Gold control?

4 A. That's correct, yes.

5 Q. Thank you, okay. Then finally in relation to this
6 document, if we look two entries further down under
7 "PC", that's Peter Crean making this particular
8 observation:

9 "The key for the transpac cupboard was not
10 labelled ..."

11 Just assist us, what's "transpac"?

12 A. A transpac is a base radio, so it's essentially the
13 radio which is fitted in the cab of a vehicle. It's in
14 a case, and it is a power supply which operates off the
15 mains electricity. And the intention with transpacs is
16 that they would, in these circumstances, be taken to
17 Accident and Emergency departments, A&E departments,
18 where they would be plugged in and used by the ambulance
19 liaison officers at those hospitals.

20 Q. I see. Returning then to the observation which was
21 made:

22 "The key for the transpac cupboard was not labelled,
23 consequently a lot of time was wasted hunting around,
24 then trying all the different keys in the lock until the
25 correct one was found.

1 "When the transpac cupboard was opened, there were
2 no radio packs in there at all."

3 Can you assist us with how that could possibly have
4 come about, that the radio packs weren't stored in the
5 cupboard where everyone thought they were going to be?

6 A. Regrettably, I can't. What I can go on to say, though,
7 is that the intention behind these would have been to
8 take them to Accident and Emergency departments as
9 I just described.

10 Those officers which were tasked to Accident and
11 Emergency departments had radios in their vehicles, so
12 whilst it would have been inconvenient for them, if we
13 hadn't had experienced the communication difficulties we
14 had, the absence of the transpac would not have
15 inhibited their communication.

16 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Sorry, just before you go on, I just
17 want to go back to what you were talking about, the
18 CHALET report is going to Gold control, Mr Killens,
19 because I wasn't quite sure.

20 Do you accept that Wendy Cox was right that a CHALET
21 report didn't get -- the essence of it didn't get passed
22 on to Gold control? If so, in relation to which site?

23 A. It's -- it would be unlikely she would have received in
24 Gold control a full CHALET report from the scene on the
25 basis that they would have been delivered to the main

1 control room initially. She should have received
2 relevant information from that CHALET report in Gold
3 control. In relation to which site she refers, I'm
4 afraid I can't assist you, my Lady.

5 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you.

6 MR COLTART: Thank you. We've seen some evidence in
7 relation to Stephanie Adams, who I think came up in the
8 course of evidence again yesterday, who was the
9 ambulance liaison officer who went to University College
10 Hospital to try to coordinate matters there.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. She says in her debrief form she would have been greatly
13 assisted by one of these radios.

14 A. Mm-hmm.

15 Q. She did, in fact, take one with her, but the battery
16 died on her very quickly. But it's a pretty essential
17 piece of kit, isn't it, for whoever fulfils that role,
18 in order to enable them to liaise properly with Gold and
19 headquarters?

20 A. The transpacs don't contain batteries, so my assumption
21 would be that Ms Adams was referring to a handheld
22 radio, not a transpac.

23 Q. I see, so it may be that, once there weren't any
24 transpac radios in the cupboard, she was provided with
25 a handheld, but one way or another, she was left adrift

1 at the hospital without any effective means of
2 communication, and would you accept that that plainly is
3 an undesirable state of affairs?

4 A. I do agree with you it's undesirable if she has no means
5 of communication.

6 Q. We've spent a great deal of time dealing one way or
7 another with the difficulties at headquarters and the
8 difficulties with the communication issues. One of the
9 most important consequences of these issues, was it not,
10 was that there was a failing or a failure to deploy all
11 the available ambulances in Central London to each of
12 the four different bombsites. Would you accept that?

13 A. The communication difficulties led to delays in
14 activating ambulances, and we explored that yesterday.
15 I accept that that was the case.

16 What I would say is that, given the circumstances we
17 were facing, we took a decision not to deploy all
18 available ambulances to the incident scenes and
19 essentially hold back in reserve other assets for any
20 future incidents which may occur.

21 I believe that was the right decision on the day,
22 and, if faced with a similar set of circumstances again,
23 it's highly probable that we would hold in reserve
24 assets to respond if further incidents took place.

25 Q. One can well understand, if I may say so, the common

1 sense behind that particular proposition, but can I just
2 explore this further with you? Could we have a look,
3 please, on the screen at [LAS383-17], and enlarge, please,
4 the top half of that page?

5 This is one of the very many debrief documents that
6 was produced by the London Ambulance Service. Do you
7 see there at item-number 140:

8 "Of the 201 rostered ambulances available on 7 July,
9 only 101 were used during the major incident. In
10 addition to the 50 per cent of the fleet that was not
11 used, mutual aid ..."

12 In other words, assistance from outside London.

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. "... and voluntary ambulance service resources were also
15 mobilised. London Ambulance Service did not have full
16 visibility of its own available resources."

17 That was part of the problem, was it not, that you
18 could not get a handle on who was available to be
19 deployed and who was not?

20 A. It's right to say that there was difficulty in
21 ascertaining the status of the entire fleet, and
22 obviously, as we have just seen here, the fleet on the
23 day did increase through voluntary aid, from
24 St John Ambulance, British Red Cross and the mutual aid
25 arrangements we discussed yesterday.

1 Of course, whilst some 50 per cent of the available
2 LAS fleet was deployed to the major incident, we also
3 need to have in our minds that 999 calls are still being
4 received around London to which we need to respond --

5 Q. Yes.

6 A. -- and as we, I think, explored yesterday, something in
7 the order of 3,000 emergency calls a day across the
8 capital take place which we respond to.

9 So we would have a number of ambulances deployed to
10 what I describe as routine business. Clearly not
11 routine to those people requesting the emergency
12 ambulance. But there were difficulties in visualising
13 the entirety of the fleet in the initial stages of the
14 incident.

15 Q. It was a significant finding, was it not, during the
16 course of the debrief process, that resources very close
17 to the scenes were not used in circumstances where
18 vehicles were travelling in from well outside London to
19 attend the very same scenes? Do you recall that finding
20 during the course of the debrief process?

21 A. I do, yes.

22 Q. For my Lady's note, it's in Jonathan Edmondson's summary
23 of concerns in relation to the Central Ambulance Control
24 at LAS371-2. We've looked at it previously.

25 That applied not only in relation to King's Cross,

1 which was the focus of that particular observation, but
2 it applied also in relation to Aldgate, did it not? Do
3 you recall anything in relation to Aldgate?

4 A. I don't specifically, no.

5 Q. Well, you're not expected to remember every page of
6 every document. Let's assist you with this. LAS721,
7 please, at page 3 [LAS721-3]. The bottom half of that page,
8 please. This is, in fact, Mr Edmondson's debrief form,
9 and at point 1 there we see:

10 "Lack of ambulance resources that were deployed to
11 the incident for the number of patients, despite
12 available ambulance crews calling up available."

13 That's specifically said to relate to Aldgate.

14 So do you accept that the same issue related to
15 Aldgate as it appeared to have related to King's Cross?

16 A. I think that's Mr Edmondson's recollection. We heard
17 evidence yesterday from Dr Davies that, when patients
18 were required to leave the scene at Aldgate, there were
19 ambulances available to convey them. So I think that's
20 Mr Edmondson's recollection, as is noted there.

21 I wouldn't want to comment further to say whether
22 there was or was not, indeed, a shortage of ambulances
23 or delays at Aldgate in that regard.

24 Q. Let's have a look at someone else's recollection, then,
25 in relation to Edgware Road, LAS89, please, at page 2 [LAS89-2].

1 This is the incident report form of Lee Parker, who
2 was a HEMS paramedic, and if you go over to page 3 [LAS89-3],
3 please, bottom half of that page, he says:
4 "I cannot understand why local crews [from]
5 (Park Royal [or] Willesden) were not used. Due to the
6 number of casualties involved, we had to utilise various
7 medical staff who ended up creating more work as they do
8 not understand triage and/or major incident procedures."
9 He talks further about the effect of the medical
10 staff, but over the page [LAS89-4], he continues:
11 "I attended the Ladbrooke Grove train crash and all
12 the same complaints that were being made there are being
13 made in the aftermath of this incident, ie poor
14 communications, lack of equipment, not enough crews,
15 medical teams just turning up" and so on.
16 Then he makes a complaint about unequal patient
17 distribution to the hospitals.
18 But this is a theme, is it not, that appears time
19 and again in relation to each of the bombsites, that
20 available local ambulance crews are not being deployed
21 to the scene of the incident?
22 A. It's recognised that there were crews -- were ambulance
23 crews in the immediate vicinities of the scenes that
24 were not deployed. As I say, 999 calls were still going
25 on and it would not be appropriate to deploy every

1 single resource in the immediate vicinity of those
2 incidents to them.

3 That said, I do accept that there were delays in
4 activating available resources to the scenes.

5 Q. My Lady's heard a great deal of evidence about the
6 length of those delays and the impact which it had,
7 particularly at King's Cross and at Russell Square and
8 at Tavistock Square.

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. I only want to look at one further document in relation
11 to that issue which we haven't seen previously, which is
12 at [LAS719-5], please.

13 This is from Mr Edmondson's witness statement. He
14 came and gave evidence before Christmas in relation to
15 Aldgate, but we've put over, in anticipation of him
16 coming back, his experiences elsewhere that morning.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. He went from Aldgate, did he not, to Russell Square? He
19 sets out on this page how that journey unfolded. He
20 says:

21 "At 10.16, Aldgate was cleared of casualties."

22 He spent then about a quarter of an hour trying to
23 liaise with Central Ambulance Control about where they
24 wanted the resources on the scene deployed to.

25 At 10.48, he was instructed to send six ambulances

1 to King's Cross and the remaining four to
2 Russell Square, and he was told to go there himself.
3 He says:
4 "On arrival at Russell Square, it was evident that
5 there was no incident ..."
6 Just pausing there, we know, of course, that there
7 was a very significant incident at Russell Square
8 Underground station, but can we assume that that wasn't
9 obvious to him on arrival?
10 A. I think that's a safe assumption from what he's written.
11 Q. It looks like a safe assumption.
12 "... but I could see something was going on further
13 along at Tavistock Square."
14 He confirmed with the London Ambulance Service staff
15 on scene at Russell Square that they didn't require any
16 further assistance and he walked on to the Underground
17 station. He says this:
18 "At 11.08, I arrived at Russell Square Underground
19 station. There were a large number of casualties ... in
20 the ticket hall and ... outside."
21 He met up with Bill Kearns and Paul Woodrow and he
22 offered his assistance:
23 "They told me that they had lots of seriously
24 injured casualties and only one emergency support
25 vehicle, one Fast Response Unit and three ambulances on

1 scene."

2 So there can be no suggestion, can there, that by
3 this time, which is, what, nearly two and a half hours
4 after the bomb has gone off --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- that we're left with only P3s or people with minor
7 injuries at Russell Square Underground station; would
8 you accept that?

9 A. I would say that's unlikely.

10 Q. Sorry, it's unlikely what?

11 A. Sorry, could you just clarify the question for me?

12 Q. Yes, of course. It appears, doesn't it, that by this
13 time there are still people at Russell Square
14 Underground station who are seriously injured as opposed
15 to being, say, P3s?

16 A. From what Mr Edmondson is saying here at 11.08, yes.

17 Q. "... I used the radio [he says] on the emergency support
18 vehicle to contact Central Ambulance Control and request
19 ten ambulances and a bus to be sent to [the] scene for
20 the sixty plus casualties that still needed transporting
21 to hospital."

22 Plainly, on any view, that was an unsatisfactory
23 state of affairs?

24 A. Indeed, yes.

25 Q. Let's leave all that and move on to a completely new

1 topic, if we may, which is warnings which were given
2 over the dangers associated with the use of mobile
3 phones for the purposes of a major incident.

4 Mr Keith touched on this issue yesterday, but I'd
5 like to explore it in a little more detail with you
6 today, if I may.

7 I'd like to clarify exactly what it is that we're
8 talking about. There are two potential issues, aren't
9 there, with mobile phones? One is crews using mobile
10 phones for the purposes of day-to-day communications.

11 Correct?

12 A. That can be an issue, although crews do not use mobile
13 phones, then or now, for day-to-day communication and
14 passage of call data, call information.

15 Q. They are certainly not supposed to, are they, because
16 the mobile phones were provided to front line crews for
17 the purposes of their own personal safety at an
18 incident. Correct?

19 A. That's correct, yes.

20 Q. They weren't supposed to use it other than for that
21 reason?

22 A. That's correct.

23 Q. But we've seen some evidence during the course of the
24 inquest that, in the absence of handheld radios, some
25 crews had become reliant on mobile phones as an ordinary

1 day-to-day means of communication.

2 A. Certainly staff working in -- staff working in fast
3 response cars or alone do use -- did then and do use now
4 mobile phones, relatively frequently.

5 Q. Right.

6 A. It's rare, I would say, for ambulance crews to use
7 mobile phones, and I do that -- I say that from two
8 bases: firstly, my own personal experience of that; and,
9 secondly, call data usage of the emergency crew
10 assistance phones, the mobile phones we've issued to
11 crews, indicates that they are used rarely for those
12 purposes.

13 So mobile phones are certainly used as a regular
14 means of communications by single staff, those in cars,
15 but in terms of ambulance crews, it's rare for mobile
16 phones to be used.

17 Q. Thank you. The second issue in relation to mobile
18 phones, which is the one that I wish to concentrate on,
19 is their use as an alert mechanism?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. The sending of SMS text messages from headquarters to
22 Incident Commanders.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. The position is this, if we can just summarise it, that
25 up until the end of 2004, the London Ambulance Service

1 had been using pagers for that purpose. Correct?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Some time in 2003, you were notified by British Telecom
4 that it was ceasing to issue pagers or to work in that
5 market --

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. -- and you recognised at an early stage that you were
8 going to have to replace that device with something
9 else?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. A great deal of work was done in researching what is the
12 suitable replacement product. We'll look at the
13 documents, if we need to, but will you accept that one
14 of the express requirements which was set out by the
15 so-called paging forum, which was the working group set
16 up to examine this issue, was the requirement for
17 resilience during the course of a major incident?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. With that in mind, and as I say, in fairness to the
20 London Ambulance Service, it was a detailed review,
21 various options were explored and mobile phones were
22 chosen as the weapon of choice, as it were.

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. It's against that background, isn't it, that
25 Mr Grimmett, Keith Grimmett from your Emergency Planning

1 Unit sent the email which we looked at briefly yesterday
2 warning of the risks which were associated with that
3 choice. I wonder whether we could go back to that
4 document, please? It's at [LAS733-2].

5 It's an email sent on 2 March 2005. So within about
6 three months of the replacement system having been put
7 in place, and he sends it to Claire Glover, who I think
8 was head of your corporate governance department.

9 A. She was, yes.

10 Q. Peter Suter, who was head of information technology, and
11 John Hopson, who I think -- he had a senior role within
12 the Central Ambulance Control, is that right?

13 A. He did, yes.

14 Q. Mr Grimmett says:

15 "Claire, as previously discussed, attached is the
16 risk assessment form [which we'll look at in a moment]
17 relating to delays in the delivery of time-critical
18 messages via the SMS messaging system."

19 He says it's for consideration by the risk
20 management group on 30 March.

21 Then he addresses Peter Suter:

22 "It's important that your department has an
23 opportunity to look at this prior to the meeting on the
24 30th.

25 "I was hoping delays could be surmounted through the

1 use of procedures within Central Ambulance Control.

2 However [says Mr Grimmett], I'm now convinced the system
3 is not fit for the purpose we need it for in its current
4 state. Your thoughts would be greatly appreciated."

5 So that was set out in fairly trenchant terms,
6 wasn't it, his view about the fitness for purpose as far
7 as these devices were concerned?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. If we have a look at the risk assessment form, which is,
10 I suggest, a significant document, it's at [LAS427-2]. If
11 we could enlarge the second half of the page, please, he
12 gives the background, which I hope I've accurately
13 summarised, about the decision not to use pagers any
14 longer. Then under the heading "Delays" he says this:
15 "Unacceptable delays are occurring between Central
16 Ambulance Control sending a time-critical ... message
17 relating to incidents and the intended recipient
18 receiving the message. Delays are currently ranging
19 from 5 minutes to hours."

20 He sets out -- we don't need to go to it, but on the
21 next page he sets out some examples, you may recall, of
22 the sort of incidents he has in mind and the length of
23 the delay which had ensued:

24 "Coverage.

25 "Of course, the success of delivering a message is

1 dependent upon the recipient's mobile phone being within
2 an area of network coverage. If this is not the case,
3 then the message will not get through ..."

4 I suspect, in this day and age, we are all familiar
5 with this sensation, aren't we, just through the use of
6 mobile phones?

7 Then under the "Effect" of this happening:

8 "The effect upon the Trust of the delays or, indeed,
9 failures of message delivery will be a delay in the
10 instigation of the incident management structure which
11 in turn will seriously compromise the Trust's ability to
12 manage a serious, major or catastrophic incident with
13 the resulting compromise of patient care in a mass
14 casualty scenario, such as that experienced [at] the
15 Kegworth Aircrash on ... East Midlands Airport ..."

16 He refers there to the instigation of the incident
17 management structure. In fairness to you, the initial
18 instigation wasn't a problem, was it, because all your
19 managers were at Millwall?

20 A. Exactly that, yes.

21 Q. At the time that they were alerted to the possibility of
22 an issue, which was before 9.00 that morning --

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. -- the mobile phones were still working?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. So they were promptly notified, and off they set in
2 their cars, and we've heard from them.

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Off they went to the various different scenes. But
5 where they ran into problems was in the subsequent
6 receipt of information, wasn't it?

7 A. That's correct, yes.

8 Q. Because had they been equipped with pagers still, it
9 would have been possible, assuming, of course, that you
10 had the information yourselves, to provide them with
11 important, indeed critical, information about what was
12 happening both at their site and elsewhere?

13 A. It's possible we could have used pagers to send one-way
14 messages, so out from the control room or from the
15 headquarters building to those at the scenes.

16 Q. Yes.

17 A. Of course, what's worth noting is that pagers would not
18 work underground, so those officers who were assigned to
19 the incidents in trains, or it would have been tunnels
20 or platforms, those pagers would not have worked and,
21 indeed, whilst it's true to say we could use them to
22 pass messages, update messages essentially, out, they
23 would -- except for assisting with the awareness of
24 other incidents going on around London, they would be
25 unlikely to have an impact on the management of the

1 specific scenes where those officers were.

2 Q. Let's just consider that, shall we? We've heard that
3 Terry Williamson, Paul Gibson and Paul Ward, who between
4 them were trying to manage the incidents at
5 Russell Square Underground station and at
6 Tavistock Square, were, for a considerable period of
7 time, completely unaware even of the presence of each
8 other.

9 A. Mm-hmm.

10 Q. Now, if they had been equipped with pagers, of course,
11 it would have been possible, wouldn't it, to put them in
12 touch with one another, thereby enhancing the
13 coordination of the response to those various incidents?

14 A. It could have been possible, yes. However, I think it's
15 highly unlikely that the control room would have
16 considered sending a message to each of those three
17 officers saying the other two are in these locations,
18 highly unlikely, but it's possible.

19 Q. Even if Mr Gibson had received a message on his pager
20 saying "There is a serious incident unfolding at
21 Russell Square Underground station", he would then have
22 had the ability, would he not, to take steps to liaise
23 with his colleagues who were seeking to manage that
24 incident?

25 A. It's possible, yes.

1 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Sorry, just before we go further down
2 this line, were pagers still an option? I mean, BT had
3 pulled out. Were there other companies doing pagers?

4 A. Yes, there were.

5 MR COLTART: There were, and I think it's right to say that,
6 within a week of the events of 7 July unfolding, the
7 London Ambulance Service had reverted to using pagers
8 again?

9 A. We procured some pagers, yes.

10 Q. You say you procured some pagers. They were
11 reintroduced on a service-wide basis, weren't they?

12 A. They were reintroduced but not in the same numbers as
13 they were previously.

14 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Because the review group had decided
15 that the advantages of the mobile phone outweighed the
16 disadvantages of the mobile phone, given that you could
17 pass information backwards and forwards?

18 A. Yes, and the system that was being used for mobile
19 phones was that it was such -- it was a two-way system,
20 indeed it's still in use now, complemented by pagers,
21 but we know the system tells us if the message has been
22 delivered, or when it's been delivered, and we have the
23 ability for messages to be passed back via SMS text into
24 the control room.

25 So whilst there are limitations, as have been

1 explored this morning, with SMS texts, there are clear
2 benefits to the use of that system as well.

3 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: And can also be used for personal
4 safety?

5 A. Yes.

6 MR COLTART: I'd like to explore a little further with you
7 Mr Grimmett's perception of the benefits of one of the
8 systems over the other, because if we continue in his
9 risk assessment form over at page 4 [LAS427-4], please, the top
10 half of the page to begin with, what would be the
11 impact, in his view, of persisting with the mobile phone
12 system. "Major" he writes in that box.

13 "Failure to do so or an avoidable delay for our
14 Trust to implement its Incident Management Command
15 structure will result in needless loss of life amongst
16 casualties on scene at a major incident through an
17 uncoordinated response of resources."

18 Now, whether or not there was such a loss of life in
19 this case is plainly a matter for her Ladyship. So
20 let's put that to one side.

21 But this was the risk, wasn't it, that was being
22 run, as far as Mr Grimmett perceived it to be?

23 A. That's correct, yes. Once the pagers had been removed
24 and SMS text had become the main method of communicating
25 with off-duty officers or commanders, it was recognised

1 that the -- the limitations of the system were
2 recognised and the risk that Mr Grimmett sets out is
3 reasonable.

4 Q. He deals also -- bottom half of the page, please -- with
5 the likelihood of any of this unfolding:

6 "Although we cannot predict a major incident, it is
7 reasonable to assume we have one serious incident with
8 the potential to become a major incident at least once
9 a week when the SMS system is expected to deliver
10 time-critical messages ... either alerting them to an
11 incident or requesting they attend ..."

12 He goes on to say:

13 "The London Ambulance Service has worked for over
14 30 years against a background of terrorism within the
15 capital. Typically ... conducted by [the IRA]. The
16 trust ([indeed] the nation [he says]) is now warned by
17 the Government, the Director General of MI5 and other
18 sources that we are in 'for a long haul' as far as
19 Islamist terrorism is concerned.

20 "It is worthy of note that the threat from
21 Republican terrorism has risen a level whilst the
22 informed view upon the risk of Islamic terrorism in the
23 Capital is 'a question of when not if'."

24 Short of getting out his crystal ball, Mr Grimmett
25 could not have predicted more accurately, could he, the

1 risk that was posed, in his view, by maintaining the
2 current system of technology. Would you agree?

3 A. I do agree, yes.

4 Q. He deals specifically with benefits of the pager over on
5 the next page, please, page 5 [LAS427-5], top half of the page:

6 "It is worth remembering the paging system was
7 introduced upon a recommendation from the

8 Fennell Enquiry, following the King's Cross fire ...

9 where severe problems [were experienced] by the London
10 Ambulance Service trying to alert and contact officers.

11 He says:

12 "... all officers throughout the service could be
13 contacted more quickly and easily ... Since then, the
14 paging system or, more importantly, 'a time-critical
15 message delivery system' has been adopted as an integral
16 part of London Ambulance Service communications and has
17 proved to be a very reliable [method, I think we can
18 assume] reaching recipients outside the mobile telephone
19 network."

20 He sets out, doesn't he, his view of the benefits of
21 it?

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Finally this, under "Proposed Action", he suggests you
24 seek an alternative time-critical messaging system and
25 issue pagers to critical members of staff that have an

1 incident response role as an interim solution until
2 a new system or an enhancement to the current system is
3 implemented.

4 In due course, it's right, isn't it, that that risk
5 assessment was put before the risk management group.

6 We can see a copy of the minutes of the relevant
7 meeting at [LAS727-3], please. This is 30 March 2005,
8 this particular meeting, attended by Peter Bradley,
9 Claire Glover, Fionna Moore, David Jervis, who is the
10 director of communications, Martin Flaherty and others,
11 and this is where it appears. It summarises the
12 problem. It was agreed by the group:

13 "That the impact was high and the likelihood was
14 certain."

15 And:

16 "That SMS Group will be working to resolve this
17 risk. Peter Suter to be lead director.

18 "Claire Glover to liaise with Jon Edmondson and
19 inform him of the RMG's decision."

20 We know -- we can go to the document if we need to,
21 but we know that, by the time of the next meeting, the
22 decision of the committee was that this risk will be
23 proposed for regrading at the next risk management group
24 meeting, and that was in May.

25 As I think you know, we've asked whether copies of

1 the various minutes are available, either in relation to
2 the working group that was set up or in relation to how
3 the decision was made to defer this issue and to regrade
4 it, and I think it's right to say, isn't it, that
5 efforts have been made to locate those documents, but
6 they can't be found. Is that right?

7 A. Yes, I'm aware of the request that was made and efforts
8 had already been made to secure those documents prior to
9 that request being made. We've been unable to locate
10 them.

11 Q. Are you able to assist us, in the absence of those
12 documents, as to, firstly, when the following meeting
13 in May talked about regrading that risk, was that to be
14 a regrading upwards or downwards?

15 A. I'm afraid I can't assist you with that. I wasn't
16 present at the meeting, and it would be an assumption
17 based on, you know, no evidence. So I'm really --
18 regrettably, I'm unable to assist you in that regard.

19 Q. In any event and, of course, hindsight being a wonderful
20 thing, the recommendation wasn't taken up, was it?

21 Mr Grimmett's recommendation wasn't taken up before
22 7 July and, as a result, the Silver Commanders had
23 mobile phones that day and not pagers; correct?

24 A. That's correct, yes.

25 Q. But as we've seen, the decision was taken swiftly

1 thereafter to reimplement pagers --

2 A. That's correct, yes.

3 Q. -- for those individuals? All right.

4 The final topic which I wish to explore with you,
5 please, Mr Killens, was also touched upon yesterday in
6 passing by Mr Keith and it is the accuracy of the
7 various public pronouncements which were made by the
8 London Ambulance Service following on from the bombings.
9 The position is this, is it not, that in the days,
10 weeks and months that followed on from 7/7, questions
11 began to be asked of the London Ambulance Service as to
12 whether its response on that day had been hindered by
13 failings in the communications system. That's correct?

14 A. Yes, yes.

15 Q. In response, the London Ambulance Service issued
16 a series of press releases dealing with this particular
17 issue, and I'd like to look at one of those with you, if
18 we may, which is at [LAS349-2].

19 This was a response given to The Evening Standard on
20 1 November 2005 following a series of questions which
21 had been posed by the newspaper of the London Ambulance
22 Service.

23 We see, don't we, at question 1:

24 "Please outline any communications problems
25 experienced by the London Ambulance Service in

1 responding to the 7 July attacks. In particular, please
2 explain what difficulties arose due to the collapse of
3 the mobile phone network."

4 We get off to a promising start with:

5 "The incidents in London on 7 July were on an
6 unprecedented scale and extremely complex. This placed
7 enormous pressure on our communications systems.

8 "We acknowledge that our managers may have had to
9 rely too much on public mobile phone networks, and they
10 experienced some problems when these networks were
11 overwhelmed."

12 That is an accurate statement of fact, is it not?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Then we get to deal with the radios:

15 "However, our radio systems worked as normal on the
16 day. We have radios on every ambulance, car and
17 motorbike that are connected to our control room; these
18 worked without disruption."

19 Can we agree that's perhaps a bold assertion in the
20 light of what we now know about the radio systems on
21 that day?

22 A. It's right to say that the detailed analysis of the
23 evidence, which has taken place since 2005, now rightly
24 points towards more significant issues with the
25 communications infrastructure than were initially

1 recognised, yes.

2 Q. I've no wish, Mr Killens, to get into a debate with you
3 about whether any of this was done deliberately or not.

4 I'm not proposing to explore that issue at all. All
5 right? But it would be right to say, wouldn't it, that
6 by November 2005, there had been a very thorough and
7 comprehensive debriefing process at the London Ambulance
8 Service; yes?

9 A. It's right to say that there had been a debriefing
10 process, but not on the scale of the forensic analysis
11 that we've been through in preparation for these
12 proceedings and, indeed, you know, prior to these
13 commencing within the organisation.

14 So it's right to say there had been debriefs, that's
15 absolutely right, it's right to say there had been
16 analysis of what took place on the day. Whether the
17 impact of those issues had been fully understood is
18 perhaps in question.

19 Just touching on your previous point, I reassure you
20 and reassure the court that there was no intention to
21 deceive the public or the GLA, the London Assembly, in
22 relation to the information that was provided. These
23 statements were given in good faith based on the
24 knowledge, best knowledge, of those preparing them at
25 the time.

1 Q. We could spend a considerable amount of time looking at
2 that particular issue. I don't propose to do so for the
3 reasons which I've already given. I don't propose to
4 elongate this part of the examination longer than
5 necessary. So let's move on in the document:

6 "Each ambulance also has a mobile data terminal,
7 a system of passing information electronically between
8 the control room and the vehicle; these worked well on
9 the day of the bombings."

10 The answer is they did, didn't they, work well?

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. But in addition, they became of less and less importance
13 once matters had moved into the Gold control room at
14 Central Ambulance Headquarters?

15 A. That's correct. For those resources that were assigned
16 to the incidents, they were less important, yes.

17 Q. "Our technology was resilient, but the sheer demand
18 placed on the system by four simultaneous attacks meant
19 that we experienced some capacity issues."

20 Again, can we agree perhaps something of an
21 understatement in the light of the evidence which we've
22 now heard?

23 A. That's fair, yes.

24 Q. I only want to look at one other entry, please, on this
25 page, or possibly two, I'm sorry. At question 3:

1 "Were 'Most London Ambulance crews almost totally
2 reliant on mobile phones as the crisis unfolded, causing
3 huge problems' ..."

4 The answer:

5 "We don't use mobile phones to dispatch our
6 ambulance crews or to communicate with them at [the]
7 scene. They use radios and mobile data terminals in
8 their vehicles, and these communication channels worked
9 well on the day."

10 Do the same observations apply in relation to that
11 particular assertion?

12 A. What I would say on this particular point "Were most
13 London Ambulance crews almost totally reliant on mobile
14 phones?", no, they weren't. So in response to that, the
15 answer is correct; most ambulances were not reliant on
16 mobile phones.

17 Q. I'm sorry to cut across you, but it's really the issue
18 of whether the radios worked well on the day.

19 A. Just coming on to that point, in relation to radios
20 across London, they worked. In relation to radios
21 underground and the capacity issues which we
22 experienced, clearly there were difficulties with those.

23 Q. The final issue in relation to this document, at
24 question 4:
25 "Was radio contact between London Ambulance Service

1 headquarters and ambulance staff maintained at all
2 times?

3 "Radio contact between our headquarters control room
4 and our ambulances was maintained throughout our
5 response to the bombings."

6 As I say, leaving completely to one side the issue
7 of the intention behind these observations, that is
8 completely unsustainable, isn't it, as a proposition?

9 A. It's clear now that the response given to that
10 particular question could have been fuller.

11 Q. Because taken in isolation, Mr Killens, it's completely
12 misleading, isn't it?

13 A. In isolation, without other information around it, other
14 context, I would agree with you, in isolation, yes.

15 Q. I'm going to summarise, for the sake of keeping moving,
16 what happened next, but an issue arose in due course,
17 didn't it, because the Ambulance Service received
18 a Freedom of Information request from the BBC on
19 16 December 2005 asking for copies of all your internal
20 reports and debrief documents and so on. That's right,
21 isn't it?

22 A. Yes, that's correct, yes.

23 Q. Would it be fair to say that that was a request which
24 somewhat threw the cat amongst the pigeons at the London
25 Ambulance Service? Do you remember that?

1 A. I remember --

2 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: A slightly tendentious question,
3 I think, Mr Coltart.

4 A. Hence my pause. I remember the FOI request being
5 received, certainly talk of it at the time. I wasn't
6 involved in the preparation of the response to the FOI
7 request from Mr Donovan of the BBC. However, we have
8 seen documents that were disclosed, introduced as
9 evidence here.

10 MR COLTART: In fairness to you, because you weren't
11 directly involved -- I'm not suggesting that you were
12 directly involved -- let's have a look at a document
13 created by someone who was, who was David Jervis, who
14 was your head of communications, director of
15 communications, and it's a briefing note that he
16 prepared at LAS350.
17 Second half of that page, please, this deals
18 specifically with the request by the BBC. He says this,
19 doesn't he:
20 "It is possible that the BBC are testing the Freedom
21 of Information process or are collating material for
22 some future feature programme ... there appears to have
23 been no similar request for information from the ...
24 police or the ... Fire Brigade [so] I believe the BBC
25 will use the material we provide for a news report or

1 programme specifically about the LAS performance ...
2 That is the basis on which we must proceed and prepare.
3 We must expect the worst."
4 Now, in fairness, Mr Jervis, it is part of his job
5 to prepare the Ambulance Service for adverse press
6 comment; agreed?
7 A. Yes, Mr Jervis was the director of communications and
8 part of his role would have been to brief other senior
9 staff within the organisation on the potential options
10 as to how this might unfold.
11 Q. Let's have a look at what was the worst, as far as he
12 was concerned:
13 "It is, I believe, a report from the BBC that
14 claims - using our own words - that failure of radio
15 communications and the subsequent inability to deploy
16 sufficient resources and equipment shows up the response
17 of the LAS (in sharp contrast to previous perceptions
18 and understanding) as chaotic and shambolic - a response
19 that cost lives."
20 Well, again, leaving aside the issue of whether or
21 not it cost lives, because that's a matter for the
22 court, that paragraph, albeit predicated on a worst case
23 scenario, accurately describes, does it not, aspects of
24 the response of the London Ambulance Service on
25 7 July 2005?

1 A. It describes some of the areas of difficulty which were
2 experienced, principally around radio communications,
3 around an inability to deploy resources and equipment in
4 some cases, as we've touched on.

5 It's Mr Jervis' interpretation of the information
6 that was available to him at the time and he was there,
7 as we've seen, setting out what could be the worst case
8 scenario in relation to any piece that was run by the
9 BBC.

10 Q. In due course, you found yourself fighting something of
11 a war on two fronts because Richard Barnes weighed in,
12 didn't he, on behalf of the London Assembly? He had
13 concerns about the accuracy of the evidence which
14 Russell Smith from the London Ambulance Service had
15 given about your radio capability on the day. That's
16 right, isn't it?

17 A. Yes, it is, yes.

18 Q. In the event, there was a lengthy exchange of
19 correspondence between Richard Barnes and
20 Martin Flaherty in which perhaps a slightly fuller
21 response was provided by the London Ambulance Service
22 about the difficulties it had encountered on that day.

23 A. I think that's right, and certainly the letter of
24 22 March 2006 from Martin Flaherty and the report that
25 therefore followed set out in more detail, not only the

1 issues that took place, or occurred, but the impact of
2 those issues and, indeed, Richard Barnes subsequently
3 recognised the transparency of that report prepared and
4 submitted, in that we were open and willing to take on
5 board recommendations made by the review which Mr Barnes
6 chaired.

7 Q. That's absolutely right. I think it's fair to say that
8 you accept in your witness statement that even that
9 final correspondence doesn't, in fact, reflect fully the
10 evidence which has since unfolded during the course of
11 the inquest about the difficulties which you encountered
12 on that day?

13 A. That's absolutely right. That's recognised in the
14 factual issues statement that has been submitted and, as
15 we've gone on, we have understood more about what took
16 place and identified other areas for improvement.

17 Q. This is the last question, the last document, that
18 I want to ask you about, if I may, but could we just
19 have a look, please, at BTP12 [BTP12-1]?

20 This was the official Government report on the
21 emergency response to 7 July 2005 bombings which we can
22 see was published in September 2006.

23 If we go through to page 22 [BTP12-22], please, "Issues with
24 the response" at the top of that page:

25 "It has been suggested that failures in the

1 telecommunication equipment used by the emergency
2 services led to a delay in rescuing those caught up in
3 the attacks. This is not the case. Although there were
4 difficulties, responders were on scene within minutes of
5 receiving 999 calls. The emergency services' radio
6 networks, though stressed, worked well, including the
7 British Transport Police radio system while underground.
8 Where deployed, the police's new 'Airwave' system also
9 worked well. Reduced performance of older systems ...
10 probably degraded the emergency services' Command and
11 Control capabilities, particularly in communicating with
12 vehicles and responders on scene."

13 To the extent that the official Government report
14 suggested that failures in telecommunications had not
15 led to a delay in the rescue operation, it's no longer
16 safe, is it, to rely upon that assumption?

17 A. This document was published in September 2006. By that
18 time -- some six months earlier, we had, in public
19 session with the London Assembly, been very clear that
20 we had experienced communication difficulties on the day
21 and the impact of those communication difficulties.

22 What I can't clearly answer for is why the statement
23 is, at paragraph 63 of this report, written in that way,
24 but we had certainly, six months earlier, been very
25 clear that there were difficulties.

1 Q. I don't want us to be at cross-purposes at the very end
2 of my examination. I'm not suggesting that you're
3 responsible for this, or the London Ambulance Service --

4 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Like another spin doctor, Mr Coltart.

5 MR COLTART: That may well be the case, but to the extent
6 that either the bereaved families or the wider public at
7 large have previously relied upon the assertion
8 contained within that report, I think it's open to us to
9 confirm now, isn't it, that that is no longer accurate?

10 A. I think, based on the evidence we've heard, that's not
11 an accurate reflection of what took place.

12 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Is the author of the document named,
13 in fact?

14 MR COLTART: It was Dr John Reid and the Right Honourable
15 Tessa Jowell MP. I say that they're the authors. One
16 ought to be cautious, of course. They have put their
17 names to the preamble at the beginning of the document.
18 Yes, thank you very much, I've no further questions.

19 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Saunders?

20 Questions by MR SAUNDERS

21 MR SAUNDERS: Mr Killens, I'm going to try to not go over
22 any of the ground Mr Coltart has just covered with you.
23 The approach I want to adopt is, considering what the
24 position was back in 2005 and the progress that's been
25 made since, whether there's any more that can be done.

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. All right? You attended a number of the debriefings in
3 the days and weeks following this incident?

4 A. There were a number of debriefs of various departments
5 and parts of the organisation which took place, yes.

6 Q. I think one of the ones that you attended was the
7 City & Hackney area on 20 July?

8 A. Yes, at the time, in 2005, I was the Ambulance
9 Operations Manager responsible for City & Hackney.
10 Essentially, that job is to manage the day-to-day
11 delivery of service in that geographical area.

12 Q. Clearly, one of the areas you were dealing with is what
13 had happened at King's Cross and the feedback that was
14 coming?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. So this -- I accept it's an email that you wrote,
17 I think it was to Mr Edmondson --

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. -- and to Mr Heselden, is it?

20 A. Yes, Mr Heselden was a member of administrative staff
21 who was seconded to the Emergency Preparedness Unit to
22 bring together documents from the debriefs.

23 Q. You will have heard yesterday I asked various questions
24 of Dr Davies.

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. I'm assuming that the questions I asked of him about
2 triage and treatment are best directed to Dr Moore --
3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- but this is one of the issues that he dealt with in
5 front of her Ladyship about rendezvous points, I think
6 something that her Ladyship was asking questions, and we
7 all have throughout the process.

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. There was clearly a concern, wasn't there, from those
10 that you spoke to in the days afterwards, that at
11 King's Cross, for example, crews were not being directed
12 to a specific rendezvous point?

13 A. That's correct, yes.

14 Q. You're looking through your papers.

15 A. No, I'm looking for the email.

16 Q. Can I help you? It's [LAS513-2].

17 A. Thank you.

18 Q. I'm simply asking you about number 1 at the moment.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. The point -- I don't actually need this -- in terms of
21 what you were receiving, was a concern from the crews as
22 to not appreciating where the rendezvous point should
23 have been or was at King's Cross.

24 A. That's correct, yes.

25 Q. Now, the question I have for you is this: what has

1 happened since? How would crews know now, if they went
2 to King's Cross or wherever it was, where the rendezvous
3 point should be?

4 A. Well, the rendezvous point is like -- well, it depends
5 on the type of incident or where it is, but one of two
6 things could happen. We touched yesterday, I believe,
7 on unique reference numbers, which are now used to
8 identify the location that resources -- responding
9 resources should be sent to. Now, these are used by us
10 and the London Fire Brigade, and specifically refer to
11 Underground stations and, if we take King's Cross as an
12 example, multiple entrances to that station.

13 Q. Exactly.

14 A. These numbers are now in place. When the call is
15 received from London Underground Limited, the number is
16 quoted, that gives us a specific location to respond to.
17 That system was not in place on the day for us.

18 Q. Is that the equivalent of a rendezvous point, this
19 unique reference number --

20 A. It --

21 Q. -- or does it simply give an address? Because, as you
22 know, her Ladyship has heard evidence at different sites
23 where sometimes the Fire Brigade, sometimes
24 London Ambulance, went to a different site or
25 a different entrance?

1 A. It doesn't provide a rendezvous point, and the reason
2 for that is, dependent on the type of incident and the
3 nature of it -- so where is it and what is it? -- it may
4 be appropriate to flex the rendezvous point.

5 So an example here would be -- let's say there's
6 a fire at an Underground station. The unique reference
7 number would give us the address, the entrance the staff
8 wanted us to go to. If the Underground station was in
9 a narrow road, say, and access wasn't good, our
10 rendezvous point might be at the junction at the end of
11 that road. It would not be immediately outside the
12 station. So it depends on the circumstances of the
13 incident.

14 Q. But is the position this, Mr Killens, that no matter
15 what Underground station, your officers would have
16 a rendezvous point to go to?

17 A. One would be nominated, yes.

18 Q. That's a change, is it, since 2005?

19 A. It was certainly an option available at the time to
20 nominate a rendezvous point, but it's now indicated that
21 that is something that should be done early.

22 Q. Forgive me for pressing, but it's the very point. What
23 we've heard the evidence about is that there were
24 rendezvous points, but people simply couldn't find them.
25 Whether it's HEMS or the police or ambulance and fire,

1 there were occasions where they couldn't be located.
2 Now, how would they know, if there was an incident
3 today, where the rendezvous point would be?
4 A. They would be told where it was.
5 Q. By Control?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. Using the unique reference number?
8 A. If the location associated with that unique reference
9 number was the rendezvous point, yes. If it wasn't and
10 it was another location that had been set up, then they
11 would receive -- our crews would receive that
12 information as a message on their MDT and also on their
13 Airwave handset as a text message on their Airwave
14 handset.
15 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: But I'm not detecting what's
16 different, which is the point Mr Saunders is getting at,
17 Mr Killens. I understand that this was all meant to
18 happen back in 2005. Lots of organisations have talked
19 about trying to find the rendezvous point, as
20 Mr Saunders has said.
21 Have you given a higher priority to making sure
22 people know the rendezvous point? Has anything happened
23 to --
24 A. I wouldn't want to prescribe a rendezvous point for
25 a specific incident on the basis that it could place

1 staff in danger. So, if we had a fixed rendezvous point
2 at -- you know, use King's Cross as the example. If we
3 use King's Cross station, if every incident we went to
4 at King's Cross we went to the same place, that could
5 put staff in danger, responders in danger, and it may
6 not be appropriate to respond to the incident we're
7 going to.

8 So it needs to be flexible. What we have done is
9 certainly made -- raised awareness of the need, if there
10 are more than one -- if there's more than one resource
11 going to an incident, to identify a rendezvous point
12 early and, if one hasn't been nominated either by the
13 police or the Fire Service, then we would do that for
14 our staff.

15 Q. But isn't part of the very problem, Mr Killens, too much
16 flexibility creates the very problem you're trying to
17 avoid? I do understand -- please don't think I'm being
18 critical at all -- if you meet at a certain place at
19 King's Cross and people get to know about it, it could
20 itself become the prime location for a device. But if
21 that were the problem, then one would have a secondary
22 position. The concern that I think may be expressed is
23 that none of the organisations seem to know where each
24 should go to to receive instructions.

25 A. It's right to say that -- are we talking about

1 specifically Underground stations, or are we talking
2 about incidents in general?

3 Q. We are, because that's exactly what these inquests have
4 been about, but clearly we are, and her Ladyship may
5 feel that if it was necessary to look beyond that, as to
6 if it were mainline stations, then clearly that may be
7 a matter.

8 It may be easier with some stations, we do take the
9 point, I'm sure, about King's Cross.

10 A. The initial response would be to the location associated
11 with that unique reference number, unless indicated
12 otherwise.

13 Q. Can I then move on?

14 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Sorry, just before you do, one last
15 question in relation to other agencies. How do we make
16 sure that, if all the emergency service agencies are
17 descending on a site, they are going to know to go to
18 the same place to rendezvous?

19 A. One of the requirements of our major incident plan is
20 that the first ambulance that arrives at the scene acts
21 as that focal point.

22 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Leaves its lights on?

23 A. Exactly that, and subsequent resources should extinguish
24 their lights, turn their lights off, and that indicates
25 the focal point for ambulance resources attending the

1 scene.

2 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So that's your service. What about
3 the other emergency services? Are they meant to go to
4 the first ambulance with its lights on?

5 A. No, as we touched on earlier, my Lady, each service has
6 its own control vehicle, so when they -- if it's a major
7 incident that's been declared and they are dispatched,
8 when they arrive at the scene, those control vehicles
9 become that focal point.

10 MR SAUNDERS: But isn't the difficulty that you end up
11 having more focal points? Surely if you had one control
12 that everybody knew to go to, that would avoid the
13 police looking for the ambulance or the fire?

14 A. I think we need to, I guess, contextualise this, in as
15 much as the role of each agency, responding agency, at
16 the scene of a major incident is different, and they
17 require different things.

18 So I wouldn't want to speak on behalf of the police
19 or the Fire Service, but in broad terms, we would look
20 to the police to assist us with initial rescue and scene
21 management in terms of cordons and so on. The
22 Fire Service would clearly be assisting us, again in
23 terms of scene safety, evacuation of patients, fighting
24 fires and so on.

25 Q. Yes.

1 A. So the needs are slightly different. I do accept the
2 coordination aspect of those commanders at the scene,
3 those Silver officers at the scene, needs to take place.
4 They're identified either through tabards or through
5 their presence at their control vehicles or the first
6 vehicle at the scene.

7 Q. Except that's the very point. If somebody isn't wearing
8 a tabard and it's the first point you have found from
9 your debrief with City & Hackney. There was a problem.
10 The Command structure was non-existent.

11 A. Mm-hmm.

12 Q. The staff were not directed as to what they should be
13 doing. There were no roles with tabards being evident.

14 A. That's correct, that's what the email I wrote says, and
15 that's what the staff at City & Hackney who responded to
16 the incidents in July 2005 reflected. Of course, that
17 was not qualified at the time. That was their
18 reflection based on their experience.

19 What we have done subsequent to this, of course, is
20 ensure that the key roles identified within the major
21 incident structure, sufficient tabards to identify those
22 roles, those people exist, and are in circulation and,
23 indeed, each of the officers who would normally
24 undertake the Silver role at the scene had or were
25 issued a personal set of three tabards which were

1 carried in their car, so they had them with them all the
2 time.

3 Q. Can I ask you, you deal here in this email with what was
4 happening. It's point-number 2, my Lady, which is just
5 obliterated, but it's the second "King's Cross", third
6 line down. Emphasis was the feedback as to what was
7 happening above ground but nothing below ground.

8 Now, her Ladyship has heard evidence that at
9 King's Cross there was a considerable amount of triaging
10 taking place above ground or in the foyer, ticket hall.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. Is that something I best cover with Dr Moore?

13 A. Triage -- questions in relation to triage are best
14 directed to Dr Moore, yes.

15 Q. All right. Can I then ask you, please, about equipment
16 and training? Now, that would be your sphere, wouldn't
17 it, Mr Killens?

18 A. Equipment, yes.

19 Q. All right, let me start with equipment, then. In your
20 report at [LAS752-33], it's paragraph 3.4.2, you deal here
21 with an emergency support vehicle.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Her Ladyship has also heard an acronym called an EEV.
24 Is that an emergency equipment vehicle?

25 A. It is. It would be right to say they are essentially

1 the same thing.

2 Q. Delighted. So we've managed to amalgamate two acronyms?

3 A. Two down to one.

4 Q. But they are the support service extra equipment?

5 A. They are. Essentially, they're lorries full up with

6 equipment, yes.

7 Q. That's what I'd like to deal with because the position

8 is that in the report here you deal with the detail,

9 there's no operational performance targets or resources,

10 but then you go on to deal with what, in fact, they

11 carry.

12 One of the things that her Ladyship has heard

13 a considerable amount of evidence about is stretchers.

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So in these vehicles how many stretchers -- how many of

16 the vehicles are there, first of all?

17 A. There are four vehicles, or there were four vehicles,

18 equipment vehicles, in place in 2005.

19 Q. And now, how many vehicles?

20 A. There are those four, plus a further three national

21 capability vehicles which carry principally the same kit

22 and some more, and we have recently also put into

23 operation two further vehicles which carry other

24 equipment, dressings and so on.

25 Q. In terms of stretchers, how many stretchers do they

1 carry?

2 A. I'm not able assist you in the exact number with any
3 degree of certainty. I believe it's something in the
4 order of 30, and a picture of those stretchers is shown
5 on page 130 [LAS752-130] of the report we're currently looking at.

6 These are essentially what are described as Furley
7 stretchers, a very basic carrying aid to move patients.

8 Q. So a Furley stretcher is the collapsible that can be
9 righted?

10 A. That's correct, and if you look at the picture on the
11 bottom right-hand side, it shows that stretcher folded
12 in a storage position.

13 Q. We have heard evidence about the type of stretchers --
14 I'm afraid I can't find the name of them -- where
15 casualties could be removed and, as it were, a canvas --
16 or they're enveloped into the stretcher so they can be
17 lifted vertically, and were used at Russell Square
18 because they had to be taken up the stairs, the spiral
19 stairs?

20 A. There are a number of different types of stretcher
21 called different things which deliver that capability.
22 I wouldn't want to -- like to say which exact one it
23 was. But there are a number available which deliver
24 that capability.

25 Q. How many of that type of stretcher would have been --

1 would be available today, whatever their name is?

2 A. There are variations of them available. Numbers in
3 service with us would be -- across London -- and this is
4 a guess, it's not qualified by any evidence -- it's in
5 the order of 30 or 40.

6 Q. If we had a situation like this, how would those
7 stretchers be brought to an incident scene?

8 A. The initial response would be through one of the
9 Hazardous Area Response Team vehicles. So these are
10 a team of staff which are on duty on a 24-hour basis.
11 They have with them a large equipment vehicle which is
12 staffed on a 24-hour basis, and in that vehicle would be
13 some of those stretchers.

14 Q. Because, in fairness to you and Dr Moore, in your
15 report -- my Lady, it's at 4.6.5, at page 53 [LAS752-53] -- you in
16 fact recognise, do you not, that there was, in fact,
17 a shortage of equipment at the scenes and in particular
18 the lack of stretchers?

19 A. Yes, we do. It's recognised that there was a shortage
20 of various bits of equipment at differing scenes and
21 that stretchers were one such issue.

22 I think it's worth pointing out here that even with
23 those small Furley stretchers, difficulty would occur,
24 would have occurred, and would still occur in using
25 those to take patients out of an Underground train.

1 Q. Her Ladyship heard very traumatic evidence about people
2 who had difficulties with their limbs and that's why we
3 were enquiring as to how many of the more encompassing
4 stretchers would be available for this type of incident?

5 A. Well, on that point, just moving slightly off of the
6 type of stretcher you describe, there is a new piece of
7 equipment which has recently come into service, which,
8 in terms of the numbers in service, is in the order of
9 150 -- and I'm aware of the exact number -- that is
10 better suited to the evacuation of patients from
11 underground trains than the Furley stretcher.

12 Q. The issue that arose with the emergency equipment
13 vehicle was dealt with by your colleague Mr Jones.
14 He attended Aldgate. The emergency equipment
15 vehicle went there and, as her Ladyship heard, they
16 couldn't open the door.

17 A. Mm-hmm.

18 Q. Her Ladyship asked the question: well, how difficult is
19 it to open the door to get the stretchers out? Is that
20 still a problem?

21 A. I've got operational experience of using these vehicles
22 and, indeed, deploying them and of deploying equipment
23 from them. Again, I can only speak with my own
24 operational experience with them. I have not had
25 difficulty in opening the doors or deploying equipment

1 from them.

2 The stretchers are contained in a side door of the
3 vehicle, and if we go to page 128 [LAS752-128] of the report, the top
4 photograph shows the side door there, and the one
5 underneath shows you the door open and the step deployed
6 in there, in that area, are the Furley stretchers. So
7 it is that door that is reported to have difficulty
8 opening. My own experience is that they're not
9 difficult to open.

10 Q. So that was just -- because we understood it -- it's in
11 the report -- we understood it was the actual driver of
12 the vehicle, somebody you would have assumed would be
13 able to access without too much difficulty.

14 A. Indeed, yes.

15 Q. You don't believe that's an ongoing --

16 A. It's certainly not been reported to me as an ongoing or
17 regular occurrence, no.

18 Q. Can I ask you about short-circuiting devices. You deal
19 with this in your report at 9.2.1 which is page 75 [LAS752-74] [LAS752-
20 75].

21 This is the short-circuiting device that is used by
22 London Underground to ensure traction current remains
23 off and is off.

24 Have you, as a service, ever had delays in being
25 able to access trains, underground in particular,
because of awaiting confirmation that the power is off?

1 A. I'm not aware of any reports detailing those
2 circumstances. That's not to say they haven't happened,
3 but I'm not aware of any.

4 Q. The procedure, as far as you're concerned -- I mean, are
5 you the right person to be asking here?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. The procedure would be what? If one of your crews is
8 sent downstairs to an Underground, what would they do?

9 A. I think I touched on this yesterday in evidence.

10 Q. You did.

11 A. There are a number of options available to confirm that
12 traction current is off. Either through staff,
13 Underground staff at the station, or contact in our
14 control room through to the Network Control room for the
15 Underground.

16 The most likely scenario is, I think, as I suggested
17 yesterday, that the crews themselves, the crew
18 themselves, would assess the scene and make an
19 assessment of the information they were provided, and if
20 they were satisfied that traction current was off from
21 the information they had received, then they would go
22 forward.

23 Q. Her Ladyship said to you that -- so they would satisfy
24 themselves --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- and that was the position? Could there be an easier
2 method? Could it not be easier for the line controller
3 to certify with your control room that current was off?

4 A. It is possible. That is a route that exists, yes, and
5 as I just touched on, they -- our control room can make
6 contact with the line control Network Control room to
7 confirm that power is off, yes.

8 Q. Because wouldn't that have the advantage that, before
9 anything then was reconnected, it would have to go
10 through the same route as opposed to one of your staff
11 simply asking an Underground official at the platform?

12 A. I'm aware there are procedures for reconnection of
13 traction current. I'm not completely sighted on what
14 they are.

15 Q. Can I ask you about another piece of equipment,
16 [LAS383-29], please? It's to deal with head torches.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. I can't find it now.

19 A. At the top, 158, third column from the right.

20 Q. Thank you very much indeed, that's quite right.

21 "To be raised ..."

22 This is obviously from a document that goes back
23 some years. What is the position now with that sort of
24 torch?

25 A. The position then was that each ambulance had a torch in

1 it, something of that order was issued to each vehicle.
2 Now, or as we've moved forward, smaller, more portable
3 torches have been issued in ambulances. Many staff
4 carry small torches which clip about their person, and
5 we have procured new lighting, mobile lighting, or
6 portable lighting, which can be deployed -- is deployed
7 in the equipment vehicles to the scenes of incidents.

8 Q. This suggestion of them being head -- because obviously
9 handheld, her Ladyship has heard the evidence of people
10 saying, "well, it was difficult, when I was trying to
11 deal with casualties, having one hand or having to ask
12 somebody else to hold a torch".

13 A. Yes. Well, the expectation, certainly in a scenario
14 like this, would be that staff would wear safety
15 headgear, and the preference that's come forward is
16 these small clip-on torches that clip about their person
17 on their uniform leaving hands free to operate.

18 Q. One other piece of equipment, the suggestion of having
19 a triage, rather than the card, electronic tagging. So
20 as I understand, it's an electronic piece of equipment
21 that is used rather than a card. Has anything
22 further --

23 A. Okay, I'm not aware of an electronic triage system being
24 discussed. There are -- there is an alternative -- two
25 alternative methods. One is through what are described

1 as "wrist slappers", so these are --

2 Q. Sorry, called?

3 A. Wrist slappers. So they're small, coloured devices

4 which --

5 Q. Before you go too further, can I just show you where it

6 appears? It's [LAS383-53], item-number 37. It's the last

7 but one entry.

8 A. "... investigate electronically tagging ..."

9 We certainly don't have an electronic patient

10 tracking or triage process in place now, and we've

11 reviewed the current triage process, and this is

12 certainly referred to in the statement, the factual

13 issues statement. We're satisfied that the triage

14 process and the tools available in that regard are

15 sufficient.

16 Q. Can I move on, then, to training? Is it best to deal

17 with it with you or Dr Moore?

18 A. Training in regards to?

19 Q. Bomb blast.

20 A. That's probably a matter best directed to Dr Moore.

21 Q. Inter-agency training that was cancelled?

22 A. That's probably a matter best directed to me.

23 Q. Right. [LAS383-24], please. Item-number 49.

24 The suggestion here was that there be multi-agency

25 training between the London Fire Brigade/partner

1 agencies, to be reminded of their role of the initial
2 LAS responders through the press campaign.

3 As I understand it, the problem was -- her Ladyship
4 heard evidence, I think, from Mr Cumner at Aldgate, that
5 because he was first to try and assist with triage,
6 other rescue services were imploring him to treat --

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. -- and he was trying to explain to them "That's not my
9 role. As triage officer, I'm at the forefront triaging
10 and prioritising".

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. So that's how I understood this has come about. The
13 suggestion the other agencies don't understand that.
14 Now, the reason I raise it is because it looks as if
15 this has already been dealt with, and for some reason --
16 and it may just be that it was the press campaign that
17 was cancelled. Clearly, one of the features we've heard
18 evidence about is the fact the agencies don't
19 necessarily understand the role, in particular, of those
20 first on scene.

21 A. I think it's -- evidence has shown, the evidence that
22 we've heard throughout these proceedings has shown that
23 there is a lack of understanding about the need for the
24 triage process.

25 We continually work with partners -- and here we're

1 talking about blue light partners, so police and fire --

2 Q. Yes.

3 A. -- not only at a command level, but also at a tactical,
4 operational level. I'm certainly aware of training
5 which remains ongoing today that touches on the need and
6 role for triage -- or role of triage -- and the
7 processes which we employ, and that's principally at an
8 operational level for responders, that training goes on
9 today.

10 So you may be right in saying it was the press
11 campaign that was cancelled, but certainly training in
12 regards to the need for and the process around triage
13 continues today.

14 Q. Should her Ladyship assume that there was training
15 between the inter-agency partners before July 2005?

16 A. There would have been training that took place. What
17 I can say is it certainly wouldn't have been -- I know
18 it was not as frequent or as in-depth as it is now.

19 Q. The phrase "continuing professional development" --

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. For the Ambulance Service, is it compulsory?

22 A. It is for registered professionals, so paramedic staff
23 registered with the Health Professions Council are
24 required to maintain a continual professional
25 development portfolio or log, yes.

1 Q. What about technicians, EMTs?

2 A. That's not the case. They're not registered
3 professionals with the Health Professions Council.
4 However, through good governance, if you like, we do
5 have an internal system of personal development review
6 or continual professional development through ongoing
7 training.

8 Q. Is there any reason why? I understand that they're not
9 a member of the body, but is there any reason other than
10 that why they shouldn't have compulsory training or
11 compulsory development?

12 A. Well, they certainly have compulsory training.

13 Q. Development?

14 A. And, indeed, each member of staff across -- each
15 operational member of staff across the organisation
16 receives a set period of training throughout the year.
17 I touched on this yesterday. In 2005, that CPD
18 programme had been deferred as a result of operational
19 pressures and that's touched on in our statement. But
20 certainly now, with changes to our rostering
21 arrangements, that training time is protected, so each
22 member of staff does get that every 12 months.

23 Q. Can I deal with one final point, then I've been asked to
24 deal with by other counsel who are elsewhere? It's
25 a delicate topic of those who were believed to be

1 deceased at the scene being covered.

2 A. Right.

3 Q. Again, should I more appropriately ask Dr Moore about
4 that?

5 A. If you expand a bit and I'll see if I can assist you.

6 Q. Yes. We know and her Ladyship has seen various
7 photographs of people at, in particular,
8 Tavistock Square where, in order to ensure as much
9 continued dignity as possible, bodies were covered.

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. It would appear that on some of those people there were
12 no checks made as to whether life was extinct.

13 A. Right.

14 Q. Is there, in fact, as part of the training and the
15 protocol, a means of ensuring that that should take
16 place in the correct order, that somebody checks, who is
17 clearly medically qualified, before covering, or, if
18 somebody has been covered, to check that as soon as
19 reasonable afterwards they can be declared properly life
20 extinct?

21 A. Okay, I think there are -- Dr Moore may wish to touch on
22 this when she does give evidence. I think there are two
23 things in my mind in relation to your point. The first
24 one is that I find it highly unlikely, highly unlikely,
25 that a body would be covered without checks taking place

1 in the first instance.

2 The only -- and this is my second point -- the only
3 exception to that would be where injuries were such that
4 they were not compatible with life, and, therefore, the
5 body would have potentially been covered without those
6 checks taking place. But I find it highly unlikely that
7 the checks would not have been undertaken before the
8 body was covered.

9 Q. Is there anything in the protocol or manual that deals
10 with this? I don't think there is, by the way.

11 A. No, there are -- I'm reflecting back on the basic
12 training manual. There are, to my recollection -- yes,
13 there are, to my recollection, references to injuries
14 not compatible with life. I don't recall there's
15 a specific section around persons believed to be
16 deceased and the protocol for managing them in that
17 basic training manual.

18 MR SAUNDERS: Would your Ladyship forgive me. (Pause).

19 Thank you very much, my Lady. Thank you, Mr Killens.

20 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Watson, we usually take a break
21 for the transcribers. Would you rather complete any
22 questions or shall we take the break now?

23 MR WATSON: I have a handful, but barristers are not good at
24 counting fingers and the transcript writers' wrists take
25 precedence, I think, over my needs.

1 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you.
2 (11.35 am)
3 (A short break)
4 (11.50 am)
5 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Yes, Ms Canby?
6 Questions by MS CANBY
7 MS CANBY: Mr Killens, may I just briefly deal with two
8 topics on behalf of Transport for London?
9 A. Yes.
10 Q. The first is in relation to rendezvous points.
11 A. Yes.
12 Q. Is it right to say that, since 7 July 2005, there have
13 been two improvements made in rendezvous points? The
14 first is the use of the unique reference number, the
15 URN?
16 A. Yes.
17 Q. The URN can give information to emergency services, not
18 just about the station that's involved, but in fact the
19 platform where the incident occurs?
20 A. That's correct, yes.
21 Q. The second improvement that's taken place since
22 7 July 2005 is the use of Airwave radios by the
23 emergency services and CONNECT radio by
24 London Underground?
25 A. Yes.

1 Q. That's significant because there can be a talkgroup for
2 all the Silvers and so that can assist in them trying to
3 find each other by being on the same radio system?

4 A. That's correct, yes.

5 Q. The second short topic, please, is traction current.

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. This is dealt with in your statement [LAS752-74]. It's
8 paragraph 9.1.1, and you say there in your statement:

9 "On the Underground network, the crew and officer
10 attending the incident must report to a member of LUL
11 staff wearing a silver tabard."

12 And it's that person who will officially confirm
13 with the LAS staff in attendance that traction current
14 is off and trains are stopped:

15 "LAS crew must satisfy themselves that short-circuit
16 devices are in place."

17 That is the quickest and easiest method of
18 confirmation that traction current is off?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. The second option of seeking confirmation that traction
21 current is off that was put to you was the
22 London Ambulance control contacting the
23 London Underground line controller.

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. In fact, my instructions are that the London Ambulance

1 control cannot contact directly the London Underground
2 line controller. Do you know whether or not that is the
3 case?

4 A. My enquiries suggest differently.

5 Q. My instructions are that the London Ambulance Control in
6 fact contact the London Underground Network Operations
7 Centre.

8 A. I referred to the Network control room earlier, yes.

9 Q. Right, so it's the Network Operations Centre for the
10 London Underground, who is, in fact, somebody different
11 from the line controller in the London Underground.

12 A. Right.

13 Q. But the Network Operations Centre, in order to answer
14 London Ambulance Service's query, would then themselves
15 have to go back to the line controller. So it's
16 introducing a further unnecessary stage.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. So you would agree that the easiest way is to seek
19 confirmation locally at scene?

20 A. I would, yes.

21 MS CANBY: Thank you very much, Mr Killens.

22 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Right, I think I followed that. Yes,
23 Mr Watson?

24 Questions by MR WATSON

25 MR WATSON: I'm not going to dive into the complexity of

1 messaging of that kind.

2 Can I firstly deal with deployment --

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. -- as a topic?

5 You were asked questions about deployment, both the
6 scale and the timing, and clearly the deployment of the
7 Ambulance Service vehicles has to be viewed against
8 three things. Firstly, what numbers of vehicles are
9 available. Secondly, the backdrop of normal demand, if
10 I can put it like that.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. And, thirdly, the point you also made when asked about
13 these questions, the contingency or reserve that common
14 sense accepts that had to be maintained?

15 A. Absolutely right, yes.

16 Q. Could we just check the numbers so that your position is
17 clear?

18 Page 11 of your statement [LAS752-11], which you went to with
19 Mr Keith, at paragraph 2.1.2, identifies that, on
20 checking and rechecking, your position is that, when
21 these incidents started in the morning of 7 July, the
22 availability of undeployed vehicles, if I can use that
23 phrase, was around 79 against a backdrop of 206
24 totally -- total vehicles operational that day, of which
25 127 were already deployed.

1 A. That's correct, yes.

2 Q. So you had something just less than 40 per cent of your
3 operational capacity on that day available to go to
4 these scenes?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. Against that number, you also in your statement looked
7 at the -- what was then achieved, and I'm going to go to
8 page 20 and then back to page 19. So paragraph 3.1.4 on
9 page 20 [LAS752-20] identifies what was actually achieved, both
10 through deployment of your resources and, indeed, with
11 the assistance of others in the background.

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. As I understand it, of the 79 that were available, in
14 fact, the total resources of vehicles deployed matched
15 something like 172 in the end?

16 A. That's correct, the latest information is that, yes.

17 Q. So more than double that which were available at the
18 start of the incident over the course of the incidents?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. That deployment of resources has to be viewed against
21 the backdrop, as we've just covered, of normal business,
22 and you identify what was going on by way of background
23 demand at paragraphs 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 at the bottom of
24 page 19 [LAS752-19], is that right?

25 A. I do, yes.

1 Q. In essence, whilst these incidents were going on, the
2 numbers of calls coming in over the total period,
3 I think of about 5 hours, from just before 9.00 to just
4 after 2.00, was about 575 calls; yes?

5 A. In that order, yes.

6 Q. Of which you identify that 31 were specifically related
7 to the bombings?

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. Of which you identify at least 224 were pressing matters
10 because they were category A?

11 A. These are category A calls, immediately
12 life-threatening, yes.

13 Q. Immediately life-threatening?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. So without descending to a debate about the likelihood
16 of category B calls being in a higher urgent category or
17 not, if one strips away the 31 calls specifically
18 related to the bombings, and if one assumes those were
19 category A, you're still left with about 190,
20 thereabouts, calls which were immediately
21 life-threatening calls coming in to the Ambulance
22 Service in the background?

23 A. Yes, these would have been for heart attacks and asthma
24 attacks and so on.

25 Q. Thank you. So those were the other demands that were on

1 the service and, indeed, on the general control room,
2 through this incident?

3 A. Yes.

4 Q. Not only were those demands there, but you spoke in
5 evidence of the contingency reserves. Is it right that
6 you identified that factor in your statement, I think at
7 page 32 [LAS752-32], which is the second half of paragraph 3.3.33,
8 and you identified there that there were, in your mind,
9 or in the Gold control's mind, the possibility of
10 attacks on other parts of the infrastructure?

11 A. That's absolutely right. We had in our minds the
12 potential for further attacks.

13 Q. A particular reserve that you give as an example -- and
14 I think it's been mentioned in evidence -- was the
15 possibility of Heathrow being a vulnerable area.

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. So that required a reserve to be held specifically for
18 that particular eventuality?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. That wouldn't have been a small reserve, no doubt?

21 A. No.

22 Q. Because of the uncertainty of the situation, would it be
23 right to say that the kind of reserves that had to be
24 borne in mind were reserves to meet another problem
25 within Central London?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. Does that indicate that the reserves themselves had to
3 be kept in reserve, not deployed to these incidents, but
4 in the Central London area?

5 A. We certainly would have wanted them -- kept them in a --
6 yes, proximate to where we expected or perceived further
7 incidents could take place.

8 Q. Thank you. Moving from that to the issues of
9 communications as it affected Gold control, at page 27 [LAS752-27]
10 of your statement, at paragraph 3.3.14 and, to feed the
11 second reference in alongside it, also at page 64 at
12 paragraph 6.1.10, do you identify there the tension,
13 I call it, between the technical capabilities of an
14 infrastructure within the Gold control room and the
15 demands of this incident?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Going back to the first of those references, the phrase
18 you use in your statement is you say:

19 "Thus, the scale and complexity of the
20 7 July 2005 ... bombings incidents against the technical
21 capabilities in the incident management room proved an
22 overarching issue ..."

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. The question I want to ask you is this: is it right to
25 say that those are two elements, not one, both the scale

1 and the complexity, or do you regard those as one
2 factor?

3 A. They're two separate issues.

4 Q. Thank you. Is the reason why they were two separate
5 issues partly to do with what you described as
6 a bottleneck?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. I think the pictorial illustration of what we would
9 understand to be a bottleneck is indeed there in the
10 photograph, is it not, on page 125 [LAS752-125]? In the old control
11 room, we see one VHF radio position, in the foreground.
12 Is that right?

13 A. That's correct, and this control room, as I touched on
14 in evidence yesterday, was in use through -- for daily
15 activity to manage non-urgent work and, in the event of
16 an incident, that activity was moved out and became Gold
17 control.

18 Q. The new team has to move in and, having moved in,
19 I think it's right in your supplemental statement you've
20 indicated that, at that time, messages didn't seamlessly
21 come into this room. Messages would still be received
22 in the main control room where they had to be digested
23 and filtered and, if necessary, even walked through?

24 A. That's correct, yes.

25 Q. Looking at the radio capacity, the VHF radio capacity

1 that was supporting the messages coming into the main
2 control room, is it right that you've, in two places in
3 your statement, dealt with the operational usage of VHF?
4 Firstly, pages 28 [LAS752-28]and 29 [LAS752-29], which is paragraphs

3.3.18

5 through to 3.3.22, I think, or 3.3.21, and secondly, at
6 a more technical level, perhaps, you supplemented that
7 description at page 58 [LAS752-58] of your statement,
8 paragraphs 4.8.2 through to 4.8.10?

9 A. Yes.

10 Q. Just to highlight the issue of capacity and the
11 "bottleneck" phrase you used, is it right that, when
12 these incident calls came in, that you describe at
13 3.3.19 how three channels, I think, that were, as it
14 were, dedicated to the particular geographical areas of
15 the incidents as it were took the initial shock of
16 messages coming in?

17 A. That's correct, yes.

18 Q. The only pan-London channel which could be used, as it
19 were, as an overarching coordinating channel, would have
20 been channel 7.

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. That's what you describe at 3.3.18?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Did channel 7 come into the Gold control room or to the
25 general one?

1 A. To the general one.

2 Q. To the general one. So radio traffic, using that
3 pan-London plus the traffic coming in on the
4 geographical desks, would all go into the general
5 control room?

6 A. That's correct, yes.

7 Q. The technical limitations of VHF, I think, at page 58,
8 you indicate in paragraph 4.8.5, was that only one unit
9 could transmit a message at one time.

10 A. That's correct, yes.

11 Q. So on all these channels, only one person could get
12 a message across at any one point?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. Turning then to pagers, and this is the last topic.
15 Pagers. Is it right that your statement dealt with that
16 issue, the decision to move away from pagers and the
17 problems that were identified potentially with text
18 messaging on page 60 [LAS752-60] at paragraphs -- 4.8 again --
19 4.8.14 through to 4.8.20?

20 A. Yes.

21 Q. Mr Coltart very correctly and fairly indicated that
22 pagers was a device to communicate with managers?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. It was a one-way device?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. It wouldn't have enabled communication from the scene?

2 A. No.

3 Q. Did the issues to do with text messaging, the potential
4 for late or unreliable text messaging that was described
5 in the risk management meeting we looked at with
6 Mr Coltart, was that an issue which was receiving, as it
7 were, no attention in terms of looking at the
8 reliability of text messaging or was that being itself
9 improved at the time?

10 I'm asking you particularly to look at 4.8.17 and
11 4.8.18 [LAS752-61] with regard to the background of that management
12 group meeting.

13 A. The text message system -- the database, if you like --
14 we were using to text out underwent improvement and,
15 therefore, the reliability and the capability of the
16 system was enhanced through that work.
17 That was essentially an internal server-related
18 piece of work, without going too deep into the technical
19 aspects of it, but it did enhance the capability of the
20 texting system.

21 Q. Thank you. You told Mr Coltart in answer that, when the
22 managers needed to be contacted on this day, you used
23 the text messaging system --

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. -- when they were at Millwall?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. To your knowledge, did that work?

3 A. It did. I received a text message myself, so, yes, it
4 worked.

5 Q. The particular issue, in terms of reliability of texts
6 going through the system, was that, to your knowledge,
7 an issue on the day of 7 July until the networks
8 themselves, the overall networks, became unreliable and
9 failed?

10 A. Just rephrase the question slightly for me.

11 Q. The particular issue identified by the report put
12 forward by Mr Grimmett of a text message being delayed
13 or failing in transmission in the ordinary context of an
14 incident, was that, on this day, a problem up to the
15 point where the mobile networks themselves -- leave
16 aside T-Mobile, which seems to have survived a little
17 bit -- but the other networks, when they failed?

18 A. It's not -- it was not a problem that I'm aware of.

19 MR WATSON: Thank you. Those are all the questions I had.

20 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you, Mr Watson.

21 Ms Canby, could you just, in fact, make something
22 clear for me, if you would? Do I recall correctly that
23 London Fire Brigade -- and I know Ms Boyd is here
24 today -- said that they had to get confirmation in
25 relation to traction current from -- was it the

1 Network Control room?

2 MS CANBY: I understand their process to be that they seek
3 confirmation from the Network Control Centre, which is
4 now the Network Operations Centre.

5 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So they are the same thing?

6 MS CANBY: They are the same thing.

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Right.

8 MS CANBY: The distinction is between the line controller
9 and the Network Operations Centre, and in fact the
10 Network Operations Centre cannot give confirmation that
11 traction current is on and off -- on or off. They would
12 have to refer to the line controller.

13 But it becomes much easier if it's done at site and
14 locally, because the local station supervisor, for
15 example, has a CONNECT radio with direct access to the
16 line controller and so can get confirmation either way
17 there whilst they were in front of the officer from the
18 Fire Brigade or the London Ambulance Service.

19 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So the system is the same -- or
20 should be the same now for the London Fire Brigade and
21 the London Ambulance Service?

22 MS CANBY: It doesn't appear that it is. It appears that
23 the London Ambulance Service are content to accept local
24 confirmation at scene, whereas the London Fire Brigade
25 still insist on confirmation via Control Centres,

1 Fire Brigade Control and, in fact, Mr Dunmore is meeting
2 with London Fire Brigade this afternoon to discuss this
3 issue further.

4 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Is that something we explore perhaps
5 later in the week, Ms Boyd?

6 MS BOYD: My Lady, we can do, yes. My Lady, so far as the
7 London Fire Brigade is concerned, it's correct that they
8 seek confirmation through Brigade Control, although it
9 can be done locally, as indeed was done locally,
10 effectively, at Aldgate, and I think our policy mirrors
11 the British Transport Police policy which was referred
12 to in Inspector Short's evidence, I think, or one of the
13 inspectors, in that they also have a policy whereby they
14 obtain confirmation through Control, although again it
15 can be done locally.

16 When I say "Control", through NCC, as I understand
17 it.

18 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: It sounds as if the experts --
19 namely, London Underground -- need to be talking to
20 people to make sure we have the most effective system in
21 place.

22 MS BOYD: My Lady, indeed.

23 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So we will leave it there and may
24 have to return to it later in the week.

25 MS BOYD: Thank you.

1 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you.
2 As far as rendezvous points -- I'm sorry to go on
3 about them, Mr Killens, but it does concern me --
4 I understand, when various emergency services arrive,
5 they all have different jobs to do. Of course
6 I understand that. But what happened -- I mean,
7 I appreciate it may also be very different with decent
8 radio communications, but what seems to have happened on
9 the day is that every organisation arrives at each scene
10 and everybody is sending somebody down to find out
11 what's going on.
12 Now, if you had a properly established system for
13 the agencies all to get together at a rendezvous point,
14 which is how I started these proceedings thinking that's
15 what happened, then if somebody comes back from the
16 train and says, "I've been on the train, I can tell you
17 there has been a bomb, there are multicasualties, people
18 have died", and just gives -- "There are no chemical
19 signs", just gives you that kind of information, then
20 surely that would be very helpful to the other agencies
21 who are arriving?
22 A. I think it would be helpful, my Lady. I think, just
23 kind of working this through, how it would actually play
24 out, if I may, each agency doesn't arrive at the same
25 time.

1 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: No.

2 A. And so responders from varying agencies would arrive
3 first, and they would go forward, and in this case they
4 would go forward and underground, one assumes, to assess
5 the situation. Subsequent resources arriving in the
6 minutes after would see no one up top.

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Wait a minute, can we rewind
8 a second? You have assumed that every single agency is
9 going to immediately go down to form their own
10 assessment, but if they'd been told by another agency,
11 for example, "There are no chemical weapons, any signs
12 of chemical weapons", surely that is going to help the
13 agencies who may or may not then deploy people to the
14 train itself?

15 A. Indeed it would help. What I was going to go on to
16 describe is -- say the police arrived first and the
17 police officer goes forward, he or she would make an
18 assessment of that scene. An ambulance response car
19 then arrives, sees no one up top, will go forward to
20 make an assessment. They may or may not, say in the
21 case of King's Cross, take the same path. They could go
22 in a different entrance down a different escalator and
23 so on.

24 So the initial response, as we have touched on, is
25 confused and will inevitably be so for the first period

1 of time, 20, 30, 40 minutes, until we get an appropriate
2 structure over the top of this to bring order to that
3 confusion which inevitably ensues as the responders
4 arrive.

5 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So you don't think there's any scope
6 for the various agencies involved in getting together to
7 try to work out how you could define or delineate
8 a focal point, as Mr Saunders called it, so that, when
9 people arrive -- so, if the policeman's gone down, he's
10 discovered what's happened and he then comes up, he
11 knows where to go, so that he's there and can brief
12 somebody and then all the other agencies know that they
13 can go there and get reliable information. You don't
14 think there's any scope for that kind of arrangement?

15 A. I'm certainly not saying that at all. I think it's
16 something we can take away and explore. We would need
17 any process that was agreed to be flexible and
18 dynamic --

19 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Absolutely.

20 A. -- because clearly we cannot prescribe for the
21 circumstances that we're going to see in every single
22 incident we respond to. But it's certainly something
23 that we could explore further.

24 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Because getting the Command structure
25 set up is bound to take time.

1 A. Yes.

2 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: And, as we know, whether you talk
3 about the golden hour or whatever, but minutes are
4 precious, seconds are precious. So what's worrying me
5 is there isn't sufficient -- at the moment, there isn't
6 sufficient sharing of information between the various
7 services before the -- in the chaotic time, you need to
8 get the best sharing of information you can, albeit it's
9 chaos.

10 A. Yes.

11 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: I'm just wondering if there's scope
12 for trying to get -- before you have your structure in
13 place, and obviously the best answer is to get that in
14 place as soon as possible, but is there any scope for
15 there being a chaotic sharing of information, if you see
16 what I mean, in the chaotic period, the sharing of
17 information?

18 A. There is certainly scope, I think, for sharing of more
19 information in that initial confused period. Again,
20 I wouldn't want to make a policy decision on behalf of
21 the three services here.

22 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: I'm not asking you to.

23 A. But I think there is certainly scope for it and it's
24 something we could explore with the new technology,
25 Airwave and so on, that's now available, we could look

1 at ways of doing that.

2 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you.

3 MR KEITH: May I ask a question arising out of my Lady's
4 question?

5 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Please.

6 MR KEITH: Your answer presumed, Mr Killens, that my Lady
7 had in mind a single-crewed response, because you said,
8 well, the police officer would arrive and go down to
9 see. But, of course, many of the responders were
10 double-crewed.

11 A. Yes.

12 Q. So my Lady's example works better, in fact, if you will
13 allow me to say so, than you gave it credence, because
14 two police officers could arrive, one could go down, one
15 could stay up top. The information comes back from the
16 second police officer to the first police officer. Ten
17 minutes later two ambulance men arrive, one can go down,
18 one can go off start treating, and the police officer
19 who had remained up and had the information can give
20 whatever information he or she has received from their
21 colleague below to one of the two ambulance officers who
22 have arrived, and subsequently, as more and more
23 emergency services arrive, the information which has
24 been imparted to the police, or one of the policemen,
25 can then be subsequently relayed to the others.

1 So as long as there is one person there throughout,
2 from any of the organisations, there will be somebody
3 there to relay information in those critical minutes.

4 A. I think that's a practical observation. I think, when
5 you put that into the operational context in the street,
6 the responders, yes, are arriving two, three, four, five
7 minutes after the incident has taken place, there would
8 be, in these scenarios, people coming out of the
9 stations, platforms, trains, and so on. Those
10 responders would be distracted.

11 Q. But with respect, your own organisation demands through
12 its major incident plan that one of the first two
13 ambulance staff to arrive becomes the Ambulance Incident
14 Officer and is obliged to stay near the blue light of
15 the ambulance in order to be able to collate information
16 it has received. So the current structures do actually
17 anticipate somebody staying there.

18 A. Indeed, and that is the principle, if you like, the aim
19 of our major incident plan and what we set out to do.
20 Inevitably, those people are distracted and we've seen
21 evidence of that through the course of these proceedings
22 with a different approach being taken at one scene to
23 another.

24 Now, neither of -- or none of those approaches are
25 wrong, if you like. They are set in the circumstances

1 which present at those scenes. So I think there is
2 scope to explore the points that are made, but it's very
3 difficult to prescribe exactly what will happen at
4 a scene once the -- as the initial responders arrive,
5 given the circumstances that they face.

6 Q. I'm sure you'd agree the possibility of distraction is
7 no answer to perhaps a re-examination of the principle
8 position?

9 A. And I accept that's something we can explore.

10 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: The first ambulance leaves the lights
11 going. As far as the other emergency services go, what
12 is your inter-agency training? Is there any focus on
13 the first ambulance, because it's got its lights on,
14 therefore it's going to be a focal point or --

15 A. My understanding is that each agency should adopt the
16 same position.

17 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Indeed.

18 A. So the first fire engine that turns up leaves its lights
19 on, subsequent fire engines that arrive, appliances,
20 sorry, turn their lights off until the command vehicle
21 arrives and then that becomes the focal point. So the
22 same principle should apply for each service.

23 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you. Those are all the
24 questions we have for you, Mr Killens.

25 A. Thank you.

1 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you very much indeed for
2 carrying out such a thorough and honest review of what
3 happened, and I'm very grateful to you for all your
4 help.

5 A. Thank you.

6 MR KEITH: Thank you, Mr Killens.

7 My Lady, may I invite you to recall Chief

8 Inspector Short briefly, please?

9 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Certainly.

10 CHIEF INSPECTOR PHILIP SHORT (recalled)

11 Questions by MR KEITH

12 MR KEITH: Good morning, Chief Inspector. You remain
13 technically under oath, so I needn't ask for you to be
14 resworn again. Thank you very much for making yourself
15 available for these proceedings again. You've come back
16 to assist my Lady in relation to a specific point
17 arising out of your evidence on 8 February, have you
18 not?

19 A. I have, yes.

20 Q. In the course of that evidence, you were referring to
21 a report which you prepared in relation to Airwave and
22 the history of Airwave. I think the operation, in
23 technical terms, within the British Transport Police was
24 called Operation Pendulum. The report is at [BTP428-7].
25 It referred on that page to -- at the second bullet

1 point from the top of the page -- a letter that the
2 Chief Constable wrote to the Minister of Transport
3 highlighting concerns around the lack of progress.
4 My learned friend, Mr Coltart, was asking you about
5 the project and the letter, and you described how the
6 whole project needed a bit of a kick and there was an
7 urgency in getting new arrangements in place, and you
8 said they were very important.
9 My Lady asked you a question as follows. She said:
10 "Did that letter trigger some kind of reaction in
11 terms of setting up of a project board to move the
12 Airwave project forward?"
13 And you responded in the affirmative suggesting that
14 it had.
15 A. I did, yes.
16 Q. Have you now been back to your own computer and have you
17 also now made further enquiries as to whether or not the
18 letter that you had thought had been sent was, in fact,
19 sent?
20 A. Yes, I've made extensive enquiries and, firstly, I'd
21 like to state that I believe I made an error in my
22 original report and I apologise for that, but I can
23 clarify the matter today, hopefully.
24 Q. Thank you very much. Were you able to find on your
25 computer, or on a computer, a draft of a letter which we

1 have at [BTP454-2], please, which is a draft letter to the
2 Home Secretary copied to the Department of Transport
3 Minister from the Chief Constable of the British
4 Transport Police in which you set out -- I think you
5 drafted the letter -- your concerns, but you've been
6 unable to find proof positive that such a letter was in
7 fact sent?

8 A. Yes, I've found evidence, if you like, that that letter
9 was produced from my files on my computer at my
10 workplace, and that was produced on 30 April 2003.

11 That's when the letter was actually drafted.

12 What I'm unable to establish, having made these
13 extensive enquiries, was whether the letter was actually
14 sent.

15 Q. Have you made enquiries, in fact, of the then
16 Chief Constable of the British Transport Police and his
17 staff, as well as of the persons who might have received
18 it?

19 A. Yes, indeed, sir, I've made -- in fact, the
20 Chief Constable at that time's PA has made two extensive
21 sets of enquiries as to where that letter could be or
22 whether that letter was sent and she's been unable to
23 establish that that was the case.

24 Q. Was any evidence of any reply, perhaps to corroborate
25 the sending of the letter, found either?

1 A. It was not, sir, no.

2 Q. I think to be fair -- and you gave, if I may say so,
3 a brilliant exposition on the Airwave project on your
4 last appearance before my Lady -- to be fair, you give
5 a general account in your report, and you give a general
6 account in your evidence, of how the British Transport
7 Police had pushed to bring about changes in the Airwave
8 system and to bring about the fruition in the project.
9 Even if the letter had not been sent in those terms,
10 was it mirrored in any event by the general approach
11 taken by the Chief Constable for the British Transport
12 Police in his dealings with ministers and other
13 officials involved in the project?

14 A. Yes, it absolutely was, sir, yes.

15 Q. So even if the letter wasn't sent, although you had
16 mistakenly thought that it was, it may not have had any
17 impact upon the way in which the British Transport
18 Police viewed this project and the importance of pushing
19 it on?

20 A. No, although the Chief Constable at that time has stated
21 he probably would not have sent the letter in the form
22 it was drafted, he would -- the subject was closely --
23 he was close to the subject, he was extremely
24 well-briefed on it, and he was able to raise it at
25 whatever opportunity he could.

1 MR KEITH: Thank you very much for correcting that. I have
2 no further questions.

3 Questions by MR COLTART

4 MR COLTART: Just one or two, if I may. We haven't looked
5 at the letter in any detail, or the draft letter in any
6 detail. In a nutshell, it says this, doesn't it: that
7 you had concerns that PITO, who had taken over the
8 progress of the project, weren't advancing it as quickly
9 as perhaps might have been hoped?

10 A. Yes.

11 Q. Is that fair? And that you felt as if some ministerial
12 intervention was necessary in order to secure Airwave on
13 the Underground which was the project you were so
14 desperately seeking to advance?

15 A. That's correct, my Lady, yes.

16 Q. If we just have a look at the second page of the letter,
17 please, it's at [BTP454-3]:

18 "I am aware that Ian Blair, Deputy Commissioner of
19 the Metropolitan Police, wrote to your Permanent
20 Secretary on 12 March 2002 on this subject and I endorse
21 his comments completely."

22 Now, a search for that letter has been undertaken
23 and, sadly, it can't be found.

24 A. So I understand, sir, yes.

25 Q. But are you able to recall in broad terms what it was

1 that that letter said such that you were able to endorse
2 the observations in it?

3 A. Unfortunately, not in any great detail, but what I would
4 be prepared to state is, particularly in regard of the
5 last paragraph, that clearly that would have been
6 included in Sir Ian Blair's letter, which I would have
7 seen to -- which I would have had to have seen to
8 actually comment on it.

9 Q. Exactly. The concern that, without that intervention,
10 London's preparedness for and ability to respond to
11 major incidents on the London Underground will be
12 greatly diminished.

13 So this was a jointly held concern between the
14 Metropolitan Police and the British Transport Police?

15 A. That is fair to say, yes.

16 Q. As far back as March 2002, that issue was being
17 addressed by the Metropolitan Police, and I don't
18 suppose that anything which arose 18 months later during
19 the course of Operation Osiris put your mind at rest in
20 relation to the risk which was posed by this issue?

21 A. I wasn't directly involved in that operation, sir.

22 Q. No doubt, the results of it were passed on to you.

23 A. I am aware of some of the results of it, but ...

24 Q. But in any event, and as we well know, the fact is,
25 by July 2005, notwithstanding -- and I repeat -- your

1 very significant efforts, Airwave on the Underground
2 hadn't been achieved?
3 A. It hadn't been achieved by that time, but there were --
4 there was a move at that time -- or there were moves to
5 actually start the project off.
6 MR COLTART: Thank you.
7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Any other questions?
8 MR GIBBS: Might I just sum it up?
9 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Of course, Mr Gibbs.
10 Questions by MR GIBBS
11 MR GIBBS: Mr Short, does it come to this: the
12 Chief Constable at the time didn't send your draft, but
13 he raised the issue in his own words or in his own way
14 with the appropriate authorities?
15 A. I believe that to be the case, sir, yes.
16 MR GIBBS: Thank you.
17 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Mr Short, thank you very much indeed
18 for being so careful and so thorough.
19 A. Thank you, my Lady.
20 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Thank you.
21 MR KEITH: My Lady, may I invite you to call Mr Jim A'Court,
22 please.
23 MR JAMES MALCOLM A'COURT (affirmed)
24 Questions by MR KEITH
25 MR KEITH: Good morning. Could you give the court your full

1 name, please?

2 A. My full name is James Malcolm A'Court.

3 Q. Mr A'Court, as I've done with senior managers and
4 witnesses in your fellow emergency organisations, may
5 I acknowledge through you, firstly, the bravery of the
6 individual members of your organisation who entered the
7 various tunnels at considerable personal risk and with
8 considerable courage?

9 A. Thank you, sir.

10 Q. I think we are all very well aware of the difficult and
11 dangerous job that the London Fire Brigade, with other
12 fire services, performs.

13 A. Thank you.

14 Q. You have come to assist my Lady in relation specifically
15 to the radio systems operated by the London Fire
16 Brigade.

17 A. That's correct, yes.

18 Q. You have provided us with a statement, LFB137, dated
19 12 January 2011, and it shows that you are a group
20 manager employed by the London Fire Brigade in the
21 incident communications section of the policy department
22 at the headquarters?

23 A. That's correct.

24 Q. Your role entails drawing up, amending, reviewing
25 policies related to radio communications and how they

1 work?

2 A. That's correct, yes.

3 Q. If we turn to the second page, [LFB137-2], we can see that
4 in 2005 there were two main systems of radio
5 communication operated by the London Fire Brigade:

6 a handheld analogue UHF, ultrahigh frequency, fireground
7 radio system and a main scheme analogue VHF radio which
8 was actually installed in the Fire Brigade vehicles.

9 A. That's right.

10 Q. Could we look at the handheld system first? In 2005,
11 would there have been, were there, radio handsets in the
12 vehicles and held by individual members of the
13 Fire Brigade?

14 A. There would have been two radios on each of the front
15 line pumping appliances, so the fire engines. One of
16 those would have been issued to the appliance commander,
17 so the person in charge of the vehicle. The other one
18 would have been used by another member of the crew.
19 Normally, it would have been the driver issued that
20 radio simply because the driver would have acted as the
21 message sender, as it were, at a smaller incident
22 certainly, to Brigade Control.

23 Q. Is it important to emphasise that this handheld
24 system -- we'll explore the details in a moment -- was
25 used for operational incidents around the incident to

1 allow communication around the actual place where the
2 Fire Brigade was attending?

3 A. That's correct, yes, it was localised to the incident
4 itself.

5 Q. But could it cope with larger incidents where there were
6 present, not just a driver and another member of the
7 crew, but a number of Fire Brigade officers?

8 A. Yes. The radio system that we deployed had -- although
9 it was a localised system, had a number of radio
10 channels that was programmed into the radio. Those
11 radio channels would have been used for different
12 purposes at the incident ground, for the Incident
13 Commanders, for breathing apparatus crews, and for --
14 where the incident escalates, for a higher level of
15 Incident Command, as it were.

16 Q. Could we just have a look, please, at a document on the
17 screen next to you, [LFB46-4]? This is a diagram setting
18 out, in its most basic form, incident communications.
19 I emphasise incident communications.

20 We can see there two members of a crew, BA crew,
21 breathing apparatus crew, they have their breathing
22 apparatus on, and they're using a channel in this
23 diagram, channel 6.

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. That permits them, with the equivalent of the handheld

1 radio, which is actually inside their breathing
2 apparatus masks --
3 A. Yes.
4 Q. -- to communicate with somebody, who's also channel 6,
5 called the entry control officer.
6 A. That's correct.
7 Q. The entry control officer can also, by using a different
8 channel, or by using a vehicle, communicate with other
9 people?
10 A. The entry control officer would be unlikely to use
11 a vehicle. They would more likely use an alternative
12 communications officer with another radio tuned to
13 a different channel.
14 Q. In this example, is it channel 1?
15 A. It would be channel 1 in this example, yes.
16 Q. Then, as we'll see in a moment, was there also, as there
17 is now, a main scheme radio which allowed communication
18 from the vehicle?
19 A. That's correct.
20 Q. Back to Brigade Control?
21 A. Back to Brigade Control, yes.
22 Q. All right. The handheld radio, was it what was known as
23 intrinsically safe or not?
24 A. The intrinsic -- there were intrinsically safe radios,
25 they were attached, permanently attached, to the

1 breathing apparatus sets, but at the time of the 7 July
2 bombings, the intrinsic radios would have only been
3 issued one per pumping appliance.

4 Q. What are or what were intrinsically safe radios?

5 A. Essentially, it means that, if the device were to fail,
6 it would fail in such a way that it wouldn't heat up or
7 cause a spark that may ignite explosive gases that were
8 present in the environment.

9 Q. So does that mean that the handheld radios, according to
10 the protocols in place, would have to be switched off or
11 not used within a certain distance from an incident lest
12 there was a risk of a spark creating an explosion?

13 A. To a certain degree, yes. But then it's based on the
14 risk assessment that would be carried out by the
15 Incident Commander and the type of incident that you
16 were attending. If there was a likelihood that there
17 was an explosive gas or a flammable gas that had been
18 not ignited, then the Incident Commander would have used
19 caution to approach the incident and to not have used
20 a non-intrinsically safe radio.

21 Q. My Lady has heard evidence that some firefighters were
22 concerned at the various scenes of the bombs of the risk
23 of -- the risk that a radio held by them might cause
24 a detonation of some sort, or an explosion of some sort
25 and, of course, there was, at the start of each of the

1 incidents, some degree of doubt as to whether or not
2 they were CBRN-related. There was a degree of confusion
3 as to what the risks were.

4 Until the risks were analysed, I think you call it
5 a dynamic risk assessment, before everybody knew what
6 the position was, did the old system, the old handheld
7 radios, therefore give rise to concern on the part of
8 officers that perhaps they should be switching them off
9 until they knew what they were dealing with?

10 A. I would imagine that in the first instance -- bear in
11 mind that I wasn't actually at the incidents -- in the
12 first instance, the primary concern would have been to
13 gather information to determine whether or not there was
14 any risk.

15 For some officers, I'm aware that they did consider
16 the possibility of detonating any unexploded IEDs and we
17 have a policy that dictates the distances where you
18 should stay away from the localised scene.

19 Q. So it was an issue, a concern, and hence a problem for
20 some officers because the old handheld --

21 A. For some officers, correct.

22 Q. -- radio had that facet, that aspect, which meant that
23 there was a risk of a further IED being detonated, it
24 gave rise to concerns?

25 A. Had it have been a consideration or had people thought

1 about the potential for a second IED, then, yes, it
2 could well have been a concern.

3 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Sorry, what was the mechanism by
4 which a second IED would have been detonated by
5 a handheld radio of this kind?

6 A. There's a potential for a transmission from the radio,
7 my Lady.

8 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: It's the transmission itself? Yes,
9 that's what I thought the concern was. So nothing to do
10 with not being intrinsically safe and not emitting off
11 sparks?

12 A. No.

13 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Just the very fact of any radio
14 transmitting?

15 A. Any radio, that's correct.

16 MR KEITH: You mentioned the one in the breathing apparatus.

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. That, however, was intrinsically safe?

19 A. That is intrinsically safe.

20 Q. Yes.

21 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: But again, there would still be the
22 same worry about transmissions?

23 A. Exactly the same. If somebody is transmitting on the
24 radio, then, yes, my Lady, there's a potential for it to
25 detonate an IED.

1 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Do you know whether there's been any
2 discussion with experts on the detonation of IEDs?

3 I think I recall, some weeks ago now, hearing from an
4 expert who wasn't so convinced as others that there
5 might be the risk of detonating by radio transmissions.

6 A. I've not been a party to that.

7 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Right.

8 MR KEITH: The handheld radios had a number of channels, did
9 they not?

10 A. That's correct.

11 Q. At page 3 [LFB137-3] of your statement, do you set out the channels
12 that were programmed in those handheld radios?

13 Channel 1 was an Incident Command. Channel 2 also used
14 for Incident Command, but for larger incidents. But did
15 channel 2 require what's known as a radio repeater?

16 A. Yes, that's correct.

17 Q. What is that?

18 A. A radio repeater is essentially a piece of equipment
19 that is like another radio. It receives signals on one
20 frequency and it transmits signals out on another
21 frequency. It allows for a greater coverage area within
22 an incident ground.

23 Q. Channels 3 and 4 were not used. Channel 5, did channel
24 5 have a specific purpose?

25 A. Channel 5 specifically was used for underground

1 communications and communications in structures with
2 known difficulties for radio communication for London
3 Fire Brigade.

4 Q. What enabled channel 5 to be used, in particular in
5 sub-surface areas, London Underground stations? What
6 device was relied upon to make channel 5 work?

7 A. Sub-surface or section 12 Underground stations were
8 fitted, permanently fitted, with a radio repeater device
9 in the equipment rooms that was permanently switched on.

10 Q. Was that what we heard described as a leaky feeder?

11 A. No, the leaky feeder is the radiating aerials that are
12 connected to the repeater system which allow the signal
13 to be transmitted at a greater distance.

14 Q. In essence, the radio repeater sends the radio
15 transmission outwards. The leaky feeder allows it to be
16 sent down a pipe with holes in it --

17 A. That's correct.

18 Q. -- and so the transmission comes out of the holes, along
19 the length of the line?

20 A. Yes and is received along the same thing.

21 Q. And is received as well, so you can go down into
22 a platform and receive transmissions and send
23 transmissions through use of that leaky feeder line?

24 A. That's correct, yes.

25 Q. Channel 6, as we saw from that diagram, was the one used

1 by breathing apparatus crews, is that correct?

2 A. Used by breathing apparatus crews above surface,
3 although breathing apparatus crews, had they gone
4 sub-surface, would have used channel 5.

5 Q. There were a number of limitations in relation to the
6 old handheld radio system, were there not? One could
7 only transmit or receive on one channel at a time when
8 holding a handset?

9 A. That's correct, yes.

10 Q. Were there limitations in terms of line of sight; that
11 is to say there were limitations depending on whether or
12 not there were buildings in the locality or where two
13 firefighters were standing, with how far apart they
14 could be whilst communicating?

15 A. Yes, with an uninterrupted line of sight, the radios
16 typically could transmit about a kilometre distance, and
17 that can change quite dramatically, depending on the
18 type of buildings or the type of geography, if you want,
19 that prevails.

20 Q. Because it was a radio, because it worked on the basis
21 of radio transmissions to that handset on a particular
22 channel, it wasn't possible for to you send multiple
23 broadcasts, that's to say general messages to everybody
24 on a channel?

25 A. No, the radios would have -- the analogue handheld

1 radios that we had then were simplex in operation, which
2 means that one person could transmit at any one time
3 whilst multiple users could receive it. So in that
4 respect, yes, you can have one person sending a message,
5 and many people receiving the message, but we were
6 limited by the number of radios that were physically
7 available at the scenes.

8 Q. As you've already observed, that system would not
9 therefore have allowed firefighters to speak directly to
10 Brigade Control?

11 A. No.

12 Q. Because they would be away from Brigade Control and
13 Brigade Control would be outside the scope of the radio
14 transmission?

15 A. No, the radios were designed purely to provide an at
16 incident communication system.

17 Q. Indeed.

18 A. Any communications with Control would have been carried
19 out using our main scheme radio which would have been
20 attached to the appliances.

21 Q. The main scheme radio, then, please, page 5 [LFB137-5] of your
22 statement. It was also an analogue radio system, was it
23 not?

24 A. That's correct.

25 Q. But it was bigger and powerful and used VHF, very high

1 frequency radio waves?

2 A. That's correct.

3 Q. Was that the primary means by which vehicles -- London
4 Fire Brigade vehicles -- could communicate with
5 Brigade Control, the mobilising control?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Were they only contained in the cabs of the vehicles,
8 that is to say permanently fixed to the cab?

9 A. Permanently fixed to the cabs and in some officers' cars
10 as well.

11 Q. So if somebody at the scene of an incident wished to
12 speak to Brigade Control, they could speak amongst
13 themselves then on the handheld radio, but one of them
14 would have to go to the cab and then radio in to
15 Brigade Control whatever it was they wished to relay?

16 A. Yes, at a smaller incident, typically the person that
17 would be sending the messages would also be carrying out
18 other functions. At a larger incident, you would
19 nominate a person to be the radio operator and they
20 would be at the Incident Command pump and would be
21 sending messages from there.

22 So that radio operator would also have a handheld
23 radio receiving incident ground messages and being able
24 to relay information back to Control, if it were
25 necessary.

1 Q. Did that main scheme radio have a number of channels,
2 depending on the geographical location of the vehicle?

3 A. Yes, the radios were programmed with four channels. In
4 fact, they were programmed with more than that, but four
5 primary channels for use within the London Fire Brigade
6 area, three of them used constantly, and the areas that
7 they were covering were designated by our commands, our
8 various different commands.

9 Q. So if a vehicle was travelling from one part of London
10 to another, and it crossed over into a different
11 geographical command area, it would switch to the
12 channel relevant for that area?

13 A. That's correct.

14 Q. So if it was coming north over the river, it might --
15 and you give an example -- switch to channel 3 or 4,
16 depending on where they were?

17 A. That's correct, yes.

18 Q. The current situation then, please. Dealing firstly
19 with the handheld radios. Have the actual handsets, the
20 handheld radios, been replaced?

21 A. Yes.

22 Q. Is it still an analogue system, or is it a digital
23 system?

24 A. No, it's an analogue handheld at incident ground radio.

25 Q. We have heard a great deal of evidence about the way in

1 which other emergency services used the new digital
2 TETRA-based Airwave system for communications above and
3 below ground.

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. But the Fire Brigade use for incident communication an
6 analogue system. Can you just describe for us, please,
7 what the advantages were, as the Fire Brigade perceived
8 it, of continuing with an analogue system as opposed to
9 using Airwave for incident communications?

10 A. Yes, certainly. What we found with an analogue system
11 is that the -- as you are moving in towards a -- the
12 coalface, if you want, of the incident, moving further
13 away from the other transmissions, any signal
14 degradation is slow and obvious to the people using the
15 radios, whereas, with a digital radio, you lose a signal
16 and it's much akin to a mobile phone when you lose the
17 signal, it just goes. There's no warning.

18 For the people using the radios, particularly BA
19 wearers, they will have some warning of that occurring,
20 because it's obvious that they're sending messages
21 backwards and forwards to the entry control point and
22 there will be a clear indication that the signal is
23 going.

24 If they were to move into an area where they knew
25 that they were going to lose the signal, they could

1 report back to the entry control officer, say "We're
2 about to lose radio communications, we will contact you
3 again in 30 seconds, a minute".

4 What that then means is actually the entry control
5 officer, whereas, if we were to lose radio
6 communications unwittingly, unknowingly, they would
7 actually start to send in an emergency crew to find out
8 what happened. That's one reason why we continue to use
9 analogue radios.

10 The other reasons are that there are a number of
11 vehicles -- sorry, there are a number of premises around
12 London, of course, that have an infrastructure to
13 support our analogue handheld radios.

14 Q. Just pausing there, do you mean that they have their own
15 internal leaky feeders, if you like --

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. -- which allow you then to use a local analogue system
18 in those premises, such as, I don't know, Heathrow or
19 certain tunnels like the Blackwall Tunnel --

20 A. Yes, that's correct.

21 Q. -- and certain large shopping centres?

22 A. Yes. The other reason, at the time, is that there
23 were -- there was a limitation, if indeed there were any
24 intrinsically safe digital radios that were available on
25 the market. As I've -- I have already said, digital

1 radios are permanently attached to our breathing
2 apparatus sets. We wouldn't want to send firefighters
3 in to a situation where the equipment possibly could
4 cause an explosion.

5 Q. Did other fire services, fire rescue services, in the
6 United Kingdom switch over to Airwave or did they
7 maintain an analogue radio handset system?

8 A. To my knowledge -- and I have tried to look into this
9 further -- all fire rescue services within England,
10 Wales and Scotland continue to use analogue at incident
11 ground radio. Partially that's because of the
12 inter-operability aspects which was another deciding
13 factor for choosing analogue radio when we replaced our
14 system, meaning that we can work with other fire rescue
15 services from different counties, for example, if we
16 were to provide some provision of equipment.
17 Also, the Chief Fire Officers' Association
18 recommends continued use of analogue radios for that
19 very reason.

20 Q. That process of considering whether or not to move from
21 the old handsets, the old analogue handsets, to a new
22 analogue handset or to Airwave, when was that process
23 undertaken, when was consideration given?

24 A. It actually started at the end of 2004, December 2004,
25 the London Fire Brigade looked to replace all of our

1 incident ground radios simply because they were coming
2 to the end of their useful life.

3 Q. By and large, the old analogue handsets were still
4 working, though, fairly efficiently by the time
5 of July 2005?

6 A. Yes, they were still working. They were probably within
7 about the last two years of their serviceable life.

8 Q. May we take it from what you've said that a great deal
9 of time and effort was spent in considering whether or
10 not you should continue with Airwave as opposed to
11 using -- continue with the analogue system as opposed to
12 using Airwave?

13 A. I'm not sure a great deal of time was taken in doing it,
14 but certainly an amount of time was taken in looking at
15 the alternatives, yes.

16 Q. All right. So in summary, in relation to the handheld
17 radios, they still remain analogue, but the handsets are
18 new, they've been replaced with a new model, and at the
19 same time have the leaky feeders which were in place in
20 the Underground system in July 2005, been extended so as
21 to allow better coverage for your handheld analogue
22 radios in tunnels?

23 A. Yes, we took advantage of an offer made by
24 London Underground with the CONNECT project when they
25 were extending or changing their own radio systems

1 underground, and they extended our leaky feeders into
2 the Underground tunnel system as well.

3 Q. So when they were putting in their own CONNECT system,
4 of which we've heard --

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. -- they also extended the existing leaky feeders to
7 enable you to have a better --

8 A. That's correct.

9 Q. -- analogue communication system underground?

10 A. Yes, that's correct.

11 Q. In practice, Mr A'Court, do the new handheld radios and
12 the new leaky feeders give you a much better coverage in
13 the Underground than you had before, even in the
14 platform areas?

15 A. They do. The radios seem to be working more
16 efficiently, but the other side of it, of course, is
17 that we've increased the number of radios that are
18 issued so that all operational personnel now have
19 a handheld radio issued to them. So rather than just
20 having two per pumping appliance, now we have one for
21 every operational firefighter.

22 Q. So all those persons who are using a breathing apparatus
23 can communicate amongst themselves -- and you've kept
24 the same channels essentially --

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. -- on channel 6, and all the firefighters at the scene
2 can all communicate together on channel 1 or channel 2
3 if a further channel is required?

4 A. We've also extended the number of channels that can be
5 used by the radios so that actually distinct crews of
6 firefighters, when they're carrying out a specific task,
7 can use channel 3 to communicate. That's so that it
8 doesn't interrupt the Command channel, which will be
9 either channel 1 or channel 2.

10 Q. But the same position still exists, does it not, in
11 relation to connect to Brigade Control, or communication
12 to Brigade Control?

13 A. Yes, that's right.

14 Q. There is still a different system for communication
15 between the vehicles and Brigade Control?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. But has that main scheme system also been updated and
18 extended?

19 A. Significantly so, yes. We've now moved, as have other
20 fire rescue services and the other emergency services
21 within England, Scotland and Wales, over to the Airwave
22 digital radio system for our main scheme radio.

23 Q. So your main scheme radio is an Airwave-based digital
24 system like the totality of the radio systems operated
25 by your fellow emergency services?

1 A. That's correct.

2 Q. In your case it's restricted to use between vehicles,
3 senior operational managers and Brigade Control?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. That process appears from your statement to have been
6 underway for some time because, by 2000, we can see from
7 your second statement, [LFB173-1], the old main scheme
8 radio was reaching the end of its serviceable life, as
9 I say, by 2000, and there appears to have been quite
10 a lengthy procurement process to bring about the changes
11 in the main scheme radio.

12 A. That's right.

13 Q. Did that process go on for some years -- in fact from
14 2000 all the way through to 2010 -- when, in fact, the
15 process of rolling out the new main scheme radio was
16 complete?

17 A. The process was complete, yes, February 2010, but the
18 replacement main scheme radio project was delayed, as it
19 were, by the intervention really of the office of Deputy
20 Prime Minister shortly after the 11 September
21 bombings -- sorry, the 11 September incidents over in
22 the United States.

23 Q. 2001?

24 A. In 2001, yes.

25 MR KEITH: My Lady, is that a convenient point? I'm afraid

1 I won't quite finish with Mr A'Court now.

2 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: Certainly. I'm sorry, I have
3 a professional matter I need to deal with at lunchtime,
4 so I'm sorry we're going to have to break off at this
5 stage. Thank you very much. This is our last witness
6 for today?

7 MR KEITH: My Lady, yes.

8 LADY JUSTICE HALLETT: So it wouldn't cause any
9 inconvenience if I said 2.10?

10 MR KEITH: Certainly not.

11 (12.53 pm)

12 (The short adjournment)

13

14