Haringey Emergency Planning Partnership

REVIEW OF THE RESPONSE TO THE TOTTENHAM RIOT

Multi-agency Debrief Report

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CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 The riots of August 6th to 7th 2011 were the most serious disorder to have affected the borough since the Broadwater Farm riot of 1985.

1.1.2 It was also the trigger event for a wave of disorder that affected firstly a large number of other boroughs in London, and then a number of other towns and cities across England.

1.1.3 The riots in Tottenham, as the starting point of such a significant national event, have a particular significance. It is therefore incumbent on partners to review the events thoroughly.

1.1.4 It is also the case, that whilst elsewhere the riots subsided, the death of Mark Duggan meant that there were a series of events after the riot that required careful and sensitive management, to ensure that dignity and respect were accorded to the family and that no further flashpoints developed.

1.2 PURPOSE

1.2.1 The purpose of the report is to gather, analyse and learn lessons from the riots.

1.2.2 The audience for this report is the Haringey Emergency Planning Partnership.

1.3 SCOPE

1.3.1 The remit of the Haringey Emergency Planning Partnership is generally around the preparation for and response to major incidents. As such, the events from August 4th 2011 to August 6th 2011, prior to the outbreak of serious disorder are not extensively examined in this review. Some consideration of how well the risks were anticipated will be provided.

1.3.2 This report also does not look at the tactics of individual agencies. The Haringey Emergency Planning Partnership is aware of a variety of internal reviews being undertaken by various agencies. This is the appropriate place for such reviews to be undertaken.

1.3.3 Therefore the main scope of the report is to look at partnership coordination and communication within the London Borough of Haringey.

1.4 RELATED REPORTS

1.4.1 Haringey Emergency Planning Partnership is aware of the following reviews:

- ➢ Civil disturbances in London, August 2011: Brigade response
- ➢ "5 Days in August" – the interim report from the Riots, Communities and Victims Panel
- ➢ The London Resilience Forum Multi-agency Debrief
- ➢ Operation Kirkin Strategic Review – the interim report of the Metropolitan Police.

1.4.2 Not all of these reports are available at present, and most are subject to further analysis. There will be a need to have regard to these and other sources of learning on an ongoing basis.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

1.5.1 An initial partnership discussion was held at the Haringey Emergency Planning Partnership meeting of 5th September. Partners shared initial thoughts and reflections, and the scope for the debrief was agreed.

1.5.2 Initially, feedback forms were sent to partner organisations to allow key themes and concerns to be publicised.

1.5.3 A workshop was held on 12th October 2011 which allowed the key issues to be explored.

1.5.4 Where appropriate further feedback, thoughts and reflections have been included.

1.5.5 Regard has been given to other related reports and their recommendations.

1.6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.6.1 The partnership operated very well overall.

1.6.2 Engagement between partners before the riot was appropriate in sharing information and concerns, although clearly the level of risk was not fully appreciated.

1.6.3 There was an initial delay in putting in place multi-agency response coordination, but once established, partnership arrangements operated very effectively.

1.6.4 There were some issues about the cascade of information from the London level to local responders, and within the NHS.

1.6.5 There is a need for all organisations to consider how they engage with and communicate to the public and businesses, particularly given the increasing importance of social media.

1.6.6 Tribute should be paid to the many officers put themselves in considerable personal danger to restore order, and to protect lives and property. The contributions of very many individual members of the public, businesses and voluntary or community organisation should also not be underestimated. Their contribution was vital in starting to restore a sense of community to the borough.

1.6.7 Seven key recommendations are made:

➢ *A review of good practice should be carried out by the Council and MPS, considering the potential for contingency arrangements for dealing with heightened community tensions.*

➢ *A joint review of potential enhanced use of CCTV for local decision support in major incidents should be carried out by the emergency services and Council.*

➢ *Haringey Council Emergency Planning Manager to raise the issue of how local and regional command structures should interface at a regional level.*

➢ *Haringey Council to share briefings with partners when appropriate.*

➢ *All agencies to consider when to apply the "Gold" label to meetings, and how better to signal the intended purpose of the meeting, to ensure they are properly resourced.*

➢ *NHS NCL to review its procedures for cascading information internally and externally, and alerting providers during emergencies.*

➢ *A review of mechanisms for efficiently briefing businesses during and after major incidents should be carried out by the Police and Council.*

2 PRE-EVENT COORDINATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT

2.1.1 Following the death of Mark Duggan on August 4th, the MPS led an extensive community engagement exercise to attempt to understand the community impact of this event, and to take appropriate steps to manage the situation.

2.1.2 Key partners did become aware of the situation. Not all of the resilience partnership were fully engaged at this stage. This reflected the sense that, although tensions had become apparent, the risk of disorder on the scale that transpired was not foreseen.

2.1.3 Therefore most activity was taken through the crime reduction partnership channels, including through the involvement of community leaders and the Black Independent Advisory Group. This included a Gold meeting held centrally by Operation Trident on 5th August.

2.1.4 Haringey Council had an internal emergency planning meeting on Friday 5th August. Due to generally elevated levels of concern expressed, the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager made contact with the Chief Executive, and then was able to brief the duty officers for the weekend, including the CCTV Control Room.

2.1.5 Had there been a formal understanding of how tense the situation was, there may have been potential to do more to defuse the situation. There would also have been the potential to have mobilised more resources to deal with potential trouble.

2.1.6 There is a need for work to be undertaken to consider whether and how community tensions could be better understood.

2.1.7 The partnership is aware of cases where frontline workers were able to engage with young people during the rioting and persuaded them to disperse.

2.1.8 Other testimony has also been provided from community leaders who, when the disorder commenced, "put their hands in their pockets and walked home". There was a desire to disassociate themselves from the ensuing violence.

2.1.9 There is the sense therefore, that different individuals take a differing views of their responsibilities, capabilities and priorities during disorder. However, the examples of positive engagement does show that this sort of activity can make a difference. However, frontline workers, community leaders and volunteers will need proper training before deployment into "tinderbox" situations.

> *Recommendation 1: A review of good practice should be carried out by the Council and MPS, considering the potential for contingency arrangements for dealing with heightened community tensions.*

3 INITIAL NOTIFICATION AND INFORMATION SHARING

3.1.1 The Metropolitan Police and the London Fire Brigade were in close coordination during the disturbances. Very close cooperation was needed due to the large numbers of fires started, and attacks on fire service crews.

3.1.2 Haringey Council became aware of the disorder initially due to TV coverage. A number of telephone conversations were held throughout the night. The Council spoke to both the Police and LFB during the night. These conversations were sufficient to enable the Council to properly advise staff at work during the time of the riots. It also facilitate access to the Council's CCTV Control Room by the MPS.

3.1.3 London Ambulance Service were also aware from an early stage in case of large numbers of casualties. Fortunately, there were no casualties requiring hospitalisation.

3.1.4 All agencies struggled to gather and maintain a dynamic picture of the fast-moving events, that could then be shared internally and between partners.

4 ORGANISATION RESILIENCE AND RESOURCES

4.1.1 The Police, Fire Brigade and Council all commented that organisational resilience was significantly tested by the demands of the incident.

4.1.2 Great tribute should be paid to officers from a range of organisations who worked tirelessly and under great pressure for many days to deal with the consequences from the death of Mark Duggan and the subsequent disorder.

4.1.3 Many officers put themselves in considerable personal danger to restore order, and to protect lives and property. There are numerous reports of spontaneous gestures of appreciation from the public for these efforts. All members of the partnership would like to extend their thanks and appreciation.

4.1.4 The contributions of very many individual members of the public, businesses and voluntary or community organisation should also not be underestimated. Their contribution was vital in starting to restore a sense of community to the borough.

4.1.5 The resources available to individual agencies to deal with the demands placed upon them are beyond the remit of this report. All organisations will wish to consider what lessons there are for them in dealing with an incident of this magnitude.

4.1.6 Ultimately, the situation across London was reliant upon mutual aid from police forces from across the country. There was potential for community tensions to be heightened by the inadvertent actions of officers not familiar with the borough. The fact that this was avoided was due to the strong leadership from senior officers from Haringey MPS.

5 COORDINATION

5.1 INITIAL COORDINATION

5.1.1 Normal practice in a major incident would typically involve establishing a Silver tactical command at a Joint Emergency Service Coordination Centre at or near the scene of the incident. This was not initiated, for a number of good reasons:

> ➤ There was no identifiable place of safety to which partners could be called. Establishing a coordination location, a rendez-vous point, would probably have led to that location becoming a target

> ➤ Normal major incident tactics rely on the police being able to establish and control cordon locations, which is not a plausible tactic if police officers are under sustained attack.

> ➤ Whilst disorder was ongoing, there was a need to narrowly focus on the highest priorities in any incident – saving life and preventing escalation. In practical terms, even these limited objectives become extremely hazardous in conflict situations.

5.1.2 Some other boroughs have reported that the police, fire brigade and local authority were able to establish tactical level (Silver) control points at CCTV control rooms. This would allow CCTV coverage to be exploited to support tactical decision-making and dynamic risk assessment.

> *Recommendation 2: A joint review of potential enhanced use of CCTV for local decision support in major incidents should be carried out by the emergency services and Council.*

5.2 ONGOING COORDINATION

5.2.1 The first formal partnership meeting following the disorder was held at 1100 on Sunday 7th August at Tottenham police station. This was billed as a Gold meeting. This meeting was attended by several police officers, Council officers, the IPCC, community representatives and leaders, Councillors, the local MP. In total, approximately 40 people attended. The meeting was a forthright exchange of views, and was, understandably emotionally charged.

It focused primarily on the death of Mark Duggan, community feeling, and the events that triggered the riot.

5.2.2 This meeting was undoubtedly needed. It did not, however, enable meaningful decision-making to be made. This was problematic as it tied up officers who came believing it would be a decision-making meeting.

5.2.3 At this stage there were a wide variety of issues that needed to be discussed between partners:

➢ Were all persons accounted for?

➢ What was the extent of damage?

➢ How long would the road remain closed for?

➢ What were the tactical priorities in dealing with the "scene" / multiple scenes?

5.2.4 With hindsight, it would have been possible to establish a working multi-agency silver command at an earlier stage, once the disorder had subsided (by say 0800). In fact this was delayed to approximately 1400. Given the scale of the clean-up that needed to be undertaken, this was not a critical delay.

5.2.5 Nevertheless, an opportunity to commence joined up on-the-ground liaison was missed, leading to imperfect briefings to senior stakeholders.

5.2.6 Importantly, once those meetings were established, they played an extremely valuable role in enabling the orderly clean-up and reopening of the High Road following the forensic investigation of the burned out buildings and controlled demolitions.

5.2.7 However, there was some confusion about whether this was a Silver meeting (understood as such by Fire Brigade and Local Authority) or Bronze (resourced as a Bronze meeting by the MPS). This is a point primarily relating to how the local and regional command structures interface.

Recommendation 3: Haringey Council Emergency Planning Manager to raise the issue of how local and regional command structures should interface at a regional level.

5.2.8 Homes for Haringey had a vital role in the ongoing situation, given their strong links into the community. Initially they were not part of the Borough Emergency Coordination Centre, but once this was rectified they were able to contribute significantly to the response.

5.3 BRIEFINGS

5.3.1 The Metropolitan Police Service cascaded written briefings out to community partners. These were centrally initiated, rather than borough-specific.

5.3.2 Not all partners were in receipt of these briefings. In general, these were cascaded via the sector lead at a regional level (e.g. NHS London, London Local Authority Coordination Centre). Therefore issues with distribution of these is an issue for individual agencies to address within their regional communication chains.

5.3.3 There is potential for locally-focused briefings to be provided. The Council was providing briefings for Members and staff that would have served this need, and can be considered for future emergencies.

Recommendation 4: Haringey Council to share briefings with partners when appropriate.

5.4 GOLD MEETINGS

5.4.1 The Gold meeting held at Tottenham police station on Saturday 7th August was one of a number of meetings that were described as Gold meetings. These were either single-agency and multi-agency, local and regional, community-focused or operationally-focused.

5.4.2 The Gold, Silver, Bronze structure was adopted to enable partners to readily understand what meetings and officers roles were, without the need to understand the intricacies of other organisations. However, such a variety of billed as Gold runs the risk of defeating that objective. This can then lead to officers being tied up in meetings where they were not needed, when there were pressing concerns elsewhere.

Recommendation 5: All agencies to consider when to apply the "Gold" label to meetings, and how better to signal the intended purpose of the meeting, to ensure they are properly resourced.

5.4.3 It is also evident that there are varying expectations about what Gold groups should look like and do between major incident procedures and those used for critical incidents. A critical incident, which is primarily a police term, refers to an incident likely to affect community confidence. Evidently a riot meets this criteria: many

incidents on a lesser scale such as a serious violent crime will also meet this threshold.

5.4.4 Unfortunately, these types of incidents are relatively frequent, and Gold groups convened in these circumstances routinely involve Councillors, community leaders and other stakeholders without an operational role. In these circumstances, such attendees are useful to provide an external reference point to the police response, avoiding decisions being taken in a vacuum. Both the Mark Duggan fatality, and the subsequent riots were considered to be critical incidents.

5.4.5 A major incident is one in which "any emergency that requires the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services and will generally include the involvement, either directly or indirectly, of large numbers of people." Arguably, the riot could be said to meet this threshold. The Council considered the riot to be a major incident, but it had not been declared as a major incident by the emergency services. In major incident procedures, the attendance at Gold meetings is much more tightly confined to strategic decision-makers from emergency response organisations.

5.4.6 The initial Gold meeting was unusual even for a critical incident Gold meeting, in terms of the number of attendees and the emotionally-charged nature of the discussion.

5.4.7 Subsequent operational Gold meetings were extremely effective in coordinating the partnership response at a strategic level, in tandem with the meetings dealing with the clear up of the High Road.

5.5 NHS COORDINATION

5.5.1 Problems have been reported about the flow of information between NHS organisations.

➢ LAS were aware of the situation regionally, but following on from the initial disturbances did not get localised information.

➢ Acute trusts were alerted by the LAS, but it was not a "major incident" notification, or a standby message. As a result there was some uncertainty about how best to react to this kind of message. There was potential that significant numbers of walk-in casualties might have arrived at the Accident and Emergency Department. This did not materialise.

➢ Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health were aware of the situation primarily via the media.

- ➢ Haringey Council attempted to get information to GPs via NHS North Central London, and to get information back about the impact on local services. This proved difficult.

- ➢ The net impact of this was, for example, members of the public calling 999 to seek information about whether GP surgeries were open.

- ➢ The Health Protection Unit were aware of the situation, and would have expected to be contacted but were not. They took from that that they were not immediately needed, and decided not to get involved, appreciating that those responding were very busy.

- ➢ However all agencies were experiencing concerns about business continuity, and were having to address staff worries about personal safety.

5.5.2 A key point to make at this stage is that the business continuity concerns of any critical public service is a legitimate concern for all members of the partnership. Ensuring public services continue to function is part of a successful response, and therefore seeking information to enable this to take place should not be seen as intruding on those who are leading the response.

5.5.3 Well rehearsed mechanisms for sharing information within the health community via teleconferences have worked well in other emergencies. There is no reason why this could not have been initiated during the riots.

5.5.4 The overall responsibility for ensuring the integrity of health services within Haringey rests with NHS North Central London. NHS-NCL could have sought information on behalf of the health economy more generally, and then cascaded this out to all its providers, including other trusts, possibly via a teleconference.

5.5.5 It is understood that NHS NCL is reviewing its procedures for cascading information and alerting providers during emergencies. This is very much to be welcomed.

> *Recommendation 6: NHS NCL to review its procedures for cascading information internally and externally, and alerting providers during emergencies.*

5.6 RECOVERY MANAGEMENT

5.6.1 The early focus on recovery management was welcomed by all partners. This allowed an easy transfer of responsibilities between the police and local authority.

5.7 LATER OPERATIONS

5.7.1 Whilst the situation across London and the rest of the country was returning to normal, there were two further events which gave rise to concerns:

❯ The Ninth Night Vigil

❯ The funeral of Mark Duggan.

5.7.2 The concerns in both these events were partly the large numbers expected, and the potential safety concerns with any large event, and partly the need to avoid further community tensions.

5.7.3 The engagement between partners for both these events was exemplary. Both passed off peacefully.

6 WARNING AND INFORMING THE PUBLIC

6.1 WARNING MESSAGES

6.1.1 During the initial riot in Tottenham and the looting elsewhere in the borough it would have been difficult to send out meaningful warning messages.

6.1.2 The Council has a text alert system that could message a large number of people in the borough. Typically messages would either ask people to "Go in, tune in, stay in"; avoid an area; or prepare to evacuate. Each of these messages would be extremely problematic, given the ongoing disorder in an ill-defined area:

➢ Going in and staying in, would have been generally sensible but there were also a number of people needing to be evacuated.

➢ An evacuation message would have brought more people onto the streets.

➢ Avoiding the area would have been inappropriate given the time of day (it is a message designed for daylight hours when people are travelling).

6.1.3 In any event, the disorder was readily apparent to people due to the high-profile news coverage, and their own proximity.

6.1.4 Overall, the scope for warning messages was not high in these circumstances.

6.2 INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

6.2.1 In the days following the rioting, there was no guarantee that there would not be further disorder in Haringey. Extensive outreach work and communications activity took place across the borough involving a wide variety of agencies.

➢ Information on police and Council websites

➢ Briefings to councillors

➢ Information sent to community stakeholders by the police

➢ Community outreach work by Homes for Haringey, and volunteers working from the Community Assistance Centre.

6.2.2 There is no doubt that the combined impact of this activity was extremely positive.

6.2.3 The role of social media was significant throughout the disturbances. It was both negative – in allow rioters and looters to organise their activities, and in spreading scare stories – and positive – as a tool for organising positive community responses.

6.2.4 There is significant potential for further use of social media by emergency response organisations as a means of providing information to the public. This would be positive, particularly if it enabled the rapid sharing of authoritative information, and therefore contested the least helpful information (or misinformation).

6.2.5 There are reviews of the use of social media under way in many organisations already, so no further recommendation is made here.

6.2.6 Homes for Haringey played a major role in distributing information on Haringey estates. There was potential for that role to be extended more widely.

6.2.7 Other community partners undertook similar activities, including church groups, Haringey Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations (HAVCO) and others. Much of this community outreach work was coordinated through the Community Assistance Centre. This partnership work made a big difference to members of the community who had felt afraid, and were effectively isolated in their own homes. Older people formed the biggest part of this group. Feedback from the outreach work suggested that there was a big reassurance benefit to this work.

6.2.8 Because of the huge volume of donations received from the private sector, it was possible to make food parcels to distribute to the community. For people unable to reach the shops, this was extremely valuable.

6.2.9 Clearly there is much good practice here, to be documented in plans for the future.

6.3 COMMUNICATION WITH BUSINESSES

6.3.1 Businesses were particularly severely affected. This was both the direct damage to businesses, which in some cases was devastating, and the wider anxiety and its impact on business confidence.

6.3.2 There was naturally a focus on the High Road, Tottenham. However damage was done elsewhere – notably in Wood Green and Tottenham Hale. The worries about possible further trouble were prevalent across the borough.

6.3.3 In the week following the initial riot, whilst the trouble was still spreading, the level of anxiety was acute. This was fuelled by rumours spread on social media. Media reporting of the alleged use of social media to organise looting and disorder gave credence to Twitter and Facebook as a reliable source of information. Subsequent investigation seems to be suggesting that Blackberry

Messenger (BBM) was far more important to those intent on disorder.

6.3.4 A series of counter-productive, and ultimately false rumours of trouble led to a significant number of shops and businesses closing early on Monday 8th and Tuesday 9th August. In some cases, shop-keepers and staff (including sometimes security staff) claimed that they were closing on police advice.

6.3.5 At no point did the police advise businesses in Haringey to close.

6.3.6 This situation led to a significant demand for authoritative advice, both from the police or failing that from the local authority. Advice on whether or not to close is unlikely to be forthcoming unless there is unambiguous information that disorder is imminent or already in progress.

6.3.7 However, there is potentially a role to be played in giving briefings on what is known and what is not, so that businesses can make their own decisions in possession of facts rather than rumour.

> *Recommendation 7: A review of mechanisms for efficiently briefing businesses during and after major incidents should be carried out by the Police and Council.*

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1.1 The partnership operated very well overall.

7.1.2 Engagement between partners before the riot was appropriate in sharing information and concerns.

7.1.3 It is clearly the case that the community engagement activity did not give a clear and shared sense of the potential scale of the risk in the situation, even though there was a sense of unease about community tensions.

7.1.4 There was an initial delay in establishing effective partnership coordination. This had only a minor impact on the overall response, but could have been more damaging in other circumstances.

7.1.5 Once established, partnership arrangements operated very effectively.

7.1.6 There were some issues about the cascade of information from the London level to local responders, and within the NHS.

7.1.7 There is a need for all organisations to consider how they engage with and communicate to the public, particularly given the increasing importance of social media.

7.1.8 Attention to the needs of businesses is particularly important.

7.1.9 Tribute should be paid to the many officers put themselves in considerable personal danger to restore order, and to protect lives and property. There are numerous reports of spontaneous gestures of appreciation from the public for these efforts. All members of the partnership would like to extend their thanks and appreciation.

7.1.10 The contributions of very many individual members of the public, businesses and voluntary or community organisation should also not be underestimated. Their contribution was vital in starting to restore a sense of community to the borough.