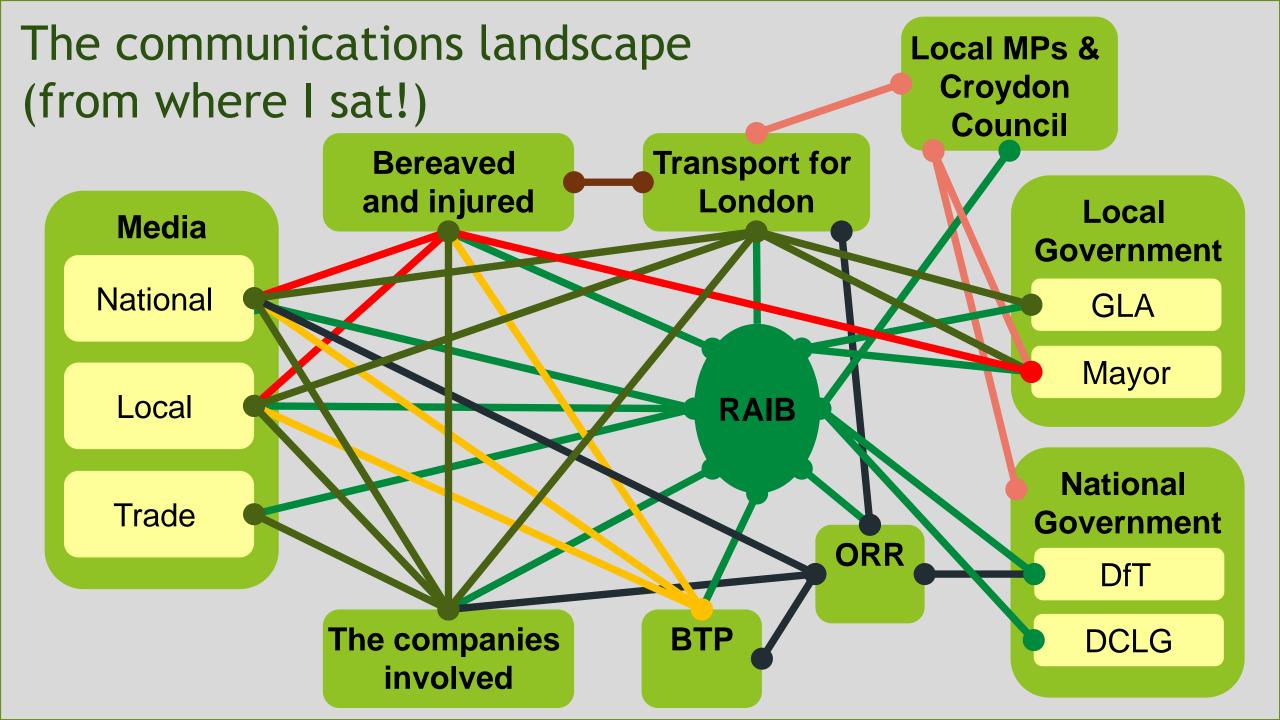


Rail Accident Investigation Branch

# Managing external communications and government agencies

Railway Accident Investigation Seminar Simon French, Chief Inspector, RAIB



# How we approached the communications challenge

#### Setting our strategy (1)

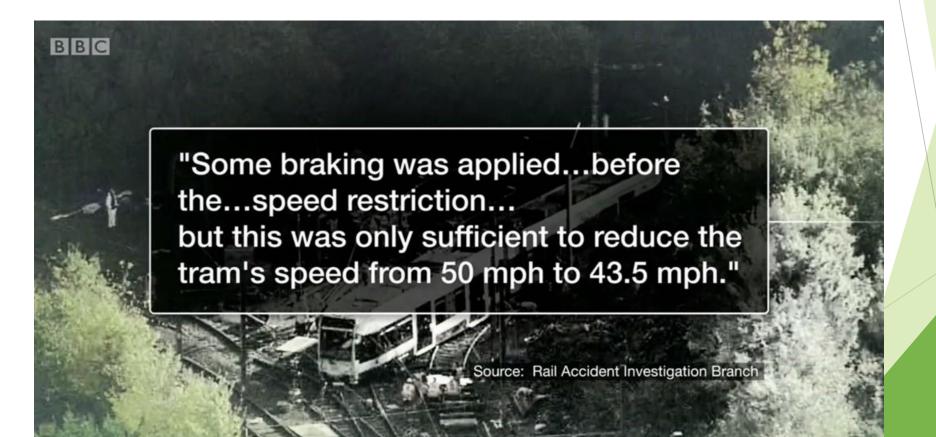
- ▶ Who did we <u>want to</u> communicate with (proactive)
  - what message
  - the best way to communicate the message
- ▶ Who might we have to communicate with (reactive)
- We appointed two lead communications coordinators (working closely together)
  - the AIB external comms specialist for media and other press officers
  - a senior member of the branch support team for local and national government

# How we approached the communications challenge (2)

- All communications with the bereaved and injured were managed by our trained family liaison coordinator, who liaised closely with the BTP FLOs
- Given the high profile of the event we agreed that our communications strategy would be based on the early dissemination of information and as much openness as possible

#### 09 November 2016 (day of accident)

First web entry



#### **14 November**

Statement to Parliament by Gavin Barwell, Minister for London at the Department for Communities and Local Government (and MP) for Croydon Central)

#### **O**4.03 pm

Volume 617

The Minister for London (Gavin Barwell)

With permission, Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a statement about the tragic tram derailment in the early hours of Wednesday 9 November, close to Sandilands junction in Croydon. The tram was running from New Addington to Wimbledon via Croydon town centre. Sandilands junction is the point where inbound trams from the Beckenham Junction, Elmers End and New Addington routes converge shortly before they arrive at Sandilands tram stop to the east of Croydon town centre. Trams approaching from New Addington have to negotiate a sharp, lefthand curve with a speed limit of 12 mph before reaching the junction. The derailment occurred on the curve and the Rail Accident Investigation Branch says that initial indications suggest that the tram was travelling at a significantly higher speed than is permitted.

Seven people lost their lives-Dana Chippers, Bal



#### 16 November

- First interim report is published
- ▶ Interviews with 5 TV and 3 radio channels





#### 20 February 2017

RAIB publishes its second interim report



Rail Accident Investigation: Interim Report 2

Fatal accident involving the derailment of a tram at Sandilands Junction, Croydon 9 November 2016



#### 03 August 2017

RAIB updates its web entry to give details of areas of recommendation likely to feature in the final report

#### November 2017

Briefings to:

- Jesse Norman, Minister for local transport at DfT; and
- Sadiq Khan; Mayor of London



### Early December 2017

Briefings to bereaved families

#### 07 December 2017

- Report is published following an off-camera press briefing in Croydon and interviews with the Chief Inspector
- Publication is accompanied by a short video explaining the accident and the findings of RAIB's investigation



# General learning

- The early definition of our external communications strategy was an important part of our success
- Careful coordination between the parties involved can avoid conflicting stories
- Early openness can buy investigators time to carry out their investigation without undue press attention
- Interim reports and web updates are a really helpful way of keeping the public and key stakeholders informed
- It always helps when the investigators are setting the agenda (which we usually managed to do)
- A briefing of political figures like the Mayor can help ensure that they correctly understand the issues and stay 'on-message'