

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

Key points from discussion with No.10

Took too long for RBKC to ask for help. It was evident to most in the meetings at 10VS that they didn't have a grip, despite their assurances to the contrary. Discussed this with DCLG and others, but no levers readily available to force change and make things happen. Should have clear thresholds for intervention and be able to replace key individuals where necessary [not first time as similar problem in Somerset levels where knew a problem, but unable to do anything].

Situational awareness on the ground was poor. Not clear when DCLG or others had a presence there – it was central London so should have been easy...

Unclear and unsatisfactory division of responsibility between John Barradell for victims in the Tower and RBKC for everyone else. Not clear how this worked in practice and whether it added to confusion/poor information flow. Why was this distinction created and by who?

DCLG GLO – not clear they had the right skill set. Who was sent, when and where to. Need PS skills. How did we link into RBKC given split role with recovery gold? How do we measure success?

Should be a standardised offer for victim support in such situations with ready to go 'pop up centre/centre in a box'. [Probably already exists in terms of HA guidance etc of what it should look like]. Need to read/check.

London/RBKC lost control of the narrative and never really appreciated the importance/value of public messaging. Early foul ups fed through and weren't adequately countered.

Data – there was no grip on the data centrally or locally. Seemed unable to provide stats on housing (eg offers made) or to present and track it in a consistent and accessible way. Significant capability gap in both RBKC and DCLG. [Capacity and capability?]

Impossible to contact people in DCLG, so hard to get answers quickly/at all! Added to pressure on private offices as they were used as conduits. Better info management structures critical. Lack of phone numbers and email addresses that were answered!

Should have augmented DCLG Private Office – capable people, one of best out of crisis, but out of depth here and couldn't handle volume of info flowing through.

DCLG (MD) reassured JJH that all okay and had all the staff they needed, but evidently not the case!

HMG must have a process for getting good people with right skills quickly to where they are needed. Need senior decision makers with sound judgement, not lots of junior staff.

Quality of briefing etc very poor. Late and not up to scratch. Real difficulty getting good PMQ briefing, so lost confidence quickly.

CRIP worked well, but need to keep it refreshed. Think about including more anecdotal info to raise questions/prompt debate.

Some uncertainty over whether medical triage arrangements worked at the scene [I said my impression was there were and it worked, but should check]

Disconnect between central views and something happening. Who do we tell if something not working. Whose job is it to make change and how to do it. How does this fit with role of NSA and DNSA in COBR and as primary advisors. Where does JJH fit in and relationship between the two.

Positive view of CCS. Worked directly with DCLG on most policy issues. Meant CCS often blindsided, so worth copying in to requests in future. Think more about how we (CCS) can support without getting in way.