

manchester  
arena  
**inquiry**

**Manchester Arena Inquiry**  
**Volume 1: Security for the Arena**

Report of the Public Inquiry into  
the Attack on Manchester Arena  
on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

**Chairman: The Hon Sir John Saunders**

**June 2021**

HC 279



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Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 26  
of the Inquiries Act 2005

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# Preface

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, twenty-two innocent people were murdered in Manchester at the end of a concert performed by the American artist, Ariana Grande. In addition, hundreds were injured. Many suffered life-changing physical harm, many others psychological trauma. There were acts of bravery by those who came to the assistance of the dying and the injured. Many of those rescuers bear the scars of what they experienced. None of those affected will forget that night and nor must we. Those events are the reason for this Inquiry and have remained central to it.

The families of those who died have been devastated by these events and those who were injured will live with the effects for the rest of their lives.

The explosion that brought about these appalling consequences was caused by Salman Abedi detonating a bomb in the City Room, an area close to one of the exit doors from the Arena. These events will be referred to in the Report as 'the Attack'. He chose a place where members of the audience were meeting up with parents and others who had come to collect them. The audience was principally made up of young

people. Salman Abedi killed himself in the explosion, but he intended that as many people as possible would die with him.

It was a wicked act, inspired by the distorted ideology of the so-called Islamic State. It was designed to attack our way of life and the freedoms we enjoy. We cannot allow fear of further terrorist attacks to achieve that.

The responsibility for the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 lies with Salman and Hashem Abedi, his younger brother. Rather than use their full names, throughout the remainder of this Report, I shall refer to them as SA and HA. I have had in mind while writing this Report, as everyone who reads it should, that responsibility rests with them. This volume of my Report and those which follow must nonetheless examine the actions of others. I must decide whether more could and should have been done to stop SA detonating his bomb on 22<sup>nd</sup> May and to respond to the detonation when it occurred.

This Inquiry cannot remove the hurt of those who have suffered the loss of a child, partner, relative or friend. It cannot ease the pain from the physical or psychological injuries that were suffered. What it can seek to do is reduce the risk of such an event happening again and, if it does, mitigate the harm it causes.

In order to try and identify recommendations which will have this effect, it has been necessary to subject the lead up to and the events on 22<sup>nd</sup> May to intense scrutiny. As a result, some individuals and some organisations will be the subject of criticism. That is because, without examining what went wrong and why, I could not identify improvements.

After the deaths, inquests had to take place. In August 2018 I was appointed by the Lord Chief Justice and the Chief Coroner to conduct those inquests as the nominated judge to sit as the Coroner.

Following a ruling I made in 2019 about the relevance of material to which public interest immunity attaches, the Inquiry was established in October 2019 in order to permit me to investigate that material. Evidence within the scope of the inquests will form part of the material I consider in the Inquiry.

There are a number of ways in which the fact that I am conducting my investigation within the framework of a statutory public inquiry has brought benefits. Over and above the fact that I am now permitted to scrutinise material which could not have been considered within the inquests, the public inquiry framework requires me to write this Report. As a result, the detail and analysis that I am able to address in writing is greater. While this Inquiry and my Report can never repair the damage caused by SA and HA, it is my intention that it

will seek to provide answers to the bereaved families, those who survived this terrible act and the public at large.

My Report will be in three volumes:

- **Volume 1** will address the security arrangements at the Ariana Grande concert. It will identify the missed opportunities for detecting and stopping SA or reducing the harm he caused. I am publishing this volume now so that any recommendations that I make can be considered as soon as possible. The government is consulting on a 'Protect Duty' and some of what I say in this volume of my Report will be relevant to that.
- **Volume 2** will deal with the emergency response to the Attack. It will examine the planning and preparation by the responders to an attack of the type which took place. It will look at what happened once the bomb had been detonated and how the response unfolded. I will assess the adequacy of the response. I will also examine in Volume 2 the circumstances of the death of each of those who lost their lives and whether any of their lives might have been saved. In that part of my Report, I hope to convey something of the uniqueness of each of the twenty-two who died: their personalities, their passions and the joy they brought to their families. The Pen Portraits given during the commemorative

hearings at the beginning of the oral evidence were an extraordinary and moving start to this Inquiry. I will attempt to capture some of this.

- **Volume 3** will consider whether the Security Service and Counter Terrorism Police could and should have prevented the Attack. It will examine whether and, if so how, SA became radicalised. It will set out the steps which led to him being outside the concert with an improvised explosive device and what opportunities there may have been to disrupt, deter or divert him.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge, albeit briefly at this stage, my admiration for those who responded so selflessly and heroically to this atrocity. Some who did so were injured themselves. I shall address this in more detail in Volume 2, but it should be known from the outset of my Report that I have read and heard of extraordinary bravery and compassion by very many people. Together with the names of the twenty-two who died, the very best of humanity shown that night by so many people should never be forgotten.



# **The twenty-two who died**

**Alison Howe**  
**Angelika Klis    Marcin Klis**  
**Chloe Rutherford    Liam Curry**  
**Courtney Boyle**  
**Eilidh MacLeod**  
**Elaine McIver**  
**Georgina Bethany Callander**  
**Jane Tweddle**  
**John Atkinson**  
**Kelly Brewster**  
**Lisa Lees**  
**Martyn Hakan Hett**  
**Megan Joanne Hurley**  
**Michelle Kiss**  
**Nell Jones**  
**Olivia Paige Campbell-Hardy**  
**Philip Tron**  
**Saffie-Rose Roussos**  
**Sorrell Leczkowski**  
**Wendy Fawell**



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# Part 1

## Missed opportunities

- 1.1 In Part 1, I use the phrase missed opportunity to indicate where I am satisfied that there was an opportunity to act that should have been taken.
- 1.2 The security arrangements for the Manchester Arena (the Arena) should have prevented or minimised the devastating impact of the Attack. They failed to do so. There were a number of opportunities which were missed leading to this failure. SA should have been identified on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 as a threat by those responsible for the security of the Arena and a disruptive intervention undertaken. Had that occurred, I consider it likely that SA would still have detonated his device, but the loss of life and injury is highly likely to have been less.
- 1.3 At the time of the Attack, the Arena was operated by an organisation which I will refer to as SMG.<sup>1</sup> SMG is a large entertainment business. SMG had contracted with Showsec, a company specialising in crowd control, to provide crowd management and event security for the concert on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. Policing for the Victoria

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<sup>1</sup> Further detail about SMG, the companies which fall within it and the corporate structure will be dealt with in Part 2

Exchange Complex,<sup>2</sup> including the area in which the Attack was carried out, was provided by British Transport Police (BTP). Greater Manchester Police (GMP) provided a Counter Terrorism Security Advisor (CTSA) to SMG who had provided advice to SMG in the years leading up to the Attack.

- 1.4** SMG, Showsec and BTP are principally responsible for the missed opportunities. Across these organisations, there were also failings by individuals who played a part in causing the opportunities to be missed.

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<sup>2</sup> What is meant by the Victoria Exchange Complex and other important locations from an Arena security perspective are identified in Appendices 6 and 7

## The Attack

- 1.5** During the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, the Arena was the venue for a concert by Ariana Grande, an American singer with a large fan base. The concert was attended by over 14,000 people, many of whom were teenagers and children. The doors opened at 18:00 and Ariana Grande was scheduled to begin performing at 21:00.<sup>3</sup> Shortly before 22.30, the concert began to draw to a close and people started to leave. Many did so through an area called the City Room<sup>4</sup> which was one of the four customer access points into the Arena. There were people waiting close to the exit from the Arena concourse for friends and family who had attended the concert. This included many parents waiting to collect children.
- 1.6** SA had carried out hostile reconnaissance<sup>5</sup> of the Arena shortly after the doors opened. He then returned to the Victoria Exchange Complex once the concert was underway.<sup>6</sup> He spent 20 minutes in a CCTV blind spot (the Blind Spot) on the mezzanine. The Blind Spot was between the entrance to JD Williams and the former location

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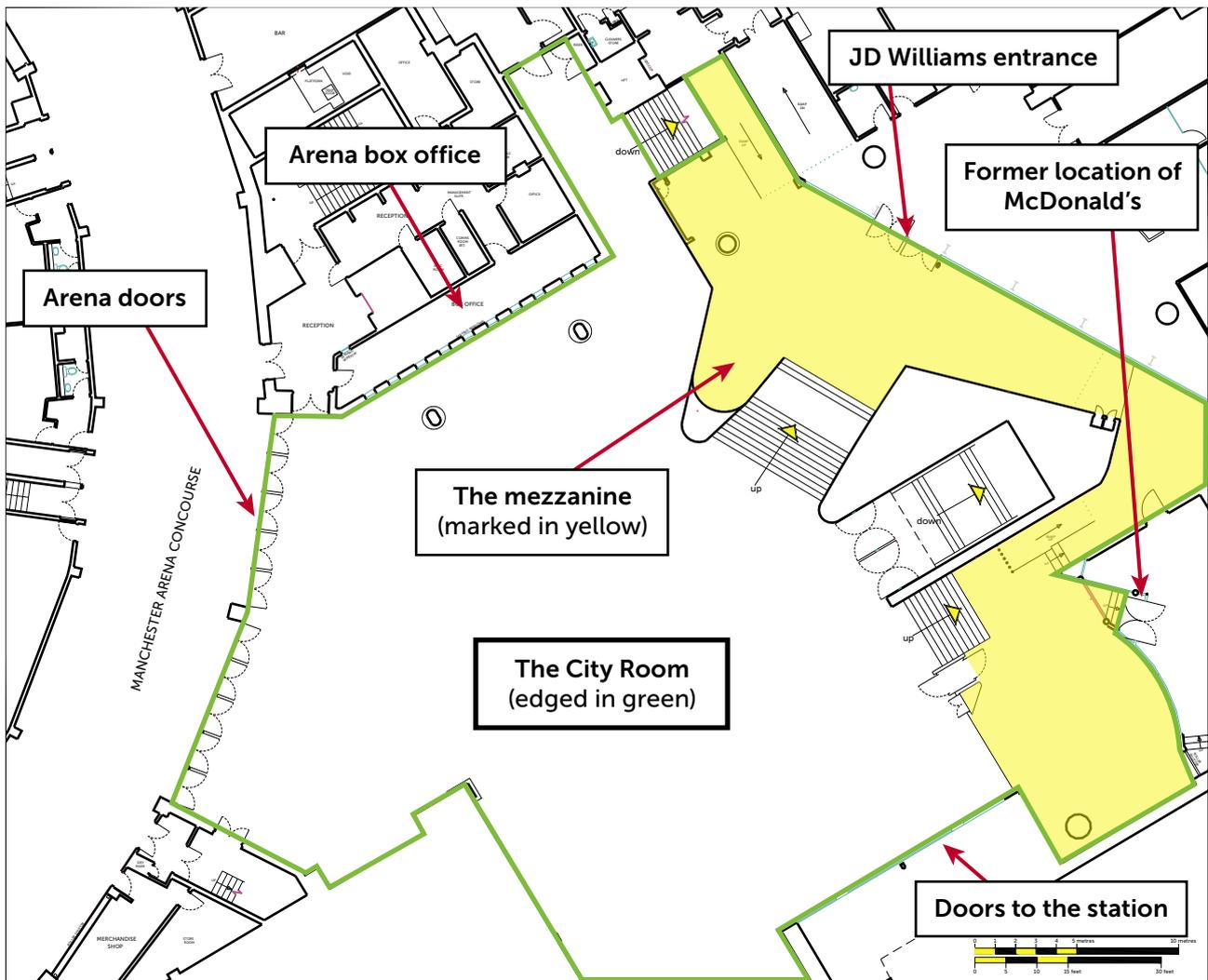
<sup>3</sup> [INQ001567/2](#)

<sup>4</sup> In the course of the evidence this area of the Victoria Exchange Complex was also called “*the City Rooms*” and “*the foyer*.” In my Report, I will use ‘the City Room.’

<sup>5</sup> A term I shall define in paragraph 1.8 below

<sup>6</sup> [INQ020160/92](#), [1/58/2-23](#)

of McDonald's.<sup>7</sup> Figure 1 is an annotated plan drawing of the City Room edged in green, with the mezzanine marked in yellow. The entrance to JD Williams and the former location of McDonald's are also indicated.



**Figure 1:** Annotated plan drawing of the City Room<sup>8</sup>

**1.7** As well as being hidden from the CCTV cameras, SA was out of view of Showsec staff who were on duty in the City Room. He left this hiding place and the City Room, but did not

<sup>7</sup> [INQ032038/25](#)

<sup>8</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ035294/1](#)

leave the Victoria Exchange Complex. After a short time, he returned to the City Room and hid in the Blind Spot again, this time for almost an hour.<sup>9</sup> After his return, members of the public saw SA in the City Room and thought he looked suspicious. One raised his concerns with a member of the Showsec security staff, but no effective action was taken in response.<sup>10</sup> As people began to come out of the Arena into the City Room, SA descended from the mezzanine and detonated the bomb he was carrying. The details of these events are set out in the chronology in Appendix 2.

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<sup>9</sup> [INQ032038/33-35](#)

<sup>10</sup> [INQ032038/40-41](#)

## Hostile reconnaissance

- 1.8** ‘Hostile reconnaissance’ is the term used within policing and the security sector to describe observation of a specific target by terrorists or other criminals as part of the planning of a hostile act on that target.<sup>11</sup>
- 1.9** Between 15<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017, SA was in Libya. On 18<sup>th</sup> May,<sup>12</sup> 21<sup>st</sup> May<sup>13</sup> and on the afternoon of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017,<sup>14</sup> SA visited the Arena to carry out hostile reconnaissance. The times SA visited on these occasions are set out in greater detail in the chronology at Appendix 2. These presented opportunities to detect, disrupt or deter him. Because the CCTV was overwritten, it is not possible to know whether SA visited on earlier occasions prior to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2017.<sup>15</sup>
- 1.10** SA’s hostile reconnaissance was conducted at times and in a way which made detecting him a substantial challenge. At these times, he was not carrying his large backpack containing the bomb. Given the extent of the challenge, I make no criticism of any individual for not having detected

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<sup>11</sup> [15/182/15-21](#)

<sup>12</sup> [INQ031275/35-42](#)

<sup>13</sup> [INQ020163/51-57](#)

<sup>14</sup> [INQ020160/47-53](#)

<sup>15</sup> [45/104/10-18](#)

his hostile reconnaissance on those occasions, particularly bearing in mind the security systems in place at the time.

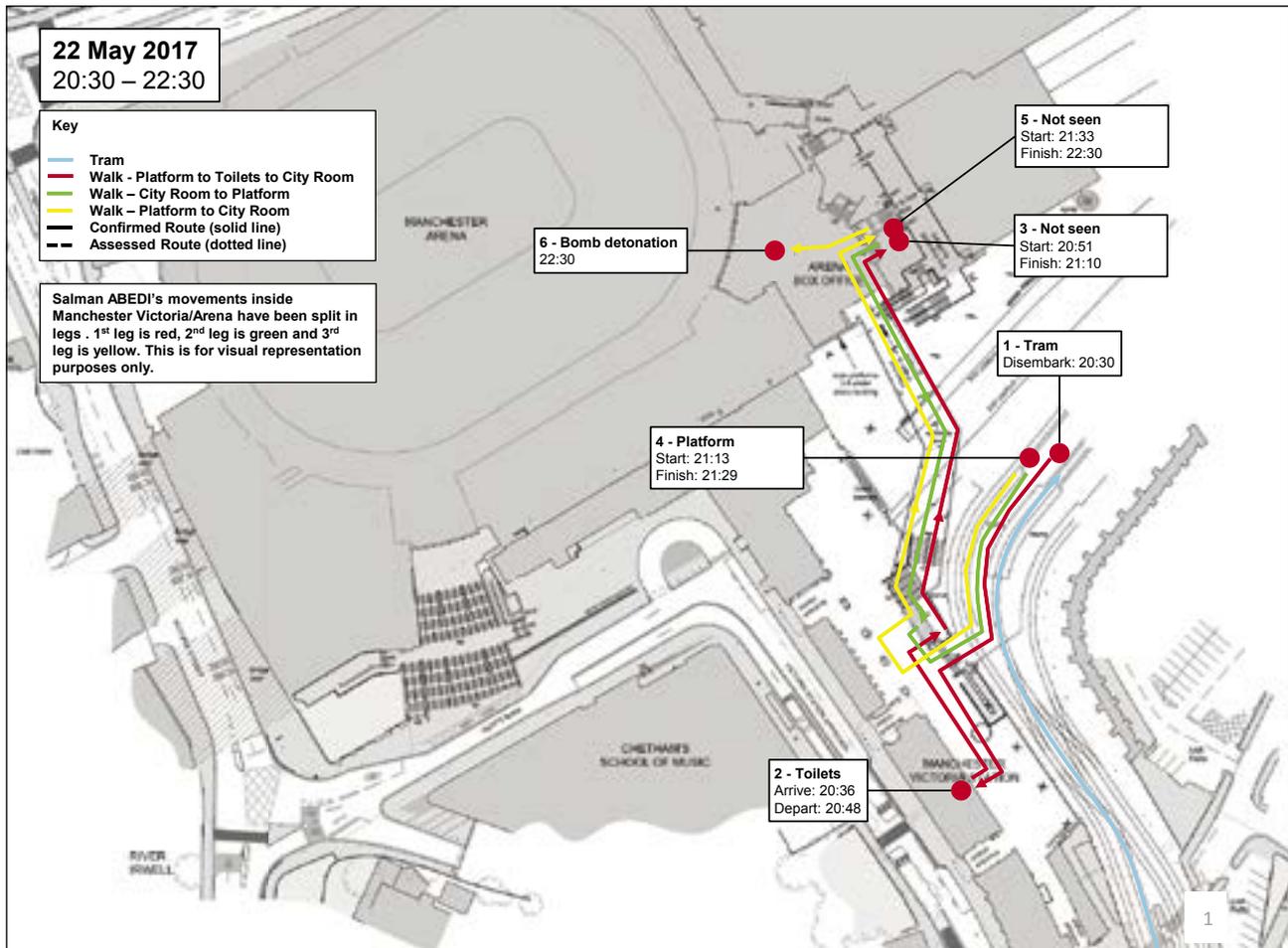
- 1.11** There existed the opportunity for SMG to make hostile reconnaissance more difficult for SA during events by pushing out the security perimeter of the security operation. This could have been a missed opportunity, depending on how the new security perimeter operated. It may have had the effect of deterring SA from attacking the Arena. I shall address the issue of the security perimeter in greater detail in Part 6.
- 1.12** Setting aside the issue of the perimeter, had things been done better by SMG and Showsec, and had BTP officers been more alert to the possibility of hostile reconnaissance, the prospect of detecting it would have been increased. I will address these weaknesses in Parts 6 and 7.

## **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 (SA's movements after 20:30)**

- 1.13** SA's movements within the Victoria Exchange Complex are set out in Figure 2.
- 1.14** During the period between 20:30 and 20:51 he moved from the tram stop to the City Room, stopping for a period of 12 minutes in public toilets en route. This movement is shown by the red line in Figure 2.
- 1.15** He spent the period between 20:51 and 21:10 in the City Room on the mezzanine. At 21:10 he left the City Room and made his way back to the tram platform, where he arrived at 21:13. This movement is shown by the green line in Figure 2.
- 1.16** At 21:29 he began his final journey to the City Room, where he arrived at 21:33. He positioned himself on the mezzanine. At 22:30 he descended from the mezzanine. At 22:31:00<sup>16</sup> SA detonated the bomb he was carrying. His movements during this period are marked by the yellow line in Figure 2.

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<sup>16</sup> Figure 2 indicates that the bomb detonation occurred at 22:30. I am satisfied on the evidence that this occurred at 22:31:00



**Figure 2:** SA's movements on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 from 20:30<sup>17</sup>

**1.17** I will now consider each time period in more detail.

<sup>17</sup> Extract from [INQ033893/7](#)

## 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 (20:30 to 20:51)

### SA walking from the tram stop to the City Room

- 1.18** At 20:30 on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, SA arrived at Manchester Victoria tram stop. He was carrying the backpack which contained the bomb. He walked from there to the male toilets on the Victoria Station concourse. After a short period in the toilets, he made his way to the City Room using the station concourse lift.
- 1.19** During this journey he walked past two BTP Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and two members of Showsec staff. These were further opportunities during which he might have been detected. He was visibly weighed down by his backpack, which weighed in excess of 30kgs.<sup>18</sup> He was over-dressed for the warm evening. He was wearing a hat. These facts in combination are likely to have struck an appropriately trained person as being of potential significance, if they noticed him. That is not the same thing as saying that SA's appearance meant that he should have been noticed. The Victoria Exchange Complex was far from empty of other people. It was a transport hub with a railway station, a tram stop and a car park.

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<sup>18</sup> [44/110/21-111/8](#)

Having some sort of heavy bag was not unusual in itself even in combination with wearing too many clothes and a hat.

- 1.20** It is easy with the benefit of hindsight to see the images of SA anywhere in the Victoria Exchange Complex while wearing the backpack and conclude that his appearance made him suspicious. Stripping out hindsight, while it is possible that an appropriately trained and vigilant person may have reached that conclusion on the basis of his appearance, I do not think that it is fair to criticise anyone who did not do so at this stage.
- 1.21** Consequently, I do not criticise the BTP PCSOs who walked past SA on the station concourse for not identifying him as being suspicious at that point. Nor do I criticise the Showsec staff who were on the footbridge which gave access from the station concourse to the City Room for the fact that neither of them noticed SA when he passed them on his way to the City Room. While these were opportunities, they were not missed opportunities in the sense in which I mean that phrase.

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 (20:51 to 21:10)**

## **SA's first period in the City Room**

- 1.22** This period represents SA's first visit to the City Room wearing his backpack. The fact that SA was permitted to wait for any period of time in the City Room immediately prior to and during the concert was the product of the positioning of the perimeter. Had the perimeter been moved away from the Arena, SA would not have been able to gain access to the City Room. Whatever reason SA gave for going into the City Room, his backpack would have been searched.
- 1.23** Showsec employee Mohammed Agha was present in the City Room at 20:51 when SA entered it for the first time on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. He had been deployed to the City Room to stand in an area known as 'the Grey Doors' for the duration of the event. As SA approached the McDonald's side staircase of the mezzanine, Mohammed Agha noticed SA's trainers because he liked them, but thought nothing more about him.<sup>19</sup> SA was in Mohammed Agha's view for fewer than 10 seconds. During that period there was nothing sufficiently suspicious about SA's

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<sup>19</sup> [24/19/15-24/2](#)

appearance or the circumstances to justify criticism of the fact that Mohammed Agha did not take any further action at that time.

- 1.24** SA remained in the City Room, out of sight of Mohammed Agha, on the mezzanine. The area where SA positioned himself was out of sight of the CCTV cameras. He had no doubt identified this area during his hostile reconnaissance. SA chose an obvious hiding place and remained in it for a period of nearly 20 minutes. Had the area been covered by CCTV so that there was no Blind Spot, it is likely this behaviour by SA would have been identified as suspicious by anyone monitoring the CCTV. Once some scrutiny was on him, it is likely that SA's backpack, hat and bulky clothing would have heightened the suspicion. I shall address the issue of CCTV monitoring in greater detail in Part 6.
- 1.25** This period was not a time that was obviously significant in terms of the risk of a terrorist attack. The concert was some way from finishing and very few people were in the City Room. Consequently, it is likely that there would have been a period of time before SA was identified as suspicious and a decision taken that he should be spoken to. I am not able to say, therefore, with any certainty that he would

have been approached and, by reason of this, made aware that he had been identified during this period.

**1.26** However, had the CCTV system covered the Blind Spot and been properly monitored, there would have been heightened sensitivity to SA's presence. His return to the City Room at 21:30 would then have been seen as significant by those responsible for monitoring the CCTV. I shall address CCTV and the Blind Spot in greater detail in Part 6.

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 (21:10 to 21:33)**

## **BTP officers in the public area of the Victoria Exchange Complex**

- 1.27** BTP had deployed officers to police the Ariana Grande concert. They had been expressly briefed to stagger their breaks during the concert and to have concluded them by 21:00. This was a sensible instruction in light of the number of people, including young people, attending the concert who needed to exit the venue safely. This instruction was ignored by the officers who were present in the Victoria Exchange Complex. SA left the City Room at 21:10 and made his way via the station concourse to a tram platform. He waited there for a short period before making his way back to the City Room by the same route. He re-entered the City Room at 21:33.
- 1.28** Because the BTP officers had ignored the instruction they had been given, there were no BTP officers in any of the public areas of the Victoria Exchange Complex during the period of SA's departure from and return to the City Room between 21:10 to 21:33. Had there been, it is possible that SA may have been seen by one or more BTP officers. This will be dealt with in further detail in Part 7.

**1.29** It is also possible that a visible policing presence would have deterred SA, but this is no more than possible. I do not regard this as a missed opportunity in the sense that I mean that phrase. SA had been undeterred by the two PCSOs he had walked past earlier.

**22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 (21:33 to 22:00)**

## **SA's second period in the City Room**

- 1.30** What I have said about the security perimeter in the paragraphs above applies equally to SA's return to the City Room at 21:33.
- 1.31** SA's return presented an opportunity for him to be identified as suspicious by Mohammed Agha. The fact that SA had been there previously was a factor which should have caused Mohammed Agha to pay him greater attention. SA followed the same path in the City Room as earlier in the evening. He again concealed himself on the mezzanine in the Blind Spot. Had Mohammed Agha been more alert to the risk of a terrorist attack, he had a sufficient opportunity to form the view that SA was suspicious and required closer attention. This conclusion, had Mohammed Agha been adequately trained, would have caused him to draw SA to his supervisor's attention at this stage. This, in turn, would have brought into sharp focus that SA had chosen to position himself out of sight of the cameras.
- 1.32** This was a missed opportunity. Had this opportunity not been missed, it is likely to have led to SA being spoken to before 21:45. Had SA been spoken to at this stage he may have been deterred. He may have detonated his

device. He may have left the City Room for a period, before attempting to return later. None of these possibilities is likely to have resulted in devastation of the magnitude caused by SA at 22:31.

- 1.33** Principal responsibility for this missed opportunity lies with Showsec, who failed adequately to train Mohammed Agha. Mohammed Agha also bears personal responsibility for this missed opportunity. I will address the issue of Showsec's training in greater detail in Part 6.
- 1.34** At the same time, SMG's inadequate CCTV system was the cause of a different but connected missed opportunity. Had the Blind Spot been eliminated either by increased CCTV or by patrols, SA's activity would have been identified. This would have led to a similar course of events as if Mohammed Agha had drawn attention to SA. This was an ongoing missed opportunity for the whole of the period 21:33 to 22:00.
- 1.35** By 22:00, SA's presence on the mezzanine had been noticed by members of the public. One of those members of the public was Julie Merchant who was in the City Room that night as part of an anti-bootlegging operation.<sup>20</sup> Julie

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<sup>20</sup> [20/72/24-73/2](#)

Merchant asserted that she had drawn SA to the attention of BTP Police Constable (PC) Jessica Bullough, although not because she thought SA was suspicious. PC Bullough stated that she had no recollection of any conversation of the type reported by Julie Merchant.<sup>21</sup> The City Room CCTV recorded Julie Merchant and PC Bullough at 21:59 near the doors which provided direct access to the station concourse.<sup>22</sup> The two were in close proximity for only a couple of seconds.

**1.36** Julie Merchant stated that she did not regard SA as being suspicious.<sup>23</sup> Her recollection about what she said was, for understandable reasons, not clear, but she was not seeking to raise a security concern.<sup>24</sup> It is entirely understandable that PC Bullough did not take any action at this time. I do not regard this as a missed opportunity.

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<sup>21</sup> [21/172/8-24](#)

<sup>22</sup> [20/106/1-15](#), [INQ035314/29-34](#), [INQ036597/1](#) at 2:52:12 to 2:56:02

<sup>23</sup> [20/91/19-92/7](#)

<sup>24</sup> [20/114/8-120/11](#)

## **22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 (22:00 to 22:31)**

### **BTP and the City Room in the 30 minutes before the end of the concert**

- 1.37** The BTP officers who attended the Victoria Exchange Complex on the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 were there because of the concert. They were instructed by the duty sergeant that at least one of them should position themselves in the City Room from approximately 22:00 in readiness for the end of the event at 22:30.
- 1.38** Five officers were instructed to attend. One of those officers, the most experienced, PC Stephen Corke, did not attend the Victoria Exchange Complex at all until after the detonation. PC Bullough, together with PCSO Mark Renshaw left the City Room at 21:59. Neither of them returned until after the explosion.
- 1.39** There were two other PCSOs deployed to the Victoria Exchange Complex that evening: PCSO Jon Morrey and PCSO Lewis Brown. PCSO Brown was PCSO Morrey's mentee and had to remain with him. Both had been in the City Room during the course of their deployment. Neither was in the City Room at any point during the period 22:00 to 22:31.

- 1.40** As a result, there were no BTP officers in the City Room during the period 22:00 to 22:31. There should have been at least one. Responsibility for this failing lies with PCs Bullough and Corke and PCSOs Renshaw and Morrey. They share this responsibility with BTP as an organisation. I will address this in greater detail in Part 7.
- 1.41** The mere presence of a BTP officer in the City Room may have deterred SA from mounting any attack, although I consider this unlikely. A BTP officer in the City Room may have identified SA as requiring investigation. PC Corke routinely positioned himself on the mezzanine.<sup>25</sup> In any event, all BTP officers should have been vigilant. The concert was shortly to end. SA's age meant that he did not fit the demographic of a parent waiting for a child. While SA may have been a sibling or friend of an attendee, his age was a further piece of relevant information when considering whether or not his presence at that stage of the evening was suspicious. This, added to his clothing, backpack and where he had chosen to position himself on the mezzanine, would have resulted in him being identified by a vigilant BTP officer, had such a person been present from 22:00.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> 21/9/11-24

<sup>26</sup> 21/16/19-17/2

**1.42** I will consider what might have occurred had SA been identified by an adequately vigilant BTP officer in the City Room at the conclusion of Part 1.

## **Showsec's pre-egress check**

**1.43** A further missed opportunity during the period 22:00 to 22:30 arose from the absence of an adequate security patrol by Showsec at any stage during this time. Showsec operated a system of "*pre-egress*" checks. Such a check was carried out by Showsec supervisor, Jordan Beak. An adequate security patrol of the whole City Room would have included a counter-terrorism element on the mezzanine. The pre-egress check was not an adequate security patrol. It should have been.

**1.44** Jordan Beak's pre-egress check took place between 22:09 and 22:18. It included walking through the City Room.<sup>27</sup> Jordan Beak's understanding was that this check included a counter-terrorism element, but the focus was on ensuring the egress routes were clear.<sup>28</sup> The CCTV footage showed<sup>29</sup> and Jordan Beak accepted, that he looked towards the staircases up to the mezzanine area only very briefly at

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<sup>27</sup> [INQ036729/132-136](#), [INQ036729/156-158](#)

<sup>28</sup> [23/148/13-23](#)

<sup>29</sup> [INQ100000/1 at 1:42:32-1:43:13](#)

22:09 and 22:17. He did not consider them a very important part of the check because it was not an egress route.<sup>30</sup>

- 1.45** Jordan Beak did not go up on to the mezzanine area and so he did not see SA. This was a significant missed opportunity. Had Jordan Beak gone up onto the mezzanine, he would have seen SA. For the reasons I have identified, the circumstances would have resulted in SA being identified by an adequate pre-egress check as being suspicious. This, in turn, would have prompted further action which I will consider in detail at the conclusion of Part 1.
- 1.46** I accept that Jordan Beak was simply following the training he had been given in relation to the pre-egress check. Principal responsibility for this missed opportunity lies with Showsec. However, SMG does bear some responsibility as well.
- 1.47** I will address the issue of patrols in more detail in Part 6.

## **Christopher Wild's report to Mohammed Agha**

- 1.48** At 22:15, an event occurred which exemplifies the need for a BTP officer to have been in the City Room from 22:00. Christopher Wild was present in the City Room with his partner Julie

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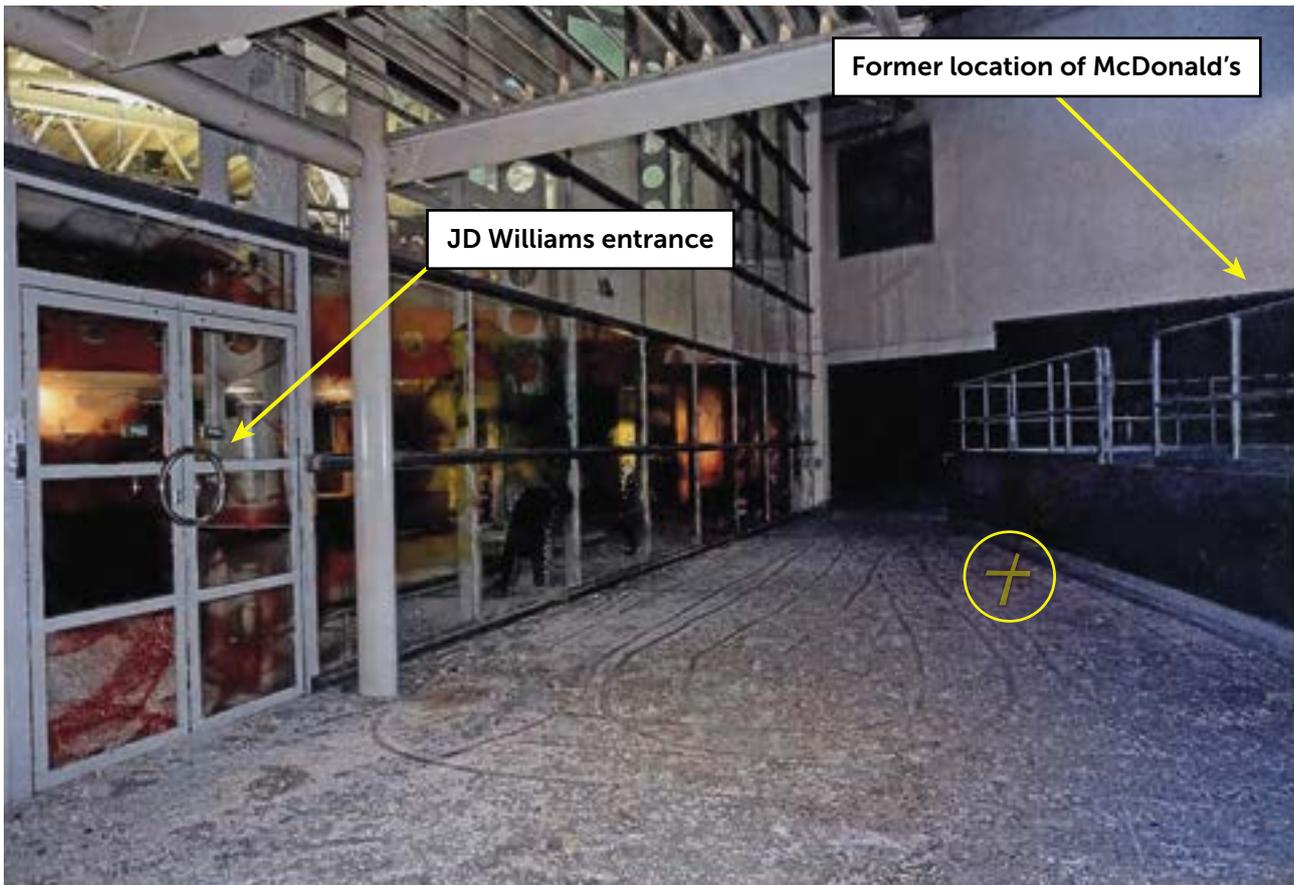
<sup>30</sup> [23/191/14-192/13](#)

Whitley. They were waiting to pick up Julie Whitley's daughter and her friend. At 22:12 they saw SA seated on the mezzanine. They could not understand why he was there and why he appeared to be hiding.<sup>31</sup> Christopher Wild asked SA what he had in his bag and he did not reply in any meaningful way. Christopher Wild was concerned that the bag might contain a bomb.<sup>32</sup> Figure 3 shows an area of the mezzanine between the JD Williams' side and McDonald's side in which SA was hiding when seen by Christopher Wild.

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<sup>31</sup> 22/31/2-25, 22/34/20-35/21

<sup>32</sup> 22/35/1-41/25



**Figure 3:** Location of SA when seen by Christopher Wild (marked with an X)<sup>33</sup>

**1.49** Christopher Wild was not the only member of the public who thought that SA appeared to be out of place at that time.<sup>34</sup> He was, however, the only person who acted. The fact that SA was noticed by members of the public supports the conclusion that a vigilant BTP officer or Jordan Beak would have identified SA as suspicious, had they seen him.

<sup>33</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ023234/2](#), with the location of the X marked by Christopher Wild highlighted by the circle

<sup>34</sup> [18/67/4-10](#), [22/159/8-15](#), [21/112/24-113/20](#)

- 1.50** Christopher Wild reported his concerns to Mohammed Agha at 22:15.<sup>35</sup> Mohammed Agha's response was that he already knew about him. Christopher Wild felt he had been "*fobbed off*".<sup>36</sup> Another member of the public, Thomas McCallum, who overheard the conversation, thought Mohammed Agha was "*really quite dismissive*."<sup>37</sup>
- 1.51** Mohammed Agha stated that when Christopher Wild told him of his concern, it took him some time to realise that he was talking about the same person that he had seen go up to the mezzanine area on two occasions.<sup>38</sup> He stated he did tell Christopher Wild not to worry as he did not want him to be concerned and worry other people. Mohammed Agha denied fobbing Christopher Wild off.<sup>39</sup> Whether it was Mohammed Agha's intention or not, the effect was to fob Christopher Wild off.
- 1.52** Mohammed Agha knew that he should report what he had been told to a Showsec supervisor or a member of Showsec staff who had a radio.<sup>40</sup> He saw a senior supervisor, David Middleton, over by the doors to the Arena in the City Room

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<sup>35</sup> [INQ035315/13-17](#)

<sup>36</sup> [22/46/22-47/20](#)

<sup>37</sup> [23/8/5-25](#)

<sup>38</sup> [24/31/19-32/4](#)

<sup>39</sup> [24/102/17-103/21](#)

<sup>40</sup> [24/39/4-18](#)

less than 30 metres away<sup>41</sup> and he stated he tried to call him over.<sup>42</sup> The CCTV reveals some very modest movements by Mohammed Agha which do, to some extent, support his account. For that reason, I am prepared to accept that Mohammed Agha did make some effort to contact David Middleton. The effort he did make was, however, inadequate.

- 1.53** Mohammed Agha should have done more immediately following his conversation with Christopher Wild. This was a missed opportunity. Mohammed Agha did not respond appropriately because he did not take Christopher Wild's concerns as seriously as he should have. Responsibility for this rests on both Mohammed Agha and Showsec. I will address the reasons for this further in Part 6.
- 1.54** At this point in the events, the concert was not due to finish for another 15 minutes. This was a sufficient period of time both for an investigation of Christopher Wild's concerns and for decisive action to be taken by those in charge of the event. I will deal with what could have been done in more detail at the conclusion of Part 1.

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<sup>41</sup> [24/97/17-98/6, INQ036982/1](#)

<sup>42</sup> [24/40/16-41/7](#)

## Mohammed Agha's report to Kyle Lawler

**1.55** A further opportunity for Mohammed Agha to respond to Christopher Wild's concern presented itself at 22:22. Kyle Lawler, another Showsec employee, walked across the City Room and was called over by Mohammed Agha. Unlike Mohammed Agha, Kyle Lawler had a radio. Mohammed Agha told him what Christopher Wild had said and they both said that they then went to look at SA. Kyle Lawler stated that at first he was not suspicious about SA but he did think there was something wrong.<sup>43</sup> He said that SA appeared to have a slightly nervous reaction to being looked at and seemed fidgety.<sup>44</sup> Kyle Lawler felt conflicted about what to do as he had heard nothing of any potential attack. He stated he was fearful of being branded a racist and would be in trouble if he got it wrong.<sup>45</sup>

**1.56** I accept that Kyle Lawler did try and get through on the radio, but someone else was talking and he was unsuccessful. He said he tried to get through a number of times before returning to the raised walkway.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> [25/105/2-112/6](#)

<sup>44</sup> [25/108/2-7](#)

<sup>45</sup> [25/112/12-114/2](#)

<sup>46</sup> [25/115/13-117/21](#)

- 1.57** There was evidence that the radio traffic could be busy about the time that the concert was coming to an end, but the weight of the evidence was that a member of the Showsec staff would not have to wait more than a couple of minutes before getting through.<sup>47</sup> While Kyle Lawler did make some effort to get through, I do not consider that his efforts were adequate. If he believed he could not get through on the radio, he could have reported what he had been told to senior supervisor David Middleton. Instead, within minutes of having first spoken to Mohammed Agha, Kyle Lawler had left the City Room and made no further efforts to communicate what he had been told to anyone else.
- 1.58** In Figure 4, Kyle Lawler can be seen on the raised walkway. The image is taken approximately 30 seconds after he had finished speaking to Mohammed Agha. His body language as he walked away from the City Room indicates that he was by that stage unconcerned.

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<sup>47</sup> [17/213/24-214/9](#), [19/97/5-10](#), [23/30/2-7](#), [23/165/5-168/21](#), [34/150/19-22](#)



**Figure 4:** Kyle Lawler (in the yellow box) at 22:25:46 on the raised walkway<sup>48</sup>

**1.59** This was another missed opportunity. The inadequacy of Kyle Lawler’s response was a product of his failure to take Christopher Wild’s concern and his own observations sufficiently seriously, as was the case for Mohammed Agha. Responsibility for this rests on both Kyle Lawler and Showsec for reasons I will explain. I accept that having spoken to Kyle Lawler, Mohammed Agha was entitled to rely upon him as a radio holder to communicate Christopher Wild’s concerns from that point.

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<sup>48</sup> Extract from [INQ033776/48](#)

- 1.60** As indicated above, at the conclusion of Part 1, I will consider what the effect of an adequate and timely report by Kyle Lawler would have been.
- 1.61** The concern raised by Christopher Wild is relevant to BTP as well as Showsec. Had there been a BTP officer in the City Room after 22:00, Christopher Wild could have reported his concern to that officer instead of to Mohammed Agha. Christopher Wild said that he would have taken this option if it had been available. If this had occurred, a competent BTP officer would have taken action that could have saved lives.
- 1.62** A BTP officer would also have been available for Mohammed Agha to report the concern to. This is less likely to have happened, given that Mohammed Agha did not take Christopher Wild's concern sufficiently seriously.

## The consequences of the missed opportunities

- 1.63** It is difficult to reach a safe conclusion on what the consequences of the missed opportunities were, if any. No-one knows what SA would have done had he been confronted before 22:31. We know that only one of the twenty-two killed by SA entered the City Room before 22:14. Eleven of those who were killed came through the Arena concourse doors into the City Room after 22:30. I will deal with the detail of these timings in Volume 2.
- 1.64** If a BTP officer had been present in the City Room from 22:00 onwards, Christopher Wild would, he said, have approached that person instead of Mohammed Agha.<sup>49</sup> It is likely that a BTP officer would then have spoken to SA. PC Bullough confirmed that had a member of the public raised a concern about a suspicious person with a backpack she would “*definitely*” have approached that person.<sup>50</sup> I have considered whether this statement was a product of guilt born of hindsight. Having heard her give evidence, I have no reason to doubt that her evidence about this was correct. An approach by a police officer may have caused

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<sup>49</sup> [22/48/15-23](#)

<sup>50</sup> [21/185/22-196/15](#)

SA to leave the City Room, or he may have detonated his device. In either case, it is likely that fewer people would have been killed.

- 1.65** Had Mohammed Agha or Kyle Lawler reported the presence of a suspicious individual in the City Room, Miriam Stone, SMG Event Manager that night, stated that she could, within minutes, have prevented the audience exiting into the City Room. This would have been done by closing the exit doors and diverting the audience through other exits.<sup>51</sup> James Allen, SMG's Arena Manager, agreed and thought it would take in the "*single figures*" of minutes to achieve this.<sup>52</sup>
- 1.66** This step would not have taken place immediately. The procedure which would have been followed, is that the Sierra Control Room would have asked for the CCTV camera to be turned to focus on SA's position. Had it become clear he could not be seen, this may have caused further concern and led to the City Room doors being closed for egress at that stage. Alternatively, the Sierra Control Room may have asked a Showsec supervisor, most likely to have been David Middleton, to go and observe SA. David Middleton's evidence was that he would have considered someone loitering in the City Room with a big backpack suspicious and

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<sup>51</sup> 30/22/1-29/13

<sup>52</sup> 29/204/14-24

reported this to the control room,<sup>53</sup> which would also have led to the City Room doors being closed for egress.<sup>54</sup> Had the City Room doors been closed for egress, it is highly likely that the number of casualties would have been fewer.

**1.67** In any event, none of these processes would have taken long, probably fewer than five minutes and very likely less than 10 minutes given the evidence of James Allen and Miriam Stone. If Mohammed Agha had reported Christopher Wild's concern immediately to David Middleton at 22:15, these steps would have been taken before SA moved off the mezzanine area. If Kyle Lawler had reported SA's presence over the radio immediately at 22:23, it is also likely that these steps would have been taken before SA moved towards the doors. Events would then have developed very differently, although it is impossible to be certain what the final outcome would have been.

**1.68** I am satisfied that there were a number of missed opportunities to alter the course of what happened that night. More should have been done. The most striking missed opportunity, and the one that is likely to have made a significant difference, is the attempt by Christopher Wild to bring his concerns about SA, whom he

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<sup>53</sup> [19/177/24-178/14](#)

<sup>54</sup> [30/22/1-29/13](#)

had already challenged, to the attention of Mohammed Agha. Christopher Wild's behaviour was very responsible. He stated that he formed the view that SA might "*let a bomb off*".<sup>55</sup> That was sadly all too prescient and makes all the more distressing the fact that no effective steps were taken as a result of the efforts made by Christopher Wild.

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<sup>55</sup> 22/37/23



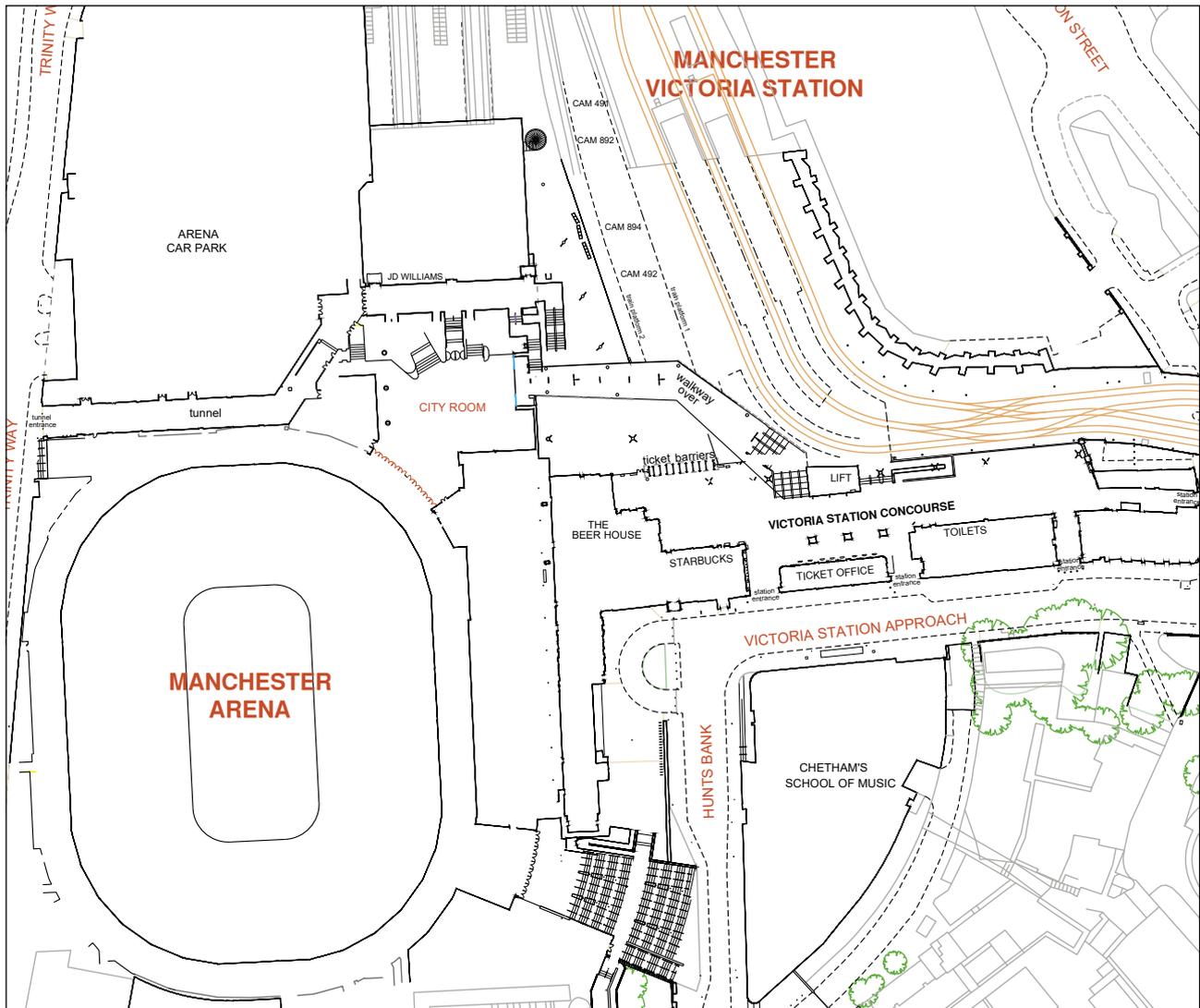
# Part 2

## Manchester Arena

- 2.1** The Arena was opened in 1995. It is situated to the north of the city centre in Manchester. Its footprint lies above Manchester Victoria Railway Station and it can be accessed from the station concourse via a raised walkway. The freehold interest in the Victoria Exchange Complex is held by Network Rail. Between 2013 and 2018, Mansford LLP (Mansford) held a lease for the Arena. Mansford sublet the Arena and had no involvement in the day-to-day management. I shall deal further with the sub-lease granted by Mansford to the Arena operator, SMG, below.
- 2.2** The Arena is one of the largest and busiest indoor arenas in Europe, with a maximum capacity of 21,000.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> [1/22/3-10](#)



**Figure 5: Plan view of the Victoria Exchange Complex<sup>57</sup>**

**2.3** Figure 5 shows the layout of the Victoria Exchange Complex. The City Room can be seen to the left of centre. One of the main Arena entrances opens out into this space, providing access to the NCP car park, Trinity Way via a pedestrian tunnel and the railway station and

<sup>57</sup> Extract from [INQ033841](#)

tram platform via a raised walkway. For these reasons, it is a popular location for people to wait to pick up attendees at the end of an event.<sup>58</sup>

**2.4** On the opposite side of the City Room from the Arena doors, there are stairs up to the mezzanine. This is where SA waited before walking down the stairs and towards the Arena doors, where he detonated his bomb. Figure 6 shows a view of the mezzanine level from the main floor of the City Room.

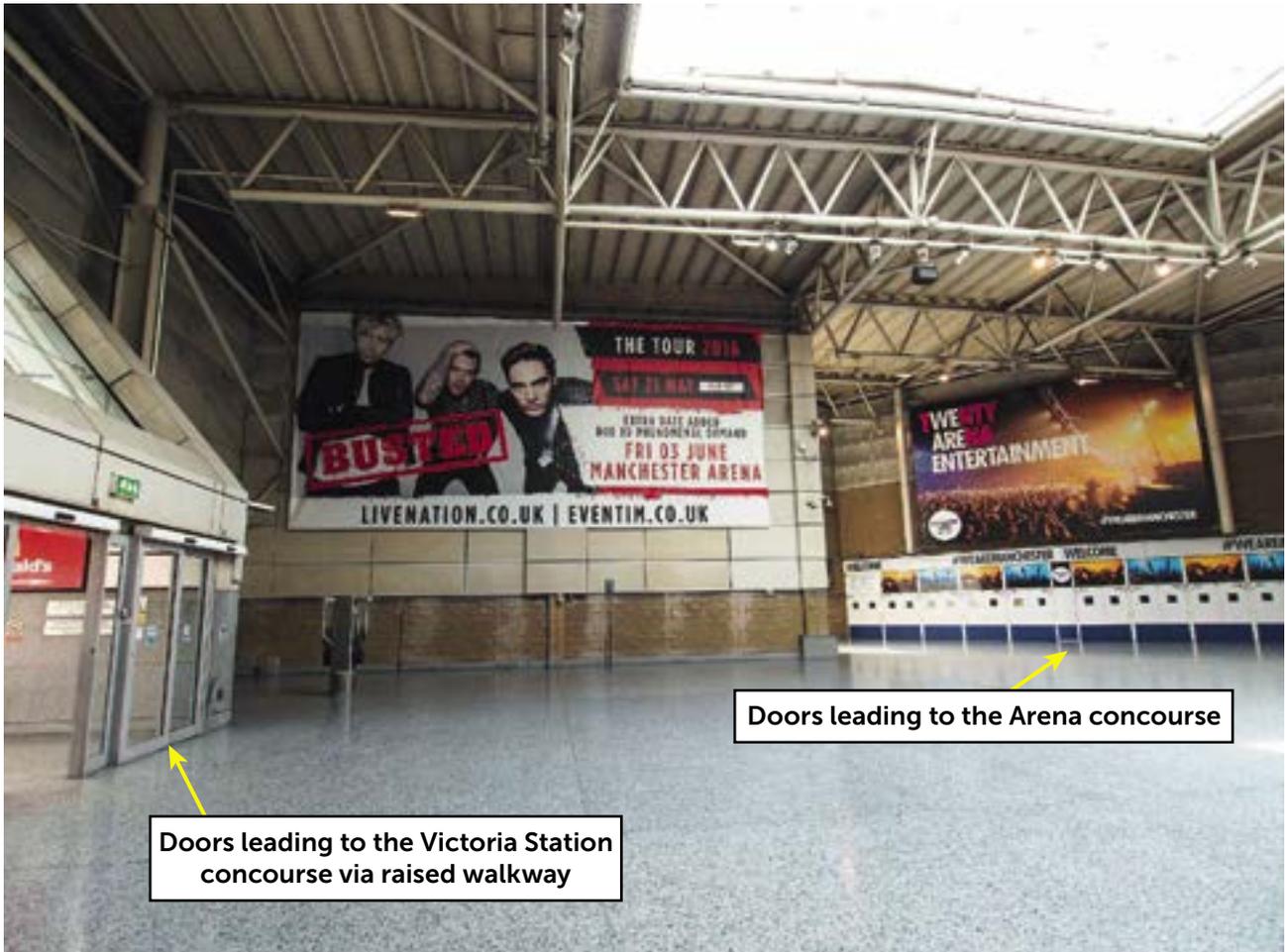


**Figure 6:** View of the mezzanine from the main floor of the City Room<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> 1/22/11-23/2

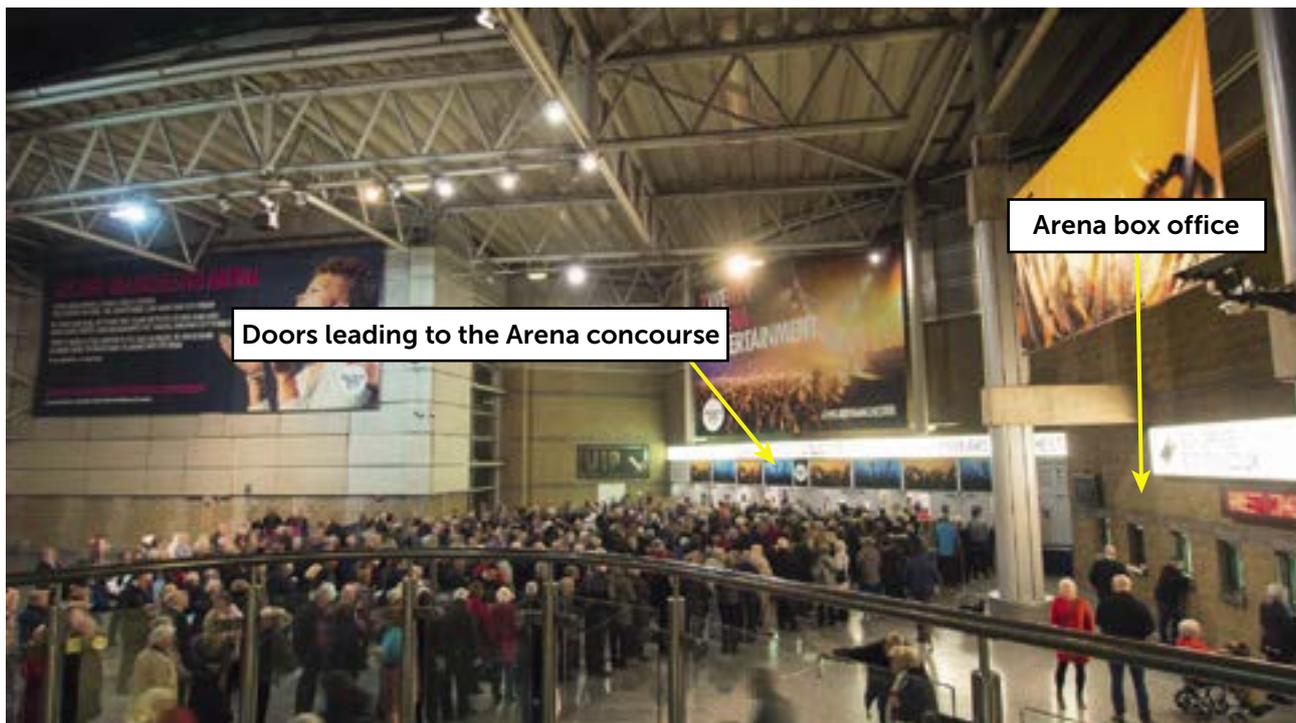
<sup>59</sup> Annotated extract from INQ001766

- 2.5** At the top of the flight of stairs, on the left in Figure 6, is the entrance to JD Williams. At the top of the flight of stairs on the right is the former location of McDonald's. In order to distinguish between the two sides of the mezzanine I will refer to the 'JD Williams' side' and the 'McDonald's side' by reference to these two locations. I will take the same approach when identifying the two staircases which lead up to each of these areas. Behind the raised area, above the Grey Doors exit between the staircases, is a corridor space. This connects the JD Williams' side of the mezzanine with the McDonald's side of the mezzanine.
- 2.6** Figures 7 and 8 show the City Room empty and with people queuing to enter the Arena. These photographs were not taken on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. Behind the position from which the photograph in Figure 7 was taken is the McDonald's side of the mezzanine, near the doors to the raised walkway. The photographer of Figure 8 was standing on the JD Williams' side of the mezzanine.



**Figure 7:** *The City Room viewed from near the doors to the raised walkway<sup>60</sup>*

<sup>60</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ016169](#)



**Figure 8:** *The City Room viewed from the JD Williams side of the mezzanine*<sup>61</sup>

**2.7** The City Room, as an area outside an event site to which the public had access, is an example of what Colonel Richard Latham and Dr David BaMaung, the Security Experts instructed by the Inquiry, described as “*grey space*”. This is a space where there is a lack of clarity over ownership or where various neighbours, partners or tenants have responsibility for security.<sup>62</sup> The City Room is part of the Victoria Exchange Complex, but not within the Arena itself. Except between 00:00 and 05:30, the public had access to it at all times,<sup>63</sup> including during

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<sup>61</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ033848](#)

<sup>62</sup> [15/156/6-157/7](#)

<sup>63</sup> [27/22/23-23/1](#)

events. Employees and customers of the other businesses within the Arena complex came and went through it.

**2.8** There were two control rooms within the Arena: Sierra Control and Whisky Control. Sierra Control was only used for events. Whisky Control was open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I shall provide further detail about the relationship between these two control rooms in Part 6.

**2.9** There were three organisations or institutions in particular which had significant responsibility for security within the City Room: the owner and operator of the Arena, SMG; its crowd management and security subcontractor for events, Showsec; and the relevant police services, primarily BTP. I consider the extent of BTP's responsibility and how well it was discharged on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 in Part 7. The responsibilities of the private organisations are dealt with in further detail below.

## SMG

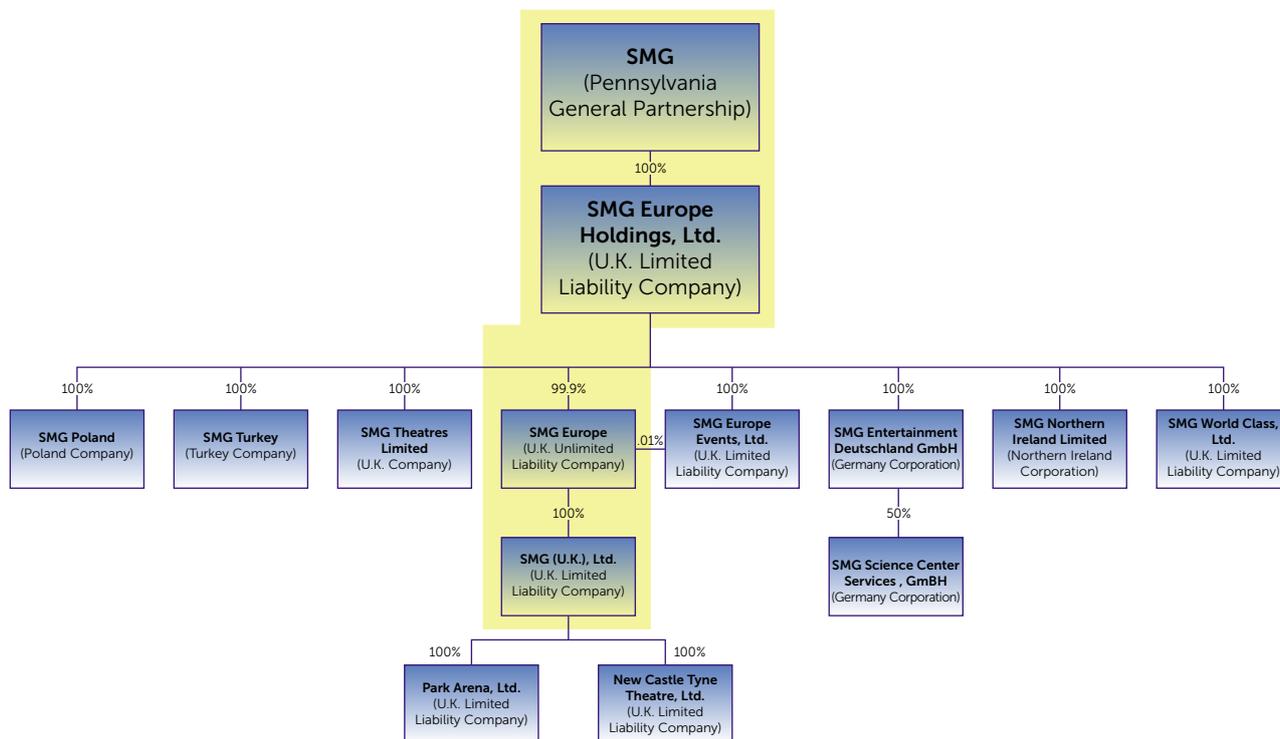
### Key findings

- For the purposes of the Attack, the two most important companies in the SMG group were SMG Europe Holdings Ltd and SMG (UK) Ltd. There was an unclear division of responsibility between these two companies.
- SMG Europe Holdings Ltd had undertaken to provide security in the City Room by reason of a facilities management agreement with its landlord. Security included patrolling and monitoring of CCTV.
- There is likely to have been a breach of the Security Industry Authority's (SIA) licensing regime in relation to CCTV operators by either or both SMG Europe Holdings Ltd and SMG (UK) Ltd.
- SMG had responsibility for the security of people in the City Room by reason of the facilities management agreement. It had a separate statutory duty to take such steps as were reasonably practicable to keep event-goers in the City Room safe from a terrorist attack.

## The SMG corporate structure

- 2.10** In Part 1, I referred to SMG. While a convenient shorthand to cover more than one company which included SMG in its name, it is important that the legal position is set out. This is because there was an unclear division of responsibilities between two SMG named companies. The arrangement was sufficiently unclear to result in confusion in the minds of some SMG employees as to which company they worked for. It also created confusion which resulted in an incorrect belief that an SIA CCTV licence was not required for those monitoring the CCTV.
- 2.11** SMG's corporate structure at the time is set out in a document entitled "*SMG Organizational Chart European Entities*" as set out in Figure 9.

## SMG Organizational Chart European Entities



**Figure 9: SMG Organisational Chart of European Entities – relevant companies highlighted<sup>64</sup>**

**2.12** The relevant parts of this structure, as they were arranged in 2017, were as follows. SMG was a Pennsylvania General Partnership. It was the parent organisation and was registered in the United States. I shall refer to it as SMG US.

**2.13** Beneath SMG US was SMG Europe Holdings Limited (SMG Europe Holdings). SMG Europe Holdings was wholly owned by SMG US and registered in the United Kingdom. SMG Europe Holdings owned a number of other UK-based companies. One of these was SMG

<sup>64</sup> Annotated extract of [INQ038985/1](#)

Europe Limited (SMG Europe). SMG Europe was an intermediate holding company and is not named as a party to any of the agreements.<sup>65</sup>

**2.14** SMG Europe owned SMG (UK) Limited (SMG (UK)).

**2.15** For the purposes of what occurred on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, the two most important companies in the SMG group were SMG Europe Holdings and SMG (UK). Between them, SMG Europe Holdings and SMG (UK) carried out the two parts of the SMG group's activity within the Victoria Exchange Complex. Those two parts were facilities management and the running of events.<sup>66</sup> I accept that, at a senior level, the intention was that SMG Europe Holdings would be responsible for facilities management and SMG (UK) would be responsible for events. This was not always borne out by what occurred.

**2.16** In this Report, when I refer to SMG, I am referring to the activities of these two companies. The evidence revealed there was an insufficiently clear distinction between the two of them for it to be appropriate, or on occasions possible, for me to identify one rather than the

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<sup>65</sup> 41/5/23-6/3

<sup>66</sup> 41/15/17-24

other. This was because of the contractual and employment arrangements which had been put in place by SMG.

**2.17** The approach I am taking by referring to two legal entities by the single name SMG reflects the reality on the ground in May 2017 in the minds of many who interacted with SMG. At a senior level in Showsec, for example, there was no clear understanding of the corporate structure set out above.<sup>67</sup>

**2.18** My approach is also consistent with the approach that SMG itself took during the Inquiry. Core Participant status in the Inquiry was held by SMG Europe Holdings.<sup>68</sup> However, those representing SMG Europe Holdings, which of course owned SMG (UK), dealt with both the events and facilities managements side of the business. This was both an appropriate and pragmatic approach.

## **SMG Europe Holdings**

The Arena lease and the facilities management agreement

**2.19** Mansford sub-let the Arena to SMG Europe Holdings. SMG Europe Holding's lease was subject to a facilities management agreement.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> 31/163/23-164/8, 33/81/9-19

<sup>68</sup> 12/1/10-15

<sup>69</sup> 16/3/8-4/20

In 2014 the rights and responsibilities under both agreements were transferred from SMG Europe Holdings so that they were jointly held by SMG Europe Holdings and SMG US. This was at the request of Mansford. This was not a change which the evidence suggested made any difference to the issues I am considering.

**2.20** The facilities management agreement is an important document. It states: “*SMG will provide and operate a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week, security service*”.<sup>70</sup> Included within the security service was “*Monitoring, operating and testing the security alarm, intruder detection, and security surveillance systems.*”<sup>71</sup> The security service also required “*foot patrols of the building*”<sup>72</sup> which would be recorded by “*an electronic clocking system*”.<sup>73</sup> These electronically monitored foot patrols were referred to by SMG as “*Deister Patrols.*” This term was a reference to the equipment which was used.<sup>74</sup>

**2.21** The route of the Deister Patrols took in the mezzanine area in the City Room.<sup>75</sup> These patrols included a counter-terrorism element.

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<sup>70</sup> [INQ022832/68](#)

<sup>71</sup> [INQ022832/68](#)

<sup>72</sup> [INQ022832/68](#)

<sup>73</sup> [INQ022832/69](#)

<sup>74</sup> [26/170/24-171/5](#)

<sup>75</sup> [26/194/8-23, 34/29/11-14](#)

They did not, however, take place during events. The facilities management agreement did not specify how many patrols would occur each day or at what time, but stated that “*all duties*”, which included the foot patrol duty, “*will be required on a 24 hour, 7 day a week basis.*”<sup>76</sup>

## Key employees of SMG Europe Holdings

**2.22** SMG Europe Holdings employed a number of key people so far as the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 are concerned. The Inquiry heard from each of them.

**2.23** In 2017, John Sharkey was the Executive Vice President of SMG Europe Holdings. He was responsible for 10 arenas operated by SMG Europe Holdings, including the Arena.<sup>77</sup>

**2.24** James Allen was the Arena General Manager. He joined SMG in 1998, having spent the three previous years working in the events industry.<sup>78</sup> He started working at the Arena in 2003.<sup>79</sup> He became the Arena General Manager in 2013.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> [INQ022832/68](#)

<sup>77</sup> [41/1/15-2/23](#)

<sup>78</sup> [28/3/23-5/12, 28/5/23-24](#)

<sup>79</sup> [28/5/13-15](#)

<sup>80</sup> [28/6/4-6](#)

James Allen stated that he worked for SMG (UK).<sup>81</sup> In fact he was employed by SMG Europe Holdings,<sup>82</sup> but was paid by SMG (UK).<sup>83</sup>

**2.25** Miriam Stone was the Events Manager and on duty on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. She was also employed by SMG Europe Holdings<sup>84</sup> and paid by SMG (UK).<sup>85</sup> She worked for the events side of the business. She said of the relationship between SMG (UK) and SMG Europe Holdings, *“If I’m honest from where we were sitting there was... it didn’t feel like a massively straightforward relationship.”*<sup>86</sup> She went on to say that there was *“some fuzzy crossover in that our offices were next door, so there’d be to-ing and fro-ing.”*<sup>87</sup>

**2.26** SMG Europe Holdings also employed Michael Edwards,<sup>88</sup> who worked in Whisky Control as a Control Room Operator. Michael Edwards was one of three people in or around Whisky Control during the Ariana Grande concert.

**2.27** I will address the training of the relevant SMG Europe Holdings personnel in Part 6.

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<sup>81</sup> 28/13/21

<sup>82</sup> 41/13/20-14/3

<sup>83</sup> 41/14/24-15/6

<sup>84</sup> 41/13/20-14/3

<sup>85</sup> 41/14/24-15/6

<sup>86</sup> 30/9/3-5

<sup>87</sup> 30/9/12-15

<sup>88</sup> 41/13/20-14/10

## SMG (UK)

### Licence to occupy

**2.28** SMG Europe Holdings granted a contractual licence to SMG (UK) to occupy the Arena. Despite his seniority, John Sharkey was not sure whether this grant had ever been reduced to writing. Consequently, the details of this contractual licence were not clear from the evidence. John Sharkey stated that there was a process of re-charging between SMG (UK) and SMG Europe Holdings, although SMG (UK) did not pay any rent to SMG Europe Holdings in order to occupy the Arena.<sup>89</sup>

**2.29** This appears to me to have been an arrangement of convenience based on an informal understanding between two legal entities. This agreement was able to subsist because the legal distinction was not regarded as being sufficiently important, by those who put it into effect on the ground, for any lack of clarity to be regarded as problematic.

**2.30** John Sharkey denied the suggestion that the arrangement created confusion in practice.<sup>90</sup> However, it did give rise to difficulties with the SIA licencing regime as I set out below.

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<sup>89</sup> [41/20/11-21/4](#)

<sup>90</sup> [41/13/6-13](#)

## Premises licence

**2.31** The premises licence granted by Manchester City Council, which permitted events to be held at the Arena, was held by SMG (UK). James Allen, who was employed by SMG Europe Holdings, was named as designated premises supervisor.<sup>91</sup>

**2.32** I will address the detail of the relevant parts of the licence and the licensing regime in Part 3.

## Key employees of SMG (UK)

**2.33** SMG (UK) employed Michael Cowley and Paul Johnson.<sup>92</sup> Michael Cowley was the Facility Services Director.<sup>93</sup> This meant he was in charge of the facilities management agreement. He was named as part of it.<sup>94</sup> The facilities management agreement was signed on behalf of SMG Europe Holdings, not SMG (UK).<sup>95</sup> In his statement John Sharkey incorrectly asserted that Michael Cowley and Paul Johnson were employed by SMG Europe Holdings.<sup>96</sup> However, he corrected this when he came to give evidence.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> [INQ035447/2](#)

<sup>92</sup> [41/15/7-10](#)

<sup>93</sup> [INQ001443/1](#), [26/145/19-20](#)

<sup>94</sup> [INQ022832/79](#), [26/174/10-17](#)

<sup>95</sup> [INQ022832/1](#)

<sup>96</sup> [41/13/14-23](#)

<sup>97</sup> [41/13/24-14/3](#), [41/15/7-10](#)

**2.34** Michael Cowley gave evidence about the operation of the facilities management agreement. He stated that, during events, the SMG Deister Patrols would not take place<sup>98</sup> and patrolling was carried out by Showsec.<sup>99</sup> His evidence was contradictory and confusing about whether or not Showsec were discharging the facilities management agreement responsibility to patrol.<sup>100</sup> He appeared to settle on a position in which he thought Showsec had been retained by SMG to discharge the patrolling obligation.<sup>101</sup>

**2.35** Miriam Stone provided clarity on the point. She was clear, and I accept, that Showsec's operation was confined to the event which was taking place and had nothing to do with SMG Europe Holdings' obligation to Mansford.<sup>102</sup> It is of concern to me that the person in charge of facilities management, Michael Cowley, did not understand the correct position.

**2.36** Paul Johnson was the Security and Cleaning Supervisor.<sup>103</sup> He had held that position since 2005. These roles fell into the facilities management side of SMG's business.<sup>104</sup> He also

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<sup>98</sup> 27/11/9-20

<sup>99</sup> 26/202/17-20, 27/9/6-8

<sup>100</sup> 26/202/3-203/7, 26/209/14-212/16, 27/11/9-14/2, 27/40/14-42/15, 27/48/19-52/9

<sup>101</sup> 27/85/10-89/11

<sup>102</sup> 30/11/8-13/11

<sup>103</sup> INQ001443/1, 34/1/24-2-5

<sup>104</sup> INQ001443/1

acted as Fire Safety Officer on event days, including on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. He stated that he was employed by SMG Europe Holding<sup>105</sup> and had learned of SMG (UK) through listening to the Inquiry.<sup>106</sup> In fact and despite the belief he held, Paul Johnson was employed by SMG (UK), as John Sharkey was to confirm.<sup>107</sup> He stated that he had not realised that there was a split between facilities and events and that he worked as part of “*a very close team.*”<sup>108</sup> I will address the issue of Paul Johnson’s training in Part 6.

## **Consequences of SMG’s corporate structure**

**2.37** The SIA regime only requires a person in a junior role to be licensed for CCTV monitoring into a public space if they are supplied under a contract for services. During the Ariana Grande concert, Paul Johnson and Michael Edwards both monitored the CCTV in Whisky Control. Neither had an SIA CCTV licence. One was employed by SMG Europe Holdings; one was employed by SMG (UK). At least one of them required an SIA CCTV licence, depending on whether at the time they were monitoring CCTV, they were doing so on behalf of SMG Europe

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<sup>105</sup> 34/4/8-10

<sup>106</sup> 34/4/11-15

<sup>107</sup> 41/15/7-10

<sup>108</sup> 34/5/1-2

Holdings or SMG (UK). James Allen's view was that the facilities management side of the business provided him with control room officers for events.<sup>109</sup> If this was what SMG was in fact doing, as was the case for at least Michael Edwards, he required an SIA licence for it to be permissible to monitor the CCTV during events.

**2.38** Part 3 will deal in greater detail with the SIA regime. In Part 6, I will deal with CCTV monitoring as a terrorism threat mitigation measure.

## **Responsibility for people in the City Room**

**2.39** There was a clear understanding at all levels of senior management within the SMG group<sup>110</sup> of its responsibility for the security of people attending events at the Arena, including in the City Room.<sup>111</sup> In submissions to me, it was accepted on SMG's behalf that SMG was responsible for the security of people in the City Room.<sup>112</sup> SMG acted as though it was responsible<sup>113</sup> and SMG was responsible.

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<sup>109</sup> [28/27/12-23](#)

<sup>110</sup> [41/48/1-15, 41/22/5-9, 30/10/1-7](#)

<sup>111</sup> [28/7/22-24](#)

<sup>112</sup> [12/9/2-19](#)

<sup>113</sup> [43/196/24-197/1](#)

- 2.40** SMG had that responsibility for people in the City Room for two reasons arising from the two sides of its business. SMG was responsible under the facilities management agreement for the provision of security on the site, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The City Room was included within this contractual responsibility.<sup>114</sup>
- 2.41** SMG also had a responsibility for those attending events as the event operator. The City Room provided a key ingress and egress route into and out of the Arena and was used as an area in which people queued to buy tickets and queued to enter. That responsibility arose under section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. This required SMG to conduct itself so as to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that persons who are not its employees who may be affected by its activities are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Event-goers were undoubtedly persons who were affected by SMG's activities. I shall address the health and safety regime in a little more detail in Part 3.
- 2.42** An issue arose during the Inquiry as to whether John Sharkey had told Figen Murray, the mother of Martyn Hett, that SMG was not responsible for the City Room. Figen Murray stated that John Sharkey had told her that "*the area outside*

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<sup>114</sup> [INQ022832/5](#), [INQ022832/40-41](#), [INQ022832/68](#)

*the Arena had nothing to do with SMG*” during a meeting she had with him on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017.<sup>115</sup> John Sharkey stated on a number of occasions during his evidence that he had no reason to dispute Figen Murray’s account<sup>116</sup> although he also stated he could not remember the exact words he used.<sup>117</sup> He asserted he was “*definitely responding on the basis of not describing the responsibilities.*”<sup>118</sup> At one point in his evidence, John Sharkey said “*I don’t think I said SMG are not responsible for security in the City Room*” but then confirmed he was not disagreeing with Figen Murray’s account.<sup>119</sup> He categorically denied trying to avoid responsibility in the meeting.<sup>120</sup>

**2.43** He accepted that “*it should have been fairly easy to describe the responsibilities.*”<sup>121</sup> He offered Figen Murray an apology for not having given a clear answer and for the hurt he had caused.<sup>122</sup> He stated that it had not been his intention for

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<sup>115</sup> 32/182/21-23

<sup>116</sup> 41/52/18; 41/59/8-22

<sup>117</sup> 41/53/2-19

<sup>118</sup> 41/56/22-23

<sup>119</sup> 41/59/23-60/15

<sup>120</sup> 41/61/4-10

<sup>121</sup> 41/55/25-56/1

<sup>122</sup> 41/50/8-10; 41/57/3

her to leave the meeting with the impression she did.<sup>123</sup> Figen Murray's account was not challenged by SMG.<sup>124</sup>

**2.44** Having heard from both Figen Murraray and John Sharkey, I have no doubt that John Sharkey said to Figen Murray words which carried the clear meaning that SMG was not responsible for security in the City Room. That was despite the fact that he knew in May 2017 that SMG was responsible for security in the City Room by reason of both the facilities management agreement and the duty towards event-goers.<sup>125</sup> I conclude that John Sharkey tried to mislead Figen Murray in a misguided attempt at 'damage limitation' for SMG. I am prepared to accept that it was a challenging meeting for John Sharkey.<sup>126</sup> However, it would have been a much more difficult meeting for Figen Murray, and John Sharkey should have given a straightforward and accurate response.

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<sup>123</sup> 41/50/10-14

<sup>124</sup> 32/212/7-10

<sup>125</sup> 41/48/1-15

<sup>126</sup> 41/52/20-55/4

# Showsec

## Key findings

- Showsec provided a crowd management and security service to SMG. Showsec had a counter-terrorism role to play at events as part of its crowd management and security role.
- Showsec had a responsibility to event-goers in the City Room to take such steps as were reasonably practicable to keep them safe from a terrorist attack.
- Showsec held itself out as having expertise in counter-terrorism when it came to its own activity.

## Key employees

**2.45** In 2017 Mark Harding was the managing director of Showsec International Limited (Showsec). He started working for Showsec as a steward in 1987. He became managing director in 2003. He was one of four directors, one other of whom was Mark Logan.<sup>127</sup>

**2.46** Mark Logan began working for Showsec in 1991 and became a director in 2007.<sup>128</sup> One of his roles as director was as line manager for Showsec's health and safety department.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> [31/155/11-22](#)

<sup>128</sup> [39/2/18-3/5](#)

<sup>129</sup> [39/3/6-8](#)

- 2.47** Thomas Bailey joined Showsec in 2005. He was a supervisor before becoming operations executive in 2011. From 2012, he was one of two heads of security Showsec provided to the Arena. In addition to this role, from 2015, he was the senior contracts manager for the Arena and was area manager for the part of the country which included the Arena.<sup>130</sup>
- 2.48** Thomas Rigby, who was on duty as Showsec head of security on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, joined Showsec in 2007. He started acting as head of security for the Arena from 2015 and was very experienced at undertaking this role.<sup>131</sup>
- 2.49** Between them, these four people had responsibility for making the key decisions on behalf of Showsec in relation to the matters relevant to the Inquiry. All of them were appropriately qualified and experienced in the roles that they undertook.
- 2.50** Showsec has a casual workforce of approximately 4,000 people.
- 2.51** On the night of the Attack the following people from Showsec, from whom the Inquiry heard, held significant roles at the Arena.

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<sup>130</sup> [33/2/9-4/1](#)

<sup>131</sup> [34/111/23-112/15](#)

**2.52** David Middleton was the senior supervisor for the area which included the City Room. By the time of the Ariana Grande concert, he had 21 years' experience working for Showsec.<sup>132</sup> He had worked at the Arena very many times prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>133</sup> He held an SIA door supervisor's licence.<sup>134</sup>

**2.53** Daniel Perry and Jordan Beak each worked as 'access control' in the City Room on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>135</sup> Both held SIA door supervisor licences.<sup>136</sup> Daniel Perry had worked for Showsec since 2013.<sup>137</sup> Jordan Beak had worked for Showsec for approximately two years prior to the Attack.<sup>138</sup> I shall provide more detail in relation to SIA licences in Part 3.

**2.54** Mohammed Agha, who was 19 years old at the time of the Attack,<sup>139</sup> was allocated to the Grey Doors in the City Room.<sup>140</sup> This position required him to hold an SIA licence.<sup>141</sup> Mohammed Agha held an SIA door supervisor's licence and had worked for Showsec at the Arena approximately

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<sup>132</sup> 19/1/21-23

<sup>133</sup> 19/2/20-25

<sup>134</sup> 19/30/9-12

<sup>135</sup> 23/18/9-14

<sup>136</sup> 23/14/6-8

<sup>137</sup> 23/12/1-3

<sup>138</sup> 23/130/17-19

<sup>139</sup> 24/50/25-51/2

<sup>140</sup> 24/9/4-9

<sup>141</sup> 30/34/5-7

30 times prior to the Attack.<sup>142</sup> He had started working for Showsec exactly one year previously.<sup>143</sup> 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 was the first time Mohammed Agha had worked on the Grey Doors in the City Room.<sup>144</sup> It was also the first time that Mohammed Agha had worked for Showsec as the holder of an SIA door supervisor's licence.<sup>145</sup>

**2.55** Kyle Lawler and Robert Atkinson were deployed to the footbridge which gave access to the City Room from the station concourse. Kyle Lawler was 18 years of age.<sup>146</sup> He had joined Showsec when he left school two years previously.<sup>147</sup> His position required him to hold an SIA licence, which he did. Robert Atkinson held the position of steward, which did not require an SIA door supervisor's licence. Robert Atkinson had worked for Showsec for six months.<sup>148</sup>

**2.56** I will address the issue of the training relevant Showsec personnel had received in Part 6.

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<sup>142</sup> [24/3/23-24](#)

<sup>143</sup> [24/5/6-8](#)

<sup>144</sup> [24/9/4-9](#)

<sup>145</sup> [24/3/25-4/2](#)

<sup>146</sup> [25/7/5-7](#)

<sup>147</sup> [25/7/25-8/3](#)

<sup>148</sup> [23/8/9-14](#)

## Agreement with SMG

**2.57** Showsec provides crowd management and stewarding services to events at SMG venues.<sup>149</sup> It has worked with SMG since 1995.<sup>150</sup> From 2012, the relationship was governed by a stewarding services agreement between Showsec and SMG Europe Holdings.<sup>151</sup> This agreement was not specific to the Arena, but covered all venues operated by SMG to which Showsec provided staff.<sup>152</sup> In May 2017, Showsec provided staff to eight SMG venues in the UK, of which the Arena was one.<sup>153</sup>

**2.58** Mark Harding was unaware that SMG Europe Holdings had obligations for security beyond events through the facilities management agreement.<sup>154</sup> He stated that Showsec's role was to provide security and crowd management at events.<sup>155</sup>

**2.59** The stewarding services agreement does not expressly mention counter-terrorism at any point. However, it was accepted on Showsec's behalf that it did have a counter-terrorism role to play at events as part of its crowd management

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<sup>149</sup> [INQ035495/6 at paragraph 4.1](#)

<sup>150</sup> [31/157/16-20](#)

<sup>151</sup> [INQ012126](#)

<sup>152</sup> [30/16/9-12](#)

<sup>153</sup> [31/157/20-25](#)

<sup>154</sup> [31/160/22-161/2](#)

<sup>155</sup> [31/161/18-21](#)

and security role. This included the Ariana Grande concert. I will deal with this in more detail below.<sup>156</sup>

**2.60** While counter-terrorism services were not specified in the contract, Showsec did hold itself out as having expertise in counter-terrorism when it came to its own activity. The extent to which SMG was entitled to rely upon Showsec when it came to counter-terrorism was a contentious issue between the two organisations in the course of the Inquiry. I will return to this in Part 5 when considering the issue of specialist counter-terrorism input.

## **Responsibility for people in the City Room**

**2.61** During events, Showsec had a permanent presence of staff in the City Room. It was necessary and appropriate for it to do so. Thomas Bailey's evidence was that in delivering the stewarding services agreement between Showsec and SMG, part of delivering the security aspect of that agreement included counter-terrorism.<sup>157</sup> He also accepted that Showsec had a responsibility to keep

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<sup>156</sup> [INQ035495/2 at paragraph 1.12-1.13](#)

<sup>157</sup> [33/90/2-14](#)

event-goers in the City Room safe from terrorists.<sup>158</sup> He was correct to say both these things.

**2.62** In its written opening statement Showsec stated: *“Showsec accepts that as part of its duties in providing “Stewarding and Event Services” it was required to identify the risks associated with terrorism, plan to mitigate those risks and implement that plan.”*<sup>159</sup>

**2.63** As an employer, Showsec had obligations under section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. These were in the form of a duty to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, the health and safety of non-employees who may be affected by its activity. This obligation undoubtedly included event-goers, as Showsec accepted.<sup>160</sup>

**2.64** In my view, taking together Showsec’s responsibilities under the contract and its duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Showsec had a duty to take such steps as were reasonably practicable to keep event-goers safe from terrorist attack.

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<sup>158</sup> [33/93/1-9](#)

<sup>159</sup> [INQ035495/6](#) at paragraph 4.7. See also [INQ039377/10](#) at paragraph 25; [INQ035495/2](#) at paragraph 1.12-1.13

<sup>160</sup> [INQ035495/2](#) and /8 at paragraphs 1.12 and 4.20; [INQ039377/10](#) at paragraph 26

- 2.65** Unlike SMG, Showsec had not assumed a contractual responsibility for keeping everyone in the City Room safe. However, the distinction between event-goers, those who were in the City Room to meet event-goers and people who were waiting or passing through is academic. The practical effect of keeping event-goers safe would have been to keep everyone in the City Room safe.
- 2.66** In describing the distinction as academic, I am making no comment on whether or not Showsec had a legal obligation to people in the City Room beyond event-goers. Whether the same duties extended to people in the City Room who were not attending an event is not something that I need to decide.

## **SMG and Showsec: commercial pressures**

- 2.67** In the course of their questioning, representatives of the bereaved families asked questions about whether and if so, to what extent, SMG and Showsec had deliberately risked the safety of audiences in order to save money.
- 2.68** It is implicit in the findings that I have made that both SMG and Showsec failed to take steps to improve security at the Arena that they should have taken. That does not mean that they deliberately risked the safety of event-goers. Further, not taking those steps did save the companies money but again that does not mean that they knowingly risked the safety of event-goers to increase their profits.
- 2.69** It was inevitable that SMG and Showsec would look to save money when they could, both to increase profits and to ensure that they remained competitive. There are very few private and public organisations who do not do this. This did lead to reviews of staffing levels which management undoubtedly hoped would lead to savings. After those reviews, when warned by Miriam Stone that cutting staff would lead to a reduction in security, no reductions were

made. While there is a sensible argument that not only were no reductions appropriate but that an increase should follow the change in terrorist threat, I do not think, looking at the evidence as a whole, that a finding that safety was deliberately compromised to save money is justified, even on the balance of probability.

**2.70** The justified criticism on the evidence I heard is that SMG and Showsec did not take a number of necessary steps, some of which would have involved the spending of additional money, in order to provide a sufficient level of protection against the terrorist threat.



# Part 3

## Statutory context

### Key findings

- The health and safety regime imposed duties on both SMG and Showsec which were relevant to the safety of event-goers.
- The licencing process in Manchester did not consider the risk of a terrorist attack in deciding whether to grant a new licence or what conditions to attach.
- Police officers and staff who consider licensing applications did not consult with expert counter-terrorism police officers, such as CTSAs, before deciding whether to make representations to the local authority on whether to grant a licence and what conditions to attach.
- Manchester City Council's licensing enforcement regime failed to identify possible breaches of SMG's entertainment licence. One of those possible breaches may have contributed to the failure to prevent the Attack.
- The SIA's enforcement regime was insufficiently robust to identify a long-standing practice at the Arena in relation to Showsec's use of unlicensed stewards to search bags.

- The Security Industry Authority's investigation into a potential breach of the licensing regime in relation to the use of unlicensed Showsec staff to monitor CCTV at the Arena did not identify that SMG was using staff to monitor CCTV who required a licence but did not hold one.

## Introduction

- 3.1** In this Part, I will consider the three statutory regimes which were particularly relevant to the matters I am investigating. They are the health and safety regime, the licensing regime and the Security Industry Authority regime. Each are regulated by primary legislation.
- 3.2** My review is not intended in any way to be exhaustive, it is confined to aspects of those regimes most obviously important to the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

## The health & safety regime

- 3.3** Central to the health and safety regime is the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (the '1974 Act'). Underpinning and complementing it are a number of Statutory Instruments which identify further duties and address specific areas of activity in relation to which risk arises.
- 3.4** Core duties for employers appear in sections 2 and 3 of the 1974 Act. Section 2 concerns the employer's duty to its employees. Section 3 concerns the employer's duty towards non-employees who may be affected by its undertaking. 'Undertaking' is the word used in the statute. Elsewhere in my Report I have used the word 'activities' to make the meaning clearer. Under s.33(1)(a), it is an offence to fail to discharge the duties in sections 2 and 3. SMG and Showsec were both employers and so were under these duties, which were relevant to the safety of event-goers.
- 3.5** By reason of s.33(1)(c) of the 1974 Act, it is an offence to contravene regulations within the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 3.6** Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires an employer to conduct a suitable and sufficient

assessment of the risks to health and safety both in relation to employees and in relation to non-employees arising out of, or in connection with, the conduct of its undertaking. Any employer who employs five or more people must record “*the significant findings of the assessment*”. I shall address the issue of SMG and Showsec’s risk assessment in Part 6.

**3.7** Regulation 11 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 makes provision for workplaces shared by more than one employer, as was the case with SMG and Showsec at the Victoria Exchange Complex. Where two or more employers share a workplace, each employer is required to: co-operate with other employers in relation to health and safety duties; coordinate with other employers in relation to health and safety duties; and inform other employers of the risk to their employees’ health and safety arising out of its activity. The requirement is to take all reasonable steps. The connected concepts of co-operation, coordination and communication as between SMG and Showsec will be addressed in greater detail in Part 6.

# The licensing regime

## Licensing Act 2003 framework

- 3.8** As set out in Part 2, SMG (UK) was the holder of a premises licence for the Arena granted by Manchester City Council on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2005, which contained a large number of conditions.<sup>161</sup> Under the Licensing Act 2003 (the ‘2003 Act’), once a licence is granted it remains in existence unless and until it is revoked following a review or it is surrendered.<sup>162</sup> Breaches of conditions are intended to be treated seriously. A breach is a criminal offence and can lead to a prosecution and a review of the licence.<sup>163</sup>
- 3.9** The power to grant and review a licence and impose conditions on a licence is vested in the licensing committee of the Council made up of elected representatives.<sup>164</sup> Under section 4 of the 2003 Act, a licensing authority must carry out its functions with a view to promoting the licensing objectives. These include public safety and the prevention of crime and disorder.<sup>165</sup> Section 182 of the 2003 Act requires the Home Secretary to issue guidance to licensing authorities on

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<sup>161</sup> [INQ035447/1-2](#), [INQ035447/3-5](#), [INQ035447/4-6](#), [INQ035447/8-10](#), [INQ035447/14](#)

<sup>162</sup> [16/79/20-80/15](#)

<sup>163</sup> [16/100/19-22](#), [38/48/8-22](#)

<sup>164</sup> [16/57/20-58/20](#)

<sup>165</sup> [16/59/19-60/1](#)

the discharge of their functions under the Act. Section 5 of the 2003 Act requires each licensing authority to determine and publish its policy with respect to the exercise of its licensing functions.

**3.10** Considering the risks of a terrorist attack and requiring steps to be taken to mitigate it come within the licensing objectives. Therefore they are capable of being, and arguably should be, part of the consideration whether to grant a premises licence and, if granted, what conditions to attach to ensure the terrorist risk is kept to a minimum.<sup>166</sup>

**3.11** That did not arise in the case of the Arena as the licences were first granted a significant period of time ago, under different legislation which was in force before the introduction of the 2003 Act.<sup>167</sup> Prior to the 2003 Act, control of liquor licences was given to the local Magistrates, while public entertainment licences were the responsibility of the local authority. There was an automatic right, when the new Act was introduced, to convert those licences to the new premises licences. The existing conditions were simply carried over.<sup>168</sup>

**3.12** As a result of requests for information made by the Inquiry, it has become apparent that, until now, consideration of the risk of a terrorist attack

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<sup>166</sup> [38/14/11-15/17](#)

<sup>167</sup> [16/101/11-18](#)

<sup>168</sup> [16/84/6-86/6, 38/7/2-8/22](#)

and requiring steps to be taken to mitigate that risk has not been part of the investigations made by local authorities before deciding whether to grant a licence and what conditions to attach. This may be starting to change following the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, but it is something which would be difficult for local authorities to achieve on their own. Licensing authorities with the assistance of the police have always been concerned to try and ensure that an additional licence would not cause public nuisance or excessive drunkenness on the streets. Consideration has also been given to the risk of the sale of drugs on licensed premises but there has been little, if any, consideration of the attraction that large, popular licensed premises such as the Arena would present to a terrorist.<sup>169</sup>

**3.13** If there are no representations received by a local authority, then they must grant the licence.<sup>170</sup> While a local authority can make their own representations, they do not have the expertise to consider in detail counter-terrorism measures.<sup>171</sup> Representations can be made by the police but, to date, it does not seem that the police officers or staff who consider licensing applications consult with expert counter-terrorism

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<sup>169</sup> [38/8/4-10/9](#)

<sup>170</sup> [38/13/18-14/10](#)

<sup>171</sup> [38/57/7-58/10](#)

police officers, such as Counter Terrorism Security Advisors, before deciding whether to make representations.<sup>172</sup> This is surprising as licensed premises have long been recognised as an attractive target for terrorist attacks.

## Licensing enforcement

**3.14** When the new Licensing Act was put before Parliament, the intention was said to be that it would be light touch regulation so far as the granting of licences was concerned, but there would be strict enforcement for those who breached the conditions of their licence.<sup>173</sup> From the evidence I have heard about what happens in Manchester, I doubt that strict enforcement of breaches of conditions takes place in practice.

**3.15** Manchester is meant to have 42 licensing enforcement officers, but they are never up to strength and, at the time of the hearings, they were eight short. Of those 42, there should be 21 in a city centre team and 21 in a city-wide team.<sup>174</sup> Even if they were to have a full contingent, this does not allow them sufficient resources to do unannounced checks. They have to rely on intelligence they receive and

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<sup>172</sup> [38/8/18-9/3](#)

<sup>173</sup> [38/51/10-18](#)

<sup>174</sup> [38/42/21-43/7](#), [38/46/5-13](#)

liaison with a police licensing team, which is also small, to try and ascertain if there are breaches of conditions and take action.<sup>175</sup>

**3.16** The evidence given at the Inquiry was to the effect that the licensing process in Manchester did not consider the risk of a terrorist attack in deciding whether to grant a new licence or what conditions to attach. It was also not considered as part of the compliance process. This is not surprising in light of the fact that government guidance published under section 182 of the 2003 Act is silent about the terrorist threat.<sup>176</sup>

**3.17** That said, Manchester City Council in its own policy statement dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016, has two paragraphs entitled ‘Working to prevent the threat of terrorism’.<sup>177</sup> They read as follows:

“2.23      *Terror attacks have previously been targeted at bars, pubs and nightclubs in the UK. All premises are expected to have regard to the NaCTSO publication ‘Counter Terrorism Protective Security Advice for Bars Pubs and Nightclubs’.*

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<sup>175</sup> [38/45/15-46/4](#), [38/46/14-48/7](#)

<sup>176</sup> [38/76/16-77/11](#)

<sup>177</sup> [INQ038589/13](#)

*2.24 Licensed premises in the city centre are expected to be prepared in accordance with the City Centre Emergency Evacuation Plan.”*

**3.18** The NaCTSO publication referred to is extremely useful; but those two paragraphs do not indicate that there will be a careful consideration of the terrorist threat by a licensing committee when carrying out its functions.

**3.19** While the Inquiry has not heard directly from other local authorities, the information we have received suggests that Manchester is not unusual in ignoring issues of terrorism when carrying out its licensing functions. As a response to the Attack, there are signs that this is changing, and some local authorities are considering whether and in what way they should take the terrorist threat into account.<sup>178</sup> Manchester City Council has adopted a new policy and is intending to incorporate some of the requirements of Martyn’s Law into its new policy which will govern how it will make decisions in the future.<sup>179</sup> I will consider Martyn’s Law in greater detail when I set out my recommendations in Part 8.

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<sup>178</sup> [38/32/21-33/19](#)

<sup>179</sup> [INQ032601/11-12](#), [38/18/3-21/21](#)

## Monitoring of compliance with licensing conditions at the Arena

- 3.20** There were conditions on the Arena licence which were designed to protect the safety of the public. The evidence suggested that a number of them may have been ignored. It is not my role to reach conclusions as to whether there were licence breaches unless relevant to the Inquiry's terms of reference. I have identified two breaches below which are relevant, the second of which may have contributed to the failure to prevent the Attack.
- 3.21** First, it was accepted that the statutory condition that required stewards at the Arena carrying out searching to have SIA qualifications<sup>180</sup> had been ignored for many years, if it had ever been complied with.<sup>181</sup> This was an important measure brought in by the government because of concern about the way in which some door supervisors in the licensed trade carried out their work.<sup>182</sup>
- 3.22** While the breach of that condition did not play any part in the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, it does indicate a failure by SMG to have adequate regard to an important condition on the licence.

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<sup>180</sup> [INQ035447/2](#)

<sup>181</sup> [38/2/9-5/9](#)

<sup>182</sup> [26/6/14-7/11](#)

There was also an absence of any knowledge of this breach by the licensing enforcement team, despite the fact that it had gone on for many years. I will return to this issue of SIA licences shortly.

**3.23** Second, condition 86 of the premises licence provides that the minimum number of stewards as agreed by the local authority shall be provided to perform the functions and duties specified.<sup>183</sup> The purpose of this condition is to ensure there are sufficient stewards and security staff to manage the crowd and monitor the area for threats. I was concerned to be told that an agreed minimum number could not be found. There was no evidence that there had ever been an agreed number.<sup>184</sup>

**3.24** The Security Experts were of the view that the number of security staff on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 was “*sub-optimal*”.<sup>185</sup> Had a minimum number been agreed between SMG and the local authority, it may have been higher and the staffing levels would have been closer to the optimum number and more effective in identifying SA as suspicious.

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<sup>183</sup> [INQ035447/8](#)

<sup>184</sup> [28/153/25-155/2, 38/6/3-8/3](#)

<sup>185</sup> [42/110/20-112/20](#)

# The Security Industry Authority regime

## Background to the SIA and its functions

- 3.25** The Security Industry Authority was set up by the Private Security Industry Act 2001 (the ‘2001 Act’) which came into force in 2003.<sup>186</sup> There had been concerns at the way people employed in security carried out their duties in locations such as licensed premises. As a result of that legislation, security operatives were required to obtain a license before they could carry out certain security functions.<sup>187</sup>
- 3.26** Different licences are required depending on the function which the operative is employed to carry out. In order to obtain a licence, a fee has to be paid, the applicant has to be over 18 and has to pass a qualifying examination, a criminal records check must be completed and the applicant must have the right to work in the UK.<sup>188</sup> The fee, at the time of the hearing, for a door supervisor licence was £190.<sup>189</sup> The necessary qualifications are granted not by the SIA itself but by a number of government-approved awarding organisations who are subject to supervision

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<sup>186</sup> [26/5/11-6/4](#)

<sup>187</sup> [26/6/15-7/11](#)

<sup>188</sup> [INQ031233/7](#), [26/24/8-25/21](#)

<sup>189</sup> [26/8/18-19](#)

by Ofqual. Training providers are approved by the awarding organisations and the awarding organisations are responsible for quality controlling providers.<sup>190</sup> Most of the training for the qualification is intended to be in person with a small part of it being online training.<sup>191</sup>

**3.27** The Inquiry heard criticisms from two witnesses about the quality of the training they had received. In one case, none of the training was in person.<sup>192</sup> In another, the candidates were told the answers to the exam questions by the training provider.<sup>193</sup> I was not in a position to investigate how justified those complaints were, but the SIA are now aware of them and I would expect them to investigate whether they are accurate. Making sure that the training is done properly and professionally is obviously important. The SIA should make sure that there are regular and unannounced checks carried out on training providers. I heard evidence that the awarding organisations do this already,<sup>194</sup> but it would also be worthwhile for the SIA or Ofqual to consider carrying out spot checks

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<sup>190</sup> [26/83/12-86/7](#)

<sup>191</sup> [26/87/15-88/22](#)

<sup>192</sup> [26/101/7-102/2](#)

<sup>193</sup> [26/103/15-104/11](#)

<sup>194</sup> [26/106/2-108/1](#)

with SIA-licensed individuals who have received the training to get a better idea of what actually happens.

**3.28** The content of the training has changed since 2017 and now includes a greater proportion and better quality of counter-terrorism training.<sup>195</sup>

The SIA has said that if a Protect Duty becomes law, and includes mandatory ‘Action Counters Terrorism’ (ACT) training, that it would include that as part of its course work.<sup>196</sup> I will consider the Protect Duty when I come to consider my recommendations. The SIA expects employers to carry on with in-house training after the initial qualification has been achieved. At the moment, whether employers provide follow-up training is voluntary.<sup>197</sup> Where it is provided, it is often online. Whether employees actually carry out online training depends on their willingness to do so. It is obviously important that checks are carried out to ensure that the online training is carried out and that information is absorbed and understood.

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<sup>195</sup> [31/218/1-226/22](#); [33/102/13-106/11](#)

<sup>196</sup> [26/139/2-25](#)

<sup>197</sup> [26/94/11-95/13](#)

## Relevance of SIA licensing to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

- 3.29** The two areas of activity where an SIA licence was required which were relevant to this Inquiry are door supervisors and CCTV operators. There is little incentive for contractors to ensure that licences are obtained. To obtain a licence the applicant needs to be 18. The security business employs large numbers of people under that age who are cheaper to employ. Providing more SIA licensed door supervisors is an expense which may be passed onto the hirer.
- 3.30** It was accepted in the hearing that Showsec used unlicensed staff to do bag checks. This is activity which is part of a door supervisor role and requires a licence.<sup>198</sup> Showsec knew such staff should be licensed. The issue was drawn to Showsec's attention in 2013 by its head of training and confirmed by the SIA.<sup>199</sup> Despite this, the use of unlicensed staff to check bags was continuing at the date of the Attack.<sup>200</sup>
- 3.31** This demonstrates the lack of effective enforcement measures to ensure that the requirements of the 2001 Act are carried out, despite the fact that breaches of the 2001 Act

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<sup>198</sup> [57/73/19-74/6](#); [INQ039377/16](#) at paragraph 42

<sup>199</sup> [INQ035987/45-46](#), [INQ035987/48-49](#)

<sup>200</sup> [31/218/1-226/22](#); [33/102/13-106/11](#)

are criminal offences which carry maximum sentences of imprisonment. There are only 50 enforcement officers employed by the SIA covering the whole of the country and a single officer in Manchester, where there are approximately 18,000 SIA licence holders.<sup>201</sup> While there is some proactive intervention from enforcement officers, in reality, the SIA have to rely on information from partners, such as police officers, along with complaints from the public, to inform them of potential breaches.<sup>202</sup>

**3.32** The other area requiring a licence the Inquiry heard evidence about was CCTV operators. An individual operating CCTV equipment requires a licence, if that person proactively monitors the activities of members of the public, whether they are in public areas or on private property. This is required if the individual is working for a contractor who is working under a contract for services. As set out in Part 2, I am satisfied that it was likely this was the status of at least one of SMG's employees who operated the CCTV on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>203</sup>

**3.33** In November 2015, a complaint was made to the SIA that the CCTV at the Arena was being operated by unlicensed operators. The

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<sup>201</sup> [26/28/24-29/21](#), [26/10/4-11](#)

<sup>202</sup> [26/26/24-27/21](#)

<sup>203</sup> [26/92/21-94/10](#), [INQ029576/17](#)

complaint was in relation to Showsec operating the CCTV.<sup>204</sup> As the evidence revealed, Showsec did provide employees to work in Whisky Control.<sup>205</sup> On occasions, those staff monitored the CCTV;<sup>206</sup> although whether this was before or after the complaint, I am not able to say.

**3.34** The complaint was dismissed on the basis that the CCTV operators were “*in-house*”.<sup>207</sup> This conclusion was reached on the SIA’s understanding that the CCTV was operated only by SMG employees.<sup>208</sup>

**3.35** It would be of benefit to all CCTV operators to undertake the SIA licence training or something similar. The SIA CCTV operator’s licence training includes content designed to assist identification of a person who may be carrying an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) by reference to the circumstances that should arouse suspicion, such as suspicious behaviour or clothing.<sup>209</sup>

**3.36** The evidence that I heard suggests that it was not just Showsec employees who required a licence to operate the CCTV. SMG employees were operating the CCTV pursuant to a

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<sup>204</sup> [26/33/13-17](#)

<sup>205</sup> [33/49/24-50/12](#), [31/161/22-162/1](#), [32/90/13-92/3](#)

<sup>206</sup> [27/39/24-40/13](#)

<sup>207</sup> [26/33/13-34/15](#)

<sup>208</sup> [26/34/20-22](#)

<sup>209</sup> [26/93/4-10](#), [INQ029576/17](#)

contract to provide security for the building, the facilities management agreement. That is a contract for services, and it was mandatory for those employees to have licences. If that is correct, then it may be that the SIA got it wrong when they concluded that no offence had been committed. I do not know what the SIA were told by SMG when they investigated the matter and, in particular, whether they were told of the existence of the facilities management agreement.

**3.37** In any event, it does seem odd that there should be a distinction in the need for a licence depending on whether the operator is working under a contract for services or as a direct employee. The same skills are required and there would seem to be a good argument for saying that training is required when operating a CCTV camera focused on a public space, whatever the employment status of the person doing it.<sup>210</sup> I will deal with this further in my recommendations.

**3.38** The SIA also runs an Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS) which operates on a voluntary basis and has around 800 members.<sup>211</sup> Showsec are an approved contractor<sup>212</sup> and

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<sup>210</sup> [26/127/8-128/19](#)

<sup>211</sup> [26/13/7-10](#), [26/109/17-110/1](#)

<sup>212</sup> [26/51/13-14](#)

have played a prominent part in setting up the scheme. That makes it even more regrettable that, for a period of years, it has been allowing its unlicensed staff to carry out bag checks, even when Showsec knew they ought to have licences. The ACS appears to be principally self-certifying, but assessors do appraise the conduct of the contractors concerned.<sup>213</sup> If the ACS is continued or expanded, it is important that the ACS brings with it a quality assurance on which the public can rely.

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<sup>213</sup> 26/110/5-112/3, INQ031222/4-5, 26/115/4-117/25

# Part 4

## The Counter Terrorism Security Advisor system

### Key findings

- The voluntary nature of the CTSA system and the lack of any specific duty to identify and mitigate the risk of terrorism means that system is inadequate to provide a proper level of protection to the public.
- The CTSA did not consider and advise on what security was required to protect against an attack by a person-borne IED in the City Room, particularly during egress or ingress. There was nothing about that issue on the Protective Security Improvement Activity form to bring that particular area at those particular times into focus.
- The way the CTSA spoke to SMG about the Protective Security Improvement Activity scores could have led to a false level of reassurance being provided to SMG.
- BTP and GMP CTAs should have co-operated and had regular communication in relation to their respective processes within the Victoria Exchange Complex.

- The CTSA culture at the time meant that organisations in Showsec's position were not invited to participate in the CTSA process. Security at the Arena would have benefitted from Showsec's involvement in that process.

# Counter Terrorism Security Advisors

- 4.1** CTAs are part of the government’s policy for combatting terrorism which is overseen by the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism (OSCT).<sup>214</sup> The policy is known as CONTEST.<sup>215</sup> There are four strands to CONTEST: Protect, Prepare, Pursue and Prevent.<sup>216</sup> CTAs are concerned with the Protect and Prepare strands and are accredited by and work with the National Counter Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO) which is part of Counter Terrorism Policing. NaCTSO inform and oversee the work of Protect and Prepare.<sup>217</sup>
- 4.2** The relationship between OSCT, NaCTSO and other parts of the national framework for countering terrorism is set out below in Figure 10.

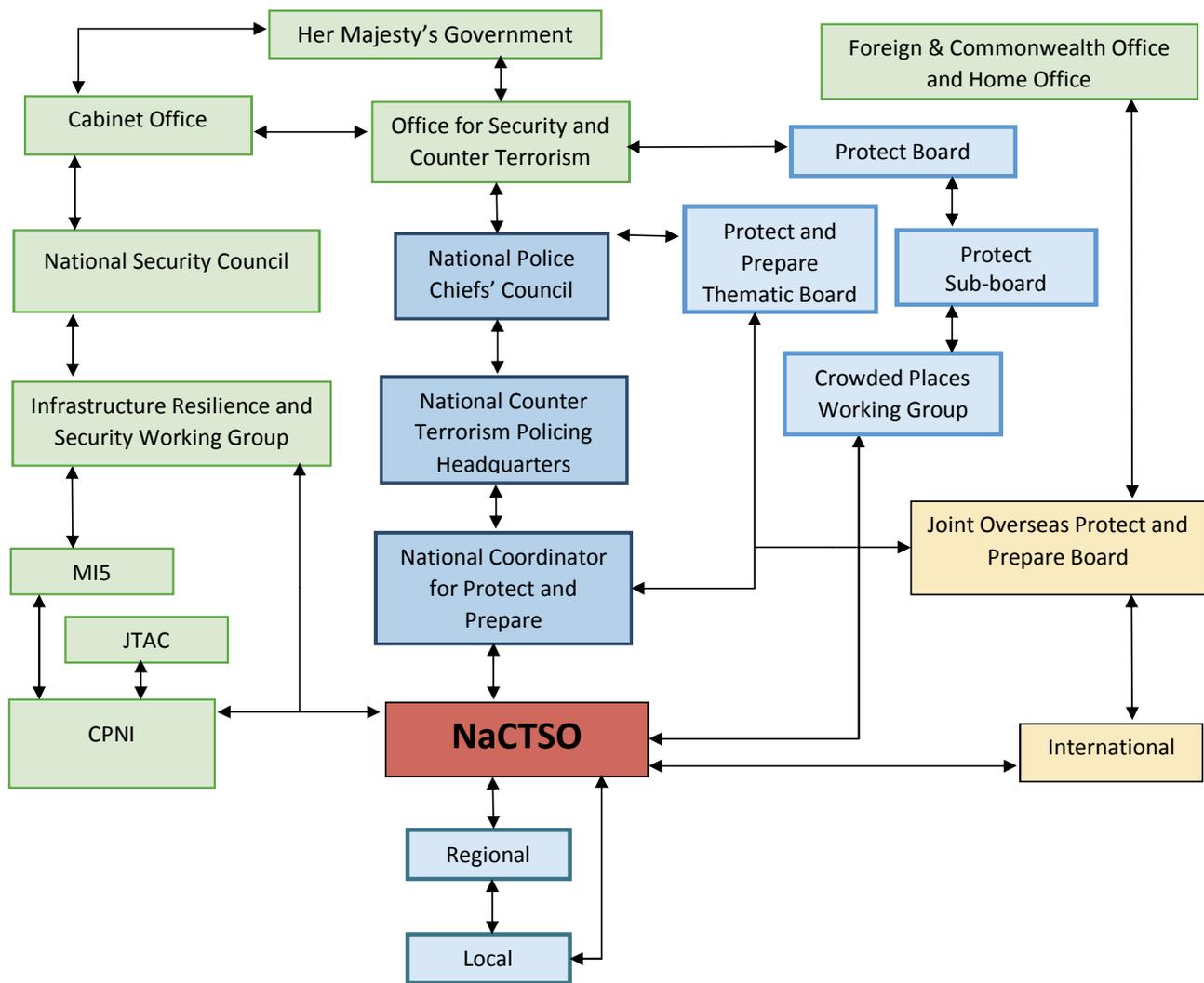
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<sup>214</sup> [35/11/15-21](#), [35/156/18-20](#)

<sup>215</sup> [35/4/2-6](#)

<sup>216</sup> [35/4/11-14](#)

<sup>217</sup> [35/158/9-16](#), [35/165/19-21](#)



**Figure 10:** The relationship between OSCT, NaCTSO and other parts of the national framework for countering terrorism<sup>218</sup>

**4.3** NaCTSO is concerned, amongst other things, with providing advice and guidance around protective security for “crowded places”.<sup>219</sup>

**4.4** In providing that advice and guidance, NaCTSO supplies videos, written documents and sets up exercises which are provided to the private

<sup>218</sup> Extract from INQ025466/25

<sup>219</sup> 35/160/15-20

sector and to the public by CTAs.<sup>220</sup> CTAs also provide advice and guidance to some individual sites in relation to what steps can be taken to reduce their vulnerability and prepare for potential terrorist attacks.<sup>221</sup> There were insufficient CTAs to provide that advice to all crowded places on an individual basis.<sup>222</sup> The process to qualify as a CTA takes approximately two years.<sup>223</sup> CTAs are the most highly trained counter-terrorism advisors in the country.<sup>224</sup> I accept that those who dealt with the Arena were highly trained and highly skilled.<sup>225</sup>

**4.5** The basis on which sites were selected to receive advice has altered over the years. From about 2008, sites were selected on the basis of their vulnerability. In 2014 that changed, and sites were selected on the basis of their attractiveness to terrorists.<sup>226</sup>

**4.6** Under the new attractiveness scheme, there are three tiers. The Arena was graded Tier 2(b): the “2” indicates that the Arena, *“whilst not of national or international prominence, nevertheless has a profile above local or have*

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<sup>220</sup> 35/160-23-161/11, 35/161/19-162/3, 35/165/22-25, 38/91/21-24

<sup>221</sup> INQ029098

<sup>222</sup> 35/166/24-167/23

<sup>223</sup> 35/178/13-21, INQ029098/1, 38/92/11-93/12

<sup>224</sup> 40/63/22-64/2

<sup>225</sup> 42/203/4-10

<sup>226</sup> 35/167/24-168/20, 40/10/6-17, INQ029098/3, 38/93/13-95/1

*a significant attendance by notable users (albeit infrequent, irregular or unpredictable)”<sup>227</sup>;* the “(b)” indicates that at the time of designation the Arena had “*a more developed security stance.*”<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>227</sup> 38/95/18-21, INQ029098/4

<sup>228</sup> 38/96/2-4

## The voluntary nature of the CTSA scheme

- 4.7** In 2017 there was no statutory duty which referred specifically to the requirement to assess the risk of terrorism or put in place measures to mitigate that risk. That remains the case today, although the government is currently consulting on the introduction of a statutory Protect Duty. The network of CTSA's offer their advice to venue owners and operators. It is a voluntary system and there is no mechanism to compel engagement, nor to enforce the implementation of a CTSA's recommendations.
- 4.8** There is a large volume of guidance available through the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) and NaCTSO outlining the terrorism threat and possible mitigating measures which can be taken. I formed the clear view that the quality of this guidance was adequate in May 2017 and it has continued to be improved and updated since. There was some criticism that before May 2017 there was insufficient focus on grey spaces or the risk of attack at egress.<sup>229</sup> Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) Lucy D'Orsi of Counter Terrorism Policing accepted that the 2017 Attack

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<sup>229</sup> [41/187/4-189/7](#)

marked a “*watershed moment*” which led to a greater emphasis on those issues. GMP’s Principal CTSA, Elizabeth Forster, agreed.<sup>230</sup>

- 4.9** The unanimous view of all those who expressed a view to this Inquiry, was that the voluntary nature of the CTSA system and the lack of any specific legal duty to identify and mitigate the risk of terrorism has posed problems. I agree.
- 4.10** Figen Murray told me of her efforts to campaign for a change in the law: to introduce freely available counter-terrorism training; a requirement for vulnerability assessments of venues and public spaces; and a duty to have a counter-terrorism action plan and to take measures to mitigate any risks identified.<sup>231</sup>
- 4.11** Shaun Hipgrave, Director of Protect and Prepare within OSCT, agreed that the difficulty with a voluntary scheme is that there is a range of take-up and enthusiasm from private concerns.<sup>232</sup> He described the work that is currently being done by OSCT to change the legislative framework to impose a Protect Duty upon those who ought to be responsible for the safety of the public when they are in

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<sup>230</sup> [35/153/21-154/9, 38/189/18-190/10](#)

<sup>231</sup> [32/192/3-197/7](#)

<sup>232</sup> [35/114/8-115/12](#)

a publicly accessible location and to provide further information or training to help them fulfil that duty.<sup>233</sup>

**4.12** DAC D’Orsi said, “*I think there’s always a gap in a system that’s discretionary. The way forward is new legislation and I have always been an advocate of a [Protect] duty.*”<sup>234</sup>

**4.13** The Security Experts thought the voluntary nature of the CTSA scheme was inadequate to address the threat of terrorism. They support the introduction of a mandatory Protect Duty.<sup>235</sup> They commented that some form of inspection and enforcement regime would be necessary to make the duty effective and that the number of CTSA’s would need to be increased or others with suitable expertise who are accredited by reputable organisations used to advise venues.<sup>236</sup>

**4.14** So far as SMG is concerned, it is clear that SMG did understand its responsibility for security in the City Room and did engage with their CTSA. It follows that the fact that the system was voluntary made no difference to what happened on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. Nevertheless, the Attack at the Arena has given rise to a constructive debate

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<sup>233</sup> [35/51/3-58/7](#)

<sup>234</sup> [40/3/1-7](#)

<sup>235</sup> [41/119/18-25](#)

<sup>236</sup> [41/122/6-124/1](#), [41/133/7-135/12](#)

about how the legislative framework can be improved. I make recommendations as to what the key elements of a Protect Duty should be in Part 8.

**4.15** Before I address the particular issues around the CTSA system as it operated at the Arena, I make clear that it is my view that a voluntary system is inadequate to provide a proper level of protection to the public.

## CTSAs and the Arena

- 4.16** The Arena had been given advice by CTSAs, employed by GMP, for a number of years before the bombing. At the time of the bombing, the CTSA advising SMG in relation to the Arena was Ken Upham. I consider below whether specific advice should have been provided to the Arena by Ken Upham as to the risks to customers of an attack at egress into the City Room from the Arena. I also consider the related issue of the extent to which SMG was entitled to rely on any assurances provided by Ken Upham as to the level of protection already in place at the Arena.
- 4.17** Ken Upham was employed by GMP as a civilian CTSA. There are about 200 CTSAs working for regional police forces across the country. BTP employ a small number in addition.<sup>237</sup>
- 4.18** The contact between Ken Upham and SMG began in 2014.<sup>238</sup> It centred around a tool prepared by NaCTSO and used by CTSAs called the Protective Security Improvement Activity (PSIA).<sup>239</sup> This was an Excel document which was completed by the site and the CTSA.<sup>240</sup> It takes a site through six common

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<sup>237</sup> [41/123/12-17](#); [39/102/23-25](#)

<sup>238</sup> [INQ034423/2](#)

<sup>239</sup> [INQ029098/3](#), [38/103/24-104/2](#)

<sup>240</sup> [38/131/1-8](#)

attack methodologies which included both vehicle-borne IEDs and a PBIED and awarded a score depending on protective security measures which were in place to protect the site against these attack methodologies.<sup>241</sup>

**4.19** Depending on the answers, points would be awarded which would be totalled to provide an overall score.<sup>242</sup> Relying on the scores, an 'Action Plan' would be devised which would provide the site with ways in which it could improve its scores.<sup>243</sup> The CTSA visited on a quarterly basis.<sup>244</sup> The PSIA would be completed every six months.

**4.20** There are a number of issues with this system. First and foremost, as I have already said, it is entirely voluntary.<sup>245</sup> The services of a CTSA are offered to a site but it is up to the site whether they engage with the CTSA's and, if they choose not to, there is no express obligation on them to get similar advice elsewhere.<sup>246</sup> For those who do engage, there is no express obligation on them to carry out the recommendations suggested in the Action Plan.<sup>247</sup> One of the

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<sup>241</sup> [INQ029098/5, INQ034423/1](#)

<sup>242</sup> [38/104/25-105/3](#)

<sup>243</sup> [INQ029098/6, INQ034423/2, 38/105/6-19](#)

<sup>244</sup> [40/20/16-21/6](#)

<sup>245</sup> [35/34/2-8](#)

<sup>246</sup> [38/114/9-23](#)

<sup>247</sup> [38/115/12-18](#)

difficulties for CTSA's early on was that they were suggesting improvements which have been described as 'gold standard' which had a very low take up.<sup>248</sup> As a result, in 2014 it became policy to advise clients that if they did not want to adopt the gold standard solution then they should do something which was less expensive on the basis that "*something was better than nothing*".<sup>249</sup> DAC D'Orsi explained that the reason for this was a change in the nature of terrorist attacks which she said had become less sophisticated so that relatively straightforward and cheap measures could be adopted which would improve security.<sup>250</sup> It may be that with the benefit of hindsight "*something was better than nothing*" was an unfortunate choice of phrase.<sup>251</sup> Whatever one's view of this, it had nothing to do with the events at the Arena on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

**4.21** SMG did engage with the CTSA scheme and did make improvements in accordance with the Action Plan. It was unfortunate that SMG was not provided with a copy of any of the PSIA's or the Action Plans, except the first ones.<sup>252</sup> SMG should have been supplied with copies

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<sup>248</sup> [38/98/19-99/21](#)

<sup>249</sup> [INQ029098/5](#)

<sup>250</sup> [40/7/19-9/15](#), [40/12/21-14/25](#), [40/178/4-25](#)

<sup>251</sup> [INQ039374/14](#), [42/210/23-212/6](#), [38/124/1-8](#)

<sup>252</sup> [INQ032598/7](#), [30/162/22-23](#)

of all of them.<sup>253</sup> What was also required was a clear understanding by SMG that the CTSA was not providing an audit of security.<sup>254</sup> It was not a CTSA's role to tell a venue that they had complied with their responsibilities and that their security procedures were satisfactory.

**4.22** Although Ken Upham did not give evidence because of ill health, the Inquiry received three statements from him.<sup>255</sup> I have had firmly in mind that I have not heard from Ken Upham from the witness box, but I have no alternative but to resolve any relevant factual dispute on the basis of the evidence before me. While I have taken fully into account his statements, there is always a risk that evidence given in person will have more impact. I have borne this in mind and have done my best to make allowance for it.

**4.23** Ken Upham made clear in those statements that he did not consider that it was part of his role to consider the security in the City Room as a whole. He concentrated his attention on the entry through the doors from the City Room into the Arena bowl itself. He also categorically denied having advised the Arena that it was doing all that it could or that he was happy with the security procedures in place at the Arena on

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<sup>253</sup> [41/151/16-152/7](#)

<sup>254</sup> [31/20/23-25](#)

<sup>255</sup> [INQ029098](#), [INQ032598](#), [INQ034423](#)

both event days and non-event days.<sup>256</sup> I accept Miriam Stone's evidence that Ken Upham did indicate to her that the PSIA figures were good and SMG should continue with what they were doing.<sup>257</sup> This was not an appropriate view to express. It could have given Miriam Stone a false level of reassurance. However, even in these circumstances, there were clear limits to any reassurance, as I shall go on to explain.

**4.24** Ken Upham was reliant on the information provided to him being correct.<sup>258</sup> He did not check it. It was not his job to do so<sup>259</sup> nor did SMG have any reason to think he had done so. So, for example, if he had asked whether the CCTV provided good coverage, which he might have done, he would very likely have been told by Miriam Stone that it did, as she was not aware of the Blind Spot.<sup>260</sup> Further, his focus was on the Arena rather than the areas outside, such as the City Room.<sup>261</sup>

**4.25** While an overall score might have been high, it did not mean that there were no significant improvements required in certain areas. In the case of CCTV, it was given a score of "3"

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<sup>256</sup> [INQ034423/8](#)

<sup>257</sup> [31/124/13-17](#)

<sup>258</sup> [INQ034423/5](#), [31/21/4-6](#)

<sup>259</sup> [INQ034423/5](#)

<sup>260</sup> [30/86/25-87/2](#), [31/21/7-9](#), [31/22/1-7](#)

<sup>261</sup> [38/108/21-109/11](#); [INQ034423/4](#)

out of 3<sup>262</sup> which suggests that all that could be done, had been done. Given the failings I have identified in SMG's approach to CCTV monitoring in Part 6, any indication that SMG's CCTV system had no room for improvement was misplaced, inappropriate and risked essential remedial steps being overlooked, as in fact they were.

**4.26** Some of the information on the PSIA form was incorrect, for example in relation to searching.<sup>263</sup> Ken Upham accepted this.<sup>264</sup> The form was completed on the basis that there was more searching than there was.<sup>265</sup> The most significant gap in the advice given by Ken Upham, which is relevant to the Attack, is that Ken Upham did not concern himself with advising what security measures were required to protect against an attack by a PBIED in the City Room, particularly during egress or ingress. This was when customers coming to or leaving an event would be there in considerable numbers, making it an attractive crowded space for an attack.<sup>266</sup> There

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<sup>262</sup> [38/137/12-15](#)

<sup>263</sup> [INQ032598/4-6](#), [INQ034423/7](#)

<sup>264</sup> [INQ029098/11](#), [INQ032598/2-6](#), [INQ034423/5-8](#)

<sup>265</sup> [38/140/19-141/7](#)

<sup>266</sup> [INQ029098/6](#), [INQ032598/8-9](#), [38/119/9-15](#)

was nothing about that on the PSIA form to bring that particular area at those particular times into focus.<sup>267</sup>

**4.27** Ken Upham considered the security measures in the City Room only in so far as you could enter the Arena from there.<sup>268</sup> He considered what protections were in place at the entrance to prevent a PBIED being taken into the Arena itself.<sup>269</sup> He did not consider what, if anything, could be done to prevent a PBIED being exploded in the City Room. Elizabeth Forster, Ken Upham's line manager, confirmed that the CTSA was concerned with safety in the Arena itself.<sup>270</sup> As such, Ken Upham's approach was consistent with what his line manager expected him to do. CTSA considered protections outside the Arena, such as against a vehicle-borne IED, from the perspective of preventing such threats getting into the Arena. The focus was on the safety of the public inside the Arena itself, not on what might happen to them outside.

**4.28** DAC D'Orsi says that it should have been obvious to everyone that the City Room could be a target for attack at times when it was

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<sup>267</sup> [INQ034423/3](#), [38/120/8-19](#), [INQ001541/4](#), [41/162/8-14](#)

<sup>268</sup> [38/105/25-106/22](#)

<sup>269</sup> [INQ032598/8-9](#)

<sup>270</sup> [38/109/5-11](#)

crowded.<sup>271</sup> It is therefore unfortunate that Ken Upham did not regard it as part of his brief to consider it. However, Miriam Stone knew that the PSIA scoring system was primarily aimed at protecting the public inside the Arena.<sup>272</sup>

**4.29** While the NaCTSO advice was adequate, it did not contain specific written advice dealing with risks at times of egress from events.<sup>273</sup> The NaCTSO Project Argus training, launched in Spring 2016, included a scenario dealing with the effects of an attack as people are leaving an event.<sup>274</sup> It was concerned with a how to deal with an attack if it happened rather than precautions to prevent an attack taking place. DAC D’Orsi took the view that it would be inappropriate to deal specifically in written advice with risks at times of egress as that might lead to less weight being attached to risks at other times.<sup>275</sup> While that may generally be true, it makes it more important for CTSA’s to consider particularly vulnerable points for each venue. Given the measures which existed to prevent a person gaining access to the Arena itself,

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<sup>271</sup> [40/25/19-26/17](#)

<sup>272</sup> [31/20/4-7](#)

<sup>273</sup> [40/27/18-24](#), [38/106/23-107/10](#), [INQ039374/10](#)

<sup>274</sup> [INQ035521/6](#)

<sup>275</sup> [40/28/1-29/20](#)

the most vulnerable time for the Arena was on egress. At this time there would be the largest numbers of people in the City Room.

- 4.30** The security of the City Room, because of its complexity, may have been beyond the expertise or experience of some CTSA's.<sup>276</sup> Ken Upham could have advised SMG to obtain assistance from external security experts. There was nothing to prevent him doing so, except for the practice of CTSA's not to do it.<sup>277</sup> Where this situation arises in the future, it would seem sensible for a CTSA to give advice that external security experts should be retained. I shall consider this further when I deal with recommendations associated with a Protect Duty in Part 8.
- 4.31** It would also have been of assistance if Ken Upham had monitored an event, to see how the security operation worked in practice. This would have enabled him to check the accuracy of the information contained on the PSIA form.<sup>278</sup> He would then have appreciated, for example, that the information relating to what searches were carried out on the form was inaccurate.

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<sup>276</sup> 41/137/10-17, 41/139/25-140/3

<sup>277</sup> 39/114/4-115/13

<sup>278</sup> 31/20/8-25, 41/158/8

**4.32** If he had attended an event, he might have become aware of the shortcomings in the CCTV coverage and the failure to carry out proper patrols. It was not the practice of CTSAAs to attend events at the time<sup>279</sup> and I make no criticism of Ken Upham for not having done so. There was a lack of capacity within the CTSA system for such visits to form part of their duties.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> 41/158/8-17, 41/160/6-15

<sup>280</sup> 41/123/8-11

## Involvement of BTP and Showsec in the CTSA process

- 4.33** There should have been co-operation between a BTP CTSA considering the security in the station, with the GMP CTSA considering security at the Arena.<sup>281</sup> The contrary was not suggested by anyone who gave evidence. There seems to be no reason why that did not happen, although the evidence I heard did not reveal who, if anyone, was at fault in this regard. As the two locations are part of the same complex, it would clearly make sense to consider the overall security at the Victoria Exchange Complex rather than making individual assessments of the station and the Arena.
- 4.34** Showsec's employees were not invited to meetings with the CTSA. Elizabeth Forster saw no reason why, in principle, a third-party contractor involved in the security arrangements, such as Showsec, could not be involved in the meetings.<sup>282</sup> The evidence suggests that it was not the culture at the time for CTSA's actively to encourage sites to invite others to attend their meetings.<sup>283</sup> In appropriate circumstances, I can see no reason why a

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<sup>281</sup> [30/82/22-23](#), [30/165/3-15](#)

<sup>282</sup> [38/136/2-13](#)

<sup>283</sup> [38/188/23-189/17](#)

contractor in Showsec's position would not be invited to participate either by the CTSA or the venue operator.

**4.35** There are obvious advantages in involving Showsec in this process. Important information about, for example, searching, would have been relayed first-hand. Involvement of Showsec would have brought more benefits than just ensuring accurate information. It would have embedded Showsec into a process focused on counter-terrorism. It would have caused Showsec to think more about counter-terrorism. It would have led to more discussion about counter-terrorism between SMG and Showsec. It is important that the CTSA process involves representatives of every organisation which holds a security responsibility for that site. The greater the communication, the better the coordination will be.

# Part 5

## SMG and expert counter-terrorism input

### Key findings

- SMG needed input from an expert in security beyond that provided by the CTSA, BTP and/or Showsec. That expert should have been retained to undertake a comprehensive review of and provide advice on the entirety of the security arrangements at the Arena. This was obvious, or should have been. SMG should have obtained this expert security input prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.
- Had SMG done so, it is highly likely that the security arrangements at the Arena would have been improved.
- Such input would probably have resulted in changes that could have prevented or mitigated the Attack.
- Those changes may have included extending the security perimeter to prevent a terrorist gaining access to the City Room.

- 5.1** SMG was responsible for the safety of those who attended events and others in the City Room. The Security Experts expressed the view that SMG should have had an in-house specialist senior security professional in 2017.<sup>284</sup>
- 5.2** It was argued on SMG's behalf that it was entitled to rely upon the CTSA, BTP and Showsec for advice about counter-terrorism. Industry practice at the time was also cited as a justification for why SMG did not obtain input from beyond those three sources.<sup>285</sup> I will address each of these claims as against the Security Experts' opinion above. This will involve consideration of both what security advice and support was being provided to SMG and what security was actually needed at the Arena.

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<sup>284</sup> [41/195/9-16](#)

<sup>285</sup> [INQ039255/6-7 at paragraphs 15 to 20](#)

## Reliance on industry practice

- 5.3** Dr BaMaung stated that in 2017 “*there were probably quite a few arenas that didn’t have that in-house expertise.*”<sup>286</sup> This was consistent with other evidence.<sup>287</sup> SMG relied upon what was said to be industry practice as part of the justification for not retaining a suitably qualified person or organisation comprehensively to review and advise on the entirety of the security measures at the Arena.
- 5.4** This is not an adequate justification for SMG failing to obtain such advice prior to the Attack. SMG is a world leader in event management.<sup>288</sup> It was, and is, a very substantial organisation.<sup>289</sup> The Arena was one of the largest venues in Europe.<sup>290</sup> Over one million people attended events there every year.<sup>291</sup> The unique configuration of the Victoria Exchange Complex and the complications that created meant that relying on standard industry practice is not an answer. Expert counter-terrorism input tailored to the demands of the Arena, including the City Room, was necessary. This required a

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<sup>286</sup> [43/185/15-186/8](#)

<sup>287</sup> [INQ034755/2](#)

<sup>288</sup> [31/22/21-25](#)

<sup>289</sup> [41/22/25-24/22](#)

<sup>290</sup> [12/4/16-18](#)

<sup>291</sup> [12/4/19-21](#)

comprehensive assessment of all aspects of SMG's operation by a person or organisation qualified to do so.

**5.5** Whether or not it was a common practice generally in 2017,<sup>292</sup> shortly after the Attack and without apparent delay or real difficulty, SMG was able to obtain the services of expert security consultants.<sup>293</sup> Within three weeks of the Attack, representatives of SMG and Showsec met with SMG's new advisors.<sup>294</sup> Within four months of the Attack, the Arena was able to reopen operating under a plan which had been designed in consultation with those independent experts.<sup>295</sup> Additionally, SMG has retained a security director<sup>296</sup> to provide it with security expertise, which it could have done prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

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<sup>292</sup> [INQ034755/2](#)

<sup>293</sup> [28/83/12-84/4](#), [28/143/8-23](#)

<sup>294</sup> [29/92/11-14](#), [INQ012053/1](#)

<sup>295</sup> [28/58/4-6](#)

<sup>296</sup> [28/84/3-4](#)

## Reliance on the CTSA and BTP

- 5.6** The evidence of the SMG witnesses was that they relied upon the expertise and advice of Ken Upham. This included the fact that he did not suggest his expertise was limited or that they should seek additional assistance elsewhere.<sup>297</sup> Mark Harding, Showsec's managing director, commented that in his experience counter-terrorism expert advice would be expected to come from CTAs.<sup>298</sup>
- 5.7** As I have set out in Part 4, while Miriam Stone was entitled to take some comfort from the reassurance given to her by Ken Upham, security at the Arena and in the City Room remained the responsibility of SMG which was aware of the threat which it presented.<sup>299</sup> SMG had been told by Ken Upham that it must take responsibility for procedures and decisions.<sup>300</sup>
- 5.8** Superintendent Edward Wylie was the commander for BTP's Pennine Sub Division. Superintendent Wylie was involved with policing particular events at the Arena, such as boxing.<sup>301</sup> It was not appropriate for SMG to rely on its

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<sup>297</sup> 30/69/8-15

<sup>298</sup> 32/121/2-15

<sup>299</sup> 38/92/2-4, 31/22/17-20

<sup>300</sup> 31/22/17-20

<sup>301</sup> 30/164/14-166/21

staffs' interactions with him, as was suggested. His involvement was based on policing the Victoria Exchange Complex. He did not conduct an audit or comprehensive counter-terrorism assessment of SMG security systems.<sup>302</sup>

**5.9** The fact that positive comments were made about training, searching and staffing<sup>303</sup> was capable of providing some reassurance to SMG. It was not an adequate substitute for a comprehensive review of the entirety of the security operation at the Arena by an appropriately qualified expert who had been retained for that purpose.

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<sup>302</sup> [30/169/21-170/14](#)

<sup>303</sup> [INQ015823/8, INQ001444/1](#)

## Reliance on Showsec

**5.10** It was denied on Showsec's behalf that Showsec was an expert in counter-terrorism.<sup>304</sup> Dr BaMaung accepted that they did not market themselves as having significant expertise.<sup>305</sup> Miriam Stone said that she thought Showsec had "*expertise in counter-terrorism*".<sup>306</sup> She cited a presentation given by Showsec in April 2016 as one part of the basis for this belief. I will deal with this presentation below. Miriam Stone stated that she expected Showsec to have told her if "*they had seen something they thought was amiss*".<sup>307</sup>

**5.11** Mark Harding agreed that Showsec was providing SMG with counter-terrorism input, in the sense that Showsec "*provide some of those counter-terrorism services within the training of our staff. So an SIA licence-holder may well be asked to conduct counter-terrorism activities and we would help SMG with that process. So I think they were reliant on us to provide some of those services.*"<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> 32/119/3-13; 39/26/10-15

<sup>305</sup> 43/79/9-80/20

<sup>306</sup> 30/166/22-167/22

<sup>307</sup> 30/167/23-168/3

<sup>308</sup> 31/189/7-20

**5.12** There are a number of pieces of evidence which reveal that Showsec did consider it had some expertise in counter-terrorism and, implicitly or explicitly, held itself out as having such expertise.

**5.13** First, the Showsec training included a counter-terrorism module, the content of which I will deal with in greater detail in Part 6. This module was created by Showsec. Miriam Stone stated: *“I assume that you have to be an expert in it to write a training course for your staff on it.”*<sup>309</sup>

**5.14** Second, three days after the Bataclan theatre attack, and in direct response to it, Showsec director Mark Logan sent an email to other senior Showsec staff.<sup>310</sup> The opening paragraphs include:

*“The company aims to deliver best practice through third party engagement on a local and national level and we seek to use the guidance being offered by the security services which I have copied into the narrative of the email. These practices should be embedded into operating plans, risk assessments, counter terrorism advice, briefing, training (please see the e-learning module for refreshment) and standard operating procedures.”*<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> [30/167/17-19](#)

<sup>310</sup> [39/6/19-7/6](#)

<sup>311</sup> [INQ034698/1](#)

- 5.15** Mark Logan stated of this passage that the word “*advice*” may have been “*misplaced*” and that the word “*awareness*” may have been more appropriate in its place.<sup>312</sup>
- 5.16** Also included within that email was a request that a review was conducted of “*operating procedures*” in light of the attack. The review Mark Logan envisaged, among other things, “*Examin[ing] the control procedures, search templates, search queuing times, moving a queue to a place of safety, external operating environment, terms and conditions of entry.*”<sup>313</sup>
- 5.17** Although this email was internal to Showsec, in my view it reveals Showsec’s view of itself and the extent of its own competence. This, in turn, will have informed the way in which Showsec presented itself to its customers and the way in which it spoke about its own capabilities as an organisation.
- 5.18** Mark Logan’s email was a responsible reaction to the Bataclan theatre attack. Implicit within it is that Showsec regarded itself as having the necessary in-house knowledge and experience to conduct the work he wanted to be carried out. Mark Logan went on to state his belief that his instruction was the “*genesis*”<sup>314</sup> of the

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<sup>312</sup> [39/7/7-8/20](#)

<sup>313</sup> [INQ034698/2](#)

<sup>314</sup> [39/11/3-9](#)

document “*Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017: Manchester Arena*” (the Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017 document).<sup>315</sup>

**5.19** I will deal in further detail in Part 6 with the content of “*Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017: Manchester Arena*”. It is sufficient to say here that implicit in the creation of this document was that Showsec regarded itself as competent to produce such a document. It involved both judgment about what available open-source material should be included in it, as well as how that information should be tailored for the specific circumstances of the Arena. This document is the third piece of evidence which has informed my conclusions on this point.

**5.20** Fourth, in April 2016 Mark Logan and his fellow director, Simon Battersby, gave a presentation to the National Arenas Association (NAA) and the European Arenas Association (EAA). This presentation was attended by 40 to 50 people, including Miriam Stone and James Allen.<sup>316</sup> The presentation was entitled “*The Role of Event Security in a CT Environment*” (the NAA and EAA presentation).<sup>317</sup> Showsec was the only organisation to give a presentation on this topic. Included within the content of

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<sup>315</sup> [INQ012031](#)

<sup>316</sup> [39/11/18-12/24](#)

<sup>317</sup> [INQ025638](#)

the presentation was a summary of attack methodologies together with advice of general application such as the importance of creating a “*coordinated approach*”.

- 5.21** “*External and internal patrols*” appear in a list under the heading ‘Security Operation’.<sup>318</sup> Mark Logan stated of this list that the items in it were offered as “*component parts or parts of our service*”.<sup>319</sup> I will return to the issue of patrolling in Part 6.
- 5.22** The fact that Showsec was prepared to give this presentation at this event indicates that Showsec regarded itself as having the necessary knowledge and experience to do so.
- 5.23** Fifth, although Thomas Bailey stated that Showsec did not provide counter-terrorism expertise to the Arena, when asked whether he had ever been asked to give SMG counter-terrorism advice, he stated “*Not beyond the limitations of what we could give.*”<sup>320</sup> In the context of the other evidence, I regard this as further confirmation of the way in which Showsec was presenting itself to the outside world, which included speaking knowledgeably about its own counter-terrorism role.

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<sup>318</sup> [INQ025638/7](#)

<sup>319</sup> [39/28/16-33/5](#)

<sup>320</sup> [33/260/5-19](#)

- 5.24** All of the above has led me to conclude that Showsec held itself out as having expertise in counter-terrorism within the context of crowd management and security. Showsec did not market itself as providing counter-terrorism advice to SMG so far as the conduct of SMG's operation was concerned, nor did the contractual agreement expressly provide for such advice. As such, while Miriam Stone was entitled to expect Showsec to point out issues related to counter-terrorism as they might have directly arisen from the way in which Showsec was conducting its own operation, she was not entitled to regard Showsec as playing a similar role to the one played by the company SMG contracted with after the Attack. I did not understand Miriam Stone to be suggesting that she had relied upon Showsec to that extent.
- 5.25** I found the apparent dispute between SMG and Showsec about the extent of Showsec's counter-terrorism role to be more imagined than real. It was substantially a product of a differing view about the meaning of the phrase "*counter-terrorism expert*". The evidence established that both SMG and Showsec thought Showsec was competent to provide security services which included a counter-terrorism element. Neither SMG nor Showsec

thought that Showsec had been retained to give detailed advice about SMG's overall counter-terrorism strategy.

**5.26** Accordingly, while Miriam Stone was entitled to rely upon Showsec to the extent she did, Showsec did not fill SMG's substantial knowledge gap in relation to the effectiveness of its overall counter-terrorism strategy. For this, SMG needed specialist input from an appropriately qualified expert.

## Expert counter-terrorism input conclusions

- 5.27** It is highly likely that the security arrangements at the Arena in 2017 would have been improved if SMG had instructed an expert in security to conduct a comprehensive review of all the security measures that were in place. Such a review should have involved considering how events were run in practice. It should have included interviewing key security personnel, including employees from Showsec. The scope and operation of the CCTV also needed to be assessed as part of what was taken into account. Following this comprehensive review, the expert could have provided advice as to how SMG could improve its security arrangements.
- 5.28** SMG should have obtained such input before May 2017. It could have been obtained from an external source or from someone employed by SMG for this purpose.
- 5.29** It is likely that the security expert who considered the difficulties presented by the City Room would have advised that the security perimeter needed moving away from the Arena. That is what occurred when SMG instructed experts following the Attack.<sup>321</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> [41/90/16-24](#)

- 5.30** While better CCTV and regular and thorough patrols might have prevented, or reduced, the impact of an explosion in the City Room, preventing a terrorist from gaining access to that space was the better option. The only way to provide assurance against an explosion taking place in the City Room before, during or after an event was to extend the security perimeter and carry out searching before entry into the City Room.
- 5.31** I will address the security perimeter, CCTV and patrolling in more detail in Part 6.



## Part 6

# SMG and Showsec: terrorism threat mitigation measures

- 6.1** There are many steps that an organisation can take to reduce the risk of a terrorist attack or to reduce the impact of any attack that does take place. The measures considered below are not intended to be an exhaustive list. They are the measures focused upon by the Inquiry because of the circumstances and arrangements at and around the Arena in May 2017.
- 6.2** These measures are: risk assessment, training, hostile reconnaissance response, security perimeter, CCTV monitoring and security patrols. I shall address each of them in turn as they relate to SMG and Showsec's activity in May 2017.

# Risk assessment

## Key findings

### SMG

- At the time of the Attack, SMG had in place a general written risk assessment covering its activities. It was inadequate: it failed to adopt a rigorous approach to the assessment of the risk of a terrorist attack and did not identify what steps should be taken to reduce that risk. In any event, it did not form part of SMG's planning or procedures at the time of the Ariana Grande concert.
- SMG prepared a specific risk assessment for the Ariana Grande concert. It was inadequate: it did not identify the threat from terrorism as a potential hazard and had descended into a box ticking exercise.
- SMG's approach to risk assessment as it related to terrorism was inadequate. Had SMG put in place an effective risk assessment process at the Arena it would have identified deficiencies in the security arrangements including: the approach to CCTV; moving the security perimeter; the importance of patrolling in the City Room during events by Showsec; and, the breakdown in communication between SMG and Showsec in relation to the pre-egress check.

## Showsec

- Showsec had in place a general written risk assessment in relation to the threat from terrorism to its employees. It was not an adequate document.
- Showsec staff failed to notice the obvious and significant errors in the general written risk assessment in relation to the threat from terrorism to its employees.
- Showsec did not have a general written risk assessment in relation to the threat from terrorism in relation to event-goers or other members of the public who might be affected by Showsec's role in providing crowd management and security services. That was a substantial and serious omission on Showsec's part.
- Showsec did consider the risk of a terrorist attack and what steps it should take to mitigate it in the document entitled "*Counter-terrorism Awareness 2017; Manchester Arena*". This document failed to identify the use of patrols as a mitigation measure against PBIEDs in the City Room. It should have done.
- Showsec did not conduct a risk assessment which considered the threat from terrorism specific to the Ariana Grande concert. Showsec should have done.

## SMG and Showsec

- SMG and Showsec should each have taken into account the steps being taken by the other when conducting risk assessments. The necessary level of communication, coordination and co-operation was not achieved
- SMG and Showsec needed to know what BTP was or was not going to do at each and every event by way of deployment. That did not occur.

## **Risk assessment: threat from terrorism**

**6.3** As set out in Part 3, both SMG and Showsec were under a legal obligation to conduct suitable and sufficient risk assessments in relation to their employees. They were also under a legal obligation to conduct suitable and sufficient risk assessments in relation to those who might be affected by their activities: in SMG's case, its activity as the Arena operator; in Showsec's case, as the provider of crowd management and security services at an event. A number of documents were provided to the Inquiry relevant to these obligations. I shall consider each of them and the evidence I have heard about them.

**6.4** Before doing so, the importance of an effective risk assessment process needs to be underlined. Such a process has three important

stages to it. The first is to identify and assess the hazards to the groups of people to whom a responsibility is owed. The second is to determine how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously. The third is to take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this is not possible, control the risk. These are commonly known as control measures.

- 6.5** It is necessary to say something more about the two parts of the second stage in relation to the threat from terrorism: likelihood and severity. Given the purpose of a terrorist attack will invariably be to cause maximum harm, the severity of the risk for it will always be of the highest order. There will be few risks which will have the potential to cause as much harm as those from a terrorist attack.
- 6.6** When it comes to likelihood and the weighting given to it, it is important that considerable care is taken. Fortunately, terrorist attacks are relatively infrequent. However, any successful attack will have catastrophic results. The events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 demonstrate so devastatingly that they must be prevented. Because the statistical probability of a terrorist attack in any one place at any time may be very low, there is a risk of a mindset developing that “*it won’t happen here*”. Such an approach is wrong, particularly in the context of a risk assessment

process. It is obviously so, when even a little thought is given to the potential consequences of this approach.

- 6.7** The emphasis at the second stage should be on severity. The possible consequences of a terrorist attack are catastrophic. For this reason, they have to be given far more weight in a risk assessment than the likelihood of an attack on a particular site at any particular moment in time.
- 6.8** In 2017, there were three other factors which were highly relevant to the risk assessment process and which should have been factored into it by both SMG and Showsec.
- 6.9** First, SMG knew that the Arena had been identified by counter-terrorism police as a Tier 2 site following the NaCTSO assessment in 2014.<sup>322</sup> The very placing of the Arena into this category should have made clear to SMG that it was an attractive target to terrorists. In Showsec's case, while its employees were not invited to the meeting with the CTSA, its own risk assessment acknowledged SMG's engagement with Ken Upham. That risk assessment should have taken proper account of the CTSA process.

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<sup>322</sup> [INQ029098/4](#)

- 6.10** Second, the national level for the threat from international terrorism, set by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre (JTAC), was “Severe”. This meant that “*an attack is highly likely.*” Proper account should have been taken of this fact. The risk assessment process should have accommodated the national threat level. It might have done this by setting out different levels of response based on the different threat levels. Alternatively and preferably, the assessment process should have required a complete review of the control measures when the threat level changed. This would increase the possibility that proper regard would be given to any new information which had emerged that justified the national threat level change.
- 6.11** Third, regular reviews of the risk assessment were essential.<sup>323</sup> In May 2017, the national threat level had been at Severe since 29<sup>th</sup> August 2014.<sup>324</sup> However, since that time, the nature of the threat had been evolving. The terrorist attacks in 2015, in particular, gave notice of the very real threat of a PBIED. The risk assessment process should have recognised expressly the need for a constant refreshing of the thinking behind its content. This should have involved a regular, scheduled review of all of the

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<sup>323</sup> [41/199/1-7](#)

<sup>324</sup> [INQ032114](#)

content and material underpinning it. It should also have allowed for an unscheduled review if events warranted it.

**6.12** The above represents the minimum that a terrorism risk assessment should have included. I turn now to consider what the documentation submitted to the Inquiry, in fact, revealed.

## **SMG**

### **Operational Procedures; Emergency and Contingency Plans document**

**6.13** At the time of the Attack, SMG's general written risk assessments were contained within a document entitled "*Operational Procedures; Emergency and Contingency Plans*" (the Operational Procedures document).<sup>325</sup> Although the copy the Inquiry received is marked as revised on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017,<sup>326</sup> it was confirmed by SMG this was the date the document was printed.<sup>327</sup> This document had not been superseded or withdrawn prior to the Attack.<sup>328</sup>

**6.14** Within the Operational Procedures document are a number of risk assessments which are relevant to the threat from terrorism. The evidence did not reveal who the author of the

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<sup>325</sup> [INQ001359](#)

<sup>326</sup> [INQ001359/1](#)

<sup>327</sup> [28/146/23-147/2](#)

<sup>328</sup> [28/146/23-147/8](#)

risk assessments was, although they were added into the document by James Allen.<sup>329</sup> James Allen, Miriam Stone and a number of other senior people within SMG are indicated as being on the circulation list for the document. Also on the circulation list were GMP, BTP and Showsec.<sup>330</sup>

**6.15** At the start of the document the scoring of the assessments is described as “*using a standard severity x likelihood table*”. The ranges for the total are listed: a total score of 0 to 5 is said to be an “*acceptable risk*”; a total score of 5 to 10 is said to be “*low risk*”; a total score of 10 to 15 is said to be “*medium risk*”; and, a total score of 16+ is said to be “*high risk*”. The document states that “*Emergency contingency plans have been enclosed for situations that have scored a rating of five or above as incidents below this score will offer negligible risk.*”<sup>331</sup> The document does not explain how exactly a user is expected to apply the total score in any practical way.

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<sup>329</sup> [29/29/10-11, 90/91/22-92/5](#)

<sup>330</sup> [INQ001359/2](#)

<sup>331</sup> [INQ001359/6](#)

- 6.16** Within the subsequent risk assessments are three which I regard as most relevant to events on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017: “*Bomb Detonation*”;<sup>332</sup> “*Explosions*”;<sup>333</sup> and, “*First Aid Injuries: Multiple and Major Injuries caused by Explosions*”.<sup>334</sup>
- 6.17** The first of these falls in a list of hazards under the heading “*Acts of Terrorism within the Venue*”; the second falls in a list of hazards under the heading “*Incidents outside the Venue*”; and the third under “*Medical Incidents*”. Each of these have been completed against five different “*profiles*”: three types of event ranging from “*low risk*” to “*high risk*”, “*load in / load out*” and “*Non event mode*”. Each of the profiles has three columns completed with a number: “*severity*”, “*likelihood*” and “*total*”.
- 6.18** The “*Bomb Detonation*” risk assessment appears in Figure 11. It provided total scores which ranged between “5” and “15”, depending on whether the event profile was said to be “*low risk*”, “*medium risk*” or “*high risk*”. The event profile risk was determined by the national threat level and how “*contentious*” the artist or event was. Miriam Stone stated that, given the national threat level, all events at the Arena at

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<sup>332</sup> [INQ001359/12](#)

<sup>333</sup> [INQ001359/13-14](#)

<sup>334</sup> [INQ001359/18](#)

the time of the Attack were high risk.<sup>335</sup> Within the terms of the document’s approach to scoring, a total score of “5” was at the top of the “*acceptable risk*” and the bottom of the “*low risk*” category. A total score of “15” was at the top of the “*medium risk*” category.<sup>336</sup>

<b>ACTS OF TERRORISM WITHIN VENUE</b>					
<b>RISK DEFINITION AFFECTING SEVERITY/LIKELIHOOD</b>					
<p><b>LOW</b> Low national/regional threat level (as advised by GMP/BTP)                      Non contentious artist/event content                      Limited press/media interest</p>					
<p><b>MEDIUM</b> Medium threat level                      Major press/media interest in event/artist</p>					
<p><b>HIGH</b> High threat level                      Contentious artist/event</p>					
<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Total</b>
Bomb Detonation	Causing multiple deaths	Event - low risk	5	1	5
		Event - med risk	5	2	10
		Event - high risk	5	3	15
		Load in / Load out	5	1	5
		Non event mode	5	1	5

**Figure 11: SMG ‘s “Bomb Detonation” risk assessment<sup>337</sup>**

**6.19** The most relevant risk assessment by reference to what occurred on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 was “*Explosions*”. This appears at Figure 12. Whether an event profile was “*low*”, “*medium*” or “*high*” was determined, according to the document, by the effect on the venue. The person who completed the form assessed the

<sup>335</sup> [30/101/10-17](#)

<sup>336</sup> [INQ001359/6](#)

<sup>337</sup> Extract of [INQ001359/12](#)

severity for all of the profiles in the “Explosions” scenario as being “5” out of a possible 5; with the likelihood for all of the profiles as being “2” out of a possible 5. This produced a total score for each of the profiles, regardless of whether the event profile was low, medium or high risk, of “10”. According to the explanation of the scoring, this total score equates to the top of the “low risk” category or the bottom of the “medium risk” category.

<b>INCIDENTS OUTSIDE THE VENUE</b>					
RISK DEFINITION AFFECTING SEVERITY/LIKELIHOOD					
LOW Nothing happening to affect the venue					
MEDIUM A single incident which affects the venue					
HIGH More than one incident affecting the venue					
Hazard	Risk	Profile	Severity	Likelihood	Total
Incidents outside the venue – continued					
Explosions	Detonation of improvised explosive device	Event - low risk	5	2	10
		Event - med risk	5	2	10
		Event - high risk	5	2	10
		Load in / Load out	5	2	10
		Non event mode	5	2	10

**Figure 12: SMG’s “Explosions” risk assessment<sup>338</sup>**

**6.20** Also relevant was the risk assessment for “*First Aid Injuries: Multiple and Major Injuries caused by Explosions*”.<sup>339</sup> This appears in Figure 13.

<sup>338</sup> Extract of [INQ001359/14](#)

<sup>339</sup> [INQ001359/18](#)

This risk assessment took the same approach to the scoring for events as “*Explosions*”, giving a total of “10” for all event risk profiles. For this risk assessment, whether or not an event profile was “*low*”, “*medium*” or “*high*” risk was determined by the number of attendees, whether those attendees were likely to cause trouble and whether there was any “*historical data*”.

<b>MEDICAL INCIDENTS</b>					
<b>RISK DEFINITION AFFECTING SEVERITY/LIKELIHOOD</b>					
<p><b>LOW</b> Attendance of 5,000 or less. Seated floor.                      Family or mature adult audience profile                      Good historical data with less than 1% accident rate</p>					
<p><b>MEDIUM</b> Attendance of 5,000 - 10,000                      Standing floor with limited movement                      Young adults in mixed sex groups                      Good data with 1 - 2% accident rate</p>					
<p><b>HIGH</b> Attendance of 10,000 or above                      Standing floor with extensive crowd movement                      Teen, over 50+ years or rival fraction audience                      No historical data</p>					
<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Severity</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Total</b>
	Caused by Explosions	Event - low risk	5	2	10
		Event - med risk	5	2	10
		Event - high risk	5	2	10
		Load in / Load out	5	2	10
		Non event mode	5	1	5

**Figure 13: SMG’s “First Aid Injuries: Multiple and Major Injuries caused by Explosions” risk assessment<sup>340</sup>**

<sup>340</sup> Extract of [INQ001359/18](#)

- 6.21** Another part of the Operational Procedures document contains a section devoted to control measures.<sup>341</sup> None of those listed are focused on preventing a terrorist attack. It also contains a section headed “*Bomb and Terrorist Threats*”.<sup>342</sup> This section does not list any control measures relevant to mitigating the risk of a terrorist attack. Nor does it mention PBIEDs. The only way in which its content is relevant to what occurred on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 is in relation to actions after a detonation had taken place. To the extent other parts are relevant to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 they, too, are relevant to the response to an attack, not preventing it.
- 6.22** Overall, the Operational Procedures document fails to adopt a rigorous approach to the assessment of the risk of a terrorist attack. It is entirely deficient in relation to the key question which automatically arises once the extent of any risk is identified, namely what steps should be taken to reduce it? James Allen agreed that the approach within these important risk assessments was not “*particularly rational*”<sup>343</sup>. He agreed that giving the same overall risk score to scenarios in which the risk was different was “*nonsense*”.<sup>344</sup> Overall, the thrust

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<sup>341</sup> [INQ001359/26-40](#)

<sup>342</sup> [INQ001359/59-63](#)

<sup>343</sup> [90/91/16-21](#)

<sup>344</sup> [90/90/18-92/3](#)

of his evidence was to accept that these risk assessments were inadequate.<sup>345</sup> Miriam Stone accepted they were inadequate.<sup>346</sup> They were both right to do so.

**6.23** In the event, the inadequacy of the risk assessments within this document made no difference. This is because neither of the key SMG employees, James Allen and Miriam Stone, used them in practice.<sup>347</sup>

## Manchester Arena Security Risk Analysis document

**6.24** SMG prepared a document entitled “*Manchester Arena Security Risk Analysis*” (the Security Risk Analysis document). Although not explored during the oral evidence, SMG disclosed this document to the Inquiry before the oral evidence hearings began. The date on the face of it is after the Attack. However, the Solicitor to the Inquiry was informed by SMG in correspondence that it predated 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 and that the date appearing on the first page indicated the day on which it was printed after the Attack. The document itself refers to the JTAC threat level as being ‘severe’.

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<sup>345</sup> 28/147/17-149/11, 29/129/15-29/131/8

<sup>346</sup> 30/101/2-4, 30/102/20-23

<sup>347</sup> 29/131/11-132/9, 30/100/12-16

- 6.25** In SMG’s Opening Statement it was accepted that there were “*shortcomings*” with this document. SMG went on to concede, about both the Security Risk Analysis document and the Operational Procedures document, “*We also accept that they were not being reviewed with the appropriate frequency at the time of the Attack. In fact, neither of these documents was being used as part of the day to day process of terrorism risk assessment at the Arena in the period running up to the Attack.*”<sup>348</sup>
- 6.26** The Security Risk Analysis document included an assessment of the risk of “*Terrorist Threats outside Manchester Arena*” which were “[i]n close vicinity which could affect the building directly or prevent an event taking place.” Of this particular threat, the document goes on to state in the notes to this assessment: “*This is potential high due to the fact we are a city centre building within a major interchange railway station. WORLD RENOUNED venue operated by US Company and many American acts.*”<sup>349</sup>
- 6.27** This risk assessment goes on to conduct an initial likelihood-times-severity score, with the likelihood score initially equivalent to “*medium*”. The likelihood score is reduced to “*low*”

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<sup>348</sup> [INQ035492/18-19 at paragraph 75](#)

<sup>349</sup> [INQ001442/3](#)

following the identification of certain controls measures, including *“police intelligence”* and *“good site wide CCTV”*.

- 6.28** A number of risk assessments in relation to scenarios within the Arena are subsequently set out.
- 6.29** The document continues by stating, under the heading *“Major Risks”*, that *“[t]he above risk assessment has identified 3 major areas of concern that despite the risk reduction in place it is difficult to fully bring these down to an acceptable level without restricting our business flexibility.”* Of those three major areas of concern one is said to be *“The location of the Arena within a railway interchange of a major European city with little control on what takes place outside and around the building.”*<sup>350</sup>
- 6.30** The Security Risk Analysis document concludes with three appendices. The first of these includes a number of the elements of the Operational Procedures document I have identified. The two further appendices relate to SMG and Showsec’s recruitment of staff.<sup>351</sup>
- 6.31** It was a significant failing that SMG did not have regard to the content of the Security Risk Analysis document as part of the process of risk

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<sup>350</sup> [INQ001442/6](#)

<sup>351</sup> [INQ001442/7-36](#)

assessment in the period prior to the Attack. The concession that there are “*shortcomings*” with it was appropriately given. However, in my view, the threat of an attack in close vicinity to the Arena building, which could affect it, included the scenario of an IED in the City Room. This threat was stated to be a “*potential high*” risk. The document identified that the reasons for this risk level were the Arena’s iconic status, the fact it formed part of a transport hub, its American ownership and the fact that “*many American acts*” performed there. Ariana Grande is an American act. An event specific risk assessment, undertaken with this part of the Security Risk Analysis in mind, would have led to a recognition that the areas immediately outside the concert on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 may be a particularly attractive target for a terrorist, as in fact was the case.

**6.32** The document recognised that one of three challenges to bringing the risk down to “*an acceptable level*” was the lack of control over access by members of the public to the areas outside and around the Arena. This challenge is precisely why pushing out the security perimeter would have brought greater protection to event-goers. The recognition of this challenge should have driven attempts to move the security

perimeter beyond the City Room. SMG should have been doing all it could to bring this risk down below an acceptable level.

- 6.33** Alternatively, in the absence of achieving a security perimeter which protected the areas immediately outside the Arena, such as the City Room, the recognition of this particular challenge should have caused SMG to consider more closely what other mitigation measures could have been put in place. The CCTV system in areas of particular risk, such as the City Room, should have been scrutinised with this particular challenge in mind. Security patrolling, as a further means of identifying those who may be using the public right of access as a cover for their malign intent, should have received more attention.
- 6.34** As it was, the Security Risk Analysis document did not form part of SMG's day to day process of risk assessment in the period prior to the Attack. Consequently, the important parts of this document identified above, which were capable of making a difference to the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 had they been acted upon in the way I have described, did not receive the attention from SMG they should have.

## Ariana Grande concert: event-specific risk assessment

**6.35** SMG prepared a document entitled “*Manchester Arena – Event Risk Assessment specific to the Ariana Grande concert*”.<sup>352</sup> This involved the completion of a pro forma risk assessment with event-specific information. This was a standard document produced by SMG for each event.<sup>353</sup>

**6.36** At no point in this document is the threat from terrorism identified as a potential hazard.<sup>354</sup> James Allen and Miriam Stone both accepted it should have been.<sup>355</sup> Miriam Stone went further and candidly accepted that the event-specific written risk assessment process had descended into a box ticking exercise.<sup>356</sup> She also accepted that the system SMG had in place for risk assessment was less than ideal.<sup>357</sup>

## Sharing of risk assessments with Showsec

**6.37** Showsec’s Service Delivery Management document envisaged that SMG would provide its risk assessments to Showsec.<sup>358</sup> Showsec Regional Manager, Thomas Bailey, had no recollection of having received either a

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<sup>352</sup> [INQ001567/1](#)

<sup>353</sup> [30/106/5-9](#)

<sup>354</sup> [28/152/18-23](#), [30/105/19-21](#)

<sup>355</sup> [28/153/7-8](#), [30/105/22-23](#)

<sup>356</sup> [30/106/14-17](#)

<sup>357</sup> [30/17/20-25](#)

<sup>358</sup> [INQ012054/14](#)

risk assessment or any method statements from SMG.<sup>359</sup> Neither had Thomas Rigby, the Showsec Head of Security at the Arena on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>360</sup>

**6.38** Mark Harding stated that the arrangement between SMG and Showsec envisaged an exchange of information between the two organisations from the risk assessments. He stated that it would have been prudent for each to have a copy of the others'.<sup>361</sup>

**6.39** Although the event-specific risk assessment was used by SMG as the basis to calculate the number of Showsec staff required,<sup>362</sup> it was not a document that Thomas Bailey had ever seen.<sup>363</sup>

### Effect of SMG's approach to written risk assessments

**6.40** Both James Allen and Miriam Stone asserted that despite the accepted deficiencies in the written risk assessment process, SMG did adequately take into account the threat from terrorism in its operation.<sup>364</sup> I do not accept that. A more rigorous approach would have

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<sup>359</sup> [33/28/24-30/14](#)

<sup>360</sup> [34/162/8-10](#)

<sup>361</sup> [32/73/8-16](#)

<sup>362</sup> [33/113/5-8](#)

<sup>363</sup> [33/113/9-10](#)

<sup>364</sup> [28/163/6-12](#), [30/102/23-24](#), [30/111/2-116/6](#)

compelled greater thought by SMG. This should have led to a realisation that something needed to be done about the risk of attack in the City Room. A more rigorous approach would have prompted closer examination of Showsec's documents.

- 6.41** The importance of the failings I have identified in SMG's operation, such as the approach to CCTV and the lack of any proper investigation into the possibility of moving the perimeter, would have been revealed by an effective risk assessment process. That is the purpose of such an assessment. It would also have led to the identification of the importance of patrolling the City Room and the mezzanine area by Showsec. This may well have led to the discovery of the breakdown in communication between SMG and Showsec about the extent and function of the pre-egress check. I shall return to the pre-egress check in greater detail later in Part 6.
- 6.42** Overall, SMG's approach to risk assessment as it related to terrorism was inadequate. I agree with Miriam Stone that SMG should have sought help.<sup>365</sup> I agree with Dr BaMaung that the absence of such help was a "key weakness" of SMG's approach.<sup>366</sup> SMG's approach to

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<sup>365</sup> [30/119/7-16](#)

<sup>366</sup> [41/153/2](#)

counter-terrorism risk assessment would have substantially benefited from the expert input of the kind I addressed in Part 5.

## Showsec

### Written risk assessment: counter-terrorism

**6.43** Showsec had a number of risk assessments in spreadsheet form. These included a section focused on the threat from terrorism. The risk assessment spreadsheet was dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017. The risk assessments contained within the spreadsheet were not event-specific.<sup>367</sup> The template was created by Sharon Pates, Showsec's health and safety officer.<sup>368</sup> 2017 was the first time it was used.<sup>369</sup> It was completed by Thomas Rigby.<sup>370</sup> Thomas Rigby had undertaken a health and safety risk assessment course in 2011, although that did not involve any training in relation to counter-terrorism.<sup>371</sup> The spreadsheet was marked for review on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018.<sup>372</sup>

**6.44** Upon completion of the spreadsheet on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017, Thomas Rigby emailed it to Sharon Pates and Thomas Bailey for "*thoughts*

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<sup>367</sup> [INQ001477](#)

<sup>368</sup> [33/149/17-18](#)

<sup>369</sup> [33/223/22-25](#)

<sup>370</sup> [33/143/9-12](#)

<sup>371</sup> [34/162/4-7](#), [34/169/1-5](#)

<sup>372</sup> [INQ001477/1](#)

*and changes*". In the body of his email, Thomas Rigby raised his concern that it didn't "*look extensive enough to be correct.*" On 24<sup>th</sup> January 2017, Sharon Pates replied to Thomas Rigby "*All good Tom*".<sup>373</sup> Thomas Bailey did not propose any alterations to it.<sup>374</sup>

**6.45** The completed spreadsheet is marked as being circulated to Miriam Stone and James Allen at SMG and Thomas Bailey, Alan Wallace and Sharon Pates at Showsec. James Allen accepted he had seen this document.<sup>375</sup> Miriam Stone stated she was unable to find any record that she had received this document.<sup>376</sup> I find that she did not see a copy of it prior to the Attack.

**6.46** The risk assessment spreadsheet comprised two parts.<sup>377</sup> The front sheet of the spreadsheet contained the summary, incorporating the outcome of a number of risk assessments across Showsec's activities.<sup>378</sup> The second part comprised further sheets which contained risk assessments for the different categories summarised in the front sheet. This included a risk assessment which corresponded to

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<sup>373</sup> [INQ034679/1](#)

<sup>374</sup> [33/224/18-22](#)

<sup>375</sup> [28/156/18-19](#)

<sup>376</sup> [30/108/20-109/4](#)

<sup>377</sup> [33/140/23-25](#)

<sup>378</sup> [INQ001477/1](#)

counter-terrorism entry on the front sheet.<sup>379</sup> That risk assessment is four pages in length and identifies seven hazards.

- 6.47** The counter-terrorism risk assessment provides for scores to be given to each of the hazards under the headings “*Severity*”, “*Likelihood*” and “*Population*”. A person completing this assessment was expected to input a value in relation to each of these fields for each of the hazards. The document then required a reassessment of these headings in light of additional control measures.<sup>380</sup> Once the fields were completed, the form calculated an average score taken across each of the hazards.<sup>381</sup> The average score was then automatically carried across into an overall risk rating for terrorism on the summary page.<sup>382</sup>
- 6.48** As a result of the way the form was completed prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, the overall risk rating for the terrorism risk was indicated in the summary sheet to be a score of 12. According to the summary sheet, a score of 12 corresponds to an overall risk rating of “*Low*”. The form also records that the “*Threat Level*” was “*Low*”.<sup>383</sup> This is despite the fact that the national threat

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<sup>379</sup> [INQ001477/2-5](#)

<sup>380</sup> [33/141/13-142/7](#)

<sup>381</sup> [33/141/25-142/7](#)

<sup>382</sup> [33/142/8-25](#)

<sup>383</sup> [INQ001477/1](#)

level was “*Severe*” at the time the assessment was completed. Thomas Bailey described this as being “*a typo*”.<sup>384</sup> Thomas Rigby accepted that the document contained an inappropriately low assessment of the risk of terrorism.

**6.49** The failure of Thomas Bailey, Sharon Pates, from whom I have not heard but to whom I gave an opportunity to respond to this criticism, and James Allen to notice such an obvious and significant error reveals a lack of care and attention on their parts towards their duty to identify and take steps to mitigate the risk of a terrorist attack. On the SMG side, James Allen accepted, and I agree, that he “*should have taken more notice*” of this document.<sup>385</sup>

**6.50** The aggregating of all risk assessments across all hazards to create an average is obviously problematic. This is so because the very low risk of particularly unlikely forms of attack could result in artificially depressing the final overall number. This might have the effect of concealing the significance of a threat from the most likely form of attack.<sup>386</sup> As a result of the approach that was taken, the assessment of the risk of a terrorist attack was inappropriately

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<sup>384</sup> [33/150/3](#)

<sup>385</sup> [28/162/23-25](#)

<sup>386</sup> [33/149/2-6](#)

low in this document.<sup>387</sup> As a matter of common sense and, as should have been obvious to Showsec, the most likely form(s) of attack should have been used to drive the overall assessment of risk.

**6.51** There are three further and significant problems with this document.

**6.52** First, Thomas Bailey and Thomas Rigby asserted that it was an assessment focused on Showsec employees.<sup>388</sup> This was consistent with the position adopted on Showsec's behalf in the opening statement.<sup>389</sup> It was consistent with the other risk assessments which formed part of the overall document. The Showsec Operational Plan 2017 refers to a risk assessment for Showsec staff in relation to events.<sup>390</sup> The summary page of the risk assessment document refers to reading it "*in conjunction with the Operating Plan*". It seems likely that this document was created as a supporting document to the Operational Plan 2017, which indicates it is focused on employees.

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<sup>387</sup> [34/163/24-164/2](#)

<sup>388</sup> [33/152/19-21](#), [34/163/4-6](#)

<sup>389</sup> [INQ035495/11](#) at paragraph 4.42(ii)

<sup>390</sup> [33/93/10-94/23](#), [INQ012033/10](#)

**6.53** However, the counter-terrorism risk assessment identifies members of the public as a category of persons who may be at risk in relation to a number of hazards.<sup>391</sup> The inclusion of people beyond those employed by Showsec as people at risk suggests that some thought had been given to members of the public, although not in anything like a rigorous way given where it has been included. The lack of clarity around who this document was intended to benefit is unsatisfactory and indicates a lack of proper thought.

**6.54** Thomas Bailey confirmed that there was no other equivalent document for event-goers.<sup>392</sup> He stated that Showsec relied upon SMG to conduct such a risk assessment, although he never saw any such document.<sup>393</sup> I find that this was a substantial and serious omission on Showsec's part. Showsec was under an obligation to conduct a risk assessment in relation to event-goers. It was mandatory for Showsec to carry out, in writing, a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk from terrorist attack. Although Showsec failed to conduct a suitable and sufficient written risk assessment of this sort, I accept that there was some, albeit

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<sup>391</sup> [33/153/5-13](#)

<sup>392</sup> [33/153/14-17](#), [33/219/2-10](#)

<sup>393</sup> [33/219/11-14](#)

inadequate, consideration by Showsec of the threat of terrorism to event-goers, which I will consider further below.<sup>394</sup>

- 6.55** Second, the attack methodology of PBIED is not listed as one of the hazards in the ‘employee risk assessment’, although some other attack methodologies are. Given that PBIED was a well-known attack methodology in 2017,<sup>395</sup> I find that this omission reveals a substantial lack of care and attention on the part of Thomas Rigby. This omission was not identified by anyone else within Showsec in the period from January 2017 until the Attack. That fact reveals a worrying lack of oversight at a senior level within Showsec in relation to what should have been treated as a very important part of its operation.
- 6.56** There is a third problem with this document. At the top of the second part of it, two questions are posed: “*Has the vulnerability risk assessment been completed by CTSA?*” and “*Has the CTSA recommendations been actioned?*”.<sup>396</sup> Both of these questions are answered on the form as “Y”. In fact, Showsec was never provided with any written information from the CTSA process. As a result, Showsec was not provided with any detail in writing

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<sup>394</sup> [34/156/16-18](#)

<sup>395</sup> [33/154/19-24](#)

<sup>396</sup> [INQ001477/2](#)

in relation to what recommendations had been made and relied upon an oral report from SMG which was limited and omitted key information.<sup>397</sup>

- 6.57** Thomas Bailey accepted that the answer to the second question was not based on any information provided by SMG.<sup>398</sup> I regard this as being unsatisfactory and unacceptable. If Showsec wished to take into account the outcome of the CTSA process when assessing the risk to its own employees, which would have been appropriate, a request for the underlying documentation and/or involvement in the CTSA process should have been made. Answering an important question on an important document, such as a risk assessment, on the basis of what was, at best, an assumption reveals a lack of proper and appropriate thought being given to ensuring adequate steps were taken to protect people from the threat of terrorism.
- 6.58** Overall this document, as it related to the threat from terrorism, was inadequate. I accept that assessing the risk of a terrorist attack is a challenging process which may require an adjustment to the approach which is taken in relation to other risks to health and safety. I also accept that there was not readily accessible,

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<sup>397</sup> [33/161/5-9](#), [33/168/6-11](#), [33/200/4-19](#)

<sup>398</sup> [33/276/2-7](#)

free guidance on how such risk assessments may be satisfactorily completed. However, the nature and gravity of the errors in this document and Showsec's approach to the risk assessment process generally lead me to conclude that insufficient regard was given to the threat from terrorism by Showsec as an organisation. Showsec's staff should have realised the limitations of their own competence and, if they felt that there was insufficient freely available information, they should have made a concerted effort to obtain expert input.

## Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017; Manchester Arena document

- 6.59** Thomas Bailey reviewed and signed off "*Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017; Manchester Arena*", a document dated 6 January 2017.<sup>399</sup> Thomas Rigby is recorded as the primary contact for this document. He was involved in its creation.<sup>400</sup> It was sent to key Showsec personnel and to Miriam Stone and James Allen of SMG.<sup>401</sup>
- 6.60** Although not expressly labelled as a risk assessment, parts of the document do support a risk assessment process. Thomas Rigby said that it was intended to support the risk

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<sup>399</sup> [INQ012031, 33/108/8-11](#)

<sup>400</sup> [34/155/20-156/10](#)

<sup>401</sup> [34/156/19-23](#)

assessment process.<sup>402</sup> It does so by identifying the measures which are being deployed to control the threat from terrorism. It was asserted on Showsec's behalf that this document "*set out how Showsec delivered on its limited counter-terrorism obligations*".<sup>403</sup>

**6.61** Under the heading "*Security Planning*" the document addresses the number of personnel required to ensure the safety of the public. It states: "*Consideration of Risk assessment, audience profile, Artist Risk assessment, Capacity/Sales will determine the safe requirement*".<sup>404</sup> It does not mention the national threat level. Thomas Bailey stated these were the factors "*on SMG side*" for allocating the number of Showsec staff to an event. He stated this was determined by SMG's risk assessment which he never saw.<sup>405</sup> As set out above, SMG's event risk assessment did not include any consideration of the threat from terrorism. Thomas Bailey accepted that confusion may have entered the process in relation to the risk of terrorism and the risk the audience posed to itself.<sup>406</sup> This was undoubtedly the case. The thinking around risk was focused on the trouble

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<sup>402</sup> [34/156/11-18](#)

<sup>403</sup> [INQ035495/11](#) at paragraph 1.24(ii)

<sup>404</sup> [INQ012031/6](#)

<sup>405</sup> [33/112/21-114/9](#)

<sup>406</sup> [33/114/10-115/15](#)

an audience might cause. It did not consider in any satisfactory or rigorous way what the risk to the audience might be from those who may wish to do them harm.

- 6.62** The document deals at an early stage in general terms with the “*Physical Security*” which Showsec put in place to mitigate the threat from terrorism.<sup>407</sup> As part of this section, the document identifies, correctly in my view, that one important measure to mitigate this threat is patrolling.
- 6.63** I recognise that it would be inefficient and undesirable for a patrol to focus only on counter-terrorism. Such an approach may result in other suspicious behaviour, such as a person showing an unlawful interest in children, being overlooked. Consequently, it seems to me that it would be potentially misleading to refer to patrolling of the type I am describing as a counter-terrorism patrol. I think it is better described as a ‘security patrol’. Such a patrol should include a counter-terrorism element, but will include active and conscious vigilance for all suspicious behaviour. I shall deal in further detail with patrolling as a counter-terrorism mitigation measure later in Part 6.

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<sup>407</sup> [INQ012031/6](#)

- 6.64** The patrolling section of the document includes: *“As well as designated patrols each steward is responsible for their immediate working area, the total of which will cover the entire working area of the event/venue. Supervisors will undertake regular patrols of their sectors as further observatory patrols.”* It also refers to the SMG patrols on non-event days and states *“during events these patrols are undertaken by Showsec Security staff.”*
- 6.65** Given the way in which it is framed within the document, I find the natural meaning of this passage includes the City Room. First, because the SMG patrols included the City Room and the use of the word *“these”* can only mean in this context that Showsec was indicating it will undertake the patrols which replicated the SMG patrols. Second, because the City Room falls within the area encompassed by the supervisors’ *“sectors”*, in relation to which it is said there will be regular, observatory patrols. Third, because this part is dealing with *“the entire working area of the event/venue”* which includes the City Room.
- 6.66** This interpretation is consistent with the recognition in the NAA and EAA presentation given by Mark Logan and Simon Battersby that external patrolling was part of the counter-terrorism security operation.

- 6.67** However, the difference between the plain meaning of the document and the way Showsec approached its activity at the Arena became clear during the evidence.
- 6.68** Thomas Bailey agreed that the natural meaning of this part of the document was that Showsec would conduct patrols which would have included a counter-terrorism element of the whole of the City Room.<sup>408</sup> However, in fact, Showsec did not approach its work in the City Room in this way.<sup>409</sup>
- 6.69** That Showsec had not recognised the need to conduct security patrols of the City Room is found later in the same document. The City Room is specifically addressed. The threat of a suicide bomber in the City Room is identified. A number of “*Control measures*” are listed. None of the control measures listed include the use of security patrols of the City Room.<sup>410</sup> This absence is consistent with the pre-egress checks which Showsec in fact carried out, none of which could properly be characterised as a patrol with a counter-terrorism element of the City Room. Omitting patrolling which included a counter-terrorism element of the City Room as a control measure was a serious failure,

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<sup>408</sup> [33/118/14-123/10](#)

<sup>409</sup> [33/122/24-123/1](#)

<sup>410</sup> [INQ012031/10](#)

particularly in circumstances where Showsec had identified earlier in the document the importance of patrolling as a mitigation against the risk of terrorist attack both in the same document and in the NAA and EAA presentation given in April 2016.

- 6.70** Thomas Bailey recognised that, even prior to the terrible events on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, the use of patrols was an “*obvious*” control measure against the threat of a PBIED in the City Room.<sup>411</sup> His explanation for its absence in the relevant part of this document was that the focus was on the crowd and where it went.<sup>412</sup>
- 6.71** A further deficiency with this document relates to the inclusion of the pre-egress check sheet in Appendix 2. This appendix relates to searching in the event of a bomb threat. Included within it was the pre-egress check sheet.<sup>413</sup> It emerged that it had been included in error and was said by Showsec to have had nothing to do with counter-terrorism.<sup>414</sup> The explanation for this error was that the pre-egress sheet appeared on the back of a relevant document and the

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<sup>411</sup> [33/127/21-25](#)

<sup>412</sup> [33/128/1-7](#)

<sup>413</sup> [INQ012031/24](#)

<sup>414</sup> [33/134/9-11](#), [33/136/6-12](#)

scanning process when the Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017 document was created had incorrectly included it.<sup>415</sup>

- 6.72** The inclusion of the pre-egress sheet was an easily avoidable mistake. It was also a highly unfortunate mistake as it was capable of giving rise to the false impression that Showsec’s pre-egress check was a counter-terrorism patrol or a patrol including a counter-terrorism element. On the face of the pre-egress sheet, this was a patrol which included the “*entire*” City Room. Senior SMG personnel said this is what they thought was, in fact, occurring.<sup>416</sup> None of them, though, drew attention to the inclusion of the pre-egress sheet in the Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017 document as giving rise to that belief.
- 6.73** It was asserted on Showsec’s behalf that the purpose of sending this document to SMG was “*so that SMG could understand how Showsec was addressing this aspect [the counter-terrorism procedures] to secure the safety of the event goers.*”<sup>417</sup> As such, it was highly unfortunate that a plain reading of it

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<sup>415</sup> [33/130/25-131/23](#)

<sup>416</sup> [26/200/9-201/22](#), [26/202/15-203/7](#), [30/133/17-140/25](#)

<sup>417</sup> [INQ035495/3](#) at paragraph 1.14

would be likely to mislead the reader into believing Showsec was undertaking patrolling that in fact it was not.

- 6.74** The failure to include patrolling as an express control measure against the risk of a suicide bomber in the City Room is a substantial deficiency in this document. Insofar as the document might be thought to support the risk assessment process, it was insufficient and unsuitable by reason of this obvious and significant omission.
- 6.75** Showsec's approach to this document is a good demonstration of the importance of the role of proper risk assessments. Although the document appears to recognise the importance of patrolling, when considering the specifics of the City Room, that measure is entirely overlooked. Had it been recognised and included when this document was drawn up, as it should have been, a proper system of patrolling would have been implemented in the City Room by Showsec. This would have included patrolling on the mezzanine level. This is likely to have led to the identification of SA as suspicious prior to 22:15 on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

## Ariana Grande concert: event-specific risk assessment

- 6.76** The Ariana Grande concert appeared in a document which listed a number of events under the heading “*Event Risk assessment category*”. In that document, the Ariana Grande concert was identified as being an “*Event Category A*”. This event category is identified as being “*low risk*”.<sup>418</sup>
- 6.77** It became apparent in the course of the evidence that the phrase “*Event Risk assessment category*” was a reference to the process by which the minimum required seniority, experience and education of the Head of Security for an event was identified.<sup>419</sup> Documents of the type which included the Ariana Grande concert were usually completed quarterly.<sup>420</sup> This meant that some events would be considered in excess of two months prior to taking place.<sup>421</sup>
- 6.78** Thomas Rigby, who was Head of Security for the Ariana Grande concert, accepted it was not a risk assessment.<sup>422</sup> The selection of the Head of Security process did not include any

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<sup>418</sup> 34/126/25, INQ012110

<sup>419</sup> 33/21/11-17, 34/122/20-123/2, INQ012054/7

<sup>420</sup> 34/127/8-15

<sup>421</sup> 34/127/16-20

<sup>422</sup> 34/122/15-19

assessment of the threat from terrorism to the event.<sup>423</sup> Showsec has since renamed this process better to reflect its true objective.<sup>424</sup>

- 6.79** There was no written risk assessment prepared by Showsec specific to the Ariana Grande concert which included assessing the risk to attendees from terrorists. There should have been. Assessing each event individually for all risks should have been part and parcel of Showsec's standard way of operating. When done correctly, the risk assessment process should refocus attention on the control measures which will be required. This should affect the content of the briefings.
- 6.80** Showsec have since commissioned another company to assist in the carrying out of its risk assessment for terrorism.<sup>425</sup>

## **Communication, coordination and co-operation**

- 6.81** SMG and Showsec should each have taken into account the steps being taken by the other when conducting risk assessments. Showsec needed a very clear understanding of what SMG were doing in relation to CCTV because CCTV played an essential role in

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<sup>423</sup> [34/126/10-13](#)

<sup>424</sup> [33/21/11-22/8](#)

<sup>425</sup> [31/232/16-19](#)

the overall counter-terrorism strategy. SMG needed a very clear understanding of what Showsec was doing in relation to patrolling, for the same reason. The necessary level of communication, coordination and co-operation was not achieved.

**6.82** Both SMG and Showsec needed to know BTP's deployment plan for each and every event. That way, both could plan on the basis of what they knew BTP would be doing.<sup>426</sup> This would have provided the opportunity to discuss and plan for the situation where BTP did not do as expected. Again, what should have occurred, did not.

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<sup>426</sup> 41/212/12-22

# Training

## Key findings

### SMG

- SMG should have ensured that its CCTV operators had SIA CCTV monitoring licences.
- SMG provided inadequate training to its CCTV operators in relation to counter-terrorism.
- SMG's senior staff had undertaken adequate general training in counter-terrorism.
- SMG did not provide adequate CCTV-specific counter-terrorism training for its senior staff, despite requests from both people who should have received it. This was a significant failure.

### Showsec

- The content of Showsec's online training for its stewards in relation to counter-terrorism was capable of improvement but was adequate.
- Showsec should have followed up this online training with practical, person-to-person training, which checked that the online training had been understood and built confidence around the reporting of concerns.
- Showsec should have made counter-terrorism refresher training compulsory for stewards.

- Showsec's procedures for ensuring that counter-terrorism training had been understood by its stewards were inadequate.
- Had Showsec taken robust steps to ensure that all of its staff had completed their training diligently, provided a practical opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and build their confidence, it is possible that either or both Mohammed Agha and Kyle Lawler would have acted more decisively to escalate Christopher Wild's concerns regarding SA.
- The role occupied by Mohammed Agha on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 required specific training. Mohammed Agha did not receive adequate training in that role. This reduced the prospect of him responding appropriately and robustly to Christopher Wild's concerns.
- There was confusion about the functionality of the radios issued to some Showsec staff.
- Showsec staff should not have been used to monitor SMG's CCTV during events: they lacked the necessary SIA licence, training and experience.
- Showsec took adequate steps to ensure that its senior operational staff had sufficient counter-terrorism training.

## SMG and Showsec

- While it reflects well on both SMG and Showsec that they undertook joint training exercises, they did not do so in relation to counter-terrorism.

## SMG

### CCTV operators' counter-terrorism training

**6.83** SMG required its CCTV operators to have an SIA door supervisor's licence.<sup>427</sup> However, SMG's CCTV operators did not undertake the CCTV component of the SIA licence.<sup>428</sup> The SMG employees should have undertaken such training.

**6.84** I cannot say that the absence of SIA CCTV training for the SMG CCTV operators made any material contribution to events on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. But it reveals a lack of care on the part of SMG towards an important aspect of its counter-terrorism strategy.

**6.85** SMG provided in-house training for its CCTV operators across a number of areas.<sup>429</sup> That training did not include any significant CCTV counter-terrorism element, such as in relation to the identification of hostile reconnaissance or activity which may be an immediate precursor

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<sup>427</sup> [26/177/1-3](#)

<sup>428</sup> [27/39/20-23](#), [34/75/20-24](#)

<sup>429</sup> [26/176/10-25](#)

to a terrorist attack.<sup>430</sup> Given the importance of CCTV as a counter-terrorism measure, this was a substantial deficiency.

**6.86** Paul Johnson, the SMG Security Supervisor, stated that he asked SMG to provide CCTV-specific training more than once. He stated that “*a couple of control room operators*” asked him for such training. He was told by SMG that because it was not a legal requirement, CCTV-specific training was not necessary.<sup>431</sup> As a result, Control Room Operators did not receive SIA CCTV training.

**6.87** I accept that Michael Edwards, who was the Control Room Operator in Whisky Control on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, did have a general understanding of what hostile reconnaissance was. I also accept that he understood that his role involved looking out for what he regarded as suspicious.<sup>432</sup> Despite this, I was struck by the fact that in 11 years of acting as Control Room Operator, Michael Edwards had never once suspected that he was observing anyone engaging in hostile reconnaissance.<sup>433</sup> This

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<sup>430</sup> 18/85/3-7, 34/78/3-6

<sup>431</sup> 34/74/21-75/21

<sup>432</sup> 18/85/14-86/5, 34/79/4

<sup>433</sup> 18/86/14-19

was a product of the lack of adequate training and the shortcomings in the CCTV system. I address both of these later in Part 6.

## SMG senior staff's counter-terrorism training

**6.88** James Allen, Miriam Stone and Paul Johnson had all received Project Griffin training.<sup>434</sup> Like Project Argus, Project Griffin was a training module provided by NaCTSO. While Project Argus was “*focused more at a strategic level*”, Project Griffin was “*focused at more of a ground level in terms of those people delivering security*”.<sup>435</sup> Miriam Stone and Paul Johnson also attended Project Argus training.<sup>436</sup> James Allen undertook the Showsec stewards' counter-terrorism module.<sup>437</sup> Paul Johnson had undertaken the SIA door supervisor training and had held an SIA licence for this activity.<sup>438</sup> All of these represent good practice by SMG.

**6.89** Where SMG should have done better for their senior Arena staff was in relation to CCTV. Both Miriam Stone and Paul Johnson's responsibilities included the viewing of CCTV during events. Both Miriam Stone and Paul Johnson requested external CCTV training.

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<sup>434</sup> [28/78/16-21](#), [30/83/5-7](#), [34/10/14-16](#)

<sup>435</sup> [40/30/23-31/14](#)

<sup>436</sup> [30/73/21-24](#), [31/40/14-44/23](#), [34/11/11-13](#)

<sup>437</sup> [29/158/5-11](#)

<sup>438</sup> [34/9/17-19](#), [34/75/22-24](#)

Both were told that this training was not a legal requirement. As a result, both were told that they could not have that training.<sup>439</sup>

**6.90** I address the confusion caused by SMG's corporate structure and SIA licence in Parts 2 and 3. Setting the legal position aside, it was obviously highly desirable that both Miriam Stone and Paul Johnson received proper training in the use of CCTV from a counter-terrorism perspective. They were the most senior SMG personnel in Sierra and Whisky Control. It was a significant failure in SMG's training regime for its senior staff that no CCTV-specific counter-terrorism component was provided. That this failure occurred, despite the fact that both relevant people were requesting this training, makes this failure all the more serious.

## Showsec

### Online counter-terrorism training for stewards

**6.91** Showsec had its own bespoke online e-learning platform which it had developed in collaboration with Derby University from 2011.<sup>440</sup> There are approximately 60 to 70 online courses available on the platform.<sup>441</sup> Showsec required all staff

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<sup>439</sup> [34/74/16-75/1](#), [30/157/14-158/7](#)

<sup>440</sup> [INQ039377/18](#), [33/6/16-21](#), [33/9/4-6](#)

<sup>441</sup> [31/198/3-6](#)

to undertake six modules from the online training before they started in their role as a steward.<sup>442</sup> One of these was a module devoted to counter-terrorism.<sup>443</sup> There were additional modules which could be undertaken as a steward's duties required once they had commenced work, including one specific to the Manchester Arena.<sup>444</sup>

**6.92** The counter-terrorism module was entitled "*Counter-terrorism at Events*".<sup>445</sup> It consisted of a series of webpages with information relevant to the identification of hostile reconnaissance, the UK threat level and a link to the MI5 website.<sup>446</sup> It provided examples of terrorist attacks which had taken place in other parts of the world.<sup>447</sup>

**6.93** The training also provided links to NaCTSO-prepared training videos: Operation Fairway and Eyes Wide Open.<sup>448</sup> Operation Fairway was described in the training text as containing "*very important and relevant*" information to the module.<sup>449</sup> One of the key measures of the Eyes Wide Open videos was

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<sup>442</sup> [33/4/20-5/7](#)

<sup>443</sup> [33/5/3](#)

<sup>444</sup> [33/5/11-6/4](#), [31/205/24-206/3](#), [INQ012047](#)

<sup>445</sup> [32/2/5-8](#), [INQ012105/169](#)

<sup>446</sup> [32/5/9-24](#)

<sup>447</sup> [32/7/12-21](#), [INQ012105/184](#)

<sup>448</sup> [31/209/25-210/7](#), [INQ012105/170](#), [INQ012105/184](#)

<sup>449</sup> [INQ012105/170](#)

having “*the confidence to report suspicious incidents.*”<sup>450</sup> The inclusion of these two videos was an example of good practice by Showsec. Showsec anticipated that the whole module would take approximately 45 minutes to complete.<sup>451</sup>

**6.94** Guidance was provided at the start of the module which stated the following to those undertaking the training:

*“Your vigilance is essential to ensuring protective measures are kept. Stewards/SIA staff will know their work areas very well and therefore maybe better identifiers of risk than their supervisors or line manager. It is therefore essential workers alert any unusual behaviour or items out of place to their supervisor. Workers should be confident speaking to their supervisors if they believe there is suspicious activity on the premises and should understand the importance of reporting these (even if it is a false alarm).”*<sup>452</sup>

**6.95** This was an appropriate way for the training to begin as it emphasised the twin key messages to staff of the need for vigilance and having confidence raising matters with their supervisors. There was insufficient

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<sup>450</sup> [25/30/15-22](#)

<sup>451</sup> [32/1/11-16](#)

<sup>452</sup> [32/2/20-3/6](#), [INQ012105/171](#)

evidence for me to determine whether or not Showsec's training generally was better than that provided by other similar organisations at the time. However, I do regard this as an example of good practice within the online counter-terrorism training.

- 6.96** The training included reference to "*patrolling*" as being one of the measures that might be taken to "*help reduce the chance of a terrorist attack*".<sup>453</sup> This is a further example of Showsec correctly identifying the importance of patrolling as a counter-terrorism measure.<sup>454</sup> The inclusion of patrolling in the counter-terrorism module makes it all the more inexplicable that Showsec did not put this into practice in the City Room.
- 6.97** The Security Experts were critical of the content of the online training in a number of respects.<sup>455</sup> While I agree that the content was capable of being improved, it was nevertheless adequate. The target audience was Showsec stewards who, without a licence, were not permitted to carry out active profiling of audience members.<sup>456</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> [32/3/10-18, INQ012105/171](#)

<sup>454</sup> [32/4/7-16](#)

<sup>455</sup> [41/226/16-227/10](#)

<sup>456</sup> [31/182/24-184/4, 31/185/14-188/18](#)

**6.98** The fact that the content of the online material was adequate is not the end of the matter. Those undertaking the training may be doing so in their free time,<sup>457</sup> and will be using their own equipment to access the content.<sup>458</sup> While it was not unreasonable for Showsec to require its staff to do this initial training in their own time<sup>459</sup> and with their own equipment, it gives rise to a number of obvious risks. There is an obvious and significant risk that the person doing the training would not be doing so in an optimal environment. They may be doing it late at night, others may be present while they are doing it, they may be distracted, they may be doing it piecemeal. There is a risk that the person may skip through the content without paying any real attention. There is a risk that they will be accessing it on a device with a small screen which may make absorbing the information difficult.

**6.99** There were a number of measures available to Showsec to improve the prospect that the important content of the online training was being understood and assimilated. The webpages could have been displayed for a minimum period before permitting a

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<sup>457</sup> 32/28/15-18, 32/29/3-6

<sup>458</sup> 25/9/21-25

<sup>459</sup> 41/142/9-18

trainee to move on.<sup>460</sup> This would prevent the trainee skipping forwards. A knowledge test at the end of the training would provide an opportunity to check that the trainee understood the content. In fact, in December 2016 Showsec did introduce a knowledge test to the counter-terrorism module.<sup>461</sup> While this important improvement was in place several months prior to the Ariana Grande concert, it was of no benefit to those working for Showsec in the City Room that night. This was because all of them had undertaken the counter-terrorism module prior to December 2016<sup>462</sup> and there had been no requirement to retake it once the knowledge check was implemented.<sup>463</sup>

**6.100** A further check that Showsec should have implemented was the monitoring of the duration of the time it took trainees to complete each module. Showsec commissioned a retrieval of the time spent by Mohammed Agha on his training for the purposes of collecting evidence for the Inquiry. Following this, the Inquiry requested the same information in relation to a number of other key Showsec employees.<sup>464</sup>

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<sup>460</sup> [32/29/13-30/2](#)

<sup>461</sup> [32/8/1-13](#)

<sup>462</sup> [INQ037084](#)

<sup>463</sup> [32/13/17-21](#)

<sup>464</sup> [INQ037084](#)

**6.101** This data is not the product of a system which was designed and intended to monitor compliance. It is a re-creation from information which is now available.<sup>465</sup> For this reason there are limitations to this data.<sup>466</sup> However, I am satisfied that in the case of four of the 10 people for whom there is data available, they moved through the counter-terrorism module at too great a speed to properly understand its content.<sup>467</sup>

**6.102** In the case of Mohammed Agha, he accepted that if he had attended to his studies properly, he would have been better informed as to how to carry out his duties on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>468</sup> He also stated he had not watched any videos as part of his training.<sup>469</sup> This supports the conclusion that he did not carry out the online training diligently.

**6.103** Showsec should have foreseen these risks and taken robust steps to ensure that its staff had taken on board, in a meaningful way, the critically important information contained within the online training. Such information

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<sup>465</sup> [32/32/3-24](#)

<sup>466</sup> [32/32/25-33/13](#)

<sup>467</sup> [32/35/3-46/4](#)

<sup>468</sup> [24/64/8-11](#)

<sup>469</sup> [24/23/3-5](#), [24/117/23-25](#)

was capable of making a large number of people much safer through the actions of Showsec staff.

**6.104** Once the online training had been completed, it remained available to staff to return to it of their own volition.<sup>470</sup> Showsec also had a facility to encourage its staff to undertake refresher training in the counter-terrorism module using an e-shot.<sup>471</sup> This facility was used on 14 November 2015 immediately following the terrorist attack in Paris.<sup>472</sup> It was good practice on Showsec's part to recognise the need for refresher training in light of the situation in France. However, Showsec did not make this refresher training compulsory.<sup>473</sup> Showsec should have done so. I do not accept that the reasons given for not making it compulsory provide an adequate justification given the importance of this information.<sup>474</sup> I found it particularly concerning that even after the Attack, Showsec did not immediately mandate refresher training in counter-terrorism for all its staff.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> [33/5/10-6/4](#), [23/15/1-8](#)

<sup>471</sup> [32/9/13-23](#)

<sup>472</sup> [INQ034689/1](#), [INQ034688/1](#)

<sup>473</sup> [32/13/17-25](#), [33/6/22-7/4](#)

<sup>474</sup> [32/13/17-15/14](#)

<sup>475</sup> [32/17/1-19/16](#)

- 6.105** In addition to the counter-terrorism module, Showsec’s portfolio of e-learning topics included one specific to the Arena. This served as an introduction to the layout, systems and terminology specific to the Arena. It was a customer service-focused document.<sup>476</sup> It did not contain any information which focuses the attention of those undertaking that training on matters relevant to counter-terrorism when working at the Arena.
- 6.106** It did, however, envisage that supervisors would have “*thoroughly checked their working area of any issues ahead of egress*” before completing a pre-egress report.<sup>477</sup> This was an appropriate and necessary procedure. It would have been improved by making clear what the supervisor might be on the lookout for. Within its own terms, though, it was an adequate description of what needed to occur. The City Room was one of the working areas for Showsec. The mezzanine was part of the City Room. The natural meaning of this sentence is that the City Room, including the mezzanine, would be thoroughly checked before egress. In practice, Showsec did not interpret this part of its own training as requiring a thorough check of the mezzanine for the potential threat from

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<sup>476</sup> 33/9/14-10/15

<sup>477</sup> INQ012047/38, 31/213/15-24

a terrorist. As a result, the check was confined to the direct route from the Arena concourse doors to the Fifty Pence staircase, and from the doors to the raised walkway to the Arena concourse doors.<sup>478</sup>

## Other counter-terrorism training for stewards

**6.107** Showsec's training incorporated a period in the classroom of at least half a day.<sup>479</sup> I accept that this included some element of counter-terrorism training. It is unclear from the evidence I heard exactly what it contained.<sup>480</sup> However, I heard no evidence that the classroom work on counter-terrorism involved a structured, formal and robust check that all of the online training had been understood. Nor did I hear evidence that there was any other testing of the knowledge of the individuals who participated in it.<sup>481</sup> At no point has it been submitted on Showsec's behalf that this training did contain this element.

**6.108** Whichever way it was done, a person-to-person interaction would have provided a valuable check that the message of the online training had been received and understood. The online training conveyed the message that staff should

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<sup>478</sup> 23/189/2-191/18

<sup>479</sup> 33/7/5-9, 33/7/18-20, 23/82/8-11

<sup>480</sup> 25/12/7-10

<sup>481</sup> 24/145/12-19, 23/14/23-25, 23/132/11-13, 23/82/12-13

have confidence reporting concerns adequately. For this to have any effect on attitude, a person would need to complete this training diligently.

**6.109** It is my view that the message was sufficiently important that it needed to be repeated in a one-to-one setting to check it had been understood and to instil the necessary confidence in each and every member of staff. Everyone is different. Showsec employs stewards who can be as young as 16-years old. While age is not a reliable indicator of confidence, a significant age gap can act to make some people feel less empowered to speak up. Counter-terrorism is too important an activity to leave to chance. It was incumbent on Showsec to take adequate steps to make sure that each and every member of staff understood the importance of being vigilant and speaking up.

## Briefings

**6.110** Showsec had in place a system for reinforcing the counter-terrorism aspect of the training through supervisors' briefings<sup>482</sup> and steward briefings.<sup>483</sup> The need for vigilance formed part of both levels of briefing.

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<sup>482</sup> [34/136/3-10](#), [33/52/24-53/6](#), [23/22/5-11](#), [33/239/10-24](#)

<sup>483</sup> [17/189/25-90/9](#), [25/40/2-5](#), [17/137/3-6](#)

**6.111** David Middleton, who gave the briefing to the stewards on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, stated that he included an instruction that he needed to know if there was anything they were not happy with.<sup>484</sup> However, I was concerned that his answer to the question as to whether he was an approachable supervisor was that he was “*a strict supervisor*” and that he was “*not there to make friends with staff*”.<sup>485</sup> By May 2017, David Middleton had worked for Showsec for 21 years.<sup>486</sup> He had been a supervisor for 16 years and a senior supervisor for five years.<sup>487</sup>

**6.112** Mohammed Agha did not ask any questions of David Middleton, despite not receiving any specific instruction for the role. This was a role he was undertaking for the first time that night. Kyle Lawler, while accepting that he had real difficulty recreating his mental state from the night,<sup>488</sup> stated that he had hesitated reporting SA because of his concern about what the reaction might be.<sup>489</sup> He also said that his concern was not focused on David Middleton but more generally that he might be accused of racism.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> [19/69/10-13](#)

<sup>485</sup> [19/70/4-6](#)

<sup>486</sup> [19/1/21-23](#)

<sup>487</sup> [19/1/24-2/5](#)

<sup>488</sup> [25/138/12-22](#)

<sup>489</sup> [25/113/15-22](#), [25/175/23-176/7](#)

<sup>490</sup> [25/175/20-22](#)

**6.113** The culture Showsec should have been instilling in all its staff was that they should be receptive and approachable when it came to reports of potential terrorist threats.

**6.114** In any event, while it was good practice to include in the briefing both the need for vigilance and the need to report, it was necessary to do more than this and address this on an individual and personal level. As Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Sean O’Callaghan recognised in the context of BTP briefings, there is a risk that people stop paying attention when the same message is repeated every time.<sup>491</sup>

**6.115** The briefings were not an adequate substitute for the diligent completion of the online training. A subsequent person-to-person check that the importance of that training had been understood and that each and every person had the confidence they needed should have occurred.

**Conclusion: stewards’ counter-terrorism training**

**6.116** Showsec should have had in place a system which focused on each individual. This should have checked that they had understood their online learning and provided an opportunity for the member of staff to demonstrate that understanding. This might have been done

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<sup>491</sup> [36/157/18-158/5](#)

through a short period of mentorship,<sup>492</sup> through interactive classroom-based learning which set out to assess this in a structured way, or through on-site training as part of a practical scenario.

- 6.117** This training should have dealt not only with what staff were looking for, but also how they should react when confronted with a potential terrorist situation. The training needed to instil in an individual the necessary confidence to report potential terrorist activity.
- 6.118** Two Showsec employees, Mohammed Agha and Kyle Lawler, were provided with information arising from Christopher Wild's concerns about SA on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. This information should have prompted immediate action on their parts. Both had been present at the briefing which included the need to be vigilant and to raise concerns. But neither had completed the online training in circumstances which ensured that they absorbed and understood it adequately.
- 6.119** Neither Mohammed Agha nor Kyle Lawler reacted as robustly and effectively as they should have. This was because, when presented with the information, neither of them had at the forefront of their mind the very high degree of importance of doing so. Had Showsec taken robust steps to ensure that all of its staff

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<sup>492</sup> [41/227/5-10](#)

had completed their training diligently and provided a practical opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and build their confidence, it is possible that either or both Mohammed Agha and Kyle Lawler would have acted more decisively to escalate Christopher Wild's concerns. I address the potential effect of such action in greater detail in Part 1.

**6.120** In reaching these conclusions I have not lost sight of the fact that both Mohammed Agha and Kyle Lawler had, in addition to their Showsec training, an SIA door supervisor's licence. The SIA door supervisor licence training included the active profiling of the crowd. This went beyond the level of vigilance expected of the steward role.<sup>493</sup> It included some basic counter-terrorism training.<sup>494</sup> However, the SIA training was not specific to working at the Arena. Nor was it specific to the hierarchy, relationships and personalities of those others who were working on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

**6.121** The duty was on Showsec to ensure that all of its staff, whether SIA licenced or not, were adequately trained. This meant ensuring a minimum of two things. First, that all staff possessed the level of counter-terrorism understanding required of the role they were

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<sup>493</sup> [31/183/8-19](#)

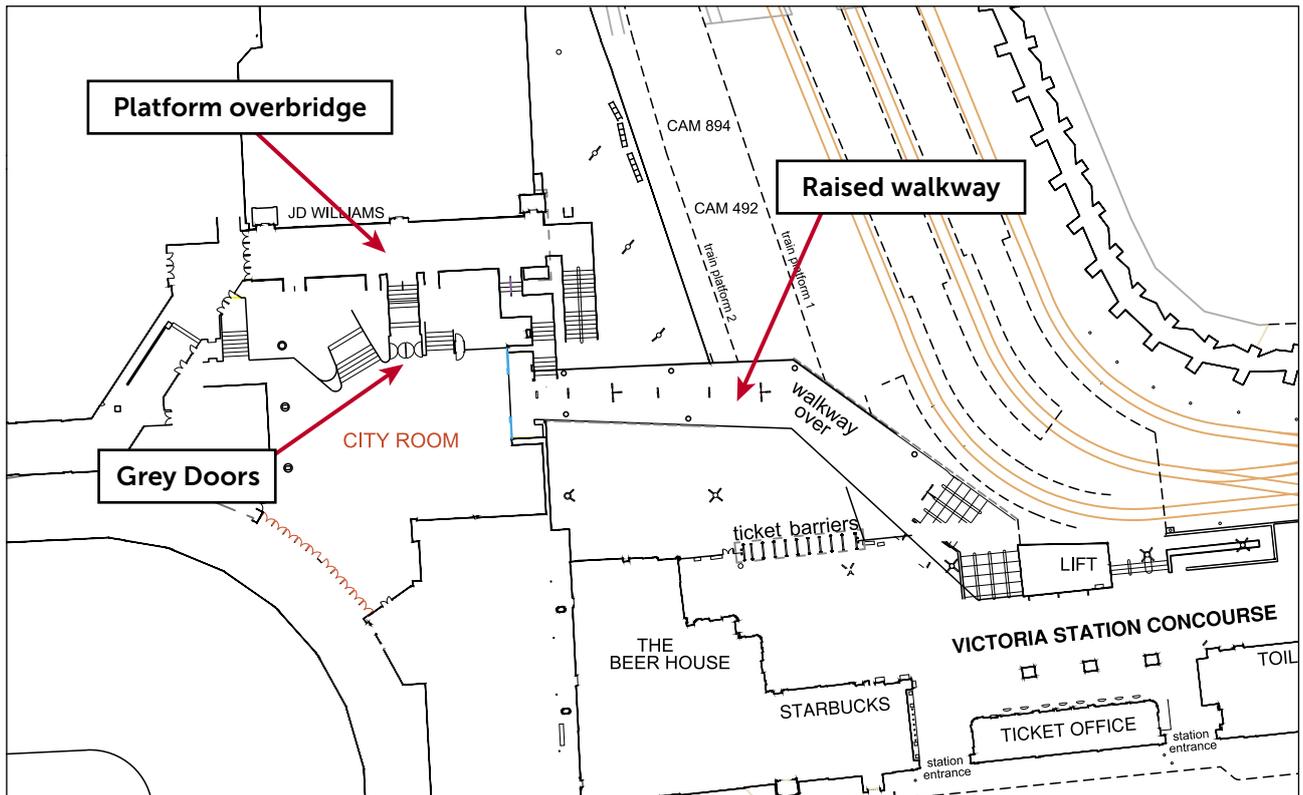
<sup>494</sup> [43/112/14-19](#)

given, so that they could immediately recognise when they needed to act. Second, that all staff felt sufficiently confident and empowered in the environment they were working in, and with the people they were working with, to report potential terrorist threats to the right person with appropriate speed and clarity.

**6.122** While the training that Showsec offered may have been successful for some, if not many of its staff, Showsec was under an obligation to ensure that all staff had taken it on board and knew what to do. Showsec's methods for ensuring this were inadequate.

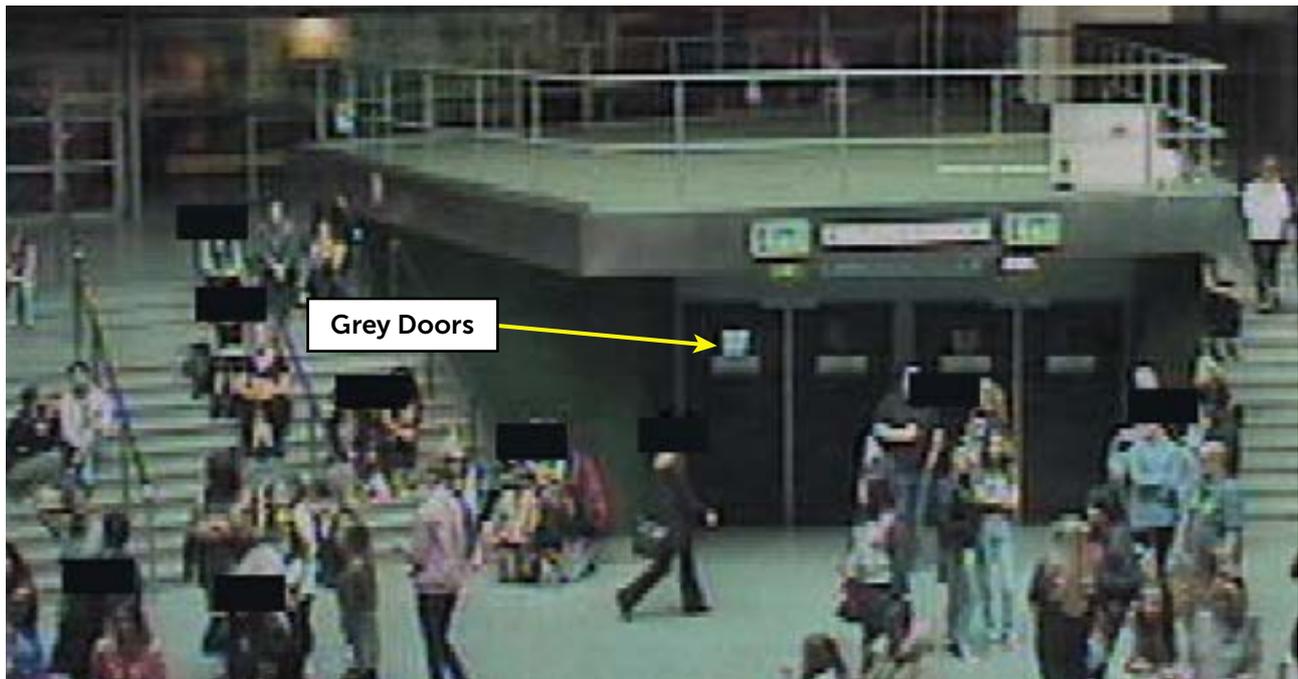
### Training for the Grey Doors role

**6.123** As set out in Part 2, Mohammed Agha was allocated to an area of the City Room known as the Grey Doors. This was an SIA licence-holder position. The Grey Doors provide access to the station platforms via the platform overbridge and are positioned between the two staircases to the mezzanine area. The location of the Grey Doors within the City Room appears in Figures 14 and 15.



**Figure 14:** Plan showing location of the Grey Doors in the City Room<sup>495</sup>

<sup>495</sup> Annotated extract of [INQ033841](#)



**Figure 15:** Photograph showing location of the Grey Doors in the City Room<sup>496</sup>

**6.124** Mohammed Agha had never previously been deployed to this position.<sup>497</sup> He was not briefed by any supervisor as to exactly what his role was but was told that he should not leave the Grey Doors unless they were covered by another member of staff or in the event of an emergency.<sup>498</sup> He received a brief explanation as to what his role involved from another steward. This explanation was to the same effect as the supervisor's briefing.<sup>499</sup> He received no written instructions in relation to this role, despite the requirements of SMG (UK)'s

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<sup>496</sup> Annotated extract of [INQ035314/8](#)

<sup>497</sup> [24/9/8-9](#)

<sup>498</sup> [19/57/10-18](#)

<sup>499</sup> [24/9/17-24](#)

premises licence.<sup>500</sup> This was an obligation on SMG, not Showsec. However, the idea which gives rise to the licence condition is a good one. I make clear, though, that I am not criticising Showsec for a failure to provide Mohammed Agha with written instructions in relation to his role on the Grey Doors. This was just one of a number of ways which was open to Showsec to make sure he knew what he was doing.

**6.125** The position on the Grey Doors was unlike other positions by fire doors: they were key operated doors, which automatically unlocked in the event of a fire alarm, the function of which was to prevent access to the platform side of the barriers on the station concourse.<sup>501</sup> As such, the Grey Doors did not present the same security risk as other fire doors. Consequently, that position required a specific briefing for a person undertaking it for the first time. That briefing should have made clear that there was greater scope for Mohammed Agha to move away from them than was the case for other fire doors.

**6.126** Mohammed Agha received no specific training on how, when in the Grey Doors role, he should have escalated any concern raised with him by a member of the public. I heard no evidence to

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<sup>500</sup> [INQ035447/9](#)

<sup>501</sup> [33/166/3-22](#), [30/33/8-34/25](#)

suggest that this lack of detailed instruction was a one-off oversight on Showsec's part. Rather there was a failure to appreciate the need for such training. The training would have provided an opportunity to discuss with the person what their role involved. In turn, this is likely to have built the confidence of that person in knowing how to respond to a variety of situations they may be presented with, including a report of potential terrorist activity.

**6.127** Mohammed Agha did not receive adequate training in his role in front of the Grey Doors. His training was capable of leading him to believe that it was more important to remain where he was than in fact was the case.<sup>502</sup> In turn, this reduced the prospect of him responding appropriately and robustly to Christopher Wild's concerns.

## Training for Showsec radio holders

**6.128** Some members of Showsec staff were issued with radios. On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, Kyle Lawler was one such person.<sup>503</sup> The radios were supplied by SMG.<sup>504</sup> In addition to the standard talk function, the radios had another button on the top.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>502</sup> 30/34/20-24, 24/156/23-157/17

<sup>503</sup> 25/62/10-12

<sup>504</sup> 33/39/6-7

<sup>505</sup> 25/65/6-8, 33/39/17-20, 23/166/9-11, 34/61/20-24

**6.129** Thomas Bailey, one of the two Showsec Heads of Security, understood this to be an “*emergency button*” which, when pressed, would cause the base station in Sierra Control to beep against the assigned call sign.<sup>506</sup> He stated that this had only occurred once in his experience, when the button had been pressed by accident.<sup>507</sup> He stated he did not know if the radios had an “*override*” function.<sup>508</sup> Thomas Bailey recognised, however, that his understanding of this function was limited. He stated that he had never seen any supervisor provide training in its use when telling staff how to use the radios.<sup>509</sup> He accepted that if the function was used infrequently staff would lose familiarity with it<sup>510</sup> and that staff should have received regular training in its use.<sup>511</sup> He also accepted he should have had a better understanding of it, but asserted that there were differences between handsets.<sup>512</sup>

**6.130** Paul Johnson, SMG Security Supervisor, expressed the view that he did not think Showsec knew anything about this button and that he did not think Showsec staff had been

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<sup>506</sup> 33/39/17-40/14, 33/41/11-42/14

<sup>507</sup> 33/42/15-19

<sup>508</sup> 33/39/17-20

<sup>509</sup> 33/42/15-44/6

<sup>510</sup> 33/43/25-44/5

<sup>511</sup> 33/43/19-24

<sup>512</sup> 33/42/20-43/4

told about the button or trained in its use.<sup>513</sup>

He expressed surprise at Thomas Bailey's evidence.<sup>514</sup> Paul Johnson said that the button was for his staff when patrolling alone.<sup>515</sup> Paul Johnson's account of this button's function was that when depressed it would broadcast for 10 seconds "*right over the channel it's on*".<sup>516</sup>

**6.131** Jordan Beak described a process in which a user "*cut in*" to a conversation to say they had a "*priority message*". This, he said should cause people to stop their broadcast.<sup>517</sup> If that did not work, he stated the radios had a red button which when pressed "*cuts everybody else and communicates only your radio.*"<sup>518</sup>

**6.132** David Middleton described pressing "*a button*" in order to say that there was a "*priority message*".<sup>519</sup> It is unclear from his account<sup>520</sup> whether he was describing the first part of Jordan Beak's explanation, which does not involve an override function of others' radios, or the use of a button the sole purpose of which was to interrupt the broadcasts of others.

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<sup>513</sup> [34/27/5-17, 34/55/16-18, 34/61/20-24](#)

<sup>514</sup> [34/27/6-9](#)

<sup>515</sup> [34/27/17-19](#)

<sup>516</sup> [34/27/23-28/9](#)

<sup>517</sup> [23/165/23-166/11](#)

<sup>518</sup> [23/166/6-11](#)

<sup>519</sup> [19/95/22-23](#)

<sup>520</sup> [19/95/4-98/7, 19/217/1-17](#)

**6.133** Kyle Lawler described his training in the use of the radio in this way: “*the first time I was given a radio, I was shown basically how to send a message and to change the channel and the volume. That was pretty much it*”.<sup>521</sup> He stated that he was not aware of an “*override*” button in May 2017.<sup>522</sup> He stated he had seen a button on the top of the radio which he said he did not know the purpose of.<sup>523</sup> He confirmed that in his statement he had described it as a “*panic button*”, but that he did not know what would happen if he pressed it.<sup>524</sup> He stated he did not think it worked.<sup>525</sup> He indicated that he had not given any thought to the purpose of the button.<sup>526</sup> He also stated that he could not recall anybody ever using the “*panic button*” before.<sup>527</sup> The use of the phrase panic button is consistent with Thomas Bailey’s apparent misunderstanding of the button’s function. Kyle Lawler’s description of his training is also consistent with Thomas Bailey’s.<sup>528</sup> Kyle Lawler’s account, that he was not aware of the functionality of this emergency button, is

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<sup>521</sup> [25/64/13-18](#)

<sup>522</sup> [25/64/25-65/2](#)

<sup>523</sup> [25/65/3-4](#)

<sup>524</sup> [25/168/10-21](#)

<sup>525</sup> [25/168/25-169/5](#)

<sup>526</sup> [25/65/21-24](#)

<sup>527</sup> [25/170/5-11](#)

<sup>528</sup> [33/43/11-13](#)

consistent with Paul Johnson's belief that its use did not form part of Showsec's training. It appears that Jordan Beak did understand what the button did.

**6.134** I accept Kyle Lawler's evidence that he did not have a clear understanding of the full functionality of the radio he had during the concert. He was not aware of the purpose of the override button, what would happen if he pressed it or its ability to deliver urgent messages immediately. This was because he was not properly trained by Showsec in its use. This did not, in the event, make any difference to events on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. That is because Kyle Lawler did not take immediate, decisive and robust action in response to learning of Christopher Wild's concerns because he did not appreciate the importance of doing so. However, Kyle Lawler's deficient understanding of the radios did reveal substantial weakness in Showsec's training.

### Showsec staff monitoring SMG's CCTV

**6.135** SMG and Showsec had an agreement that led to Showsec staff providing relief cover to SMG employees in Whisky Control. When this occurred, Showsec staff monitored the CCTV during events.<sup>529</sup> They did this despite not

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<sup>529</sup> [27/39/24-40/13](#)

having an SIA CCTV licence.<sup>530</sup> They should have had such a qualification. The confusion caused by SMG's corporate structure, which I have set out in Parts 2 and 3, did not apply when Showsec were undertaking such work.

- 6.136** An explanation for this may be Thomas Bailey's belief that those Showsec employees would be undertaking tasks other than CCTV monitoring when in Whisky Control.<sup>531</sup> Such a misunderstanding does not, however, absolve SMG of the responsibility of ensuring that those who monitored its CCTV system were suitably qualified. Further, and quite aside from the lack of compliance with the SIA regime, I am not satisfied that a Showsec employee would have the necessary experience and training to undertake the work of an SMG employee whose role was to monitor the CCTV.
- 6.137** The regulatory non-compliance and lack of training did not directly affect events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, as there were no Showsec employees in Whisky Control. It does reveal a further example of a lack of care on SMG's part in relation to CCTV. This would not have occurred if SMG had approached CCTV as being an important counter-terrorism measure.

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<sup>530</sup> [34/76/7-14](#), [27/39/24-40/13](#)

<sup>531</sup> [33/49/24-50/12](#)

## Counter-terrorism training for Showsec senior operational staff

**6.138** Those in the Head of Security role held an SIA CCTV monitoring licence.<sup>532</sup> The supervisors all held SIA door supervisor licences.<sup>533</sup> Showsec was entitled to rely upon the SIA training as providing some information to those members of staff whose role included the active profiling of event-goers and potential threats to them.

**6.139** Showsec's senior operational staff Thomas Rigby, Thomas Bailey, David Middleton and Daniel Perry had all undertaken NaCTSO Project Griffin.<sup>534</sup> In addition, Thomas Bailey and Thomas Rigby, who both undertook the most senior operational role of Head of Security, had completed NaCTSO Project Argus training.

**6.140** In my view, Showsec had taken adequate steps to ensure that its senior operational staff had sufficient counter-terrorism training.

## SMG and Showsec

**6.141** Part of Showsec's agreement with SMG was to provide "*senior management, supervisors and key staff*" with "*venue specific desktop safety exercises including but not limited to fire, crowd control, terrorist attack and show*

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<sup>532</sup> [33/50/17-19](#)

<sup>533</sup> [33/15/21-16/9](#)

<sup>534</sup> [34/115/4-7](#), [33/111/20-112/1](#), [19/17/13-23](#), [23/15/12-22](#)

*cancellations.*<sup>535</sup> This was a responsible thing for the two organisations to agree to do. As a result, Showsec and SMG organised for members of staff to participate in tabletop exercises at the Arena.<sup>536</sup> Thomas Bailey and Miriam Stone created these exercises.<sup>537</sup>

**6.142** One of those exercises, which was run on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014, involved a scenario of a terrorist attack in the City Room.<sup>538</sup> Although it was characterised at some points in the evidence as a counter-terrorism exercise,<sup>539</sup> it was not focused on detecting or preventing a terrorist attack.<sup>540</sup> The focus of this training was on what should occur after an attack had begun.<sup>541</sup> As a result, although it reflects well on both SMG and Showsec that they undertook joint training exercises, they did not do so in relation to counter-terrorism. This exercise scenario provided an opportunity for SMG and Showsec to think carefully about all the challenges presented by the City Room in the context of a terrorist attack.

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<sup>535</sup> [31/171/7-18](#)

<sup>536</sup> [33/86/1-5](#), [30/45/9-12](#)

<sup>537</sup> [33/85/5-6](#), [30/50/3-4](#)

<sup>538</sup> [INQ001444/1](#)

<sup>539</sup> [43/239/23-240/8](#)

<sup>540</sup> [33/87/5-23](#)

<sup>541</sup> [INQ001444](#)

## Hostile reconnaissance response

### Key findings

- There was evidence that SMG and Showsec had experience of identifying and responding to potential hostile reconnaissance appropriately.
- The follow-up to identified potential hostile reconnaissance was not effective on every occasion, in particular in response to an occasion of potential hostile reconnaissance by a person unconnected to SA three days prior to the Attack.
- There was an insufficiently robust system for ensuring that information about suspicious behaviour was always passed on and acted upon.
- Greater awareness of the potential hostile reconnaissance, by the person unconnected to SA, three days prior to the Attack may have caused Mohammed Agha or Kyle Lawler to respond differently to Christopher Wild's concerns. It would have increased the possibility that SA would have been noticed on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

## Hostile reconnaissance: sharing of information

- 6.143** The adequacy of the SMG and Showsec training is dealt with earlier in Part 6. I focus here on the system which was in place for following up on potential hostile reconnaissance when it was identified.
- 6.144** SMG and Showsec staff did have experience of identifying and responding to potential hostile reconnaissance effectively. Thomas Bailey told me about an incident when some individuals were thought to be acting suspiciously at a Pet Shop Boys concert in February 2017. This led to a prompt and substantial response. Another incident at a Jehovah's Witness conference in 2015 led to a BTP superintendent being deployed to the Sierra Control Room for several subsequent events.<sup>542</sup>
- 6.145** Brandon Couper-Philips, a Showsec steward, noticed an incident of suspected hostile reconnaissance on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2017,<sup>543</sup> demonstrating that Showsec staff were on the lookout for such issues on that evening too. It was not clear to me on the evidence I heard in relation to this incident, however, to what extent it was considered or investigated.

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<sup>542</sup> [33/75/15-76/20](#)

<sup>543</sup> [17/218/1-220/23](#), [INQ022790/2](#)

**6.146** The follow-up to reports of hostile reconnaissance was not effective on every occasion. Jonathan Lavery, a former police officer and member of Showsec staff, reported an Asian male “*acting very suspiciously wearing all black with a large black bag*” to the Sierra Control Room on the evening of 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017.<sup>544</sup> This description was very similar to SA’s appearance on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, although the individual Jonathan Lavery saw was not SA, nor does he have any known links to either SA or HA.<sup>545</sup> Jonathan Lavery followed the individual until he got onto a train, and informed a BTP officer of his concerns.<sup>546</sup> He then completed a written report of the incident which was collected at the end of the evening.<sup>547</sup>

**6.147** Jonathan Lavery’s expectation was that this report would have been brought up in the pre-event briefing on subsequent nights, but he could not recall whether this had in fact happened. He was not aware of any system in place to ensure that it did.<sup>548</sup>

**6.148** Miriam Stone thought that she had mentioned Jonathan Lavery’s report in her briefings to supervisors on the following evenings, in order

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<sup>544</sup> [INQ025084/5, 17/68/7-70/11](#)

<sup>545</sup> [17/9/2-18](#)

<sup>546</sup> [17/72/11-23](#)

<sup>547</sup> [INQ012062, 17/74/18-75/15](#)

<sup>548</sup> [17/78/17-18/25](#)

to raise their awareness and encourage security staff to “*keep an eye out*”.<sup>549</sup> I found Miriam Stone to be a generally reliable witness and accept that this was her genuine recollection, but there was nothing about Jonathan Lavery’s report documented on either the supervisors<sup>550</sup> or stewards<sup>551</sup> briefing sheet on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. Showsec staff did not recall being informed of it.<sup>552</sup> Either the information was not passed down effectively to those providing security on that night or it did not make a sufficient impression on them.

**6.149** There was an insufficiently robust system for ensuring that information about suspicious behaviour was always passed on and acted upon.

**6.150** The Security Experts were critical of the lack of a system to ensure such key information was adequately disseminated, both within SMG and Showsec<sup>553</sup> and between them and the police.<sup>554</sup> They also were of the view that there was not enough practical direction given to staff

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<sup>549</sup> [31/54/7-58/10](#)

<sup>550</sup> [INQ012111](#)

<sup>551</sup> [INQ011966](#)

<sup>552</sup> [19/172/2-19](#), [17/208/5-209/13](#)

<sup>553</sup> [43/152/8-155/4](#), [43/247/13-20](#)

<sup>554</sup> [42/7/5-16](#)

about how to respond to or report suspicious behaviour, and encouragement to act upon it.<sup>555</sup> Colonel Latham described the issue as follows:

*“[Y]ou can encourage it by, whenever anybody reports anything, no matter how stupid, foolish and irritating it is that they’ve done that, giving them positive public praise and reinforcement, “This guy’s always reporting stuff, he’s my best reporter”, that sort of attitude...if you encourage your junior staff to really do that, their job is less boring and you can be a bit more of a team and it’s better customer service. But in this case, we have seen when these two individuals [Agha and Lawler] were pressed to test, the net result was that the control room didn’t find out.”<sup>556</sup>*

**6.151** Colonel Latham commented that passing on reports of suspicious behaviour, such as that of Jonathan Lavery, was “*a good way of keeping your briefings fresh*” and encouraging others to report concerns. He agreed with the suggestion that, had security staff on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 been aware they should look out for someone dressed in black and carrying a backpack, it might have helped them spot someone who fitted that description.<sup>557</sup>

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<sup>555</sup> [42/31/12-32/15](#)

<sup>556</sup> [42/32/23-33/16](#)

<sup>557</sup> [42/153/24-155/24](#)

**6.152** It may be that greater awareness of Jonathan Lavery's report of suspicious behaviour a few nights earlier would have caused Mohammed Agha or Kyle Lawler to respond differently to Christopher Wild's concerns. Greater awareness would also have caused Showsec staff more generally to have been more vigilant in looking out for someone of a similar appearance to SA. This would have increased the possibility that he would have been noticed.

## Security perimeter

### Key findings

- SMG should have sought permission from its landlord to push out the security perimeter before May 2017, so that people entering the City Room with large bags were checked before entry.
- Had permission to push out the perimeter been granted, an attack in the City Room would have been much less likely. SA may have been deterred from carrying out an attack at the Victoria Exchange Complex.
- Had permission been refused, it is likely that SMG would have looked more closely at other threat mitigation measures required in the City Room.
- Whether or not the request to move the perimeter beyond the City Room had been granted, it is likely that in at least trying to achieve this, SMG would have substantially improved the safety of the City Room for event-goers.

**6.153** In May 2017, the security perimeter of the Arena, so far as approaching through the City Room was concerned, was at the doors into the Arena concourse. It was at this point that large bags were searched and tickets checked.

**6.154** The Security Experts described how one method of mitigating the risk of a terrorist attack in a grey space, like the City Room, is to push the security perimeter out further. In practice, this would mean moving it to a point further away from the entrance doors or to have layers of security whereby large bags are searched some distance away from where the crowd gathers using equipment like x-ray machines or walk-through metal detectors.<sup>558</sup>

## **The importance of a security perimeter**

**6.155** On 13<sup>th</sup> November 2015, a music concert at the Bataclan theatre in Paris was attacked by terrorists carrying firearms. The terrorists gained access to the venue and killed 89 people. This attack was the final part of a coordinated series of attacks that night. Those attacks began with suicide bombers detonating PBIEDs just outside the Stade de France. There was then a series of attacks in busy public spaces using firearms and a PBIED. A total of 130 people were killed in the course of the attacks (the Paris attack).

**6.156** On 24<sup>th</sup> July 2016, a terrorist carrying an IED attempted to gain access to an outdoor music festival in Bavaria. He was prevented from doing so by a security guard and detonated his device, killing only himself. Both Miriam Stone

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<sup>558</sup> [15/157/8-162/21](#)

and James Allen stated that they were unaware of this attack.<sup>559</sup> On any view, this attack serves as further evidence of the seriousness of the threat of PBIEDs to events like the Ariana Grande concert and the importance of the security perimeter.

**6.157** Some of SMG's senior staff attended a conference in April 2016. At that conference they were informed that following the Paris attack in late 2015, the AccorHotels Arena in Paris had responded by pushing out its security perimeter.<sup>560</sup>

**6.158** In July 2016, SMG staff attended an Exercise Sherman training event. This was a training exercise provided by the Greater Manchester Resilience Forum and facilitated by GMP. The scenario included a marauding gunman terrorist attack in the City Room.<sup>561</sup> This should have highlighted to SMG the very real vulnerabilities to an attack presented by the City Room.

**6.159** There can be no doubt after the Paris attack that SMG should have sought to push the security perimeter out, beyond the City Room.

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<sup>559</sup> [28/74/16-75/6](#); [30/74/4-7](#)

<sup>560</sup> [28/179/1-19](#)

<sup>561</sup> [26/177/21-179/4](#), [30/74/8-75/1](#)

## Consideration of pushing out the security perimeter

**6.160** At the NAA and EAA presentation in April 2016, those in senior positions at SMG spoke about the need to push out the security perimeter.<sup>562</sup> James Allen said that prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 he did not seek permission to push out the security perimeter and prevent public access during events. His explanation for this was to the effect that any such request would have been refused.<sup>563</sup> As a result of this belief, SMG did not approach Mansford, its landlord, or other tenants of the Victoria Exchange Complex to ask whether it would be possible to do so.<sup>564</sup> This was a mistake by SMG.

**6.161** The evidence of Oliver Smith, on behalf of Mansford, was that if Mansford had been told by SMG the request was for a security reason, rather than to obtain any commercial advantage, legal advice would have been taken and permission given in a similar way to September 2017. However, he acknowledged there would probably have been “*less urgency*” and it would have taken longer to speak to the other tenants and agree documentation.<sup>565</sup>

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<sup>562</sup> 28/179/1-181/10

<sup>563</sup> 16/17/4-18/5, 28/180/12-19

<sup>564</sup> 28/82/3-14

<sup>565</sup> 16/19/10-21/1, 16/23/1-4

- 6.162** SMG should have asked Mansford to allow for the expansion of the security perimeter before May 2017. Moving the security perimeter back from the entrance doors and beyond the City Room is a substantial threat mitigation measure. Had this been done, it would have made an attack in the City Room much less likely. It may even have deterred SA from attempting to carry out his attack at the Victoria Exchange Complex, although plainly he had a determination to carry out an attack somewhere.
- 6.163** It may be that Mansford or the other tenants would not have agreed. BTP may also have expressed concerns. It is impossible to say with certainty what would have happened. The impact of hindsight is inevitable. The fact that twenty-two people died and many more were injured concentrated minds on the necessity of changing the security arrangements in a way which might not have occurred before May 2017.
- 6.164** Had permission been refused, SMG would have been confronted in a stark way with the fact that alternative improvements to security were required. This, in turn, should have led to a recognition of the need for a comprehensive review, by an appropriately qualified expert, of all of the security arrangements.

**6.165** As I have explained in Part 5, SMG should have realised the need for such expert input. In my view, had SMG attempted to expand the perimeter and failed, this is likely to have caused SMG to recognise this. If such expert input had been received this would have strengthened the request to Mansford for the perimeter to be pushed out. If Mansford had then refused this request, SMG could have received further expert input about how to improve the existing threat migration measures for the City Room, such as the use of CCTV and patrolling. It is likely that in at least trying to achieve this, SMG would have substantially improved the safety of the City Room for event-goers.

## **The security perimeter pushed out**

**6.166** Following the events of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, as I have already explained in Part 5, SMG instructed external security consultants to carry out a review of security at the Arena. The external security consultants recommendations included pushing the security perimeter away from the entrances to the Arena, with checks and searches of anyone crossing that perimeter. This included the use of walk-through metal detectors.<sup>566</sup>

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<sup>566</sup> [28/141/19-142/19](#)

**6.167** In order to implement these recommendations, and in particular to close the City Room to the public when events were taking place, SMG needed the permission of Mansford as head leaseholder.<sup>567</sup> In September 2017, SMG sought this permission and were given it. Permission was granted on conditions. The conditions were that access still had to be given to employees working in the Arena Point office block by the Hunts Bank steps, anyone going to the NCP car park or anyone attending the go-karting circuit which was in another part of the Victoria Exchange Complex. Mansford made clear that this posed a risk to its enterprise because it restricted the rights of other tenants and that they could only agree to it on a temporary basis.<sup>568</sup>

**6.168** In practice, this permission was given on an ongoing basis by Mansford and subsequently by the head leaseholder since 2018, Prestbury Investments LLP.<sup>569</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> [16/8/7-10](#)

<sup>568</sup> [16/10/2-21/1](#)

<sup>569</sup> [INQ035953/1-3, INQ035953/5-7, 16/10/2-16/20, 16/41/1-6](#)

# Closed Circuit Television monitoring

## Key findings

- There was a blind spot in SMG's CCTV system on the mezzanine. The lack of coverage of the Blind Spot should have been apparent to SMG prior to May 2017.
- SMG's Arena Manager, Facilities Manager and Event Duty Manager did not know about the existence of the Blind Spot.
- SMG did not have in place a system which sought actively to identify and address blind spots in the CCTV system. As a result, there was no robust management of the challenge created by gaps in the CCTV system's coverage.
- Neither the Showsec Head of Security on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 nor the Showsec staff in the City Room on that day knew about the Blind Spot.
- SA chose to hide in the area of the Blind Spot because it was the most obvious place to hide in the City Room.
- It was SMG's responsibility to identify the existence of the Blind Spot and take steps to mitigate the risk it posed. SMG's failure to identify the existence of the Blind Spot was one of the consequences of SMG's deficient approach to risk assessment.

- There were a number of straightforward ways in which SMG could have addressed the risk created by the Blind Spot, including additional cameras and/or the deployment of Showsec staff.
- While it is not possible to determine exactly what would have happened had the Blind Spot been addressed, if it had been, it is likely that the Attack would have been disrupted, deterred or, at the least, fewer people would have been killed and injured.
- SMG's general approach to the use of CCTV was inadequate. The CCTV was not constantly monitored during show mode and as a result the CCTV system was not a reliable method of identifying suspicious activity.

## Control rooms and CCTV

**6.169** SMG operated two control rooms: Whisky Control and Sierra Control. Whisky Control was staffed 24 hours a day, including days when events did not take place.<sup>570</sup> Days on which events did not take place were referred to as “*dark days*”. Sierra Control was only staffed immediately before, during and immediately

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<sup>570</sup> [18/82/1-5](#), [34/7/17-19](#)

after events, a period referred to as “*show mode*”.<sup>571</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 show mode began at 18:00.<sup>572</sup>

**6.170** On dark days and event days there were two roles based in Whisky Control: Control Room Operator and Patrol Officer. On event days, a Fire Safety Officer was also based in Whisky Control<sup>573</sup> albeit not permanently.<sup>574</sup> On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, these roles were occupied by Michael Edwards, Stephen Noone<sup>575</sup> and Paul Johnson<sup>576</sup> respectively. Paul Johnson spent most of the Ariana Grande concert in his office, which is adjacent to Whisky Control.<sup>577</sup>

**6.171** It was the responsibility of the Control Room Operator to watch the CCTV screens, listen to the radio and monitor the heating system.<sup>578</sup> There were CCTV screens within Whisky Control onto which live images from the CCTV system were displayed. The cameras were spread across the Victoria Exchange Complex.<sup>579</sup> There were many more CCTV cameras than there were screens in

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<sup>571</sup> 18/82/6-8, 26/175/20-176/2

<sup>572</sup> 34/140/18-19

<sup>573</sup> 18/95/3-7

<sup>574</sup> 18/124/15-19

<sup>575</sup> INQ036806/7

<sup>576</sup> 34/38/13

<sup>577</sup> 34/38/11-14

<sup>578</sup> 18/81/8-17, 18/83/6-8

<sup>579</sup> 18/122/6-123/1

Whisky Control.<sup>580</sup> As a result, the majority of the screens displayed images from 16 cameras.<sup>581</sup> This meant that each camera feed took up just a small proportion of each available screen, which were not large. There was a facility to display images from a single camera on a screen.<sup>582</sup>

**6.172** When in show mode, those in Whisky Control were expected to watch the CCTV monitors, among their other duties.<sup>583</sup> When watching the CCTV, the Control Room Officer looked out for suspicious behaviour.<sup>584</sup> When something suspicious was identified on the CCTV, either the Patrol Officer or the Control Room Operator would leave Whisky Control to investigate.<sup>585</sup>

**6.173** The Patrol Officer, when present in Whisky Control, was available to assist the Control Room Operator in their duties.<sup>586</sup> Among the duties of the Patrol Officer was watching the CCTV screens.<sup>587</sup> There were other tasks, such as investigating the breakdown of lifts, which might take the Control Room Officer away from Whisky Control for a short period.<sup>588</sup> When the

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<sup>580</sup> [18/128/13-17](#), [34/57/9-11](#)

<sup>581</sup> [18/128/13-17](#), [34/58/5-18](#)

<sup>582</sup> [18/128/18-20](#); [34/67/11-16](#)

<sup>583</sup> [18/83/18-20](#), [27/27/9-23](#), [34/41/12-43/8](#)

<sup>584</sup> [18/84/13-15](#)

<sup>585</sup> [18/86/10-87/2](#), [34/22/16-18](#)

<sup>586</sup> [18/93/2-7](#)

<sup>587</sup> [INQ036806/3](#)

<sup>588</sup> [18/109/8-110/5](#)

Control Room Officer left Whisky Control, they relied upon the Patrol Officer and, if present, the Fire Safety Officer to watch the CCTV.<sup>589</sup> When all three members of staff were present, more than one of them may watch the CCTV screens at the same time.<sup>590</sup>

**6.174** During show mode Sierra Control was staffed. There were four people based in Sierra Control: the SMG Event Manager; the Showsec Head of Security; a representative of Emergency Training UK (ETUK) and a member of Showsec staff whose role was to monitor the Showsec radio. On 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, those people were Miriam Stone, Thomas Rigby, Michelle Ramsbottom and Jade Duxbury.<sup>591</sup>

**6.175** Sierra Control also had screens displaying images from some, but not all of the CCTV cameras.<sup>592</sup> The agreement within SMG was that when in show mode, Sierra Control would take charge of the operation of the CCTV system.<sup>593</sup> This agreement meant that if Whisky Control wished to move or zoom a camera during an event, permission from Sierra Control had to be obtained.

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<sup>589</sup> [18/96/23-97/2](#), [18/120/22-121/1](#), [18/124/20-24](#)

<sup>590</sup> [18/129/1-12](#)

<sup>591</sup> [INQ005269/2](#), [18/141/12-142/7](#)

<sup>592</sup> [26/180/1-182/4](#), [30/143/25-144/5](#)

<sup>593</sup> [26/179/6-10](#)

## **CCTV in the City Room and the Blind Spot**

**6.176** For some years prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, the configuration of the CCTV cameras in the City Room meant that there was part of the mezzanine level in which a person could conceal themselves out of sight of any camera. As I indicated in Part 1, I have referred to this as the Blind Spot.

**6.177** Three cameras in the City Room provided views of parts of the mezzanine. One camera, Unit 2 Cam 1, was positioned in the area of the Fifty Pence staircase. This is the staircase that leads up from the NCP car park. This camera provided a very limited view of part of the JD Williams' side the mezzanine. The focus of this camera was, though, on the top of the Fifty Pence staircase, not the mezzanine. Anyone viewing the images from the camera would naturally have their eye drawn to the top of the Fifty Pence staircase and landing area at the top. This was an immovable camera with no zoom function. Figure 16 shows the extent to which Unit 2 Cam 1 captured the mezzanine.



**Figure 16:** Image from Unit 2 Cam 1 showing limited view of the mezzanine<sup>594</sup>

**6.178** Another camera, Unit 3 Cam 14, provided a distant view of a small part of the mezzanine area outside the building which had formerly been occupied by McDonald's. This was also an immovable camera with no zoom function. Figure 17 show an image from Unit 3 Cam 14 with the highly limited and distant view of part of the mezzanine marked in the top left corner.

<sup>594</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ035314/3](#) with yellow circle removed. It should be noted that the text of INQ035314/3 incorrectly identifies this image as having been taken from Unit 2 Cam 2



**Figure 17:** Image from Unit 3 Cam 14 showing limited view of the mezzanine<sup>595</sup>

**6.179** The camera capable of providing the best view of the mezzanine level, Unit 2 Cam 2, was able to tilt, pan and zoom.<sup>596</sup> Its extent and limitations were covered in detail by the evidence of Michael Edwards<sup>597</sup> and Michael Cowley.<sup>598</sup> I was also given considerable assistance in relation to this camera by Detective Sergeant Michael Russell of GMP who co-wrote the CCTV policy for GMP's investigation into the Attack.

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<sup>595</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ035314/15](#) with yellow and green circles removed.

<sup>596</sup> [34/22/9-12](#)

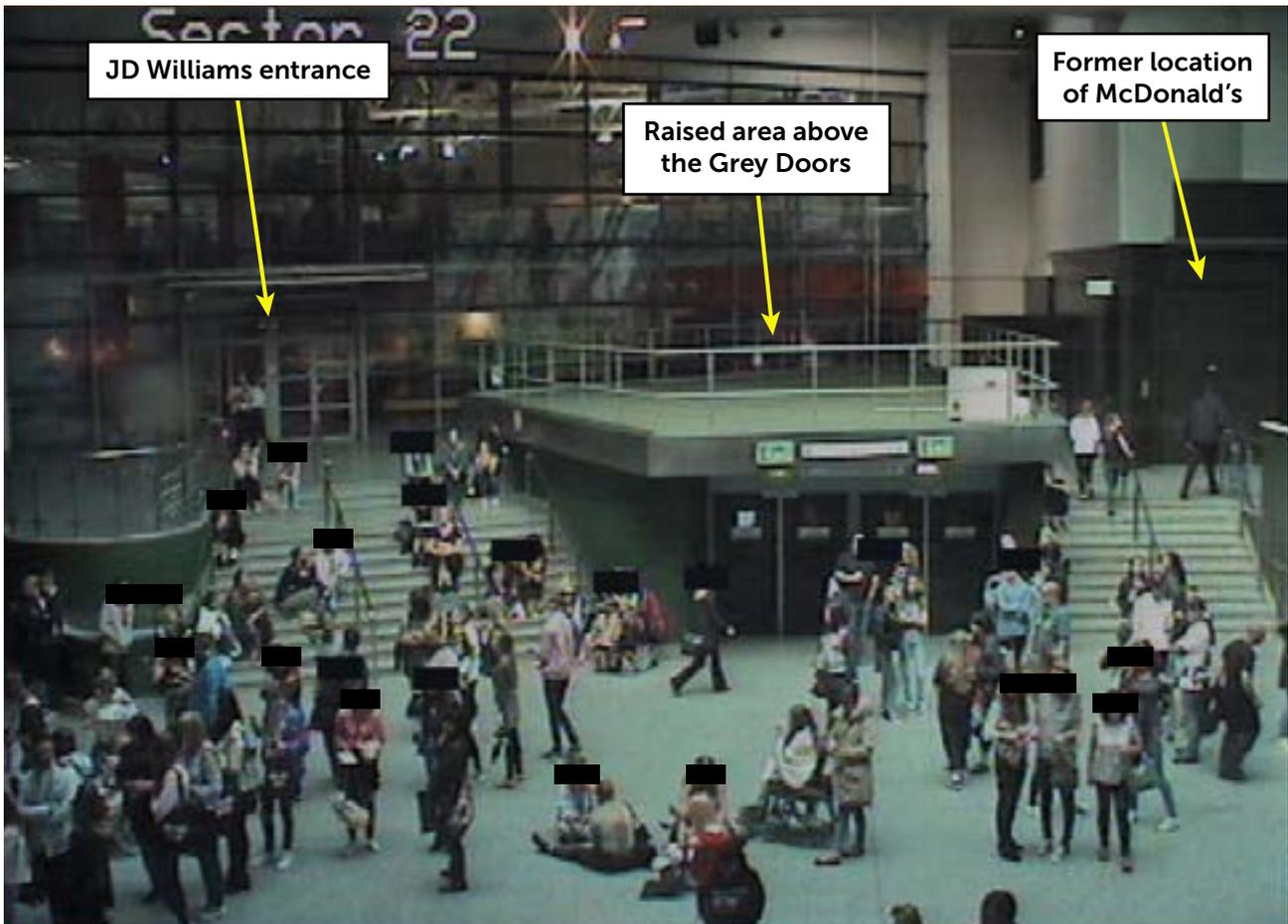
<sup>597</sup> [18/88/19-90/16](#)

<sup>598</sup> [26/183/9-191/10](#)

- 6.180** Unit 2 Cam 2 provided good coverage of significant parts of the City Room. It provided a particularly good view, from an elevated position, of the Arena entrance/exit doors to the City Room<sup>599</sup> and the box office. A large number of the images from Unit 2 Cam 2 the Inquiry considered from 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 showed these areas. There were images from the night when it is clear that the operator had moved it for periods of time so that it captured the full width of the mezzanine level that it covered.
- 6.181** However, even when Unit 2 Cam 2 was focused on the mezzanine level, there remained parts of the mezzanine which were not visible. The principal cause of this is the raised area above the Grey Doors which blocks the sightline from Unit 2 Cam 2 to the area immediately behind this raised area.
- 6.182** Figure 18 shows the view captured by Unit 2 Cam 2 when directed towards the mezzanine. Unit 2 Cam 2 was also capable of panning further to the right than is shown in this image to capture the area of the mezzanine outside McDonald's nearest the exit from the City Room onto the overbridge.

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<sup>599</sup> [34/21/2-7](#)



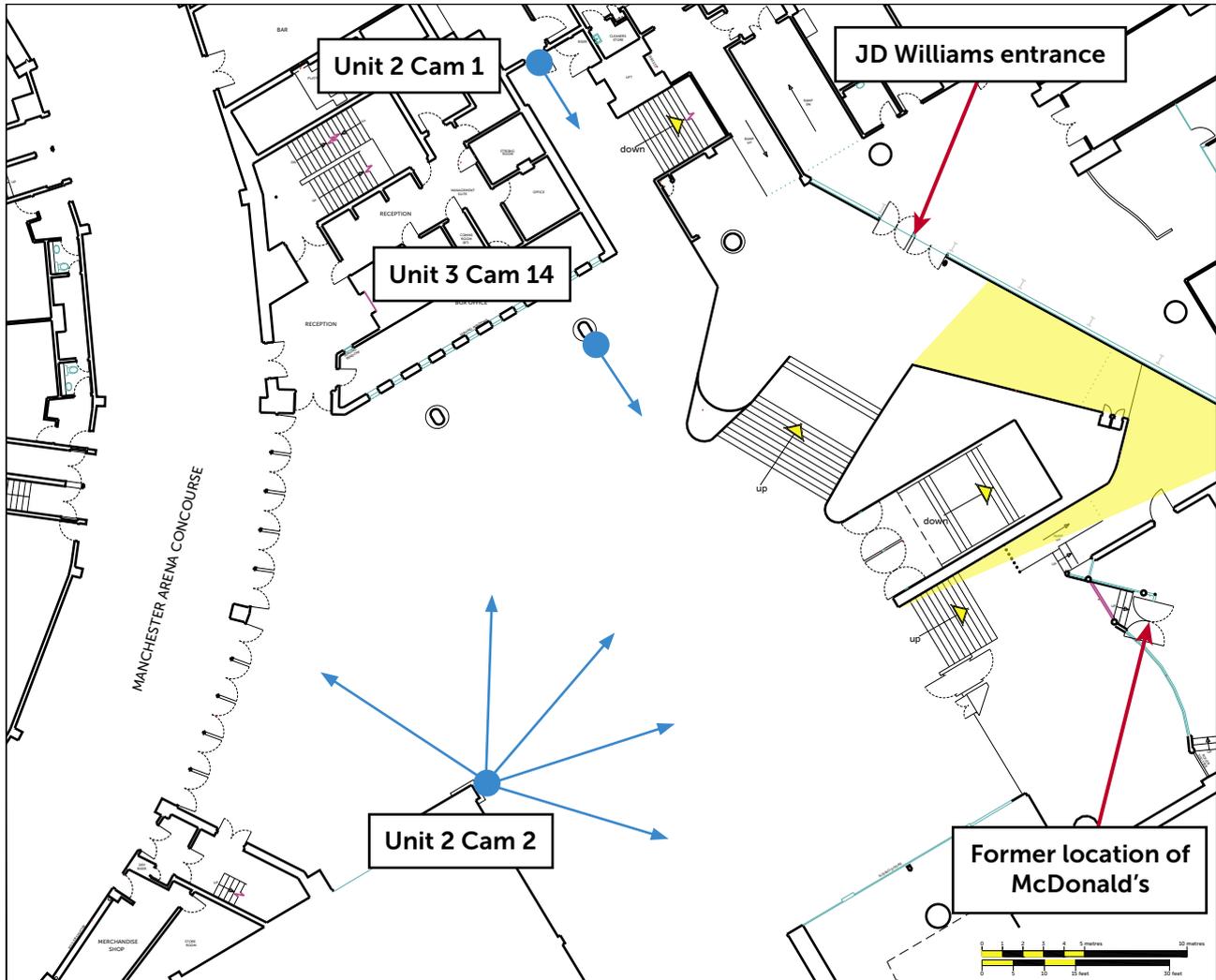
**Figure 18:** Image from Unit 2 Cam 2 showing the extent of the view of the mezzanine<sup>600</sup>

**6.183** By sitting, kneeling or crouching, a person could completely conceal themselves from the sight of Unit 2 Cam 2.<sup>601</sup> The area was large enough to accommodate and conceal a number of people. It was large enough to conceal a person with a large backpack. Figure 19 shows the positioning of the relevant cameras and the approximate area of the Blind Spot. Figures 20 and 21 depict the approximate area of the Blind Spot, viewed from the JD Williams' side and the McDonald's

<sup>600</sup> Annotated image extracted from [INQ035314/8](#) with yellow circle removed.

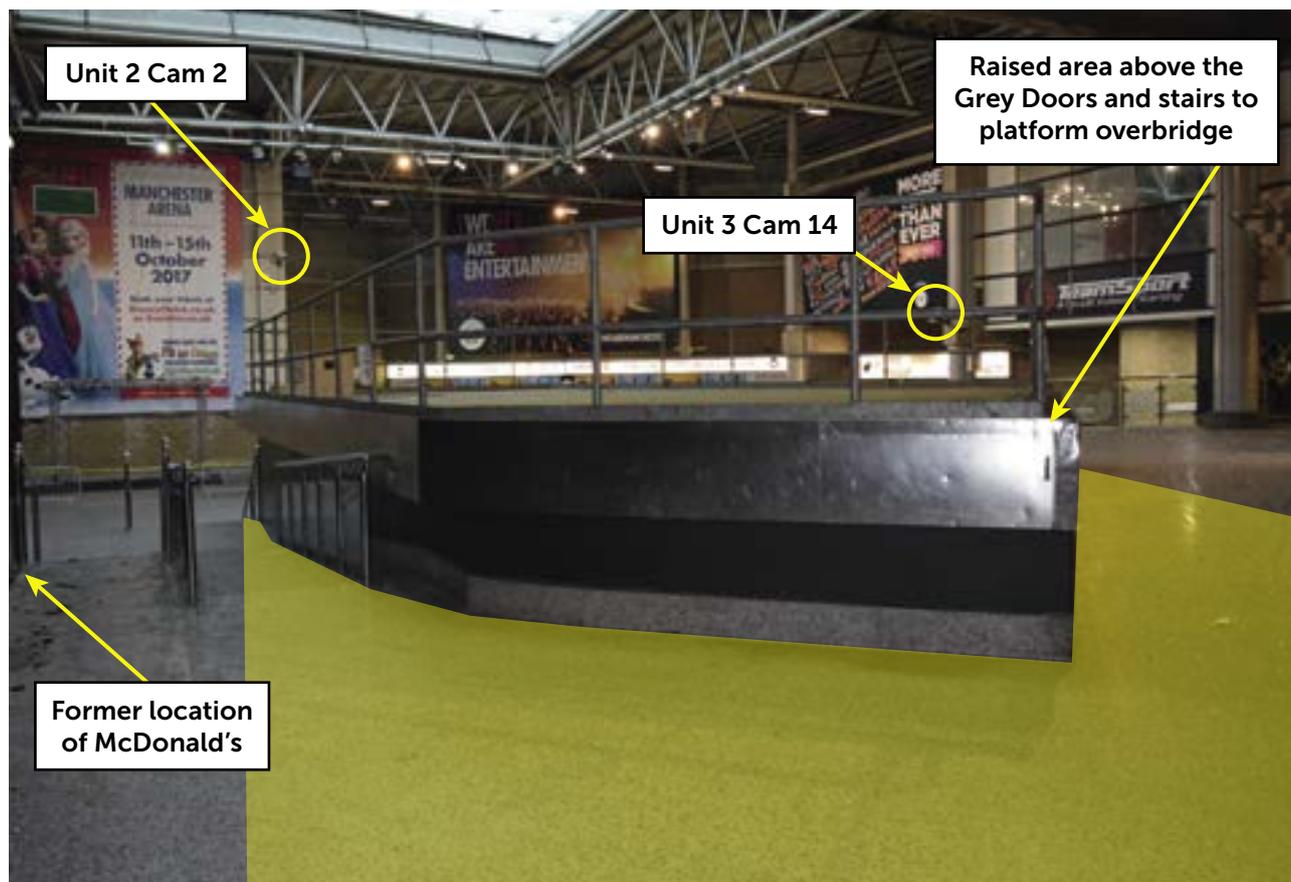
<sup>601</sup> [26/188/12-189/14](#)

side of the mezzanine respectively. In each case, the approximate area of the Blind Spot is shaded in yellow.



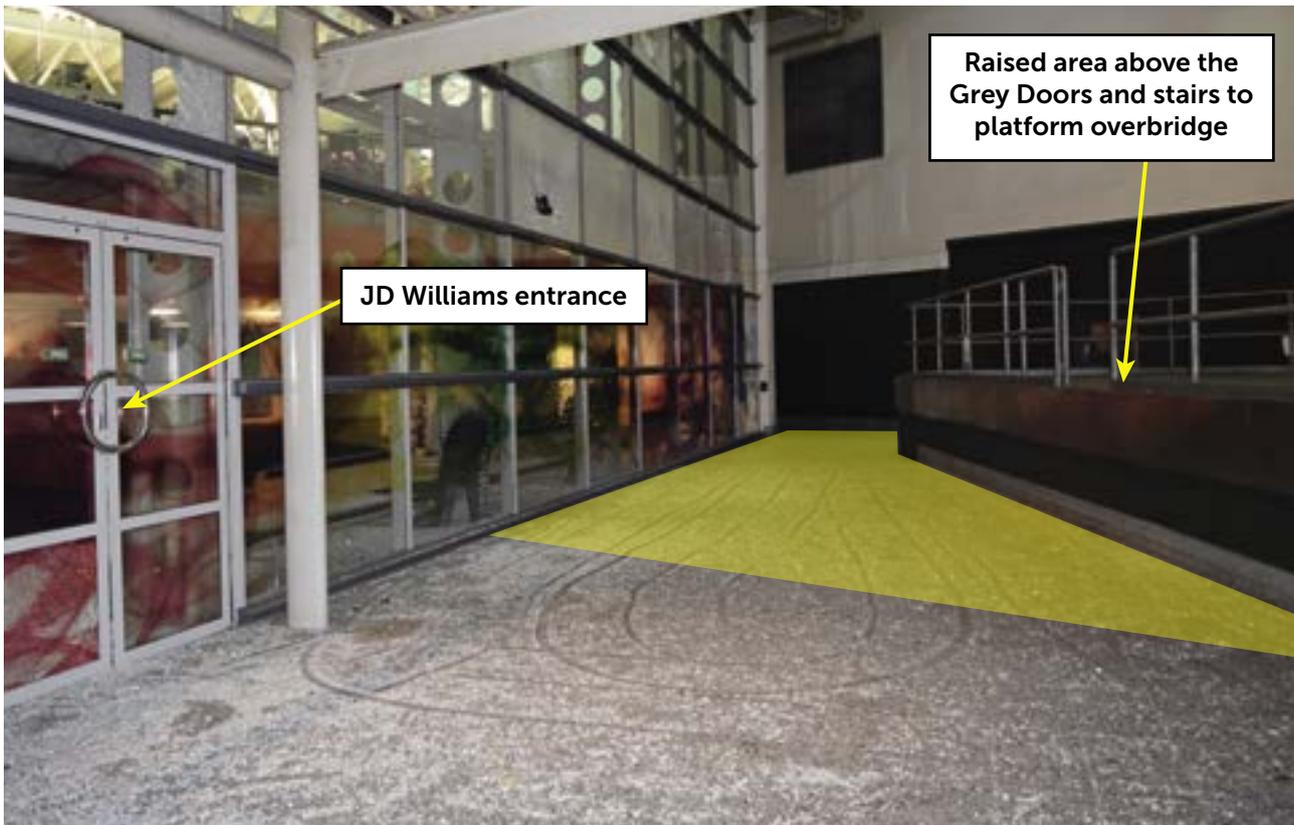
**Figure 19: Relevant City Room cameras and the Blind Spot (shaded in yellow)<sup>602</sup>**

<sup>602</sup> Annotated extract of [INQ035294/1](#)



**Figure 20:** *The Blind Spot (shaded in yellow): view from McDonald's side*<sup>603</sup>

<sup>603</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ031767/6](#)



**Figure 21:** *The Blind Spot (shaded in yellow): view from JD Williams side*<sup>604</sup>

**6.184** It was in this area that SA chose to conceal himself during a significant proportion of the period after 20:30. Across both visits to the City Room he spent in excess of an hour and a quarter on the mezzanine before he detonated his bomb.<sup>605</sup> I do not consider he did so purely by chance. Setting aside the CCTV system, this was the best hiding place within the City Room. In the words of Colonel Latham: “*it was a good place to hide*”.<sup>606</sup> This is not a conclusion I reach with the benefit of hindsight, but from

<sup>604</sup> Annotated extract from [INQ031767/4](#)

<sup>605</sup> [21/110/9-112/2](#), [20/81/2-10](#), [22/30/8-32/19](#), [22/147/2-149/18](#)

<sup>606</sup> [41/228/19-20](#)

simply considering the layout of the City Room as it was on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. I find that this must also have been the conclusion SA reached as a result of his hostile reconnaissance of the City Room.

**6.185** The fact that this obvious place of concealment was not covered by a camera was, therefore, a significant gap in the CCTV system's coverage. The problem this gap created was compounded by the fact that the only camera which gave any coverage on either side of the Blind Spot was not permanently focused on that area. As a result, unless Unit 2 Cam 2 was, by chance, pointed at the mezzanine, once a person had ascended either set of stairs up to the mezzanine, anyone viewing the cameras would have no idea whether that person had gone to JD Williams or hidden themselves. It is a striking feature of the evidence that there are no images from the CCTV which capture SA on the mezzanine on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>607</sup> This is despite the fact he spent in excess of an hour and a quarter in that area. There are two reasons for this. The first is that when SA was not in the Blind Spot, such as just before he descended the McDonald's side staircase, Unit 2 Cam 2 was not pointed at the mezzanine. The second is because he was concealed in the

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<sup>607</sup> [18/33/9-11](#), [18/42/24-43/1](#)

Blind Spot on every one of the limited number of occasions<sup>608</sup> when Unit 2 Cam 2 was pointed at the mezzanine.

**6.186** The Inquiry heard from a number of those who viewed the CCTV screens as part of their job. They were each asked whether they knew about the existence of the Blind Spot. Only one witness, Michael Edwards, the Control Room Operator in Whisky Control on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, said he was aware of the Blind Spot.<sup>609</sup> Michael Edwards stated he had known about it since he started working at SMG, 14 years prior to the Attack.<sup>610</sup> He stated he thought everyone knew about the blind spots in the CCTV system.<sup>611</sup> He stated that anyone who had worked in Whisky or Sierra Control would have known about the Blind Spot.<sup>612</sup> While Michael Edwards might have believed this, having heard evidence from a number of key people at both SMG and Showsec, it is my view that he was mistaken as to how widely known the existence of the Blind Spot was.

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<sup>608</sup> [19/227/13-23](#)

<sup>609</sup> [18/89/4-9](#)

<sup>610</sup> [18/118/11-16](#)

<sup>611</sup> [18/87/23-88/1](#)

<sup>612</sup> [18/119/5-7](#)

**6.187** The evidence was that James Allen,<sup>613</sup> Michael Cowley<sup>614</sup> and Miriam Stone<sup>615</sup> did not know about it. Consequently, Miriam Stone did not make any allowance for the Blind Spot when planning for events or in discussion with Showsec. James Allen accepted he should have known about it.<sup>616</sup> He stated he did not learn of it until he heard about it through this Inquiry.<sup>617</sup> James Allen stated that SMG operated a system in which, if a blind spot was identified, a person would be deployed to cover it on the ground.<sup>618</sup> In reality, there was no system employed by SMG which sought actively to identify and address blind spots in the CCTV system.<sup>619</sup> As a result, I find that this was a theoretical aspiration, rather than robust management of the challenge created by gaps in the CCTV system's coverage.

**6.188** Paul Johnson, the Fire Safety Officer on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 was not sure whether or not he knew about the Blind Spot in 2017.<sup>620</sup> He had also

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<sup>613</sup> [28/47/11-13](#)

<sup>614</sup> [26/182/19-25](#)

<sup>615</sup> [30/86/25-87/2](#)

<sup>616</sup> [28/48/8-12](#)

<sup>617</sup> [29/48/8-19](#)

<sup>618</sup> [28/47/16-20](#), [28/48/18-21](#)

<sup>619</sup> [18/118/22-119/1](#)

<sup>620</sup> [34/17/7-17](#)

held the role of Security Supervisor since 2005. He had never discussed the Blind Spot with anyone in that capacity.<sup>621</sup>

**6.189** So far as Showsec was concerned, neither Thomas Bailey nor Thomas Rigby, who both acted as Head of Security at events at the Arena, knew about the Blind Spot.<sup>622</sup> As a result, no account was taken of it by them when planning the deployment of Showsec staff at events and the route taken by patrols. On the ground, the Showsec City Room senior supervisor, David Middleton, did not know about it despite having worked at the Arena for 21 years.<sup>623</sup> The same was true of all of the other Showsec staff who worked in the City Room on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>624</sup>

**6.190** It was only in the summer of 2020 that the Blind Spot was completely eliminated by SMG making alterations to its CCTV system.<sup>625</sup>

## **Mitigating the Blind Spot**

**6.191** As owner and principal operator of the CCTV system, it was SMG's responsibility to identify the existence of the Blind Spot. It should have

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<sup>621</sup> 34/18/20-22

<sup>622</sup> 33/213/13-21, 34/152/7-12

<sup>623</sup> 19/61/11-20

<sup>624</sup> 23/158/14-16, 23/18/5-8, 24/26/6-10

<sup>625</sup> 18/13/3-12

done so as part of the proper conduct of its risk assessment process. Had SMG identified the Blind Spot as part of a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, consideration would have been given to what steps were required to mitigate it. This, in turn, would have led to the consideration of adding cameras or agreeing a deployment by Showsec of its staff to mitigate the Blind Spot during events. This could have included regular and frequent patrols to the area out of the view of the cameras<sup>626</sup> or the positioning of a static member of Showsec staff who had a clear view of the area the camera could not see.

**6.192** Had SMG added an additional camera, this would have increased the possibility that SA would have been detected in the City Room before he detonated his bomb. However, the way in which the CCTV system was used by SMG in May 2017 required substantial improvement before this was likely to have made a difference. I will deal with this below.

**6.193** The alternative way in which the Blind Spot should have been addressed was through the use of Showsec staff. Had this been identified as a control measure, as James Allen stated was his intended approach, it may have had

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<sup>626</sup> [34/68/9-11](#)

one of a number of effects on what occurred on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. The presence of Showsec staff on the mezzanine may have deterred SA altogether. However, I consider this to be unlikely. It may have led to the Attack being disrupted by causing him to wait elsewhere within the Victoria Exchange Complex.

This would have reduced his ability to time his Attack as he wished. I think this is the probable effect of SA realising that he would be detected if he hid for a lengthy period in the area of the Blind Spot. Had SA not been disrupted in this way, it is likely Sierra Control may have been notified, which may have led to SA being spoken to. What would have then occurred is heavily dependent upon the timing of this intervention. It is not possible to say that any one of these outcomes was more likely than not to have occurred.

**6.194** It is not possible for me to determine exactly what would have happened had the Blind Spot been addressed through patrolling and/or proper monitoring of an adequate CCTV system. I am able to conclude that if it had been, it is likely that the Attack would have been disrupted, deterred or, at the least, fewer people would have been killed and injured.

## Deficiencies in SMG's approach to CCTV

**6.195** CCTV is an essential counter-terrorism measure for any organisation in SMG's position: that of an operator of a large public entertainment venue. The sheer number of people who could attend an event, coupled with the mixing that would inevitably take place around the Arena with members of the public passing through, meant that having a comprehensive overview of all the important areas around the Arena was a necessity. The complexity of keeping people safe in this environment required SMG to maximise the prospect of identifying suspicious activity as soon as possible.

**6.196** The NaCTSO guidance "*for Stadia and Arenas*" at the time stated that CCTV could be constantly monitored or the recordings regularly checked.<sup>627</sup> As this document states, it is "*not site specific and all stadia and arenas are different*".<sup>628</sup> For activities as well attended and complex as those which took place at the Arena, real time monitoring was necessary, if there was to be any prospect of using it as a counter-terrorism measure during an event.

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<sup>627</sup> [INQ020147/23](#)

<sup>628</sup> [INQ020147/8](#)

**6.197** The importance of effective CCTV monitoring was underlined by Michael Edwards' evidence. He stated that had he noticed the full extent of SA's movements and appearance on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, he would have regarded them as being suspicious.<sup>629</sup> I accept this evidence. Paul Johnson gave evidence, which I also accept, that if someone in Whisky Control had noticed that SA had gone on the mezzanine and remained there for some time this would have been called through to Sierra Control.<sup>630</sup> SA was not noticed by those in Whisky Control as being suspicious<sup>631</sup> and this was not just because of the Blind Spot.

**6.198** There was a general problem with SMG's CCTV system and its approach to it. During show mode, those in Sierra Control, who assumed responsibility for control of the CCTV system, did not monitor it constantly.<sup>632</sup> What I mean by monitor in this context is a person constantly reviewing images in real time, proactively, with a view to identifying suspicious activity.

**6.199** The SMG Event Manager and Showsec Head of Security in Sierra Control used the CCTV for crowd management.<sup>633</sup> If a specific request

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<sup>629</sup> 18/103/5-12

<sup>630</sup> 34/59/5-60/10

<sup>631</sup> 18/103/19-24; INQ036806/8-9

<sup>632</sup> 34/144/1-7

<sup>633</sup> 30/142/17-21, 34/143/19-23, 33/34/15-24

came in from a member of staff on the ground, then focus would be given to that by those in Sierra Control.<sup>634</sup>

**6.200** There was an expectation that those in Whisky Control would monitor the CCTV.<sup>635</sup> However, there were five problems with this as a reliable method of identifying suspicious activity.

**6.201** First, the arrangements that SMG had in place did not guarantee that there would be constant monitoring before, during and after events. They should have.<sup>636</sup> All three people in Whisky Control had duties beyond the CCTV. The Control Room Operator did not exclusively devote his attention to watching the CCTV.<sup>637</sup> Michael Edwards stated that on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 his other tasks had taken him away from watching the CCTV screens in the course of the evening.<sup>638</sup> This included being out of Whisky Control for a few minutes during the period SA was on the mezzanine in the hour before the detonation.<sup>639</sup> There is no criticism of Michael Edwards for having done so: he was undertaking his duties as he had been instructed to.

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<sup>634</sup> [30/143/19-23](#)

<sup>635</sup> [34/144/8-11](#), [30/150/23-24](#), [33/35/6-8](#)

<sup>636</sup> [41/206/18-207/13](#)

<sup>637</sup> [18/87/3-15](#)

<sup>638</sup> [18/101/10-17](#)

<sup>639</sup> [18/111/15-112/7](#)

**6.202** I accept that those in Whisky Control who gave evidence to this Inquiry worked collaboratively with each other,<sup>640</sup> but I find that it was not regarded as essential by them that someone was viewing the CCTV monitors at all times.<sup>641</sup> I do not accept that there was always someone monitoring the CCTV during events.<sup>642</sup> From the totality of the evidence I heard, I did not accept that SMG's system was sufficiently robust to guarantee continual monitoring. It needed to be.

**6.203** As to the number of people who should have been monitoring at any one time, it is beyond the scope of the Inquiry to conduct an exhaustive examination of the extent of the CCTV system. I did not receive enough evidence to reach any firm conclusion as to the minimum number of people who should have been devoting themselves exclusively to monitoring the CCTV during an event. However, my impression from the substantial body of evidence I heard about CCTV was that just one person monitoring it may not be sufficient.<sup>643</sup> I make clear, however, that in saying this I am making no finding so far as the minimum number of people who should have been monitoring the CCTV on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

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<sup>640</sup> 18/124/6-14, 18/129/1-12

<sup>641</sup> 18/120/22-121/1, 18/20/2-22/22

<sup>642</sup> 34/23/17-19, 34/43/9-14

<sup>643</sup> 41/207/5-7

I conclude that it should have been at least one and that this was not the case during the Ariana Grande concert because of the number of things that were occurring in Whisky Control.

**6.204** Second, the way the system itself was set up meant that almost all of the images from each camera were small. This was also true in Sierra Control.<sup>644</sup> This meant that identifying the subtle cues that might mark activity as suspicious was harder to detect. I agree with the evidence of Paul Johnson, when he stated that identifying SA in these circumstances would not be easy.<sup>645</sup> Paul Johnson, who was in a very good position to know, stated that “*the images are too small to pick out one person*” when the images were not enlarged.<sup>646</sup> While it would have been impractical to have all of the images of a substantial size, having a number of substantial sized images of key areas in Whisky Control would have improved the prospect of suspicious activity being detected.

**6.205** Third, the agreement between Sierra and Whisky Control that Sierra took over the operation of the CCTV system during show mode<sup>647</sup> could cause problems. Sierra Control

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<sup>644</sup> 33/212/17-19

<sup>645</sup> 34/58/5-18

<sup>646</sup> 34/60/11-13

<sup>647</sup> 28/105/16-19, 18/97/14-25, 26/175-20-176/2, 26/179/5-10, 30/152/9-11, 34/21/14-22

used the CCTV system reactively and did not monitor it continuously.<sup>648</sup> Despite this, Sierra Control was primarily responsible for which cameras were moved. Whisky Control could ask for control back<sup>649</sup> and, I accept, did so on occasions.<sup>650</sup> However, this arrangement created difficulties in two ways. Michael Edwards mistakenly believed that Sierra Control was watching the CCTV throughout an event.<sup>651</sup> Further, Sierra Control having primary control over the CCTV system would not have the effect of encouraging Whisky Control to monitor proactively the feeds on a continuous basis.

**6.206** Fourth, at the time when large groups of people were moving through the venue, such as at egress, the focus of those watching the CCTV was on the event-goers leaving the Arena, rather than looking out for suspicious activity.<sup>652</sup> Unit 2 Cam 2's superior view of ingress and egress<sup>653</sup> meant that it was directed away from the mezzanine at those times.<sup>654</sup> This had the effect that the entire mezzanine was not monitored by CCTV at the time when substantial effort should have been devoted

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<sup>648</sup> 34/143/16-18, 34/144/1-7

<sup>649</sup> 26/181/8-18, 34/21/8-22

<sup>650</sup> 34/22/19-24/23/3

<sup>651</sup> 18/98/9-12

<sup>652</sup> 34/45/1-14

<sup>653</sup> 34/21/2-7

<sup>654</sup> 33/213/22-214/2

towards looking out for threats. This too was a product of the failure of the risk assessment process. This should have identified that particularly careful monitoring of all areas of risk was required at times and in places of high crowd density. This was not SMG's approach and it should have been.

- 6.207** Given the importance of monitoring, if it was to be done by Whisky Control during an event, the relationship and arrangements between the two control rooms should have been better than they were.
- 6.208** Fifth, I regard the approach to the training of those who were responsible for continuous CCTV monitoring to be deficient for the reasons I have set out above.
- 6.209** I consider that SMG's approach to CCTV was inadequate. This inadequacy in the approach to CCTV, including the lack of coverage of the Blind Spot, should have been apparent to SMG prior to May 2017.

## Security patrols

### Key findings

- There was confusion between SMG and Showsec as to whether, during events Showsec was required to undertake security patrols/pre-egress checks of the entirety of the City Room which included a counter-terrorism element. SMG thought that Showsec was undertaking a patrol of this nature; Showsec did not think it was part of its role to do this.
- As a result of the confusion, Showsec did not generally undertake security patrols of the entirety of the City Room including the mezzanine. Showsec should have made sure their staff properly checked the mezzanine during pre-egress checks.
- Primary responsibility for the confusion lies with Showsec. However, SMG should have checked whether Showsec was doing what SMG expected it to do.

## SMG

**6.210** A key element of the security arrangements at the Arena was regular patrols. There was confusion between SMG and Showsec about how these patrols were conducted during events, and in particular about what the

pre-egress checks in the City Room entailed. This led to a missed opportunity to identify SA as I set out in Part 1.

**6.211** The facilities management agreement required SMG to undertake Deister Patrols<sup>655</sup> 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.<sup>656</sup> The patrols looked for obstructions, spillages and leakages, as well as ensuring doors were locked if appropriate. One purpose of these patrols was counter-terrorism, specifically looking out for “*suspicious activities (anything out of the ordinary or any person found loitering)*”.<sup>657</sup> At least eight patrols were to be done in any 24-hour period.<sup>658</sup> The Deister Patrol route covered the City Room mezzanine and included the location where SA hid on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>659</sup>

**6.212** On event days, the SMG facilities management team had many more tasks to do.<sup>660</sup> As a result, they did not carry out Deister patrols during the event itself, when Showsec staff were present.<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>655</sup> [26/206/20-207/11](#)

<sup>656</sup> [INQ022832/68-69](#)

<sup>657</sup> [34/67/1-4, INQ025127/42](#)

<sup>658</sup> [INQ025127/42](#)

<sup>659</sup> [34/29/4-16](#)

<sup>660</sup> [34/104/18-105/20](#)

<sup>661</sup> [34/54/1-20](#)

## Showsec

**6.213** Showsec's Counter Terrorism Awareness 2017 document, as set out above, stated that:

*“The building operations include various different patrols to ensure it is constantly being checked. On a Non-event day or out of event hours the patrols are undertaken by the SMG Whisky control room staff. These checks span the whole of the venue and cover all key/ vulnerable areas such as entrances and/or lifts.*

*During events these patrols are undertaken by Showsec Security staff. The Access Control/ IRT Teams are redeployed to patrol around the venue and ensure it is secure and for public safety...”<sup>662</sup>*

**6.214** Some of the SMG facilities management team assumed that Showsec carried out similar patrols during events, albeit not using the Deister equipment, but it seems there was never an explicit conversation about exactly what this would entail.<sup>663</sup>

**6.215** Although SMG knew that the primary focus of Showsec on event days was on public access and egress, SMG thought that the pre-egress checks by Showsec would have included the

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<sup>662</sup> [INQ012031/7](#)

<sup>663</sup> [34/29/17-30/15](#)

City Room mezzanine.<sup>664</sup> SMG produced a pre-egress check sheet for Showsec staff to use, and this specified that the check needed to cover the “*entire City Room area including McDonalds and JJ Williams Entrance*”.<sup>665</sup>

**6.216** Michael Cowley, SMG’s Director of Facilities Services in May 2017, thought this was unambiguous and simply meant “*wall-to-wall in all directions, the entirety of the City Room.*”. He expected the Showsec staff to go up one set of stairs, along the mezzanine, and down the other stairs as part of the check.<sup>666</sup> He also understood Showsec’s patrols to be discharging a counter-terrorism function in the same way as the Deister Patrols.<sup>667</sup> Miriam Stone had the same understanding and said, “*it never occurred to me*” that Showsec could have thought the pre-egress check meant something different.<sup>668</sup>

**6.217** The pre-egress check of the City Room carried out by Jordan Beak on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 consisted of walking through the City Room with a brief glance towards the McDonald’s side stairs up to the mezzanine to see if they

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<sup>664</sup> [26/197/24-199/7](#)

<sup>665</sup> [INQ036769](#). The reference to ‘JJ Williams’ is a typographical error with the pre-egress sheet which should have read ‘JD Williams’. There was no evidence that this error caused any difficulty in understanding

<sup>666</sup> [26/200/9-201/22](#)

<sup>667</sup> [26/202/15-203/7](#)

<sup>668</sup> [30/133/17-140/25](#)

were clear. Jordan Beak did not accept that this was insufficient, or that it was incompatible with the pre-egress check sheet wording. His interpretation of the phrase “*McDonalds and JJ Williams Entrance*” was that it referred to the stairs leading on to the mezzanine. He did not consider the mezzanine area to be part of the City Room.<sup>669</sup> He thought his responsibility was to see if there was anyone sitting on the stairs and, if so, to ask them to move. He said he was able to fulfil that role by looking across from the other side of the City Room.<sup>670</sup> He did not think it was his job to look for anyone suspicious on the mezzanine. Even when it was pointed out to him that he had gone onto the mezzanine earlier that evening<sup>671</sup> he maintained that it “*wasn’t part of our jurisdiction or our check area*”.<sup>672</sup>

**6.218** There was one witness, Jonathan Lavery who was a Showsec member of staff, who said he routinely went onto the mezzanine, including when conducting pre-egress checks.<sup>673</sup> Kyle Lawler said he had seen Showsec staff going on the mezzanine. He thought they were checking

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<sup>669</sup> 23/142/2-143/21

<sup>670</sup> 23/234/22-237/12

<sup>671</sup> INQ036729/37

<sup>672</sup> 23/231/16-233/10

<sup>673</sup> 17/59/21-61/5, 17/51/22-52/12

it.<sup>674</sup> There was evidence of Showsec dealing with a suspicious package on the mezzanine at a Disney on Ice concert on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016.<sup>675</sup>

**6.219** However, Jordan Beak’s interpretation of the extent of the pre-egress check was more common. Thomas Bailey acknowledged that the natural meaning of the words on the pre-egress check sheet included the mezzanine, but said, “*our understanding of it was the bottom of the steps.*”<sup>676</sup> David Middleton also accepted that the literal meaning of the pre-egress check sheet included the mezzanine,<sup>677</sup> but like Jordan Beak he had understood in practice that the pre-egress check applied only to the stairs, and that the mezzanine area was not Showsec’s responsibility.<sup>678</sup> Daniel Perry thought that pre-egress checks involved looking at the stairs, but not the mezzanine level itself.<sup>679</sup> In contrast to Jordan Beak, David Middleton<sup>680</sup> and Daniel Perry<sup>681</sup> both thought that part of the purpose of the pre-egress check was to look for any kind of suspicious behaviour, but only within the main City Room space, not the mezzanine.

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<sup>674</sup> 25/34/2-15

<sup>675</sup> 34/181/19-182/13

<sup>676</sup> 33/133/11-134/20

<sup>677</sup> 19/141/25-142/7

<sup>678</sup> 19/91/16-92/9, 19/149/14-23

<sup>679</sup> 23/29/13-22

<sup>680</sup> 19/88/1-5

<sup>681</sup> 23/29/2-12

**6.220** The City Room pre-egress check sheet had been reviewed, along with all the others, in early 2015 by Thomas Bailey and Lucy Hunt, who was an Event Manager at SMG between 2010 and 2016.<sup>682</sup> At no point in their discussion was the difference in understanding about whether the pre-egress check included the mezzanine clarified. As Thomas Bailey put it:

*“I wouldn’t have brought it up with Lucy because I thought we were just going to do what we usually do. She didn’t bring it up with me because she thought we went up on to that mezzanine. So it was never discussed because we both must have had an understanding that each of us thought we were doing the same thing.”<sup>683</sup>*

**6.221** The Security Experts were of the view that the check sheet was clearly written.<sup>684</sup> They also thought that SMG had a responsibility to ensure that the security work they expected to be done by Showsec, including the pre-egress checks, was in fact being carried out.<sup>685</sup> They commented that they would not have expected SMG to be ignorant of the fact that for a considerable period of time before

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<sup>682</sup> [INQ037010](#), [INQ036811](#), [INQ036810/5](#)

<sup>683</sup> [33/195/22-196/3](#)

<sup>684</sup> [43/234/14-15](#)

<sup>685</sup> [42/142/2-143/2](#)

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, Showsec staff were simply looking at the bottom of the stairs in the City Room rather than patrolling the mezzanine.<sup>686</sup>

**6.222** It seems extraordinary that two large and commercially successful companies had such a fundamental misunderstanding of what they had agreed. Showsec characterised what happened as a “*breakdown in communication between the two companies*”.<sup>687</sup> SMG say that any breakdown of communication was “*internal to Showsec and entirely of its own making*”.<sup>688</sup>

**6.223** On the one hand, the obligation under the facilities management agreement lay with SMG to provide regular patrols at all times. While it was open to them to agree that Showsec should conduct those patrols during events, they were under a duty to ensure these were being carried out and should have checked. Such a check would have been straightforward and could have been done by simply viewing the CCTV. The closure of the McDonald’s restaurant at the end of January 2017,<sup>689</sup> which had a significant impact on how busy the mezzanine area was during events, also presented an opportunity

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<sup>686</sup> [43/238/9-20](#)

<sup>687</sup> [57/80/19-20](#)

<sup>688</sup> [56/88/1-2](#)

<sup>689</sup> [56/65/4](#)

to review the pre-egress checks and confirm they were being done in an adequate manner. This opportunity was not taken.<sup>690</sup>

- 6.224** On the other hand, the primary responsibility for the confusion about the pre-egress checks lies with Showsec. The wording of the check sheet was clear. It was reasonable for SMG to think that the pre-egress checks did include the mezzanine. It is difficult to see how the check sheet could properly be interpreted by Showsec staff as simply looking up the two sets of stairs leading to McDonald's and JD Williams from the bottom and clearing people away from the stairs if necessary. Showsec should have made sure their staff properly checked the mezzanine level and should have made sure that Jordan Beak did so on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.
- 6.225** By agreeing to complete the pre-egress check sheet, Showsec was under an obligation to carry out a security patrol of the mezzanine. I regard the failure to do so as being Showsec's, rather than that of its employees on the ground. This security patrol included being vigilant for the threat from terrorism.
- 6.226** In Part 1, I have addressed what I consider is likely to have occurred had a security patrol taken place at the time of the pre-egress check.

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<sup>690</sup> [29/160/2-161/10](#), [29/199/9-15](#)



# Part 7

## Policing of the City Room

### Key findings

- BTP was responsible for the day-to-day policing of the City Room.
- When planning the deployment of officers to police events at the Arena, BTP failed to give adequate consideration to the threat from terrorism.
- BTP failed to communicate and coordinate adequately with SMG and Showsec immediately before, during and after events.
- BTP failed to give adequate consideration to the threat from terrorism when assessing the risks to the public when events were taking place. No written risk assessment was conducted by BTP for the Ariana Grande concert or events generally. BTP should have prepared a written risk assessment which expressly considered the threat from terrorism for every event attended by a substantial number of people.
- Five BTP officers were deployed to police the Ariana Grande concert. Only four BTP officers were present in the Victoria Exchange Complex during the concert up to the point of the explosion.

- Contrary to their briefing, no BTP officer was present in the City Room in the 30 minutes prior to the end of the concert.
- Contrary to their briefing, the BTP officers who attended took breaks substantially and unjustifiably in excess of what they were permitted to. As a result, there were no BTP officers in the public areas of the Victoria Exchange Complex when SA walked to the City Room for the final time.
- There was a lack of clear leadership and supervision from any police officer present within the Victoria Exchange Complex. This was a significant contributory factor to the failure by BTP to ensure a presence in the City Room in accordance with the officers' briefing.
- The BTP officers deployed to police the Ariana Grande concert were adequately briefed.
- The BTP officers deployed to police the Ariana Grande concert had received adequate counter-terrorism training.
- BTP officers failed to follow their briefing because they failed to appreciate the need, when on duty, to be alert to the possibility of a terrorist attack.
- BTP failed to instil in the officers deployed to the Ariana Grande concert the need, when on duty, to be alert to the possibility of a terrorist attack.

## Primacy

- 7.1** Both GMP and BTP officers had the jurisdiction to act with the powers of a police constable within the Victoria Exchange Complex. The issue of which of these two police services should take lead in relation to any particular policing activity is known as primacy.
- 7.2** In Volume 1 my focus is on primacy for day-to-day policing. By day-to-day policing I mean the planning and provision of police officers to be present within Victoria Exchange Complex. The function of those officers includes the deterrence of, through visible presence, and detection of terrorist activity. I do not include the CTSA scheme within my use of the phrase day-to-day policing. Nor do I include within day-to-day policing, the response of either police service to a major incident at the Arena or, in particular, the response to a terrorist attack.
- 7.3** I am satisfied that BTP had primacy for the day-to-day policing of the City Room and surrounding areas within the Arena complex on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>691</sup> BTP was responsible from a day-to-day policing perspective for keeping members of the public safe in the City Room. Both GMP and BTP agree this was the case.<sup>692</sup>

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<sup>691</sup> [36/20/1-43/16](#)

<sup>692</sup> [INQ039375/2](#), [INQ035488/7](#)

## Background to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017

### Operational plan for deployment to events

7.4 BTP Inspector Michelle Wedderburn was the Police Inspector responsible for overseeing the BTP policing of railway stations in parts of Greater Manchester, including Manchester Victoria, for the period March 2009 to October 2016 and April 2017 to September 2017. In the intervening period she was seconded to the Operations Department.<sup>693</sup> As part of her responsibility for Manchester Victoria, Inspector Wedderburn attended the bi-annual multi-agency meetings at which forthcoming events at the Arena were discussed.<sup>694</sup> Inspector Wedderburn also received information from SMG relating to events. The focus of that information was what might disrupt particular events, such as a risk of disorder or whether an event was likely to be the target of thieves.<sup>695</sup> It was Inspector Wedderburn's responsibility to ensure that sufficient officers were deployed to police events at the Arena in May 2017.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> [43/1/24-3/5](#)

<sup>694</sup> [43/3/6-19](#)

<sup>695</sup> [43/4/6-16](#)

<sup>696</sup> [20/183/5-19](#), [43/44/16-23](#)

- 7.5** Inspector Wedderburn gave evidence about a document entitled “*Tactical Report – Phones 4U Arena*” (the 2014 Tactical Report).<sup>697</sup> Phones 4U Arena was a previous name of the Arena. This document is undated, but was created by PC Peter Wood in approximately June 2014.<sup>698</sup> As is plain from the introductory paragraph, the document provides BTP planners and operational commanders with an overview of policing at the Arena. It states that it should be “*treated as advice*”.<sup>699</sup> It refers to the “*Current threat level*” as being one of three criteria relevant to the “*policing numbers and style*”. In June 2014, the terrorist threat level was “*Substantial*”, meaning an attack is likely, and a level lower than it was in May 2017.
- 7.6** There is no evidence that the 2014 Tactical Report had been withdrawn prior to it being updated in September 2017.<sup>700</sup> However, Inspector Wedderburn was not aware of the 2014 Tactical Report before 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017<sup>701</sup> and the update was as a result of its existence having been identified after the Attack.<sup>702</sup> I consider this to be a matter for concern as it

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<sup>697</sup> [INQ001985](#)

<sup>698</sup> [43/10/8-16](#)

<sup>699</sup> [INQ001985/1](#)

<sup>700</sup> [43/12/15-13/1, 43/10/17-22](#)

<sup>701</sup> [43/11/1-5](#)

<sup>702</sup> [43/18/22-20/8](#)

means that Inspector Wedderburn was planning deployments to events at the Arena without reference to this or any similar document.

- 7.7** Inspector Wedderburn agreed that the 2014 Tactical Report contained helpful information and was the product of careful thought. However, she stressed that the author did not know the Arena and had never worked there.<sup>703</sup> For that reason, she considered that the content was of less use to someone in her position, who did have such personal knowledge.
- 7.8** The 2014 Tactical Report recommends that for “*high*” ticket-sale events one sergeant, four constables and two PCSOs should be deployed to the Victoria Exchange Complex. The Ariana Grande concert fitted the description of a “*high*” ticket-sale event,<sup>704</sup> but Inspector Wedderburn stated that the refurbishment in 2014 meant that in May 2017 fewer officers were required than recommended.<sup>705</sup>
- 7.9** The refurbishment of the Victoria Exchange Complex required careful reconsideration of policing numbers and a wholesale review of the 2014 Tactical Report.<sup>706</sup> This should have taken place before the reopening in 2015. This did not

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<sup>703</sup> [43/11/22-12/2](#)

<sup>704</sup> [43/13/16-19](#)

<sup>705</sup> [43/15/14-16](#)

<sup>706</sup> [43/20/4-8](#)

happen because Inspector Wedderburn did not know about it. Inspector Wedderburn should have known about the 2014 Tactical Report.<sup>707</sup>

- 7.10** Those responsible for briefing the officers who were deployed should have been aware of and worked to a written plan. Sergeant Gareth Wilson, who conducted the briefing on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, did not know about the 2014 Tactical Report.<sup>708</sup> Additionally, if the existing plan for policing the Arena was deficient, as Inspector Wedderburn asserted it was by reason of the author's lack of direct experience of working at the Victoria Exchange Complex, that too should have been taken into account and corrected long before the Attack.
- 7.11** Had Inspector Wedderburn identified the importance of working to a plan, either the 2014 Tactical Report would have come to her attention and been considered by her or, alternatively, a fresh plan would have been created.
- 7.12** The effect of Inspector Wedderburn not knowing about the 2014 Tactical Report was that officers were not being deployed to police events on the basis of any document or plan that specifically considered the particular risks to people attending events at, and the demands of, the

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<sup>707</sup> [43/33/12-34/1](#)

<sup>708</sup> [20/149/17-150/2](#)

Arena. Those risks included the threat from terrorism to event-goers. Since the Attack, BTP has created a generic security plan for events at the Arena.<sup>709</sup> The importance of working to such a document should have been obvious to BTP before the Attack.

**7.13** Inspector Wedderburn and a colleague attended Exercise Sherman in July 2016, the multi-agency exercise which involved a terrorist attack scenario in the City Room.<sup>710</sup> This, as Inspector Wedderburn accepted, should have resulted in a review by BTP of the policing of events at the Arena.<sup>711</sup> There was no review. Such a review was likely to have highlighted the fact that events, at that time, were not being policed in accordance with any written plan.

**7.14** The discipline of creating, updating and working to a written plan is likely to have uncovered further deficiencies in BTP's approach to policing events at the Arena. It would have provided an opportunity to reflect upon and develop arrangements for collaborative working with SMG and Showsec before, during and after events. This would have strengthened the

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<sup>709</sup> 36/122/16-19

<sup>710</sup> 43/40/9-14

<sup>711</sup> 43/41/25-42/3

relationship between the three organisations and ensured that there was effective communication, coordination and co-operation.

## **Communication, coordination and co-operation**

**7.15** SMG hosted the bi-annual meetings and so there was regular formal contact with BTP in that setting. I accept Miriam Stone and Paul Johnson’s evidence that they both had a good relationship with those they dealt with at BTP.<sup>712</sup> Showsec attended these meetings as well.

**7.16** Showsec recognised the importance of liaison with BTP. Showsec’s Operational Plan for the Arena had a section which addressed liaison with the police.<sup>713</sup> It sets out the need for the sharing and division of responsibility “*where police are deployed to an event*”. The document asserts that “*over the past years Showsec have worked closely with Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and the British Transport Police (BTP).*”

**7.17** On 20<sup>th</sup> May 2017 Showsec called upon BTP to assist with a suspicious person.<sup>714</sup> The evidence demonstrated a good working relationship between the two organisations on that occasion.

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<sup>712</sup> 30/79/20-21, 31/18/13-18, 34/32/22-24

<sup>713</sup> INQ012033/14

<sup>714</sup> 18/2/1-4/9

- 7.18** The evidence revealed that Showsec did not know the number of officers BTP deployed for events.<sup>715</sup> Nor was there any evidence of a formal arrangement between Showsec and BTP in relation to their respective plans. The discussion of individual events during the bi-annual meetings was at a high level. It tended to focus on events where problems might be caused by attendees, such as boxing matches. Specific deployments at events which were not identified as being likely to result in potential disorder from event-goers was not discussed in any detail.
- 7.19** None of the officers deployed to police the Ariana Grande concert were aware of any formal arrangement between BTP and Showsec that required them to liaise in a systematic and pre-planned way, immediately prior to, during and after events.<sup>716</sup> As a result, whether there was any contact at all between BTP and Showsec during the period of an event was left to the discretion of individual officers.
- 7.20** There was no robust system implemented by BTP to inform Showsec or SMG where, when and in what numbers officers would be deployed during an event. Nor did BTP know what

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<sup>715</sup> [33/58/12-21](#)

<sup>716</sup> [21/47/16-23](#), [21/169/18-21](#), [22/97/1-5](#), [20/204/17-24](#), [21/76/1-17](#)

Showsec's plan was in terms of the frequency, ambit and timing of Showsec patrols. There was a substantial failure of coordination by BTP.

**7.21** Adequate communication, coordination and co-operation by BTP with SMG and Showsec would have resulted in additional focus on the importance of a BTP presence in the City Room on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. This was likely to have resulted in a BTP officer being present in the City Room during egress. Such an officer would have been on hand at the point when Christopher Wild formed his concerns. Greater coordination would have materially increased the likelihood that the BTP officer present would have been spoken to by Christopher Wild or become involved, if those concerns had been raised with Mohammed Agha. I have addressed above the potential causative consequences of this in Part 1. I have also considered SMG and Showsec's responsibility to coordinate, communicate and co-operate with BTP in Part 6.

## **Risk assessment**

**7.22** A further opportunity to take proper account of the threat from terrorism was the carrying out of suitable and sufficient risk assessments on an event-by-event basis. No written risk assessment was conducted by BTP for the Ariana Grande

concert or events generally.<sup>717</sup> It was not the culture of BTP at that time to prepare such documents.<sup>718</sup> A written risk assessment, which expressly considered the threat from terrorism for every event attended by a substantial number of people, should have been prepared. This is now the case.<sup>719</sup>

**7.23** Inspector Wedderburn stated that she undertook an assessment of events using the National Decision-Making Model<sup>720</sup>. She said that she did not communicate the outcome of this process to anyone, although she did have a discussion about resourcing with the rostering sergeant.<sup>721</sup> Having heard Inspector Wedderburn's evidence about the process she undertook, it is clear to me that the focus of her assessment was on the audience numbers and profile. Her approach was over-dependent on the existence of intelligence of a specific threat<sup>722</sup> and her general expectation that any officer who was deployed would have the threat from terrorism in their minds. Her approach did not adequately take into account the threat from terrorism. Had she adopted a more formal process in writing, which

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<sup>717</sup> 36/112/13-18

<sup>718</sup> 43/31/11-14

<sup>719</sup> 36/111/6-24

<sup>720</sup> 43/26/6-31/10, 43/43/18-46/10

<sup>721</sup> 43/44/9-23

<sup>722</sup> 36/86/17-22, 43/46/4-10

she shared with others, these shortcomings would have been much more likely to have been detected and corrected.

**7.24** ACC O’Callaghan stated within BTP as an organisation there was no focus on planning a policing response to a PBIED.<sup>723</sup> Consequently, I find that this particular risk was not adequately considered by Inspector Wedderburn when she was planning deployments to events. Of particular concern to me was the evidence that, when the threat from terrorism was considered by BTP, there was insufficient consideration of the nature of the terrorist attacks in Europe which preceded 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.<sup>724</sup>

**7.25** Having heard from ACC O’Callaghan,<sup>725</sup> I am satisfied that the failure to have proper regard for the nature and extent of the threat from terrorism when policing events at the Arena prior to May 2017 was not an issue confined to Inspector Wedderburn, but it existed at a higher level within BTP.

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<sup>723</sup> [36/96/17-97/6](#)

<sup>724</sup> [36/87/24-88/9](#)

<sup>725</sup> [36/91/19-99/6](#)

## **BTP's policing of the City Room on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017**

- 7.26** Five officers were deployed to police the Ariana Grande concert: PC Corke, PC Bullough, PCSO Renshaw, PCSO Morrey and PCSO Brown. PCSO Brown was still undergoing tutoring under PCSO Morrey on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017<sup>726</sup> and so he was expected to remain with PCSO Morrey.<sup>727</sup>
- 7.27** The circumstances of the deployment were as follows. In 2017 Sergeant Wilson was an officer with 22 years' service.<sup>728</sup> At 14:10<sup>729</sup> on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, he delivered a verbal briefing which included the deployment to the Victoria Exchange Complex. In the course of the briefing, Sergeant Wilson mentioned counter-terrorism.<sup>730</sup> PCSO Renshaw attended this briefing, having come on duty at 14:00.<sup>731</sup> PC Corke, PC Bullough, PCSO Morrey and PCSO Brown did not attend the verbal briefing as they did not come on duty until 15:00.<sup>732</sup>

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<sup>726</sup> 21/61/1-5

<sup>727</sup> 43/24/7-20, 20/172/24-173/9

<sup>728</sup> 20/147/4-5

<sup>729</sup> 22/77/23-78/2

<sup>730</sup> 20/157/10-158/21

<sup>731</sup> 22/77/17-78/17

<sup>732</sup> 21/17/9-11, 21/144/12-14, 20/206/8-10, 21/65/1-3

- 7.28** In addition to the verbal briefing, in an email sent at 14:41 on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, Sergeant Wilson provided a short, written briefing to all of those who were allocated to the concert.<sup>733</sup> The email was addressed directly to PC Corke, PC Bullough, PCSO Renshaw, PCSO Morrey and PCSO Brown. It informed these officers that they “*are down to assist the concert tonight*”. It stated that the officers are “*deployed for the in and the out.*” It instructed the officers to deploy to three areas, one of which was “*patrolling the city rooms*”. It stated that breaks should “*be staggered between 1930-2100 so we have someone at Victoria*”. Attached to the email was the event rider which included information about the audience demographic. Neither the email nor the event rider referred to the threat from terrorism.
- 7.29** PC Corke and PC Bullough both recalled having seen the written briefing.<sup>734</sup> PCSO Renshaw did not have a mobile phone with him and so did not see it,<sup>735</sup> but he had received the verbal briefing. PCSO Morrey had no recollection of whether

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<sup>733</sup> INQ025538

<sup>734</sup> 21/19/2-7, 21/144/17-25

<sup>735</sup> 22/80/16-18

he saw the email.<sup>736</sup> PCSO Brown thought he may have seen it as it was his practice to check his emails.<sup>737</sup>

**7.30** Sergeant Wilson stated that by “*the in and the out*” he meant ingress to and egress from the concert.<sup>738</sup> He stated that his expectation was that there would be a BTP patrol looking out for suspicious activity or suspicious people in the City Room about 30 minutes before people started to walk out.<sup>739</sup> This time range accorded with PC Corke’s understanding of the meaning of egress.<sup>740</sup> It also accords with common sense.

**7.31** Sergeant Wilson’s meaning was clear in the email. The email directed that there should have been a policing presence in the Victoria Exchange Complex throughout the period of the deployment. The email directed that at least one officer should have been in the City Room from approximately 22:00. I accept Sergeant Wilson’s evidence that the email was a reiteration of his verbal briefing in terms of where he expected officers to be<sup>741</sup>. Consequently, in the verbal briefing Sergeant Wilson provided identical instructions to those who attended it.

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<sup>736</sup> 20/207/8-18

<sup>737</sup> 21/65/4-6

<sup>738</sup> 20/161/10-16

<sup>739</sup> 20/191/4-10

<sup>740</sup> 21/12/6-12

<sup>741</sup> 20/159/1-10, 22/81/5-24

PC Bullough accepted without equivocation that the instructions were sufficiently clear.<sup>742</sup> I agree with that assessment.

**7.32** The question then is, why were Sergeant Wilson's instructions not followed?

**7.33** PC Corke was the most experienced of those who had been allocated to police the concert that night. Sergeant Wilson's email directed him to deal with an unrelated matter before attending the Victoria Exchange Complex. At 21:00, although he had not completed that task,<sup>743</sup> PC Corke told Sergeant Wilson that he would be at the Arena for egress.<sup>744</sup> However, PC Corke did not attend Victoria Railway Station until 22:34.<sup>745</sup> He only did so in response to the requests for assistance after the explosion had occurred.<sup>746</sup>

**7.34** Exactly when PC Corke finished dealing with his other task is not clear on the evidence.<sup>747</sup> What is clear is that PC Corke did not go straight to the Victoria Exchange Complex once he had completed it. Instead, he travelled with PC Matthew Martin in a police vehicle to Deansgate.<sup>748</sup> PC Corke's justification for

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<sup>742</sup> 21/155/1-4

<sup>743</sup> 21/32/16-19, 20/165/2-16

<sup>744</sup> 20/171/1-13

<sup>745</sup> INQ035612/23

<sup>746</sup> 21/29/4-8

<sup>747</sup> 20/189/2-23, 21/26/4-17

<sup>748</sup> 21/29/7-8

doing this is that he was reliant upon PC Martin for a lift<sup>749</sup> albeit that he, PC Corke, drove the vehicle.<sup>750</sup> PC Corke explained that he was not present at egress on the basis that he had mistimed his movements by “*a couple of minutes*”.<sup>751</sup> Given that on both PC Corke and Sergeant Wilson’s evidence the period for egress would begin by 22:15, at the latest, and, given that at 22:32 he was still on Deansgate,<sup>752</sup> PC Corke’s mistiming was substantially greater than a couple of minutes.

**7.35** Even accepting that there may have been good reasons for his absence, PC Corke should have communicated to the duty sergeant, who was Sergeant Peter Wilcock from 21:00, that he had been unavoidably detained. I do not accept PC Corke’s evidence that it was not his responsibility to do this.<sup>753</sup>

**7.36** In relation to those who did attend the Victoria Exchange Complex for their deployment, all four took a break substantially longer than they were permitted. At 19:27, PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw set off on a five mile journey to buy a take-away. They returned at 20:08. They then went to a private area within the station

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<sup>749</sup> 21/27/11-28/13

<sup>750</sup> 21/58/4-11

<sup>751</sup> 21/28/13

<sup>752</sup> 21/29/4-8, 74/18/5-9

<sup>753</sup> 21/45/9-18

where they continued their break for a further 78 minutes, until 21:36, when they returned to the station concourse.<sup>754</sup> During the latter 35 minutes of PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw's break, PCSO Morrey and PCSO Brown took their break, from 20:58 to 22:28. This meant that during the period 20:58 to 21:36 there was no BTP policing presence within the public areas of the Victoria Exchange Complex, including the City Room. Each of these officers was entitled only to a break lasting, at most, one hour.<sup>755</sup>

**7.37** PC Bullough, PCSO Renshaw and PCSO Brown were candid in their acceptance that there was no good reason for the length of their breaks.<sup>756</sup> PCSO Morrey stated he could not recall whether or not he took an unacceptably long break or not.<sup>757</sup> None of the four officers sought to provide any justification for why their breaks overlapped.

**7.38** There was a complete absence of any BTP officer in the City Room from around 22:00 until after the explosion. No satisfactory justification has been provided for this.<sup>758</sup> ACC O'Callaghan gave conflicting evidence in relation to why he believed Sergeant Wilson's email was not

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<sup>754</sup> 21/161/1-164/5, 22/92/10-93/24

<sup>755</sup> 20/184/4-6

<sup>756</sup> 21/164/9-11, 22/93/25-94/5, 21/83/11-14

<sup>757</sup> 20/222/9-15

<sup>758</sup> 21/154/4-8, 22/100/3-5, 20/224/23-225/8, 21/88/2-6

followed. On one hand, ACC O’Callaghan stated that it would be wrong to blame individual officers.<sup>759</sup> On the other, he was adamant that the officers were adequately supervised<sup>760</sup> and they could be expected to follow the instructions they were given.<sup>761</sup> He also accepted that a person is more likely to follow instructions if they had a clear understanding of the reasons for them.<sup>762</sup>

**7.39** In my view there were a number of reasons why there was no BTP officer in the City Room from 22:00.

**7.40** It was partly because PC Bullough, PSCO Renshaw and PCSO Morrey failed to organise themselves in a way that followed Sergeant Wilson’s clear instructions. That is not, though, the complete explanation. The lack of clear leadership from any police officer present within the Victoria Exchange Complex was a significant contributory factor to this failure.

**7.41** Having heard the evidence from each of those officers involved, I find that the absence of a person with the experience of PC Corke<sup>763</sup> resulted in a lack of clear leadership on the

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<sup>759</sup> [36/101/17-20](#)

<sup>760</sup> [36/101/21-25](#)

<sup>761</sup> [36/101/13-16](#)

<sup>762</sup> [36/103/7-11](#)

<sup>763</sup> [21/1/23-24](#)

ground. PC Bullough, the only police constable at the Arena, had joined BTP in July 2016 and had been operational from October 2016. She was not an experienced officer.<sup>764</sup> She was still within her probationary period which was due to be completed in July 2018.<sup>765</sup> This was only her fifth deployment to police an event at the Arena.<sup>766</sup> While PCSO Morrey thought PC Bullough was in charge,<sup>767</sup> neither she nor PCSO Renshaw thought that she was.<sup>768</sup> Inspector Wedderburn's evidence was that those present should have worked it out between themselves,<sup>769</sup> although she accepted that it was now clear to her that officers deployed to police an event needed to be supervised.<sup>770</sup> An officer of PC Corke's 30 years' experience would have had a better grasp of how to ensure Sergeant Wilson's instructions were followed by all present. By reason of his length of service, PC Corke would also have had a greater natural authority. There should have been either a sergeant or an experienced constable on duty in the station complex to supervise the less senior and less experienced officers.

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<sup>764</sup> 21/142/11-22, 36/99-24-100/3

<sup>765</sup> 21/194/4-8

<sup>766</sup> 21/153/5-6

<sup>767</sup> 20/218/12-17

<sup>768</sup> 21/175/5-9, 22/99/13-15

<sup>769</sup> 43/17/7-9

<sup>770</sup> 43/36/25-37/8

**7.42** It is important to take a step back and look at the evidence as a whole. All five officers allocated to the Arena that night failed to follow clear instructions and do what was expected of them in important respects. One explanation for this might be that, by chance, and, in different ways, each of them deliberately and consciously failed to act as they knew they should. An alternative explanation is that, in addition to the lack of leadership present at the Victoria Exchange Complex, more systemic, cultural factors were in play.

**7.43** All five officers had received appropriate counter-terrorism training.<sup>771</sup> I have no reason to doubt that each of them would have been able to confirm in May 2017 what the terrorism threat level was had they been asked. However, having seen what they did<sup>772</sup> and heard what they have said about it, I find that none of them had realised when on duty on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017, that they needed to be alert to the possibility of a terrorist attack. With the exception of PCSO Brown, who was still under direct supervision, that is a significant failure on the part of each of the BTP officers who were deployed to the Victoria Exchange Complex.

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<sup>771</sup> [41/224/1-15](#)

<sup>772</sup> [INQ031678](#)

- 7.44** BTP, as an organisation, was principally responsible for this defect in the officers' attitude. BTP failed to instil the necessary alertness into each of them in their day-to-day operation.
- 7.45** ACC O'Callaghan acknowledged the difficulty with keeping police officers' attention in briefings, when there was no new information. He likened this to the safety briefing at the start of a flight.<sup>773</sup> I accept that making information memorable is a real challenge which confronts every police service in the country. It means that careful thought must be given to ensuring that this challenge is overcome. The longer the threat level remains static, the more likely it is to get pushed to the back of the minds of those whose duty is to police events. It is the obligation of the organisation to ensure that the counter-terrorism message is received by those being briefed.
- 7.46** This did not happen within BTP prior to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017. ACC O'Callaghan stated his belief that terrorism was in the minds of all of the officers.<sup>774</sup> The approach by the officers on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 to the discharge of their duties reveals that this was not at the forefront of their minds.

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<sup>773</sup> [36/155/15-161/4](#)

<sup>774</sup> [36/95/9-25](#)

**7.47** Symptomatic of the absence of conscious, proactive thought in relation to the risk of terrorism was the approach to both written risk assessments and a written plan for policing events. The 2014 Tactical Report (or similar) was not used. The lack of a proper assessment of the risk in written form and the lack of any other written plan for policing of events at the Victoria Exchange Complex, reveal a failure on BTP's part to give proper consideration to the threat from terrorism when deploying officers to police events at the Arena. The process of creating such documents compels thought to be given to threats and how they can be mitigated. This is capable of having real value by influencing the culture at all levels of command. This, in turn, is capable of affecting the attitude of those deployed on the ground.

# Part 8

## Volume 1: conclusions and recommendations

- 8.1** There are two sections to Part 8. This first section will set out and explain my recommendations. These are derived from the conclusions I have reached based on the evidence given about the security arrangements for the Arena. The second section will set out my approach to monitoring the progress of particular of the recommendations I make in Volume 1 (monitored recommendations).
- 8.2** By issuing Volume 1 at this stage, I will be in a position to receive reports from those affected by and are responsible for the monitored recommendations while the oral evidence hearings are ongoing. I will seek these reports before the conclusion of 2021.
- 8.3** As at the date of Volume 1, over four years have passed since the Attack. Some changes have been made at the Arena which provide greater protection for members of the public against terrorist attacks. I have concluded that more needs to be done. There remains a risk of further attacks which requires changes to be made without delay.

- 8.4** The monitored recommendations are all in areas in which substantial progress can be made within the remaining period of the oral evidence hearings.
- 8.5** The fact that I have not included a recommendation as a monitored recommendation does not mean it should not be followed. I will keep under review whether or not I need to seek any report in relation to those which are not monitored recommendations.

# Recommendations

## Guarding against complacency

- 8.6** My overarching impression from the evidence is that on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 and in the lead up to the Ariana Grande concert, inadequate attention was paid to the national level of the terrorist threat by those directly concerned with security at the Arena. The threat level was severe. That meant that a terrorist attack was highly likely.
- 8.7** None of those directly concerned with security at the Arena on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 considered it a realistic possibility that a terrorist attack would happen there.
- 8.8** If SMG had paid greater attention to the threat level, it would have taken more steps to mitigate the danger of a terrorist attack in the City Room on 22<sup>nd</sup> May.
- 8.9** If Showsec had paid greater attention to the threat level, it would have taken more steps to mitigate the danger of a terrorist attack in the City Room on 22<sup>nd</sup> May.
- 8.10** If Mohammed Agha and Kyle Lawler had considered the concerns expressed to them about SA in light of the threat level, they would have made greater efforts to ensure those concerns were reported to their supervisors.

**8.11** If BTP officers had that level of risk in their minds when they carried out their duties that night, they would not have been absent for such a long period from the public areas of the Victoria Exchange Complex. In particular, one of them would have been in the City Room in the half hour period before egress and therefore during part of the period that SA waited there before detonating his bomb.

**8.12** One of the reasons why inadequate attention was paid to the threat level was that it had been in place for some years. I make no criticism in respect of the length of the period during which a severe risk was identified. As long as the threat level is severe, the appropriate level of vigilance must be maintained. The problem is that it becomes more and more difficult to ensure that people maintain the high level of alertness required in relation to potential dangers. A high level of alertness needs to be maintained when the threat level is severe.

It is necessary to continuously remind those whose job includes being alert to the terrorist threat of the level of it and what that level means in relation to the possibility of an attack.

**8.13** There ought to be a risk assessment for every venue. A specific risk assessment for each event which involves the attendance

of a substantial number of people. All risk assessments for large concert venues should include consideration of the risk of a terrorist attack. Inadequate consideration of that risk may result in incorrectly identifying a low risk. This in turn may cause those responsible for security to be insufficiently alert. That is what occurred here.

- 8.14** It was suggested during the evidence that this was unnecessary, as everyone knew the threat level of a terrorist attack and would have regard to it in the way they behaved. I do not agree. While in theory that may be true, the discipline of undertaking a risk assessment will assist in keeping the threat of terrorism at the forefront of the minds of those who prepare for the event.

Robust procedures are necessary to counter the threat of a terrorist attack. The purposes of those procedures and the necessity of following them must be understood by those carrying them out

- 8.15** The following are three examples of procedures which should have been more robust.
- 8.16** It needed to be made absolutely clear and to be understood by the BTP officers that patrolling the areas of egress in the half hour before the end of the concert was not optional, it was mandatory because of the security risk. There needed to be at least

one experienced police officer on duty at the Victoria Exchange Complex on the occasions of concerts, preferably a sergeant, in addition to inexperienced officers, to ensure that nobody forgot the threat level and carried out their instructions with it in mind.

- 8.17** The pre-egress checks carried out by Showsec ignored almost entirely the terrorist threat. Those checks concentrated instead on making sure that the exit routes for the crowd were clear. That was important but it was also important that there should have been a counter-terrorism aspect to the checks. Anyone who had the threat level at the forefront of their mind would have realised that.
- 8.18** Showsec should have understood that its staff had a responsibility to check the mezzanine as part of a security patrol. SMG should have had a system in place to make sure that security patrols were taking place and being carried out properly.
- 8.19** In order for necessary security procedures to be maintained, each person needs to be reminded of the counter-terrorism aspect of their activities. The message that counter-terrorism measures are vital needs to be constantly reinforced.

Those responsible for security should be briefed at every event about the current threat level and risk of terrorist attack.

- 8.20** I accept that repeating the same warning about terrorism as part of each briefing creates a risk of it being ignored and those who have heard it before may listen less than attentively.
- 8.21** The evidence I heard from Showsec is a good illustration of this issue. The Showsec supervisors' and stewards' briefings on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 both include the importance of being vigilant for suspicious behaviour. As the events which followed demonstrate, that was insufficient to keep people safe. However, the fact that this measure was not effective on this occasion is not a reason to abandon it. Rather, it is a reason to do it better.
- 8.22** Those receiving the warning about the risk of attack have to be aware of the potential that they will become desensitised to the message. Those giving the warning need to be aware of this and must try to refresh the message so that it is sufficiently updated and relevant to attract the attention of the listener.
- 8.23** Showsec operated a system of having a period within the supervisors' briefing for a particular topic which was selected from a number of possible options, one of which

was counter-terrorism. This was, in my view, a good way to ensure that additional detail was provided without the subject matter becoming stale.

Any and all suspicious behaviour by event-goers or members of the public close to a venue must be noted. It must be reported promptly so that investigations can be made and action taken, if appropriate.

**8.24** When this recommendation is followed there will be false alarms. While this may be frustrating, it is important that the way false alarms are dealt with does not discourage the reporting of suspicious behaviour. If unnecessary reports are made, the remedy should be to train staff better to recognise suspicious behaviour, rather than criticise them for making the report. It is not easy for staff, particularly junior ones, to make reports that they know may result in disruption to an event or inconvenience a large number of people. They need to be given the confidence to do so.

**8.25** Bomb hoaxes can cause great inconvenience, but no-one can safely ignore bomb warnings. So it is with suspicious behaviour. It should only be ignored when an innocent explanation has been verified. There was evidence of a number of such false alarms during the Inquiry, but staff

should be congratulated and not criticised either expressly or implicitly for raising the alarm. Showsec and SMG were clear that they did their best to get this message across but, on the evidence, it did not seem to have got through to all of their staff. In particular, the system for capturing reports and ensuring their proper investigation was not sufficiently robust.

- 8.26** Where hostile reconnaissance is suspected it needs to be properly recorded and reported to the police. The police should investigate it and report back. Briefings to security staff need to include details of the suspected hostile reconnaissance. This is so that staff know what has happened and know what to look out for.

## **The Protect Duty**

- 8.27** A consequence of the Attack has been that impetus has been given to the idea of introducing primary legislation putting in place a ‘Protect Duty’. That is an obligation for those with responsibility for publicly accessible locations to consider and, where required, implement security measures in order to protect the public. The government proposes to introduce the necessary legislation and is conducting a Consultation on what it will contain.

- 8.28** During the hearings in 2018 of the Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament into the 2017 attacks, Counter Terrorism Police told the Committee that a Protect Duty was “*not something which seems likely at the moment in law*”.
- 8.29** In its report which included recommendations, at Recommendation LL the Committee said at page 104: “*...we remain concerned that there appears to be no way of mandating owners of public places to install necessary protective security measures where they do not do so voluntarily. This issue becomes yet more difficult where sites have multiple owners. The Government should consider clarifying the legal responsibilities of both site owners and relevant public authorities in this regard.*”
- 8.30** Things have clearly moved on.
- 8.31** The progress is a testament to the efforts of Figen Murray, whose son Martyn died in the Attack. In his memory and in recognition of Figen Murray’s work, the proposed new legislation has become known as ‘Martyn’s Law’. Everyone who took part in the Inquiry has rightly paid tribute to her efforts.
- 8.32** Legislating for a Protect Duty is an ambitious project. It is intended to put in place legal requirements which will apply to all spaces to

which the public have access. There have been other schemes which have been designed to protect the public in crowded spaces. These have been more limited in scope and have not been wholly successful. The first was targeted at buildings which were considered to be 'vulnerable'. The most recent one was aimed at crowded spaces which would be 'attractive' as targets for terrorists. This is the one which the Arena accessed through the input of a CTSA. I have dealt with that scheme in relation to the Arena in detail in the course of Volume 1.

- 8.33** There were drawbacks to both the schemes which were implemented through CTSA's. The first was that they applied to a relatively limited number of locations and, perhaps more importantly, they were voluntary schemes and occupiers of premises were not obliged to implement recommendations made by CTSA's. As I have already said, SMG did take up the offer of assistance and did implement recommendations which had been made. The shortcomings in the scheme as it affected the Arena are made clear in Volume 1.
- 8.34** The idea of a more comprehensive Protect Duty has been under consideration for a number of years. DAC D'Orsi said that she had been an advocate for it ever since she took up her previous job dealing with terrorist cases. Shaun

Hipgrave, who is in charge of policy around the Protect Duty at the Home Office, has also been a supporter for some time. The need for a different scheme was partly because of the lack of success of the previous schemes and also because of the change in the methodology of the attacks carried out by terrorists.

- 8.35** The government proposal is very wide ranging and, while simple in design, it will be complicated to put into operation. The proposal is that the Protect Duty will apply to every space to which the public has access so that wherever members of the public go within a public space some person or organisation will have the responsibility to take steps to protect them against a terrorist attack.
- 8.36** The Consultation considers three different areas to which a Protect Duty may apply. First, public venues which are capable of accommodating an audience in excess of 100; second, large organisations employing more than 250 people; and third, public spaces. Each of these different categories will cover a wide variety of locations with very different levels of risk.
- 8.37** The Inquiry has been concerned with a large arena which comes within the first category. Very different issues may arise for the Protect Duty for the second two categories.

- 8.38** I have not heard evidence and I have not considered submissions on how to make large organisations or public spaces secure, so I will restrict myself principally to dealing with the proposed Protect Duty as it applies to large, public venues. Some of my observations will be relevant to the other two categories.
- 8.39** There is already legislation which is capable of requiring consideration of the risks of a terrorist attack in some buildings. As is correctly pointed out by the government, existing legislation does not cover all the areas that they wish a Protect Duty to cover. A Protect Duty is therefore needed in addition to existing legislation, but it does not mean that existing legislation should be ignored.
- 8.40** Whenever a new Protect Duty has been considered, questions of proportionality have arisen. It is important that, as far as possible, the risk of a terrorist succeeding is eradicated or minimised. While we look to the Security Service and Counter-Terrorism Police to discover plots before they can come to fruition, they cannot prevent every terrorist plot as they themselves have said. That is not a reflection on how they do their jobs, it is the reality. Nor is it any comment on whether SA's plot could or should have been stopped by the Security

Service and Counter-Terrorism Police. I shall be considering that issue in Volume 3 of the Report.

- 8.41** Doing nothing is, in my view, not an option. Equally, the Protect Duty must not be so prescriptive as to prevent people enjoying a normal life.
- 8.42** Working out what is a proportionate response is a matter for society through Parliament. Any increase in protective measures is likely to affect both those implementing them and may affect members of the public. I have seen the horrific outcome of the Attack on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 and the appalling consequences it has had for the bereaved and survivors. I recommend that, when considering what is the appropriate Protect Duty for premises like the Arena, a high standard of protective security is justified.
- 8.43** An important question for the government will be whether setting the level for the Protect Duty in the first category at venues with a capacity of 100 or more is workable. Very different issues will arise for venues capable of accommodating an audience of only 100 people and one capable of accommodating many thousands such as the Arena.

- 8.44** The Consultation’s stated aim is for “*light touch*” regulation. While that may be justified when dealing with smaller venues, it seems to me that different considerations should apply to larger commercial premises. Not only are the potential consequences so much more serious but, for that reason, these premises are more likely to attract the attention of terrorists. They are also likely to have greater resources to put protective measures in place.
- 8.45** I recommend that when considering the shape of the legislation, the government considers whether it will be necessary to have further categories above the 100 capacity. While categorising by capacity may be the most straightforward way of deciding on the nature of the Protect Duty to be imposed, there may be other factors that need to be considered. For example, it may be appropriate to use different capacities depending on whether the venue is indoors or outdoors. This will need to be considered.
- 8.46** For venues capable of accommodating large audiences, it seems to me that considerations of eliminating or reducing risk from terrorist attacks should be part of the pre-building process. Once premises are constructed, it may be that compromises in the discharge of the Protect Duty will be reached to enable the premises to

trade. For example, one of the principal reasons that SA was able to detonate his bomb was the difficulty of making the City Room secure because of its design and use.

- 8.47** I consider it is important that before premises are built, or there is a change of use, consideration is given to whether the design is suitable for providing the level of security required by the Protect Duty. In the end, it would be better for developers to know in advance whether their building was likely to comply with any Protect Duty rather than face difficulties after they have constructed the building.
- 8.48** Safe means of entry and egress can be considered before the premises are built, so that security difficulties such as those caused by access through grey spaces can be resolved. The nature of the risks and threats from terrorists change, as we have seen over the past decade. While it may be impossible to consider every possibility at the construction planning stage, many could be.
- 8.49** There are already statutory requirements which could cater for this. It could be done as part of the construction planning or the licensing process. Considerations of public safety are already part of the licensing process and there is no reason why consideration of

the vulnerability of a terrorist attack in new premises should not be part of the planning process. I understand this could come within the present planning legislation, but if a widening of the ambit of planning permission was required, there is no reason why that could not be achieved by government guidance or, if necessary, the primary legislation which will be required to introduce the Protect Duty.

- 8.50** Similar considerations apply to licensing permissions. Any building such as the Arena would require a licence to permit public entertainment and the sale of alcohol. Public safety has always been a consideration in the granting of licences and the clear terms of the Licensing Act 2003 mean that it still is.
- 8.51** I recommend consideration is given to these matters when legislating for a Protect Duty. The Home Office, in their submissions to me, indicated that they will consider reviewing the Licensing Act 2003 guidance once a Protect Duty has been brought in. An addition to that guidance is all that would be required. Any change in the guidance needs to be consistent with a new Protect Duty and there seems no reason why it should not be issued at the same time as the introduction of the new duty.

**8.52** When dealing with large venues such as the Arena, I see no reason why regulation as part of the Protect Duty should not be rigorous. Regulation dealing with other matters of public safety such as food hygiene is rigorous. I do not see why prevention of terrorist attacks should not be treated in the same way. It would be comforting to think that threats from terrorist groups might be short-lived but there is no evidence to support that.

## The Duty

**8.53** In my view there should be the following requirements as part of the Protect Duty when dealing with large premises.

**8.54** First, it will be necessary to identify what the nature of the duty will be.

**8.55** There already exists a statutory form of words which is appropriate to define the extent of the duty, so it is unnecessary to create a completely new formulation. I recommend that a formulation of the duty could be to take such steps as are 'reasonably practicable' to ensure the security of members of the public while they are on land, or in premises, with express or implied permission to be there. Members of the public falling into this category will be those to whom the Protect Duty is owed. It should include employees of the Protect Duty-holder.

- 8.56** The meaning of reasonably practicable is well established. It is used within health and safety legislation which will have some similarities to a Protect Duty. I have included a new concept of ‘security’. My recommendation is that security in terms of a Protect Duty should mean protecting those to whom the Protect Duty is owed from harm as a result of a terrorist attack.
- 8.57** The next step will be to identify who should be subject to a Protect Duty. That is not necessarily a straightforward exercise. Identification of the persons and organisations subject to the Duty needs to be simple.
- 8.58** The Consultation proposes that the Protect Duty should fall on the owners of land and occupiers. That seems a sensible starting point. Depending on the circumstances, it may be easy for owners to discharge their duty. For example, the owners of premises like the Arena are likely to discharge their Protect Duty by contractual obligations imposed directly on the occupier or on the head lessee who can then pass them on to the occupier. It would then be a matter of the application of the reasonable practicability test to decide whether more was required of an owner. This will depend on the individual circumstances.

- 8.59** Deciding who is subject to the Protect Duty becomes more difficult in relation to areas over which a number of people have rights. When considering an area such as the City Room, there may be an owner, a head lessee and others who have premises adjacent to it who have rights for themselves and their customers to pass over it. All of these could, and probably should, have a Protect Duty over the parts of the common area which their visitors use. The extent of that may depend on the type and amount of use they make of the common space.
- 8.60** Deciding who has a Protect Duty in relation to a shared space, what the extent of each duty is and how the duty is going to be fulfilled by the different parties will be difficult. In the case of the Arena the problem did not arise as, by virtue of the facilities management agreement, SMG were contractually responsible for security in the City Room. Reaching such a contractual arrangement would be sensible and may be necessary but may not be readily reached in some cases where such a communal space exists. Imposing a Protect Duty by legislation on, for example, owners of shopping arcades which they never had in their contemplation at the time they let units in the arcade, is capable of leading to unfairness.

- 8.61** As suggested in the Consultation, the preferred way of dealing with any problems between different Duty-holders would be to encourage agreement between the various parties as to how they should collectively discharge the Protect Duty. It has to be recognised that that may not be possible, and a mechanism may have to be considered to enforce a resolution.
- 8.62** I recommend consideration of a Protect Duty on others who have no legal interest in the property but have responsibility for security. For example, Showsec who were involved in crowd management and security, activity which Showsec accepts had a counter-terrorist element, would not be covered by an ownership or occupation-based duty. On the evidence that I have heard, there is a strong case for making an organisation, such as Showsec, subject to such a Duty. It may be that this can be provided for contractually between the owners or occupiers of the premises and any company employed by them to provide security, but there could be difficulties where the contract is already in existence.
- 8.63** There may be a decision to be made as to whether the government will itself be made subject to a Protect Duty or whether some government agencies will be. Police services would not be covered by a property-based

Protect Duty except on their own land. While the Police would, no doubt, be required to protect the public from a terrorist attack without such a duty, the existence of a positive Protect Duty might provide a framework and reinforce the need for constant vigilance. One of the matters revealed by the evidence given at the Inquiry has been the difficulty in keeping people aware of the risk of a terrorist attack, particularly when the threat level remains the same for a long period of time.

**8.64** Local authorities provide protective security through the operation of CCTV which does not cover land that they own. It is important that the operators of CCTV have sufficient training to observe hostile reconnaissance and suspicious behaviour and it may be that consideration should be given to making local authorities subject to a Protect Duty.

Communication, coordination and co-operation between those with a responsibility for keeping the public safe

**8.65** One of the recurring themes of this Inquiry has been the need for co-operation between different people and organisations in the interests of everybody's safety. All employers

are already under this duty by reason of the health and safety regime in relation to shared workspaces.

- 8.66** All those concerned with or occupying the Victoria Exchange Complex in which the Arena was located should have been co-operating together over security, particularly those working in the station and the Arena.
- 8.67** The CTSA advising the station and the CTSA advising the Arena should have carried out at least part of their security assessment together. Showsec should have been involved with the CTSA when security matters were discussed with SMG.
- 8.68** BTP should have liaised more closely with both SMG and Showsec. Each should have known what the other was doing, so that the protective measures each provided were complementary. Showsec, in submissions to me, argued that once the audience members left the Arena and entered into the City Room, primary responsibility for their safety from a terrorist attack was on BTP as this was a ‘public space’.<sup>775</sup> As a matter of fact and law, I do not believe that that is accurate. The City Room

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<sup>775</sup> [INQ039377/2 at paragraph 4](#)

was a privately owned space, in to which the public was permitted except between 00:00 and 05:30 each day.

- 8.69** Whether or not it is accurate as a matter of law, it reflects in my view the wrong attitude to approaching the terrorist threat. While we enjoy the freedoms that we do, no police service or the Security Service can hope to eliminate all terrorist threats. It is up to everybody to carry out their part in trying to prevent terrorist attacks. Co-operation is required from everybody and attempts should not be made to pass on responsibilities to others. It is to be hoped that a Protect Duty will achieve this by legislation, as commercial pressures may mean that it will not be achieved on a voluntary basis.
- 8.70** In my view, the Protect Duty should include a requirement that, where there is more than one Protect Duty-holder in relation to any particular protected space, that person should co-operate, communicate and act in a coordinated manner with other Protect Duty-holders in order to discharge their own Protect Duty.

## Summary of the Protect Duty process

- 8.71** The exact mechanics of how the Protect Duty will work in practice will be a matter for Parliament to determine. However, I recommend that it will need to include the following stages:

- 1) The Protect Duty-holder must assess the risks.
- 2) In light of the risk assessment, the Protect Duty-holder must decide what needs to be done to mitigate the risks.
- 3) The Protect Duty-holder should carry out the actions which have been identified.
- 4) There should be a system of checking that the actions have been carried out.
- 5) If there has been a failure to carry out the actions, enforcement action should follow.

**8.72** I make some suggestions as to the detail below, which I hope will assist.

## The Protect Plan

**8.73** Central to the whole process of discharging the Protect Duty should be the preparation of a comprehensive risk assessment, the identification of the control measures and an explanation of how these will be implemented. I will refer to this as a 'Protect Plan'. It may well be possible that for smaller venues or open spaces, a Protect Plan could be prepared by the owner from a generic list of options. That does not seem to me to be feasible for large venues. It does not seem unreasonable to me that large commercial venues, for which preparation of risk assessments and solutions may be complex, should have to pay for the

preparation of the Protect Plan whether by retaining a consultant or employing someone for that purpose.

- 8.74** Experts assisting in the completion of the Protect Plan will require specialist training and a minimum standard of accreditation will ensure that those undertaking this very important task are properly equipped to do it competently. It will be for the security industry, in collaboration with government, to ensure that there exists a recognised standard of training, a 'kitemark' of approval and ongoing continued professional development. It may be that the Security Industry Authority could have a role to play in setting the standard.
- 8.75** In some cases, the steps required of Protect Duty-holders will be obvious and straightforward. In these cases expert input may be disproportionate. These Protect Duty-holders should be able to take the necessary steps by accessing publicly available information as to how they should approach their tasks. Below I make recommendations as to how NaCTSO may be able to make a contribution to ensuring the required information is available to those who need it.

- 8.76** In cases in which preparing the Protect Plan is not straightforward and the Protect Duty-holder, such as a charity, does not have the means to pay for assistance, consideration should be given to providing state help for the preparation of the Plan and its implementation.
- 8.77** The Protect Plan should set out the ‘reasonably practicable’ measures to be taken to mitigate the risk of a terrorist attack.
- 8.78** Once prepared, in some cases the police and other state agencies may wish to have an input into the plan before it finalised.
- 8.79** A timetable will need to be set. There will need to be provision for regular reviews and enforcement process. Reviews will not only be needed to ensure that the Protect Plan is still being implemented but to consider possible changes if the terrorist threat alters.

### Selecting appropriate staff

- 8.80** The Protect Plan should identify which roles will include a counter-terrorism element. These roles are essential to the successful discharge of the Protect Duty. It is critical that those undertaking these roles are selected with care. This will include ensuring that they have the necessary maturity and confidence to speak up should the situation arise. It should also include

ensuring a background check proportionate to the role that they are undertaking has been conducted.

- 8.81** I recommend that the Protect Plan identifies the approach which will be taken to ensuring that only appropriate people undertake work which includes a counter-terrorism element.

### Adequate training

- 8.82** Part of the Protect Duty proposals include the provision of training in counter-terrorism. The higher-level training provided by the SIA for employees occupying certain positions should be retained but it is important that managers and all employees have some training. ACT which is a training scheme set up by NaCTSO is suitable for people working in the industry at all levels. All people working in venues such as the Arena should be trained in the basics of counter-terrorism. The nature of the threat changes so it is important that there is regular refresher training.

- 8.83** The provision of adequate training should form a key control measure within the Protect Plan. This will include consideration of the need for enhanced training for those in roles which require it.

- 8.84** I recommend that staff training should form a mandatory part of the Protect Plan.

## Rigorous and robust enforcement

- 8.85** It was a common feature of the regulatory schemes that I have heard about during the Inquiry that there were insufficient resources to carry out proper enforcement. The consequence of that is that there have been a number of breaches of regulations which might have been avoided with more active enforcement.
- 8.86** It is important that there is proper enforcement of the Protect Duty, the possible consequences of breaches are so serious that proper steps need to be taken to avoid them happening. It is possible that CTSA's, licensing officers, police licensing enforcement officers and the SIA could all combine to provide enforcement. Even if that happens, it is likely that more people will be required to carry out the work. When cutbacks occur, enforcement can be one of the first areas to lose staff. It would be a false economy in relation to enforcement of the Protect Duty. I recommend that an adequate and effective enforcement process is established in relation to the Protect Duty.
- 8.87** The proposal is that there should be a system of enforcement to ensure that the terms of the Protect Plan which has been determined are complied with. I am satisfied on the evidence that I have heard that there needs to be an

enforcement mechanism and the ability to impose a penalty if there is a breach. Part of the reason for the failure of other schemes has been that they have been voluntary. The Consultation suggests that the penalty should be restricted to a civil penalty which would be financial. In those circumstances there would be no conviction. While it is not unusual to have civil penalties for regulatory failures, provision is often made for criminal prosecutions and more severe penalties in more serious cases. I would recommend that the same should apply for breaches of the Protect Duty. It should be borne in mind that this is an area where the possibility of a severe sentence could have a deterrent effect.

- 8.88** In my view, there is no good reason to put in place an enforcement regime that is any less rigorous or robust in terms of inspection, enforcement and penalty than that which exists in the parallel health and safety legislation. Given what is at stake, namely the lives of people going about their everyday business, there is every reason to make the Protect Duty equally rigorous and robust.
- 8.89** Whatever the legislature decides about penalty for breach, inspection and enforcement is likely to be the main deterrent. A proper inspection regime needs to be in force so that serious

security breaches are identified and promptly remedied. Even if enforcement is regarded as light touch it is important that there is proper inspection. An effective enforcement regime requires sufficient people to do it properly. All the evidence that I heard suggests that insufficient resources have been put into the present inspection regimes. A proper inspection policy should provide for unannounced inspections as well as planned ones. It may be that the roles of different inspectors can be combined so that for example inspectors looking to see that the Protect Duty was being complied with could also be checking in appropriate locations that licensing conditions are being observed.

**8.90** I envisage that this may follow a similar approach to that used in relation to health and safety and food standards. By this I mean the existence of a mechanism for issuing a formal notice setting out the remedial steps which are required in relation to any identified deficiencies. For extreme situations, there must be provision for issuing a notice that prevents a venue from operating until remedial steps have been taken. The notice will provide a timescale for compliance. It will also be necessary to have an appeal process for the adjudication on the appropriateness of the terms of the

notice, should there be a dispute. It should be a criminal offence to fail to comply with a valid notice without reasonable excuse.

**8.91** Operators, and people who work for them, are often under financial pressure to try and make savings as has been evident during this Inquiry. I understand that is the commercial reality, but it does mean that a proper inspection regime is needed to give some assurance that savings will not be made at the cost of safety. The security measures may be expensive. It must be more costly to an organisation and individuals to cut corners than to comply with the Protect Duty.

**8.92** I recommend that enforcement of the Protect Duty is at least as robust and rigorous as comparable regulatory regimes.

Communication, coordination and co-operation between enforcement authorities with overlapping regimes in connection with the Protect Duty

**8.93** The various regulatory bodies who have responsibility for safety at premises like the Arena need to operate together. CTSA's, the SIA, the Licensing Authority, the Health and Safety Executive and the police all have responsibilities for public safety at premises of this kind. They need to understand what each of them is doing in relation to any particular premises so they do not duplicate but can

provide complementary services. I will be reviewing the progress of this as part of my monitoring of the Protect Duty.

- 8.94** I recommend that regulators and other state agencies with responsibilities that engage with any Protect Duty co-operate, coordinate and communicate.

### Mandatory first aid training for staff of those under Protect Duty

- 8.95** As well as looking at measures aimed at preventing a terrorist attack, I recommend that the government should also look at simple measures to help to save lives should an attack occur. It has become clear to me during the evidence that it would be beneficial if employees of companies which have a Protect Duty, including SMG and Showsec, were trained in first aid relevant to injuries of the type caused during the Attack on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

- 8.96** I recommend that Protect Duty-holders are required to ensure that employees are trained in first aid relevant to injuries which are particularly likely to occur during a terrorist attack.

### Centralised NaCTSO library of training materials

- 8.97** The suggestion made by Showsec that NaCTSO should set up a centralised online library where it will be possible to access

training material is a good one. This will help in particular smaller organisations who cannot afford to employ professional help to assist them with a Protect Duty. Thought will need to be given to how access might be gained to this to ensure that this information is not misused by those seeking to do harm.

**8.98** I recommend that NaCTSO sets up a centralised online library for training materials freely accessible to those subject to the Protect Duty.

Generic guidance in relation to the completion of risk assessments in relation to the threat of terrorism

**8.99** The approach taken by SMG in its written risk assessments involved a numerical assessment of the likelihood of a terrorist attack. This was then used as a multiplier against a severity score. I have considerable reservations about this approach being used in connection with the threat from terrorism. This concern arises from the potential that a strictly statistical approach may suppress any total score to the point where the risk of a terrorist attack is regarded as being sufficiently low as to be acceptable and no action is taken.

**8.100** There are at least three ways that this could be addressed. One option is to remove consideration of likelihood from the process altogether. This will result in a focus on what can be done without providing for an opportunity for the thought, ‘It will not happen to me’, entering the process. Another is to import it only in relation to drawing a distinction between different attack methodologies. Some spaces may be naturally highly protected from a particular form of attack. In those circumstances, having a mechanism to ensure focus is on the more likely methodologies may be advantageous. A third approach may be to ensure that the severity score range is sufficiently wide so that even when a low likelihood is applied, the total score still remains high enough to produce the necessary measures. A high severity score is clearly justified when considering the very high degree of harm a terrorist attack is capable of causing. I do not believe that a range of between 1 to 5, as was used by SMG, is sufficiently wide.

**8.101** However, I have not heard sufficient evidence to express a concluded view on the best way to complete such a risk assessment. Nor have I heard expert evidence on the subject to inform me. In my view, NaCTSO is likely to have

access to the necessary expertise to consider this issue in detail, identify the best approach and issue readily understandable guidance.

**8.102** The Health and Safety Executive makes publicly available, via its website, guidance on the completion of a risk assessment, together with a template in the health and safety context.

**8.103** I recommend that a similar facility should be made available by NaCTSO in relating to the risk of a terrorist attack.

## **The SIA**

**8.104** As I have already set out, the SIA licences individuals working in the security industry to carry out certain activities. Amongst those activities is operating CCTV over a public space. At present, a licence is only required by those who monitor CCTV under a contract for services. In-house CCTV operators do not need a licence. Although an attempt was made to justify the reasoning for this distinction by Tony Holyland, a senior employee at the SIA, I was unpersuaded. This distinction has been considered in the past, but no change has been made. In-house operators carry out the same job as those who monitor CCTV under a contract for services. The Inquiry heard evidence that more than one SMG employee who carried out monitoring of CCTVs asked for

training but were not given it. There seems to me to be no persuasive reason why a licence should not be mandatory for those operating in-house as well as those working under a contract for services. I recommend that the distinction is abolished. All of those who monitor CCTV should be required to hold an SIA CCTV operator's licence.

**8.105** In addition to licensing individuals, the SIA runs an Approved Contractor Scheme (ACS). This is a voluntary scheme and, while individuals who carry out security work may require a licence or licences depending on what functions they carry out, companies who provide security and supervise these activities do not. While the ACS provides assurance that the member is a fit and proper person, there is nothing to prevent someone who is not a member of the scheme setting up and running a company providing security services. The SIA promotes good practice through its ACS. But there is no compulsion on companies to become a member or carry out good practice. While checks are made on how a company conducts its business when it applies to join the scheme, self-certification plays a considerable part in the process.

**8.106** I recommend that consideration is given to amending the SIA legislation to require that companies which carry out security work which may include a counter-terrorism element are required to be licensed. This will ensure that only fit and proper companies carry out this work. It will also ensure that they are aware of and guard against the risks of terrorist attacks at the events where they operate and carry out proper procedures, including training to mitigate those risks.

## Training

**8.107** Training for an SIA qualification is designed to be mainly classroom-based. The SIA does not provide the training itself nor does it award the qualifications, that is done by independent providers who are subject to quality control. The SIA decides what areas the training has to cover. It is important that the quality of the providers is maintained but, providing that happens, it seemed to me to be a satisfactory system of training.

**8.108** Training providers for the SIA qualification are not meant to rely to a large extent on document-based online teaching, sometimes referred to as e-learning. While e-learning is a convenient method of teaching large numbers of people without having to get them all together,

the evidence at the Inquiry was that it is difficult to ensure that the training is properly carried out and it may be possible for the student to make it look as if the training has been done when it has not. That was the case with at least one of the employees of Showsec. There was another example of a Showsec employee doing e-learning on his mobile phone which is unlikely to have been a suitable way to ensure adequate training. Simply using good quality e-learning material is not sufficient. What is important is ensuring that the trainees have absorbed the learning. As was said in other contexts in the Inquiry, the learning needs to become part of the 'muscle memory'. I recommend that there should not be undue reliance on e-learning and its limitations need to be recognised.

**8.109** I recommend that if e-learning is used, there should be follow-up to ensure that the training has been understood. This can either be done while the job is being carried out or in a classroom. If this follow-up is carried out while the job is being carried out, it should be timetabled and recorded.

Should the period of training be paid for by the employer?

**8.110** The SIA says that even with employees who are licence holders, it expects employers to provide continuous training. An issue arose as to whether training should be provided during paid time or during the employees own time. It seemed to be generally accepted within the security and crowd control industry that stewards who have been accepted for work but have not yet started should do their basic training during their own time.

**8.111** The reason for this is that people who have been accepted as employees not infrequently do not take up the job, having found something else to do. While it is understandable that future employees are not paid for this time, it provides an incentive not to do the training especially as the training at that stage is most frequently e-learning. This makes it all the more important to ensure that new employees have diligently undertaken this training.

**8.112** I recommend that employees should get further training after they have started their employment and they are paid for that training time. Training is important and it requires both employees and employers to take it seriously.

Giving payment for doing it would encourage this and ensure that employees realise that employers take it seriously.

## Primacy

**8.113** The issue of primacy is relevant to both Volumes 1 and 2 of my Report. For that reason, I will not be giving any final recommendation on primacy until I publish the part of the Report which deals with the emergency response. I have received from BTP and GMP an interim memorandum<sup>776</sup> on the policing of the Victoria Exchange Complex for which I am grateful and which I have considered. In case it may be helpful, I will set out my present thinking on the evidence that I have heard so far. While there may be other sites where similar considerations arise and my recommendations may be relevant to them, I do understand that the issues at different sites are likely to be unique both in terms of location and resources.

**8.114** It is important that any decision about this is made solely on the basis of providing the best policing service for the public. There is always a risk that decisions will be influenced by a desire to retain areas of work because to do otherwise may be perceived as a of lack of competence.

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<sup>776</sup> [INQ040967](#)

Equally, there can be a desire to take over another area of work to increase the influence and reach of a particular organisation.

- 8.115** As I set out in Part 7, BTP officers have jurisdiction to act with the powers of a constable in the Victoria Exchange Complex because of the ownership of the site by Network Rail. GMP officers also have such jurisdiction. They are concurrent jurisdictions. During the evidence it seemed that this fact was not clear to all officers. It is this that makes it necessary for a decision to be made on primacy.
- 8.116** It makes sense to me that routine policing of the City Room, by which I mean policing on days when there is no event taking place at the Arena, should remain with BTP. BTP will be on site because its officers police the station. As a result of BTP's policing of the City Room to date, its officers have formed good relationships with the occupiers of the whole Victoria Exchange Complex and there is no suggestion that they have not done routine policing satisfactorily.
- 8.117** On event days, the situation is different. If there were to be a major incident connected with the Arena, it is inevitable that GMP would become involved in dealing with it. It is always likely to be the position, and certainly is the case

now, that GMP will have greater resources immediately available than BTP in order to deal with a major incident in Manchester.

- 8.118** The handling of major incidents by BTP is done from Birmingham and/or London. While it is possible to do this with the assistance of modern technology, there will always be advantages in dealing with the matter locally if, for no other reason, because of a greater knowledge of the area.
- 8.119** If GMP are going to have to deal with any major incident arising from an event, it would seem sensible that GMP should be in charge of the policing intended to prevent a major incident happening. It would also have the additional benefit that GMP would be on site if anything was to happen. Although it is a matter of detail which is best decided by the individual police services, there seems to me to be good reason for primacy to transfer before the doors open for the event and transfer back a short period after the doors are closed.
- 8.120** Finally, GMP may already be involved in policing any crowd leaving the Arena when they come onto the street and it would be convenient for GMP to police the area right up to the time when the crowd has dispersed from it.

**8.121** This does not mean that BTP would have nothing to do with the crowd who attended events at the Arena. BTP would be under a duty to ensure their safety and the safety of railway users as they passed through the station to reach the road. It would inevitably be a combined operation so there should be continued liaison between BTP and GMP over policing associated with events.

## Monitored recommendations

### Process of monitoring

- 8.122** I have numbered those recommendations I intend, at this stage, to monitor and review. This is solely to assist in this process. The numbering is not intended to indicate importance or priority. The order broadly follows the sequence in which they appear in the first section of Part 8.
- 8.123** I shall seek evidence about these recommendations before the end of 2021. Those from whom I will seek evidence are listed below each of the monitored recommendations. The Solicitor to the Inquiry will contact those who are identified at the appropriate time.
- 8.124** When the time comes for reviewing the progress of implementation, I will permit Core Participants to make submissions to me to assist me in my review.
- 8.125** It should be understood that I intend to scrutinise what has been done in response and use all the powers available to me, if required, to achieve transparency and accountability.

<b>Monitored recommendations</b>		<b>Reporter</b>
MR1	Improvements, to the extent that they have not already been made, should be made at the Arena to address the failings identified in Volume 1. Specific consideration should be given to how to address my concerns in relation to complacency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SMG</li> </ul>
MR2	Improvements, to the extent that they have not already been made, should be made by Showsec to address the failings identified in Volume 1. Specific consideration should be given to how to address my concerns in relation to complacency.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showsec</li> </ul>
MR3	BTP should address the systemic failings identified in Volume 1, so as to ensure that they are not repeated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BTP</li> </ul>
MR4	A Protect Duty, as set out above, should be enacted into law by primary legislation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMG (the Home Office)</li> <li>• NaCTSO</li> <li>• OSCT</li> <li>• CTPHQ</li> <li>• CPNI</li> </ul>

<b>Monitored recommendations</b>		<b>Reporter</b>
MR5	NaCTSO should create a centralised library of training materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMG (the Home Office)</li> <li>• NaCTSO</li> <li>• OSCT</li> <li>• CTPHQ</li> </ul>
MR6	NaCTSO should issue guidance in relation to the completion of risk assessments addressing the threat of terrorism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NaCTSO</li> </ul>
MR7	The requirement that only those monitoring CCTV under a contract for services need to hold an SIA licence should be reviewed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMG (the Home Office)</li> <li>• The SIA</li> </ul>
MR8	Consideration should be given to whether contractors who carried out security services should be required to be licenced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMG (the Home Office)</li> <li>• The SIA</li> </ul>

<b>Monitored recommendations</b>		<b>Reporter</b>
MR9	<p>BTP and all Home Office Police Services should conduct a review of the areas in which their jurisdictions overlap. In the case of areas which have a significant footfall by members of the public which are not part of the railway estate, a review should be conducted by both BTP and the Home Office Police Services. Following the review, agreement as to primacy should be reached and recorded in writing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HMG (the Home Office)</li> <li>• Department of Transport</li> <li>• BTP</li> <li>• National Police Chiefs' Council</li> </ul>

# Appendices

- Appendix 1: Terms of reference
- Appendix 2: Volume 1 chronology
- Appendix 3: Approach to decision-making
- Appendix 4: Note on references
- Appendix 5: Initialisms and acronyms
- Appendix 6: The Victoria Exchange Complex
- Appendix 7: The City Room
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## Appendix 1: Terms of reference

### Purpose

To investigate how, and in what circumstances, twenty-two people came to lose their lives in the Attack at the Manchester Arena on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017 and to make any such recommendations as may seem appropriate.

### Scope

The Inquiry's investigations will include consideration of the following matters:

1. Whether the Attack by SA could have been prevented by the authorities, including investigation of:
  - i. The background of SA.
  - ii. His radicalisation, including his relationship with relevant associates (including family members and others), and any relevant external sources (e.g. online) and whether Prevent referrals should have been made in respect of SA and/or any of his family members.
  - iii. The knowledge of the Security Service, the police and others about SA, his radicalisation, and his relationship with relevant associates, including family members and others.

- iv. What intelligence and other relevant information on SA and/or relevant associates was available to the Security Service, the police and others prior to the Attack.
- v. When such intelligence/information was available.
- vi. The assessment, interpretation, dissemination and investigation of intelligence/information relating to SA, including, if applicable, whether and how it was shared, who it was shared with, when it was shared, and with what effect (if any).
- vii. What steps were (or were not) taken by the Security Service, the police and others in relation to SA prior to the Attack.
- viii. The reasons for what was/was not done.
- ix. The adequacy of the steps that were (or were not) taken.
- x. The systems, policies and procedures applicable to the review, sharing and actioning of intelligence and other relevant information on SA prior to the Attack.
- xi. The adequacy of such systems, policies and procedures.

**2. The build up to the Attack, including:**

- i. Attack planning and reconnaissance.
- ii. Bomb preparation and assembly, including, if applicable, relevant purchases/attempted purchases and storage.
- iii. The movements of SA and other, relevant associates in the lead up to the Attack.
- iv. What, if anything, was known by the Security Service, the police and others about the matters above (planning, preparation, etc.), what steps were taken (if any), and their adequacy.

**3. The Attack itself, including:**

- i. Events immediately prior to and following the detonation of the explosive device.
- ii. The immediate impact of the explosive device on the victims of the Attack.
- iii. The immediate response to the detonation of the explosive device.

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4. The security arrangements within and outside the Arena, including:
- i. The security provided/arranged by the owner and operator of the Arena venue, and those contracted by them to provide security, in particular the City Room's security arrangements.
  - ii. The security provided by relevant public/ State organisations.
  - iii. The security provided by relevant private security providers.
  - iv. The planning, preparation, arrangements and communication (if any) between the above security providers prior to the Attack, including (but not limited to) their roles and responsibilities for risk identification, person and bag-checking, and responding to a terrorist and/or mass casualty incident.
  - v. The adequacy of (iv) above, including their compliance with relevant planning, preparation, policies, systems and practices.
  - vi. The impact, if any, of any inadequacies in the security arrangements, including whether any inadequacies contributed to the extent of the loss of life that occurred.

5. The emergency response to the bombing, including:
  - i. Planning and preparation for responding to terrorist and mass casualty incidents, including inter-agency planning, preparation and exercises prior to the Attack.
  - ii. Policies, systems and practices relevant to the above.
  - iii. The operational responses of relevant emergency services, those contracted to provide first aid to concert-goers, the operator of the Arena venue, and relevant security providers, including their adequacy and compliance with relevant planning, preparation, policies, systems and practices.
  - iv. The inter-agency liaison, communication and decision-making between relevant emergency services, and with others, including their adequacy and compliance with relevant planning, preparation, policies, systems and practices.
  - v. The impact, if any, of any inadequacies in planning, preparation and/or the emergency response, including whether any inadequacies undermined the ability of the response to save life and/or contributed to the extent of the loss of life that occurred.

6. The experiences of each person who died, including:
  - i. Their travel to the Arena.
  - ii. The locations they visited.
  - iii. Who they were with.
  - iv. Their movements at/around the Arena.
7. The immediate cause and mechanism of each death, including:
  - v. The mechanism and cause of death.
  - vi. Exactly when and where each person died (to the extent that this is possible to ascertain).
  - vii. Survivability, including whether any inadequacies in the emergency response contributed to individual deaths and/or whether any of the deaths could have been prevented.

## Appendix 2: Volume 1 chronology

This chronology sets out the times and dates of events relevant to Volume 1.

Time	Event
<b>18<sup>th</sup> May 2017</b>	
11:00	SA landed at Manchester Airport, having returned to the UK from Libya. <sup>777</sup>
18:18	SA was captured on CCTV walking through Manchester Victoria Station from the Metrolink tram platform to Station Approach, then along Hunts Bank where he talked to an unidentified Manchester Arena worker, and through the Trinity Way link tunnel and up the stairs into the City Room, where he went to the mezzanine level. <sup>778</sup>
18:34	SA walked across the City Room and observed the queues into the Arena, before he walked back to the Metrolink tram platform and caught a tram. <sup>779</sup>

<sup>777</sup> [INQ031275/2](#); see also [INQ033893](#) for plan of all SA's movements on 18<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017.

<sup>778</sup> [INQ031275/35-42](#), [INQ031278](#) from 01:14-08:33 (internal video counter times)

<sup>779</sup> [INQ031275/43-49](#)

Time	Event
19:19	Jonathan Lavery was captured on CCTV in the City Room. <sup>780</sup> An unidentified male walked just in front of Jonathan Lavery into the crowd.
19:20	The unidentified male walked back across the City Room, in front of Jonathan Lavery. <sup>781</sup> The unidentified male walked in the direction of the Fifty Pence staircase as Jonathan Lavery followed the unidentified male from behind. <sup>782</sup> Jonathan Lavery then spoke with “ <i>two of the ticket touts</i> ” and while he had his back facing the unidentified male, the unidentified male walked away. <sup>783</sup>

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<sup>780</sup> [INQ036668/22](#)

<sup>781</sup> [INQ036668/24](#)

<sup>782</sup> [INQ036668/25](#), [17/68/2-6](#)

<sup>783</sup> [INQ036668/27](#), [17/71/4-9](#)

Time	Event
19:21	Jonathan Lavery was captured on CCTV as he walked towards the top of the stairs leading towards the Fifty Pence Foyer area. <sup>784</sup> Jonathan Lavery then walked back into the City Room <sup>785</sup> , before he walked back towards the top of the stairs from the City Room and pointed down the stairs while speaking with an unidentified person. <sup>786</sup> Jonathan Lavery then walked down the stairs heading towards the Fifty Pence Foyer area, entered the Fifty Pence Foyer area and walked through the red doors leading towards the Manchester Victoria Station platforms. <sup>787</sup>
19:23	Jonathan Lavery was captured on CCTV as he walked past the stairs that lead down to the Manchester Victoria Station platforms. <sup>788</sup>

<sup>784</sup> [INQ036668/32](#)

<sup>785</sup> [INQ036668/33](#)

<sup>786</sup> [INQ036668/35, 17/71-72/19-4](#)

<sup>787</sup> [INQ036668/37-39](#)

<sup>788</sup> [INQ036668/40](#)

Time	Event
19:25	Jonathan Lavery was captured on CCTV as he walked down the stairs heading towards the Manchester Victoria Station platforms. <sup>789</sup> Jonathan Lavery then had a conversation with a female BTP officer regarding the unidentified male. <sup>790</sup>
19:27	Jonathan Lavery was captured on CCTV as he walked back up the stairs heading towards the Fifty Pence Foyer area, re-entered the Fifty Pence Foyer area and walked back into the City Room. <sup>791</sup>
<b>21<sup>st</sup> May 2017</b>	
18:53	SA was captured on CCTV walking from the Metrolink tram platform up the stairs and over the raised walkway into the City Room, while apparently speaking on a mobile telephone. He sat down on the stairs to the mezzanine level for about eight minutes, still holding his phone, then walked up the stairs to the mezzanine level and looked out over the City Room. <sup>792</sup>

<sup>789</sup> [INQ036668/41](#)

<sup>790</sup> [17/72/16-23](#)

<sup>791</sup> [INQ036668/42-44](#)

<sup>792</sup> [INQ020163/51-57](#), [INQ020157](#) from 18:30-21:12 (internal video counter times)

Time	Event
19:05	SA descended to the City Room, walked down the stairs to the Fifty Pence Piece and exited the red doors into the Manchester Victoria Station. <sup>793</sup>
19:10	SA walked back up the stairs into the City Room, went through it and along the raised walkway into Manchester Victoria Station, where he caught a tram from the Metrolink tram platform. <sup>794</sup>
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> May 2017</b>	
17:00	Thomas Rigby gave a management briefing for approximately 30 minutes which David Middleton attended. <sup>795</sup>
17:30	David Middleton briefed staff “ <i>within 2 or 3 minutes.</i> ” <sup>796</sup>
17:41	Jordan Beak took up his position close to the Arena entrance doors in the City Room <sup>797</sup> and approached his colleague Daniel Perry on the Plus View entrance doors. <sup>798</sup>

<sup>793</sup> [INQ020163/58-59](#)

<sup>794</sup> [INQ020163/60-63](#)

<sup>795</sup> [19/66/6-8](#)

<sup>796</sup> [19/67/21-25, 24/65/16-18](#)

<sup>797</sup> [INQ036729/2](#)

<sup>798</sup> [INQ036729/3](#)

Time	Event
17:42	Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry entered the 'Plus View' (VIP) entrance between the Arena doors and the box office. They walked onto the Arena concourse and are then joined a group of Showsec staff gathered on the Arena concourse by the doors to the City Room. <sup>799</sup>
17:45	Jordan Beak left the group of Showsec staff and walked towards the south concourse and Hunts Bank exit. Jordan Beak then returned and walked past the group of Showsec staff towards, and into, the Plus View entrance. <sup>800</sup>
17:46	Mohammed Agha exited the Plus View entrance and walked into and across the City Room. <sup>801</sup> Kyle Lawler entered and exited the Plus View entrance and walked across the City Room before he exited the City Room onto the raised walkway at Manchester Victoria Station at 17:47. <sup>802</sup>

<sup>799</sup> [INQ036729/4-7](#)

<sup>800</sup> [INQ036729/8-10](#)

<sup>801</sup> [INQ032038/4-6](#)

<sup>802</sup> [INQ033776/4-8](#)

Time	Event
17:47	<p>Mohammed Agha took up his position in front of the emergency exit doors in the City Room.<sup>803</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry emerged from the Plus View entrance into the City Room.<sup>804</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak walked towards, and across the face of, the City Room doors leading into the Arena concourse. Jordan Beak walked to the far side of the City Room by the white double doors.<sup>805</sup></p> <p>Kyle Lawler and Robert Atkinson walked across the raised walkway at Manchester Victoria Station toward the end of the raised walkway at the top of the stairs.<sup>806</sup></p>

<sup>803</sup> [14/37/21-38/6, INQ032038/2-9](#)

<sup>804</sup> [INQ036729/12](#)

<sup>805</sup> [INQ036729/15](#)

<sup>806</sup> [INQ033776/9-10](#)

Time	Event
17:51	Jordan Beak walked across the City Room amongst numerous concertgoers. He passed the steps leading to the mezzanine level, with the steps on his right, and towards the City Room doors and Plus View entrance. Jordan Beak entered the Plus View entrance into the Arena. Jordan Beak entered and then exited the Arena concourse through the Plus View entrance and stood facing the Plus View entrance at 17:52. <sup>807</sup>
17:53	Jordan Beak walked across the City Room where he approached Daniel Perry and pointed towards the City Room doors. Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry stood amongst the concertgoers and Jordan Beak assisted members of the public. Jordan Beak then made his way across the City Room and towards the raised walkway exit doors at 17:54. <sup>808</sup>

<sup>807</sup> [INQ036729/16-24](#)

<sup>808</sup> [INQ036729/25-30](#)

Time	Event
17:54	<p>Jordan Beak walked along the front of the City Room doors, made his way past the Plus View entrance and walked toward the mezzanine level steps in the City Room. At 17:55, Jordan Beak stopped and engaged with Daniel Perry in front of the emergency exit doors in the City Room. Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry stood in this position for three minutes interacting with members of the public.<sup>809</sup></p>
17:58	<p>Jordan Beak walked up the steps to the mezzanine level. Jordan Beak walked back down the steps into the City Room at 17:59.<sup>810</sup></p>

<sup>809</sup> [INQ036729/31-35](#)

<sup>810</sup> [INQ036729/36-37](#)

Time	Event
18:00	<p>Jordan Beak walked towards the City Room doors and stood with Daniel Perry by the ticket booths in the City Room. Both Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry walk towards the City Room towards the raised walkway exit doors and back again. Mohammed Agha joined Jordan Beak at 18:03, by the emergency exit doors. Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry stood together amongst the crowd in the City Room, before Jordan Beak walked toward the Arena and re-entered the Arena concourse through the Plus View entrance doors. Jordan Beak joined David Middleton by the City Room doors ahead of the doors being opened to the public.<sup>811</sup></p>
18:23	<p>PC Bullough and PSCO Renshaw entered the Manchester Victoria Station at the war memorial entrance. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked across the station concourse at 18:24 and walked up the stairs to the raised walkway that lead to the City Room.<sup>812</sup></p>

<sup>811</sup> [INQ036729/38-47](#)

<sup>812</sup> [INQ031678/4-6](#)

Time	Event
18:25	<p>Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry were positioned on the Arena concourse by the City Room doors, before they passed through the Plus View entrance into the City Room at 18:26. Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry walked towards the Trinity Way exit and down the steps toward the car park and Trinity Way link tunnel. Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry walked through the Trinity Way link tunnel towards the exit, and at 18:28 spoke with members of the public at the Trinity Way entrance into the Arena.<sup>813</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked along the raised walkway and entered the City Room. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw stood near the stairs to the mezzanine level.<sup>814</sup></p>
18:29	<p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw entered Manchester Victoria Station from the direction of Long Millgate/Todd Street and walked through the station concourse. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw took up position near the ticket office opposite the stairs that lead up to the raised walkway until 18:30.<sup>815</sup></p>

<sup>813</sup> [INQ036729/48-54](#)

<sup>814</sup> [INQ031678/6-7](#)

<sup>815</sup> [INQ031678/8-10](#)

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Time	Event
18:31	<p>Once again, SA was captured on CCTV (without his backpack) arriving at the Metrolink tram platform at Manchester Victoria Station.<sup>816</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak stood on the pavement by Ring Road at the front of the Trinity Way link tunnel entrance into the Arena.<sup>817</sup></p>

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<sup>816</sup> [INQ035973/2](#)

<sup>817</sup> [INQ036729/56](#)

Time	Event
18:32	<p>SA arrived at Metrolink tram platform and started to make his way toward the City Room.<sup>818</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak walked back through the Trinity Way link tunnel toward the Arena and returned to the City Room. Jordan Beak remained in the City Room before he walked back down the steps toward the Trinity Way link tunnel entrance and through to the exit on Ring Road at 18:37. Jordan Beak walked back through the Trinity Way link tunnel towards the Fifty Pence Piece, that leads to the City Room and Arena car park.<sup>819</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked out of the City Room and onto the raised walkway. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw spoke with a member of the public before they entered the City Room and took up their position near the stairs to the mezzanine level.<sup>820</sup></p>

<sup>818</sup> [INQ035973/5](#)

<sup>819</sup> [INQ036729/56-58](#)

<sup>820</sup> [INQ031678/11-13](#)

Time	Event
18:33	SA walked through the station concourse and up the steps to the raised walkway. <sup>821</sup> SA walked in front of Robert Atkinson and Kyle Lawler who were standing at the top of the steps on the raised walkway, SA appears to be looking at his mobile phone. <sup>822</sup>
18:34	SA walked along the raised walkway toward the City Room and CCTV captured SA a few metres outside the entrance to the City Room. <sup>823</sup> SA then returned over the raised walkway to Manchester Victoria Station, had a brief conversation with Robert Atkinson and Kyle Lawler at 18:35, before leaving Manchester Victoria Station and getting into a taxi at 18:36. <sup>824</sup>
18:36	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked up the stairs to the mezzanine level. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked back down the stairs and again took up their position near the stairs to the mezzanine level at 18:38. <sup>825</sup>

<sup>821</sup> [INQ035973/6-7](#)

<sup>822</sup> [INQ035973/9](#)

<sup>823</sup> [INQ035973/10](#)

<sup>824</sup> [INQ035973/12-17](#), [INQ020160/48-54](#), [INQ033776/14-16](#)

<sup>825</sup> [INQ031678/15-16](#)

Time	Event
18:41	Jordan Beak walked toward the double doors leading into the Arena car park and walked from Trinity Way Disabled access/egress ramp into the City Room. Jordan Beak made his way to the Plus View entrance into the Arena. <sup>826</sup>
18:48	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked up the stairs to the mezzanine level for the second time. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw stood on the mezzanine level looking over the City Room. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked back down the stairs and out of the City Room onto the raised walkway at 19:20, where they continued to walk across the raised walkway. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked down the stairs onto the station concourse at 19:21 and joined fellow BTP officers near the war memorial at 19:22. <sup>827</sup>
19:27	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw exited Manchester Victoria Station and entered a patrol vehicle parked outside on Station Approach. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw drove away in the patrol vehicle at 19:28. <sup>828</sup>

<sup>826</sup> [INQ036729/59-61](#)

<sup>827</sup> [INQ031678/22-23, 26, 32-35, 21/161/1-10](#)

<sup>828</sup> [INQ031678/36-37, 21/161/1-10](#)

Time	Event
19:31	Jordan Beak approached Mohammed Agha before Mohammed Agha left his position to walk towards the Arena entrance doors at 19:32. Mohammed Agha walked through the Arena entrance doors and returned to the City Room from the toilets before he again took up his position in front of the emergency exit doors at 19:36. <sup>829</sup>
19:39	Kyle Lawler walked down the stairs and across the station concourse before he turned back towards the stairs of the raised walkway. <sup>830</sup>
19:44	Kyle Lawler walked toward the entrance doors for the City Room and entered the City Room. <sup>831</sup> Mohammed Agha and Kyle Lawler speak briefly before Kyle Lawler exited the City Room and took up his position at the top of the stairs of the raised walkway. <sup>832</sup>

<sup>829</sup> [24/67-68/24-22, INQ032038/11-17](#)

<sup>830</sup> [INQ033776/17-18](#)

<sup>831</sup> [INQ033776/18-20](#)

<sup>832</sup> [INQ032038/18, 24/69/7-14, INQ033776/21, 25/84/1-5](#)

Time	Event
20:01	Jordan Beak stood at the City Room door leading into the Arena concourse and moved between the City Room and the Arena concourse. <sup>833</sup>
20:08	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw parked outside Manchester Victoria Station and alighted from the patrol vehicle. <sup>834</sup>

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<sup>833</sup> [INQ036729/68](#)

<sup>834</sup> [INQ031678/58, 21/161-162/23-2](#)

Time	Event
20:09	<p>Jordan Beak walked across the City Room toward the Trinity Way exit and pressed the button to call the lift but did not enter. Jordan Beak walked toward and across the non-public access footbridge into Manchester Victoria Station, before he exited through controlled barriers at 20:11. Jordan Beak then walked through the station concourse and entered the elevator to the raised walkway. Jordan Beak walked up to the raised walkway and passed Kyle Lawler and Robert Atkinson at 20:15 before he walked across the raised walkway and entered the City Room at 20:16. Jordan Beak then entered the Arena concourse where he remained for several minutes with David Middleton.<sup>835</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw entered Manchester Victoria Station with bags of food and walked through the ticket barriers onto the station's platforms on their way to the Northern Rail office on Platform 3.<sup>836</sup></p>

<sup>835</sup> [INQ036729/69-73](#)

<sup>836</sup> [INQ031678/59-60, 21/162/8-24](#)

Time	Event
20:30	<p>SA returned to Manchester Victoria Station, again by tram, this time with his backpack. He was captured on CCTV making his way through the station toilets and entering a cubicle at 20:37, where he remained until 20:48.<sup>837</sup></p> <p>Mohammed Agha walked across the City Room and spoke with a member of the public until he took up his position again at 20:33.<sup>838</sup></p>
20:37	<p>Kyle Lawler walked toward the entrance doors for the City Room and entered the City Room.<sup>839</sup></p>
20:38	<p>Mohammed Agha walked a short distance away from the emergency exit doors and spoke to Kyle Lawler.<sup>840</sup> At 20:40, Kyle Lawler exited the City Room and took up his position at the top of the stairs of the raised walkway.<sup>841</sup></p>
20:48	<p>SA left the station toilets and walked past PCSO Brown and PSCO Morrey on his way to the lift up to the raised walkway. SA entered the lift and began walking to the City Room, but briefly hid behind a column.<sup>842</sup></p>

<sup>837</sup> [INQ020160/91](#), [INQ020156](#) from 35:45-39:03 (internal video counter times)

<sup>838</sup> [INQ032038/20](#), [24/69-71/22-1](#)

<sup>839</sup> [INQ033776/21-22](#)

<sup>840</sup> [24/74/9-20](#), [INQ032038/22](#), [25/84/6-14](#), [INQ033776/23](#)

<sup>841</sup> [INQ033776/24](#)

<sup>842</sup> [INQ020160/99](#), [INQ020156](#) from 39:04-41:24 (internal video counter times)

Time	Event
20:50	SA walked past Kyle Lawler and Robert Atkinson at the top of the stairs of the raised walkway. <sup>843</sup>
20:51	SA entered the City Room and walked up the McDonald's staircase to the mezzanine. <sup>844</sup> He remained there until 21:10. <sup>845</sup> SA is seen by Mohammed Agha. <sup>846</sup>
20:54	PC Bullough walked up Hunts Bank toward the entrance to Manchester Victoria Station and walked through the station after having a cigarette. PC Bullough walked onto the train station platforms at 20:55 toward the Northern Rail office. <sup>847</sup>
21:04	Kyle Lawler and Robert Atkinson left their position on the raised walkway, entered and walked through the City Room into the Arena concourse area and went on a break. <sup>848</sup>

<sup>843</sup> [INQ033776/25](#)

<sup>844</sup> [INQ032038/23](#)

<sup>845</sup> [INQ020160/100](#), [INQ020156](#) from 41:25-42:10 (internal video counter times), [INQ032038/25](#)

<sup>846</sup> [14/38/16-20](#)

<sup>847</sup> [INQ031678/92-96](#), [21/163/2-18](#)

<sup>848</sup> [INQ033776/25-26](#), [25/86/7-21](#)

Time	Event
21:10	<p>SA left the mezzanine level and walked back across the raised walkway to Manchester Victoria Station. He wandered around the station for approximately 20 minutes.<sup>849</sup></p> <p>Mohammed Agha is aware that SA left the City Room at 21:11.<sup>850</sup></p> <p>Mohammed Agha is approached by an unknown member of Showsec staff who stood at the emergency exit doors while Mohammed Agha walked toward the Arena doors and entered the Arena concourse at 21:11.<sup>851</sup></p>
21:23	<p>Mohammed Agha entered the City Room from the Arena concourse as he returned from his break and took up his position in front of the emergency exit doors.<sup>852</sup></p> <p>Kyle Lawler entered the Arena concourse from the VIP Lounge as he returned from his break and took up his position on the Arena concourse near the City Room exit doors. Kyle Lawler remained in this position until 22:21.<sup>853</sup></p>

<sup>849</sup> [INQ020160/106](#), [INQ020156](#) from 42:10-45:23 (internal video counter times)

<sup>850</sup> [24/23/7-10](#), [24/75/3-6](#)

<sup>851</sup> [24/76-77/8-7](#), [INQ032038/26-29](#)

<sup>852</sup> [INQ032038/31-33](#), [24/77/4-11](#)

<sup>853</sup> [INQ033776/29-30](#), [25/90/10-24](#)

Time	Event
21:33	SA returned to the City Room for the last time. In the lift up to the raised walkway he can be seen adjusting wiring beneath his clothing. He walked up the right-hand set of stairs to the mezzanine level again and remained there until 22:30. <sup>854</sup> SA is seen once again by Mohammed Agha. <sup>855</sup>
21:35	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked from the Northern Rail office onto the station platforms and to the station concourse. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked across the station concourse toward the exit at 21:36. <sup>856</sup>
21:39	Julie Merchant and William Drysdale came up the steps from the Trinity Way entrance and walked into the City Room. William Drysdale walked across the City Room into the Arena concourse. Julie Merchant walked behind William Drysdale and also went into the Arena concourse. <sup>857</sup>
21:41	William Drysdale walked across the City Room before he walked up the steps to the mezzanine. <sup>858</sup>

<sup>854</sup> [INQ020160/123-131](#), [INQ020156](#) from 45:24-47:55 (internal video counter times), [INQ032038/34-35](#), [24/78/2-18](#)

<sup>855</sup> [14/39/17-24](#), [INQ033776/34-35](#), [24/24/3-12](#)

<sup>856</sup> [INQ031678/97](#), [21/163/19-25](#)

<sup>857</sup> [INQ035973/196-197](#)

<sup>858</sup> [INQ035973/200-201](#)

Time	Event
21:42	Julie Merchant left the Arena concourse and entered the City Room before she approached her colleagues in the City Room who stood near the stairs to the mezzanine level on the McDonald's side. <sup>859</sup>
21:43	William Drysdale is standing on the mezzanine level on the right-hand side. <sup>860</sup>
21:47	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw entered the City Room and walked toward the Arena entrance doors. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw spoke with Showsec staff at 21:48. <sup>861</sup>
21:49	Christopher Wild sits outside a pub at Manchester Victoria Station. <sup>862</sup>
21:52	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked away from the Showsec staff and walked back across the City Room. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw are approached by a member of the public at 21:53. <sup>863</sup>

<sup>859</sup> [INQ035312/6-8](#), [20/86/2-25](#), [INQ035973/203](#)

<sup>860</sup> [INQ035973/204](#), [20/58/9-14](#)

<sup>861</sup> [INQ031678/107-108](#)

<sup>862</sup> [INQ035315/2](#)

<sup>863</sup> [INQ031678/109-110](#)

Time	Event
21:55	Mohammed Agha spoke with PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw. <sup>864</sup> At 21:56, William Drysdale came down the stairs from the mezzanine level. <sup>865</sup>
21:57	PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw stood inside the City Room. <sup>866</sup>
21:58	Julie Merchant stood near the stairs to the mezzanine level on the McDonald's side with her colleagues. At 21:58, Julie Merchant walked towards the merchandise stand in the City Room. <sup>867</sup> William Drysdale stood near the doors which lead to the raised walkway. <sup>868</sup>

<sup>864</sup> [24/79/2-25](#), [INQ032038/38](#), [INQ031678/111](#)

<sup>865</sup> [INQ035973/221](#)

<sup>866</sup> [INQ031678/112](#)

<sup>867</sup> [INQ035312/9-10](#)

<sup>868</sup> [INQ035314/29](#)

Time	Event
21:59	<p>Julie Merchant walked away from the merchandise stand in the City Room.<sup>869</sup> PC Bullough appeared to turn toward Julie Merchant with PCSO Renshaw. Julie Merchant and PC Bullough spoke.<sup>870</sup> Julie Merchant raised her arm.<sup>871</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw exited the City Room onto the raised walkway.<sup>872</sup></p> <p>William Drysdale stood near the doors which lead to the raised walkway, before Julie Merchant stood with William Drysdale.<sup>873</sup></p>
22:00	<p>David Middleton stood inside the City Room in front of the doors to the Arena and spoke to members of the public.<sup>874</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw walked down the stairs of the raised walkway onto the station concourse.<sup>875</sup></p>

<sup>869</sup> [INQ035314/30](#), [20/104/10-12](#)

<sup>870</sup> [20/110/2-24](#)

<sup>871</sup> [INQ035314/31-34](#), [20/109/1-15](#)

<sup>872</sup> [INQ031678/113-114](#)

<sup>873</sup> [INQ035314/30-34](#)

<sup>874</sup> [INQ036727/2](#)

<sup>875</sup> [INQ031678/115](#)

Time	Event
22:01	<p>Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry escorted an unknown male along the Arena concourse and toward the doors that lead out of the City Room. Jordan Beak stood in the doorway that leads into the Arena concourse, with the unknown male and two members of the public: Andrea Bradbury and Barbara Whittaker.<sup>876</sup> The unknown male and Jordan Beak spoke, then the unknown male walked away from the doors that lead into the Arena concourse and walked across the City Room. The unknown male walked up the steps to the mezzanine level. At 22:02, Jordan Beak and Daniel Perry walked towards the JD Williams' side stairs and asked members of the public to clear the area, before they walked back across the City Room and back into the Arena concourse.<sup>877</sup></p> <p>William Drysdale left the City Room.<sup>878</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw stood near the war memorial inside Manchester Victoria Station.<sup>879</sup></p>

<sup>876</sup> [INQ035286/4-6](#)

<sup>877</sup> [23/177/3-6](#), [INQ035286/9-19](#), [23/179-180/23-3](#)

<sup>878</sup> [INQ035314/35](#)

<sup>879</sup> [INQ031678/116](#)

Time	Event
22:03	David Middleton was positioned inside the City Room in front of the doors to the Arena and remained in this general area for several minutes. <sup>880</sup>
22:09	Jordan Beak commenced his pre-egress check. <sup>881</sup> Jordan Beak exited the Arena concourse doors into the City Room, made his way across the City Room toward the Trinity Way exit via the Fifty Pence Staircase. He walked through the Fifty Pence Piece to the Trinity Way link tunnel exit. Jordan Beak pressed the button to call the elevator before he spoke to a member of the public and then headed toward the disabled access ramp which leads to the Trinity Way exit. Jordan Beak walked toward the non-public access doors into Manchester Victoria Station at 22:10 and walked across the non-public access bridge toward and down the steps leading into Manchester Victoria Station at 22:11. <sup>882</sup>

<sup>880</sup> [INQ036727/6](#)

<sup>881</sup> [23/189/1-6](#)

<sup>882</sup> [INQ036729/132-143](#)

Time	Event
22:10	<p>Christopher Wild walked across the raised walkway toward the City Room. Christopher Wild entered the City Room and walked up the stairs onto the mezzanine level at 22:11.<sup>883</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough exited the Manchester Victoria Station onto Station Approach. PC Bullough stood on the corner of Station Approach and Hunts Bank and directed traffic. PC Bullough re-entered Manchester Victoria Station from Station Approach at 22:11.<sup>884</sup></p>
22:12	<p>Christopher Wild spoke to SA.<sup>885</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak assisted two unknown females through the turnstiles in Manchester Victoria Station before he walked with them across the station concourse toward the Metrolink tram stop at 22:13. Jordan Beak accompanied the two unknown females onto the Metrolink tram platform at 22:14.<sup>886</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough stood on the station concourse near the war memorial. PCSO Renshaw took up his position with PC Bullough near the war memorial.<sup>887</sup></p>

<sup>883</sup> [INQ035315/3-6](#)

<sup>884</sup> [INQ031678/118-126, 21/173/6-20](#)

<sup>885</sup> [INQ035315/8, 22/43/11-14](#)

<sup>886</sup> [INQ036729/143-148](#)

<sup>887</sup> [INQ031678/128-130](#)

Time	Event
22:14	Christopher Wild walked down the stairs from the mezzanine level, approached and spoke to Mohammed Agha before Christopher Wild walked back up the stairs that lead to the mezzanine level at 22:15. <sup>888</sup> Mohammed Agha remained in position in front of the emergency exit doors. <sup>889</sup>
22:16	Christopher Wild walked down the stairs from the mezzanine level and out the doors to the raised walkway. <sup>890</sup>

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<sup>888</sup> [INQ032038/40-41](#), [24/80-81/2-11](#), [INQ035315/11-19](#), [22/45/23-25](#)

<sup>889</sup> [INQ032038/41.43](#)

<sup>890</sup> [INQ035315/20-22](#)

Time	Event
22:17	<p>David Middleton briefly spoke with Kyle Lawler who had exited the Arena concourse. Kyle Lawler then walked back onto the Arena concourse.<sup>891</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak walked along the raised walkway towards the City Room, entered the City Room and walked past a merchandise stand to his left in the City Room.</p> <p>Jordan Beak approached David Middleton with a white sheet of paper in his hands and stood in front of the City Room doors that lead into the Arena concourse. Jordan Beak entered the Arena concourse through the City Room doors at 22:18. Jordan Beak walked towards the Hunts Bank exit at 22:19 before going out of CCTV view.<sup>892</sup></p> <p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw exited Manchester Victoria Station onto Station Approach and directed traffic. PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw stood at the entrance to Manchester Victoria Station at 22:18.<sup>893</sup></p>
22:19	<p>David Middleton was positioned in the City Room facing the centre of the foyer area.<sup>894</sup></p>

<sup>891</sup> [INQ036727/7, INQ033776/34](#)

<sup>892</sup> [INQ036729/155-160](#)

<sup>893</sup> [INQ031678/131-134](#)

<sup>894</sup> [INQ036589/5](#)

Time	Event
22:20	<p>David Middleton and Daniel Perry were positioned in the City Room facing the centre of the foyer.<sup>895</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak re-appeared on CCTV and walked toward the City Room doors across the Arena concourse before he entered the City Room. Jordan Beak stood with David Middleton and Daniel Perry in front of the City Room doors, before David Middleton and Daniel Perry left Jordan Beak in that position at 22:23. Jordan Beak then moved to the left and stood facing the City Room doors at 22:24.<sup>896</sup></p>
22:21	<p>PC Bullough and PCSO Renshaw were outside Manchester Victoria Railway Station on Station Approach and spoke with a member of the public.<sup>897</sup></p>

<sup>895</sup> [INQ036589/9,13](#)

<sup>896</sup> [INQ036729/161-166](#)

<sup>897</sup> [INQ031678/136](#)

Time	Event
22:22	<p>David Middleton entered the Arena concourse and started to open a number of the doors that lead out into the City Room at 22.23.<sup>898</sup></p> <p>Kyle Lawler entered the City Room from the Arena concourse and walked across the City Room where Mohammed Agha walked toward Kyle Lawler and they spoke at 22:23. Kyle Lawler began to walk toward the stairs that lead up to the mezzanine level but then walked away from the stairs, across the City Room and stood near the doors that lead into Manchester Victoria Station.<sup>899</sup> Kyle Lawler attempted to make two calls to control.<sup>900</sup></p> <p>Christopher Wild entered the City Room from the raised walkway and walked up the stairs to the mezzanine level. Christopher Wild looked towards the area where SA was seated before he joined Julie Whitley where they remained until detonation at 22:31.<sup>901</sup></p>

<sup>898</sup> [INQ036727/8-10](#)

<sup>899</sup> [INQ032038/43-46](#), [24/84-85/14-21](#), [INQ033776/35-39](#), [25/100-103/12-25](#)

<sup>900</sup> [INQ033776/37-38](#), [25/116-117/2-21](#)

<sup>901</sup> [INQ035315/22](#)

Time	Event
22:24	<p>Kyle Lawler and Mohammed Agha walked toward each other across the City Room and spoke.<sup>902</sup> They were then approached by unknown members of the public. Kyle Lawler accompanied two members of the public toward the exit doors. Mohammed Agha then took up his position in front of the emergency exit doors.<sup>903</sup></p> <p>David Middleton walked into the City Room and took up his position in front of the Arena doors and remained in this position until 22.30.<sup>904</sup></p> <p>Jordan Beak momentarily stepped into the Arena concourse but returned back into the City Room. Jordan Beak stood and looked out over the City Room from this position until 22:29.<sup>905</sup></p>
22:25	<p>Kyle Lawler and Mohammed Agha walked toward each other across the City Room and spoke.<sup>906</sup> Kyle Lawler walked out of the City Room, across the raised walkway and Mohammed Agha again took up his position in front of the emergency exit doors.<sup>907</sup></p>

<sup>902</sup> [24/86-87/16-6](#)

<sup>903</sup> [INQ032038/49-53](#), [24/87-88/21-1](#), [INQ033776/41-45](#), [25/97/5-25](#)

<sup>904</sup> [INQ036727/11-12](#)

<sup>905</sup> [INQ036729/167-168](#)

<sup>906</sup> [24/88/11-21](#), [INQ032038/56](#), [25/97/20-25](#), [INQ033776/46](#)

<sup>907</sup> [INQ032038/55](#), [INQ033776/47-48](#)

Time	Event
22:26	<p>Kyle Lawler and Robert Atkinson walked back to the end of the raised walkway and took up his position at the top of the stairs. Kyle Lawler appeared to take a pen and white piece of paper from his trousers. Kyle Lawler placed the paper onto the glass side of the raised walkway and appeared to be writing on it.<sup>908</sup></p>
22:29	<p>Jordan Beak momentarily joined colleagues at the centre of the doors in the City Room, before moving back to the left. Jordan Beak remained at this point up to 22:31.<sup>909</sup></p>
22:30	<p>David Middleton remained at his position in the City Room and in front of the Arena doors.<sup>910</sup></p> <p>Mohammed Agha remained at his position in front of the emergency exit doors<sup>911</sup> when SA walked down the stairs from the mezzanine level and across the City Room towards the Arena doors.<sup>912</sup></p>
22:31	<p>SA detonated the bomb.</p>

<sup>908</sup> [INQ033776/49-50](#)

<sup>909</sup> [INQ036729/169-171](#)

<sup>910</sup> [INQ036727/13](#)

<sup>911</sup> [INQ032038/57-60](#)

<sup>912</sup> [INQ020156 from 47:56-48:27 \(internal video counter times\)](#)

## Appendix 3: Approach to findings

### Hindsight

- A3.1** In the course of writing Volume 1, I have applied intense scrutiny to actions, events and decisions. This has been both appropriate and necessary. It has enabled me to have as full an understanding as is possible.
- A3.2** Volume 1 contains a number of criticisms of organisations and individuals. These have been expressed in different ways, including concluding that those criticised ‘should’ have acted differently, that they failed to act and that particular actions were inadequate or insufficient.
- A3.3** I am obliged to act fairly and I have sought to achieve that. Consequently, when making those criticisms I have been conscious of the importance of not making those judgements based upon all the information which is now known, but by reference to what I consider those criticised did know or should have known at the time. I have particularly sought to exclude from my assessment the knowledge we now have about what SA was intending to do.

- A3.4** While I have taken into account what steps have been taken since, I have used this information to improve my understanding of what was, or may have been, possible to do before the Attack. Where changes would not have happened but for the Attack, I have taken this into account.
- A3.5** In taking this approach, I have had regard for the standards and practises of 2017. However, as is plain from what I say in the course of Volume 1, I do not consider these to be determinative. It may be that many of those concerned in putting on events at the time underestimated the risk of a terrorist attack and/or failed to put in place sufficient mitigating measures. Looking back now at the practices used when the Attack took place does not mean that no criticism can attach if they were not as effective as they should have been.
- A3.6** I consider that in making recommendations for the future it is necessary for me to use hindsight. I need to use my understanding about what happened to make sure the mistakes that we now know about are not repeated, that security protections are improved and planning for terrorist attacks is more firmly in mind. The use of hindsight is a powerful tool to ensure that lessons are learned.

- A3.7** The Inquiry cannot make a finding of civil or criminal liability. That is the role of different legal processes. That limitation does not mean that the Inquiry is inhibited from making findings of fact or recommendations, even if liability may be inferred from them. This makes it important for me to explain the standard of proof, or the legal test, that I have applied when making such findings. This is something that many other public inquiries have considered.
- A3.8** In deciding what standard of proof I should apply when determining factual issues, I have decided to adopt a variable and flexible approach similar to that adopted by Sir Martin Moore-Bick in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report.<sup>913</sup> This approach has been used in many other inquiries. It was taken in the Anthony Grainger Inquiry by His Honour Judge Teague QC.<sup>914</sup>
- A3.9** Very many of the facts cited in Volume 1 were not the subject of challenge and were incontrovertibly established by the evidence I heard. It has been necessary for me to resolve some issues of fact. Unless I expressly say so, findings of fact have been made using the civil standard of proof, the balance of probabilities.

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<sup>913</sup> Phase 1 Report of the Public Inquiry into the Fire at Grenfell Tower, paragraph 1.17

<sup>914</sup> Report into the Death of Anthony Grainger, paragraph 1.48

**A3.10** There are many findings in Volume 1 that I make which are not subject to a standard of proof at all. They are judgements that I have made based on the facts I have found.

## **Information taken into account**

**A3.11** In writing Volume 1, I have considered carefully all the relevant evidence and submissions that I have heard and read. That has included the live witness evidence, witness evidence that has been read during the Inquiry, other documents and other material that has been put into evidence during the Inquiry. It included the opening and closing statements, both written and oral. All of the information I have considered and had regard to is available on the Inquiry's website.

**A3.12** As part of the preparation of Volume 1, I have considered the responses provided by all those who were sent warning letters by the Inquiry under Rule 13 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 in March and April 2021. Having reviewed the responses, I reconsidered the evidence on which a particular proposed criticism was based and, where appropriate, modified my provisional conclusions in light of the responses I received.

**A3.13** I have not, however, taken into account fresh evidence or new arguments that were provided in warning letter responses and which could

have been, but were not, put forward during the Inquiry's evidence hearings or in written and oral submissions. I have adopted that approach because it is not the purpose of Rule 13 to provide those who may be criticised with an opportunity to re-open matters in order to justify their conduct or to advance submissions that could have been made openly, on notice to the Inquiry and other Core Participants and subject to submissions but were not. Although a public inquiry is an investigative, rather than an adversarial, process, which to some degree must always be open to new insights, there must be a degree of finality if the process is to reach a conclusion within a reasonable time. Rule 13(1)(b) of the Inquiry Rules 2006 recognises that by providing an opportunity to respond to criticism based on the material already before the Inquiry. Advancing fresh evidence or new arguments in response to warning letters is inconsistent with the need for finality and can give rise to unfairness.

## Appendix 4: Note on references

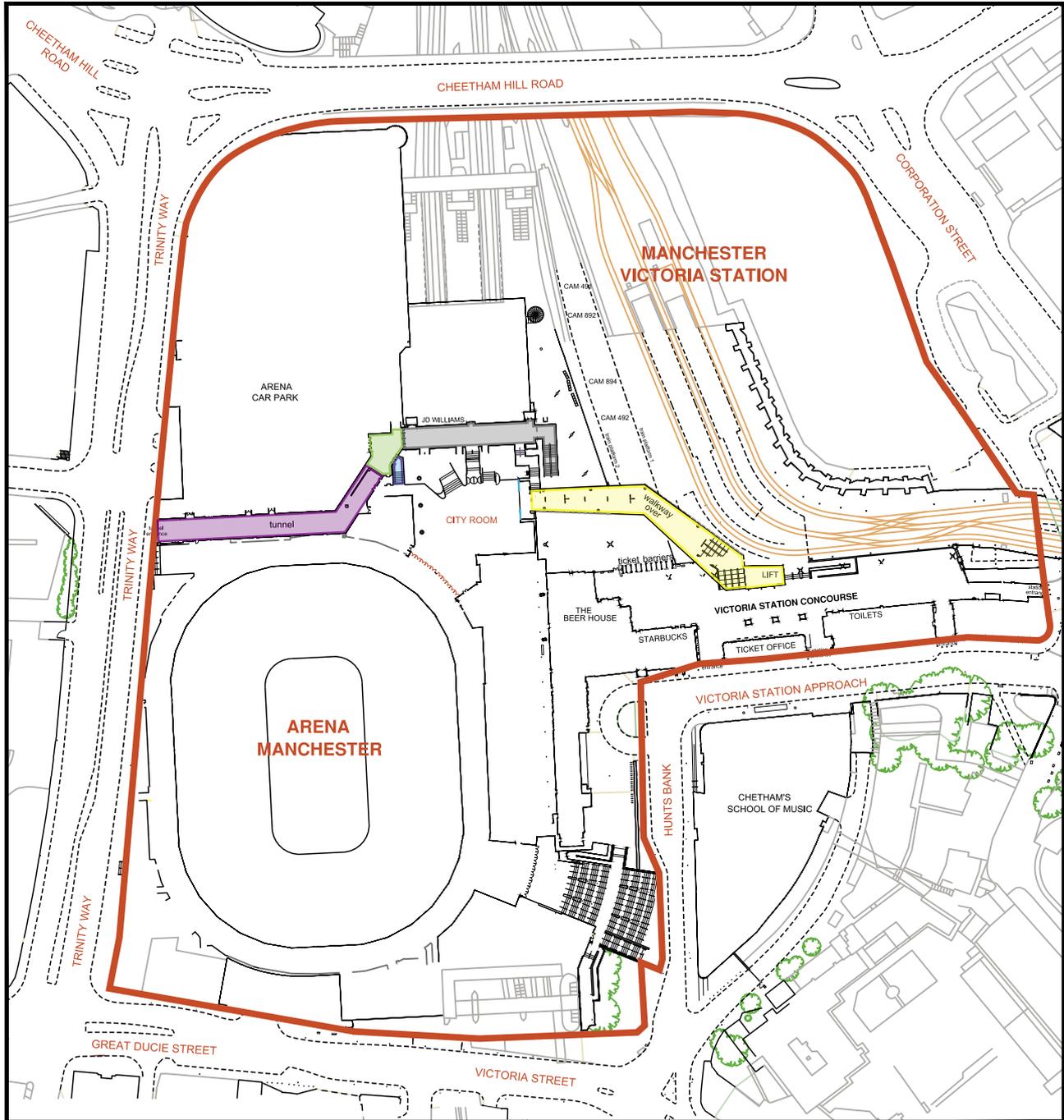
- A4.1** All references in the footnotes relate to material which is available on the Inquiry website: [www.manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk](http://www.manchesterarenainquiry.org.uk). The citation system used is Day/Page/Line in relation to transcripts of evidence. References starting “*INQ*” are to documents displayed in the course of the hearings or published on the website as evidence considered by the Inquiry. The evidence, as it was adduced in the course of the oral evidence hearings, is also available to be viewed on YouTube.
- A4.2** The footnotes are intended to assist the reader identify evidence which goes to the statement to which they are applied. However, the included references are not intended to be exhaustive. As such, the reader should not assume that the included references are the only evidence which was given and which I have taken into account which bears on the statement to which they are attached, or which informed subsequent conclusions or resolutions of fact.

## Appendix 5: Initialisms and acronyms

ACC	Assistant Chief Constable
ACS	Approved Contractor Scheme (run by the SIA)
ACT	Action Counters Terrorism (NaCTSO counter-terrorism course)
BTP	British Transport Police
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
CPNI	Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure
CTSA	Counter-Terrorism Security Advisor
DAC	Deputy Assistant Commissioner
EAA	European Arenas Association
ETUK	Emergency Training UK
GMP	Greater Manchester Police
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
JTAC	Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre
NAA	National Arenas Association

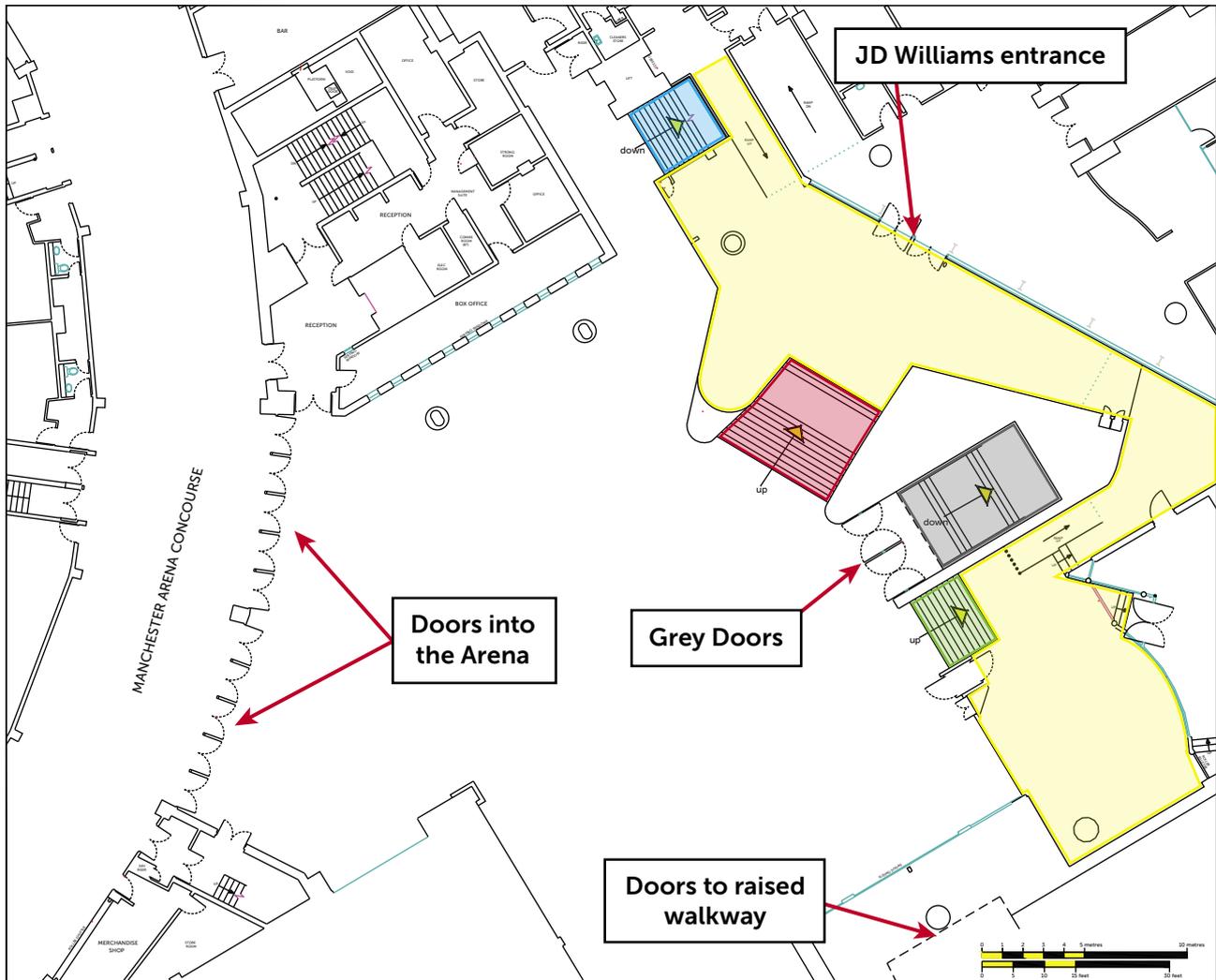
NaCTSO	National Counter Terrorism Security Office
PBIED	Person Borne Improvised Explosive Device
PC	Police Constable
PSCO	Police Community Support Officer
PSIA	Protective Security Improvement Activity
OSCT	Office for Security and Counter Terrorism
SIA	Security Industry Authority

# Appendix 6: The Victoria Exchange Complex



Victoria Exchange Complex		Platform overbridge	
Raised walkway		Fifty Pence staircase	
Fifty Pence Piece		Trinity Way link tunnel	

# Appendix 7: The City Room



Mezzanine		Fifty Pence staircase	
JD Williams staircase		Staircase to platform overbridge	
McDonald's staircase			

## Appendix 8: Acknowledgements

**A8.1** I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to the Institute of Licensing and Jeremy Phillips QC who provided freely of their time and knowledge to assist the Inquiry in relation to matters relating to the Licensing Act 2003. They helped considerably those participating in the Inquiry in understanding how the Act was capable of being relevant to the terms of reference of the Inquiry and how in practice Licensing Committees took the possibility of terrorist attacks into consideration when making their decisions.



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