

GRENFELL TOWER
INQUIRY

**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
MARK SAWYER**

I, **Mark Graham Sawyer** of Guildhall, London, EC2P 2EJ make the following statement, the contents of which are true to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1. This statement has been written in response to receiving a letter dated 12th May 2020 from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Solicitor. The letter contained a formal request from the Chairman under rule 9 of the Rules for me to provide a written witness statement which addresses (a) the particular issues identified and (b) any other issues in relation to which I consider that I have evidence which will be relevant to the Inquiry's investigation (a "Rule 9 Statement"). Below is my response to the 29 questions posed.
2. *Question 1: Please set out and explain your roles as of June 2017 which are understood to include acting as London Local Authority Gold's ("LLAG") Chief of Staff and Chief Executive Liaison Officer (Resilience) for the Local Authorities Panel ("LAP") and a member of the implementation group ("LAP-IG")?*
3. On 1st April 2017 I began employment with the City of London Corporation ("the Corporation") of Guildhall, London EC2P 2EJ. My role (MS/321) was Chief Executive Liaison Officer (Resilience). This position was established to provide support to all London local authority chief executives and was funded equally by all 32 London local authorities

and the Corporation. My role included providing advice and support to chief executives on London-wide local government resilience related preparedness across a range of themes including policy development, the use of the central resilience fund formed of equal annual contributions by all local authorities, the London Local Authority Gold arrangements, liaison and undertaking special projects. I am authorised by the Corporation to make this statement.

4. To assist in delivering my responsibilities, I was a standing member of the Local Authorities' Panel (LAP) and Local Authorities' Panel Implementation Group (LAP IG).
5. In relation to incident response arrangements, I was required to provide support to London Local Authority Gold (LLAG), Chair of LAP and Chief Executive of London Councils from Day 2 of an incident requiring activation of the LLAG arrangements. I was also required to provide support, as necessary, to chief executives when responding to a localised Major Incident within their borough, as defined by the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel (LESLP) Major Incident Procedure Manual, and as necessary, to LLAG and chief executives when responding to challenges affecting core services which fall outside Civil Contingencies Act 2004 defined emergencies.
6. Following the decision to invoke the 'Gold Resolution' on 16th June 2017, my role focused on providing dedicated support to John Barradell, Chief Executive and Town Clerk of the Corporation. My duties from that time were a combination of Chief of Staff and Staff Officer functions.
7. Pre- Fire
8. *Question 2. On behalf of the LAP you prepared and published the Recommendations for Local Government Emergency Planning and Resilience for the 2020s ("EP2020") in October 2016. What was done to action these recommendations in the period from the publication of this report on 3 October 2016 to the time of the fire on 14 June 2017?*
9. In 2016, the Local Authorities' Panel (LAP) asked me to undertake a review of the status of local authority emergency planning in London. This necessity arose from recognition by the Local Authorities' Panel of the heightened pressure authorities were facing and increases in

risk, such as those posed by terrorism and internally from loss of corporate knowledge and capacity. The aim of the review was to suggest steps necessary to efficiently reinforce the service and ensure London local authorities could continue to provide effective individual and collective leadership on resilience into the 2020's. I undertook the review whilst employed by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority (LFEPA). I was supported by David KERRY, Emergency Planning Manager Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Technical Advisor to LAP and Doug Flight, Head of Strategic Policy Group, London Councils.

10. Following endorsement of the final report (MS/320) by LAP on 3rd October 2016 and the decision to establish an implementation group on 2nd February 2017 (MS/301), an implementation plan was developed (MS/322). This plan was endorsed by LAP on 2nd February 2017. For ease of reference the recommendations were grouped into five sections: Corporate Policy, Governance and Planning, Duty London Local Authority Arrangements, Borough Response Capability and Assurance. Included in the implementation plan alongside each recommendation was a set of actions, confirmation of the lead person or group, a completion date and status assessment. An updated implementation plan (MS/323) was presented to LAP IG on 17th May 2017 along with an associated report on the Standardisation Programme (MS/311) which was one of the key recommendations.
11. On the 17th May 2017, the implementation plan assessed that of the 44 actions, 10 were complete and only two within the assurance theme were causing initial concern in terms of meeting the completion date. The remainder of the actions at that time were on track to be completed by the due dates.
12. *Question 3. Please provide details of Nicholas Holgate's prior participation on the LLAG duty rota, and any training or briefings he had in relation to this role from 2015 up until June 2017 inclusive.*
13. Details of regionally delivered training and briefings provided to Nicholas HOLGATE in relation to London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) duties are held by the London Resilience Group (LRG). This is because LRG, on behalf of London local authorities, administer the London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) rota and provide briefings and training to local authority chief executives on the specifics of the LLAG role. Details of LLAG specific

training or briefings provided locally along with complimentary training, if delivered, will be held by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

14. I have been informed by Toby GOULD, Deputy Head of London Resilience, that prior to 14th June 2017, Nicholas HOLGATE undertook on call duties as Secondary LLAG from 30th March to 13th April 2016 and Primary LLAG between 17th and 31st August 2016 and the 28th December 2016 to 11th January 2017,(MS/312 to MS/315).
15. Records held by London Resilience Group indicate that Nicholas HOLGATE attended the Metropolitan Police Special Operations Room in Lambeth for a visit and briefing on 7th March 2017 (MS/324). Nicholas HOLGATE also attended a London Resilience Partnership Strategic Coordination Summit on 14th March 2017, see my response to question 4, paragraph 17.
16. *Question 4. When in 2017 was the first Strategic Coordination Summit which was facilitated by the London Resilience Group? Please outline the programme.*
17. Following receipt of information provided by Alex TOWNSEND-DRAKE from London Resilience Group, I can confirm that the first London Resilience Partnership Strategic Coordination Summit was held at the Oval Cricket Ground on Tuesday 14th March 2017 from 10:00 to 15:30.
18. The aim of the summit was to bring together London's strategic representatives to enhance their understanding of prevailing risks, partnership strategic coordination arrangements, and the response and recovery capabilities in relation to terrorism.
19. The Programme for the Summit included presentations on 'Counter-Terrorism Strategy in London and Beyond, Lessons from Paris: Responding to a Multi-Sited Terrorist Attack, Building Resilience in the Aftermath of Terror and two table-op workshops' (MS/325).
20. 14th June 2017
21. *Question 5. Please provide for the period from 2015 to June 2017 copies of:*
 - a. LAP minutes;

b. LAP business plans;

c. LAP Implementation Group meeting minutes.

22. Following receipt of documentation from Toby GOULD, Deputy Head of London Resilience, I can confirm that 8 Local Authorities' Panel (LAP) meetings were held and 8 Local Authorities Panel Implementation Group (LAP IG) meetings were held between 2015 and June 2017. During this period, LAP maintained Business Plans for 2013/2015 and 2015/2017. As requested by the Inquiry Team, all minutes for LAP and LAP IG plus LAP business plans covering 2015 to June 2017 have been submitted (MS/295 to MS/310).
23. *Question 6. Were LLAG incident logbooks maintained by you or on your behalf? If so, could a copy be provided. If no logbook was maintained please set out why not?*
24. My role in supporting the local authority response to the Grenfell Tower Fire was to provide advice and assistance. My activities involved talking in person or on the phone to council officers and partners whilst also sending the occasional email when time permitted.
25. For this reason and due to the fast-moving nature of the response from mid-afternoon on 14th June 2017, I did not maintain an incident/decision log. Contact names, telephone numbers, personal prompts and extremely rough notes were recorded in notebooks which are available for review if required.
26. *Question 7. How and when were you notified of the Grenfell Tower fire?*
27. At 04:41 on 14th June 2017, I received a text message and email (MS/13) from London Resilience Group which stated, 'Please see email from London Resilience Group regarding Major Incident declared in North Kensington.'
28. Following receipt of the text message, I reviewed my received emails, and found two from Matthew HOGAN from London Resilience Group. The first message timed 04:37 and titled 'URGENT - Major Incident - Grenfell Tower, North Kensington' informed me that the London Fire Brigade had asked for a teleconference SCG to take place in relation to the above incident (MS/19). A second email timed 04:38 and titled 'Declared Major Incident - Grenfell Tower, North Kensington', was sent to London Local Authority Gold and

Secondary Local Authority Gold and copied to me and a number of other key council officers including John BARRADELL , Chair of the Local Authorities Panel (LAP) (MS/2). This email contained similar details about the SCG Conference Call at 05:00.

29. *Question 8. Please set out your actions and role on 14 June 2017 from the time you were notified of the fire?*
30. Following notification at 04:41 on 14th June 2017, my role was to monitor the regional local authority response on behalf of the Local Authorities' Panel and provide support and advice, as necessary, to John BARRADELL in his capacity as Chair of the Local Authorities Panel and other local authority chief executives. My initial action was to review the names of local authority officers included in the initial notification email (MS/2) sent my Matthew HOGAN to ensure the correct people had been included. I noted that the email had been sent to Chris NAYLOR, chief executive London Borough of Barking and Dagenham of Barking as London Local Authority Gold (LLAG). This was incorrect because Chris NAYLOR was due to take over LLAG responsibilities from 09:00 that day. Having spoken to Mathew HOGAN on the phone to rectify this, I noted that it was unlikely that Andrew BLAKE-HERBERT would make the 05:00 Strategic Coordination Group call due to notification being by email and the offer to represent him made by Matthew HOGAN (MS/14) and I therefore decided to dial in to the call with a listening watch. This allowed me to hear the briefing on the situation and ensure I was in a good position to contribute to discussions with LLAG, London Resilience Group and John BARRADELL, as Chair of LAP, if my advice was sought.
31. Following the SCG and based on what I had heard, I concluded that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea were actively engaged in the established multi-agency response. As a result, I reverted to monitoring emails, sharing information with John BARRADELL, in his capacity as Chair of LAP, and liaising with London Resilience Group when necessary.
32. At 08:11, I received an email (MS/288) from John HETHERINGTON, who at the time was Deputy Head of London Resilience, confirming London Resilience Group had been in touch with Nicholas HOLGATE, chief executive, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Chris NAYLOR as on-coming LLAG and Andrew BLAKE-HERBERT as off-

going LLAG. The message confirmed they 'were content at the moment that RBKC retain the lead at this point'. The message also confirmed that the London Local Authority Coordination Centre was opening to support the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea should they need mutual aid.

33. At 11:52 I received an email (MS/289) from Stuart TURNER, London Resilience Group LLACC Link Officer, which was sent to all London Local Authority Emergency Planning Teams. This message contained details of the actions RBKC had either completed or had underway. These aligned to the type of actions I would have expected a local authority to have undertaken in these circumstances and within reasonable timeframes.
34. As the day progressed and following a conversation with John BARRADELL, I was asked to liaise with the London Resilience Group to set up a conference call involving Nicholas HOLGATE, Chris NAYLOR as LLAG, John O'Brien, the chief executive at London Councils and John BARRADELL. John HETHERINGTON, Deputy Head London Resilience set up the conference call for 17:30. For details of the call and outcomes please see paragraphs 41, 42 and 43.
35. Immediately after the 17:30 conference call I was asked by John BARRADELL to attend the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on the morning of 15th June 2017. The intention was for me to discuss with Nicholas HOLGATE and other senior officers in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea the required support to humanitarian assistance and recovery going forward. This was recorded in the post conference call email (MS/16) produced by John HETHERINGTON and circulated at 18:59 on 14th June 2017.
36. In the evening of 14th June 2017, I spoke to David KERRY on the phone to arrange to meet him and Nicholas HOLGATE on the morning of the 15th June 2017. During the call David KERRY briefed me and confirmed he was just about to start a night shift. I expressed concern that he needed to be available during the day to support the Councils overall response. David KERRY acknowledged this concern. I am not aware of the actions, if any David KERRY undertook to resolve this matter.
37. *Question 9. On 14 June 2017, please provide details (including emails, notes, logs or other contemporaneous materials) of communications, if any, you had with:*

a. Nicholas Holgate or other senior members from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ("RBKC") including emergency planners such as David Kerry;

b. the primary/duty LLAG (up until 09:00) Andrew Blake-Herbert on 14 June 2017;

c. the primary/duty LLAG (from 09:00) Chris Naylor on 14 June 2017;

d. London Resilience officers;

e. David Bellamy on behalf of the Mayor of London;

f. John O'Brien of London Councils;

g. John Barradell; and

h. the Home Office, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ("MHCLG") and/or the Cabinet Office.

Please provide details of any communications.

38. Recorded details of contact with any of the listed individuals and organisations are contained in the emails I have submitted (MS/1 to MS/294). I was aware of senior level local authority officer contact being made with Nicholas HOLGATE on 14th June 2017 and I therefore do not believe that I communicated directly with him. I also do not recall communicating with David BELLAMY on the 14th June 2017.
39. All other communications with those listed, if they did occur, would have been on the phone or in person but not recorded by me.
40. *Question 10. It is understood you participated in a 17:30 telephone conference with Nicholas Holgate and others on 14 June 2017.*
- a. What was the purpose of this conference?*
- b. Please provide any agenda, minutes, notes or actions arising for any participants from this conference.*
- c. Were any concerns expressed regarding the ability of RBKC to cope with the immediate aftermath?*
- d. Was activation of the Gold Resolution discussed?*
- e. What advice, if any, was Nicholas Holgate given?*
41. Following a request from John BARRADELL for a call to be set up with Nicholas HOLGATE, Chris NAYLOR as LLAG and John O'BRIEN, chief executive London

Councils, I liaised with John Hetherington, Deputy HEAD London Resilience. The purpose of the call was recorded in an email sent by John HETHERINGTON at 16:10 on 14th June 2017 (MS/6) and was 'to understand the likely support RBK&C will require and how this can be best supported across local government and in particular strategic support to Nicholas. Secondly to consider the wider implications for RBK&C and London, and what initial actions are required.'

42. I did not take personal notes during the call and I therefore cannot recall if any concerns were expressed regarding the ability of the Royal Borough of Kensington Chelsea to cope with the immediate aftermath, if the activation of the Gold Resolution was discussed and what advice, if any, Nicholas HOLGATE was given. It was however recorded by John HETHERINGTON, see paragraph 43, that during the call additional staffing resources would be sent to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea the next morning. This would indicate that there was recognition by Nicholas HOLGATE that additional strategic level support and deployment of City of London and London Councils communications staff would be helpful.
43. Following the call, a short precis was circulated by John HETHERINGTON at 18:59 on 14th June 2017 (MS/16) which I believe to be an accurate summary of key discussion points, based on my recollection.
44. 15th June 2017
45. *Question 11. What was the anticipated scope of the peer support agreed to be provided by John Barradell and Eleanor Kelly to Nicholas Holgate at this conference on 14 June 2017? What was the reasoning behind this?*
46. I do not recall the specifics of the peer support to be provided by John BARRADELL and Eleanor KELLY discussed on the 17:30 conference call on 14th June 2017. I do however recall that the media response and likely demands on the Communications Team in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea led to agreement that the Corporation and London Councils would deploy communications team staff to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to support them. It was also agreed that two senior officers from Southwark, Barbara COLLINS and Gerri SCOTT, who had recent experience of supporting

major incident responses in Southwark at a strategic level, would attend the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea on 15th June 2017 to provide advice and assistance.

47. *Question 12. On Thursday 15 June 2017 you were deployed to RBKC Town Hall to assist Nicholas Holgate. What was the scope and nature of your role?*
48. On behalf of John BARRADELL, the Chair of the Local Authorities' Panel, my role on the 15th June 2017 was to spend the day at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Civic Offices. I was asked by John BARRADELL to meet Nicholas HOLGATE and senior officers from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea who were responding to the Grenfell Tower Fire, sit in on relevant meetings, and provide emergency planning and major incident response advice and support where requested.
49. The reason I believe I was asked to provide assistance to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea is because I have extensive experience of responding on behalf of local authorities to large scale incidents in London. These include the 7/7 bombings, the Polonium contamination following the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko, where I was deployed into Westminster City Council to support the recovery effort, the London-wide response to severe weather in 2009 and 2010, the risk of large scale flooding in South London, where I was deployed into the London Borough of Croydon to provide advice and support in the response effort, and the response to Westminster and London Bridge terror attacks.
50. For a summary of my activity on the 15th June 2017 and my involvement in relation to assisting the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea response, see paragraph's 68 to 77. This involvement included gaining an understanding of methods and structures being applied by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to manage the response across the range of responsibilities, including humanitarian assistance, housing, mass fatalities and generic command and control functions. On the morning of the 15th June 2017, I provided initial support to Deborah COLLINS from London Borough of Southwark who undertook to develop proposals changes to the structures, if deemed necessary. I also provided my thoughts throughout the day to Nicholas HOLGATE, Tony REDPATH and Sue REDMOND, see paragraphs 68 to 77.

51. *Question 13. Within that role, what were your observations of the nature of the incident and the response of RBKC on 15 June 2017?*
52. On the 1st July 2017, I retrospectively recorded my observations and actions from 15th June 2017 in rough note form and emailed them to myself (MS/9).
53. In my opinion there were a number of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea officers trying their very best to address the myriad of challenges they faced in supporting the those affected and minimise impacts. Faced with unprecedented challenges, the response was always going to be complex and challenging and their efforts did not go unnoticed to me.
54. However, in my opinion, I did not believe that Nicholas HOLGATE had complete awareness of the scale and complexity of what the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea were being asked to deal with, with a lack of full situational awareness across the senior management team. It was also my opinion that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had not been galvanised as an organisation due to witnessing members of staff seemingly continuing to deliver their day jobs whilst a small number of individuals appeared to be dealing with a significant number of issues at the same time.
55. *Question 14. Please provide details (including emails, notes, logs or other contemporaneous materials) of communications in connection with the Grenfell Tower Fire response, if any, you had with:*
- a. John Barradell including information communicated to him regarding your observations at RBKC;*
 - b. Nicholas Holgate or other senior members from RBKC including emergency planners such as David Kerry;*
 - c. the primary/duty LLAG Chris Naylor;*
 - d. London Resilience officers;*
 - e. John O'Brien of London Councils;*
 - f. David Bellamy on behalf of the Mayor of London; and*
 - g. the Home Office, MHCLG and/or Cabinet Office.*

56. Recorded details of contact with any of the listed individuals and organisations will be contained in the emails I have submitted (MS/1 to MS/294). Please also see my response to Question 13 which details my conversations with Nicholas HOLGATE. I do not believe that I communicated of David BELLAMY on the 15th June 2017.
57. All other communications with those listed, if they did occur, would have been in person or on the phone but not recorded by me.
58. *Question 15. It is understood there were a number of telephone conferences in the afternoon of 15 June 2017:*
- a. at 17:00 between John Barradell, Eleanor Kelly and Nicholas Holgate;*
 - b. after the above mentioned 17:00 teleconference, between John Barradell, John O'Brien and Eleanor Kelly; and*
 - c. during the evening of 15 June it is understood there were a number of calls between John Barradell and Nicholas Holgate.*
- Please provide any minutes, log, notes or actions created for these telephone conferences.*
59. I was involved in the 17:00 call primarily with a listening watch as I deemed it a high-level conversation between chief executives. I am not aware of the call being recorded or minutes taken.
60. I was not involved in the subsequent calls on the evening of the 15th June 2017 and I do not have knowledge or records of them.
61. *Question 16. When did you understand that the request for activation of the Gold resolution took place?*
62. Although I did not make a personal note of the exact time; from my recollection, a formal request was made by Nicholas HOLGATE during the early afternoon on 16th June 2017. This is supported by an email sent by John HETHERINGTON to all London local authority chief executives on behalf of Nicholas HOLGATE and John BARRADELL at 13:27 on 16th June 2017 (MS/7). The email states 'Following a request from RB Kensington and Chelsea for strategic support due to the increasing complexity and severity of the Grenfell

Tower fire the London Local Authority Gold operations have been activated. This is to ensure that London Local Government collectively supports RBK&C during these extremely challenging times.'

63. The formal request followed John BARRADELL reading himself into the full extent of the situation by attending the 10:00 Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Gold Group meeting and listening to the London Strategic Coordination Group meeting at 11:00, both on 16th June 2017.
64. *Question 17. What were the reasons for the formal activation to take place at 14:00 on Friday, 16 June 2017?*
65. I have no formal record of the reasons for the request for the London Local Authority Gold arrangements being invoked. There was evidence of mutual aid being provided by London local authorities to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in advance of the decision, but the response operation mounted by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea required further support. The activation of the Gold Resolution empowered John BARRADELL to formally commit London-wide local authority resources and expenditure in support of the response, with the agreement of and on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
66. In my opinion Nicholas HOLGATE required strategic level support in managing the response. By requesting that John BARRADELL formally step in to assist; this allowed John BARRADELL to take a more active and direct role in managing the response on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
67. *Question 18. Please set out any other actions or involvement in supporting RBKC and LLAG in relation to the response to the Grenfell Tower Fire on 15 June 2017 that you consider relevant?*
68. On my way into the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Civic Offices on the morning of 15th June 2017, I noted a significant amount of donations piled outside the Civic Offices, including milk sitting in the sun.

69. Soon after my arrival I met Nicholas HOLGATE and David KERRY. We discussed the proposed agenda for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Gold Group meeting scheduled for 10:00 that day. I attended with some notes which I talked through, including the types of structure and groups Nicholas HOLGATE would need to consider adopting as the incident moved from response to recovery and what was required to ensure a smooth transition, as detailed in the London Resilience Partnership Recovery protocols. I also referenced a window of opportunity to build on the community spirit being witnessed. I then raised the point that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea should consider what additional support it required and what conditions it would wish to apply in discussions with the Metropolitan Police Service considering the formal handover from response to recovery.
70. During the conversation I suggested that the donations outside the offices should be moved to a more suitable location. I also noted that David KERRY looked extremely tired and visibly upset. Noting David KERRY had been working the previous night, I was concerned that this could have a detrimental effect on his ability to offer strategic advice, at times when Nicholas HOLGATE and his Senior Management Team were available and potentially all together.
71. Following the meeting, I mentioned to Nicholas HOLGATE the offer of support from Borough Market as detailed in the email I sent him at 08:04 on 15th June 2017 (MS/5). Nicholas agreed to deal with the email.
72. Prior to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Gold Group meeting scheduled for 10:00 I asked Martin FITZPATRICK, who I believe at the time was Head of Media and Communications, why the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had failed to dial into the London Gold Communications Group conference call at 08:30. Martin FITZPATRICK indicated that the request may have been lost in the 200 emails he had not had time to open.
73. At 10:00 I was joined in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Gold Group meeting by Deborah COLLINS AND Gerri SCOTT from the London Borough of Southwark. The meeting was held in Nicolas HOLGATE's office with a significant number of people involved. My estimate was about 25 people. After the meeting, I suggested to Nicholas HOLGATE that the meeting had been very operational and not strategic enough. I

asked Nicholas HOLGATE to consider reducing membership to his Senior Management Team plus his Tactical Lead Officer (Silver) to ensure the discussions were more strategic. Nicholas HOLGATE confirmed that most of the people in the room were his Senior Management Team.

74. Following information received that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea had not participated in the Mass Fatalities Coordination Group meeting the previous day, I highlighted the need to ensure representation. This way Nicholas HOLGATE would be able to gain assurance that the logistical arrangements being established at Westminster Mortuary were appropriate. I cannot recall as to whom this was discussed with, but I am aware that a Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea officer did assign and officer.
75. I spoke to Sue Redmond, the nominated Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officer (HALO) and I noted the extreme pressure she was under due to the pace in which the response was required and the scale of the situation. As a result, I further emphasised to Toby GOULD from London Resilience Group, the importance of their support to the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Group which was due to meet that afternoon. Toby GOULD confirmed in an email to me at 13:23 (MS/4) that he would be dialling into the call at 14:00.
76. Based on my observations, I suggested to Nicholas HOLGATE that a call should be held with at approximately 17:00 with John BARRADELL and Eleanor KELLY, chief executive London Borough of Southwark. The intention was to allow Nicholas HOLGATE the opportunity to discuss the status of the response and any additional support the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea might require.
77. Prior to leaving the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, I spoke with Tony REDPATH. I expressed a concern that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) was not operating effectively and I had not seen a BECC Sitrep prior to either Gold Group meeting held that day. I believed this was hindering situational awareness. I also re-emphasised the importance of David KERRY coming off nights and moving to working days.
78. 16th June 2017

79. *Question 19. For 16 June 2017, please provide details (including emails, notes, logs or other contemporaneous materials) of communications in connection with the Grenfell Tower Fire response, if any, you had with:*
- a. John Barradell;*
 - b. Nicholas Holgate or other senior members from RBKC including emergency planners such as David Kerry;*
 - c. the primary/duty LLAG Chris Naylor;*
 - d. London Resilience officers;*
 - e. John O'Brien of London Councils;*
 - f. David Bellamy on behalf of the Mayor of London; and*
 - g. the Home Office, MHCLG and/or the Cabinet Office.*
80. Recorded details of contact with any of the listed individuals and organisations will be contained in the emails I have submitted (MS/1 to MS/294).
81. All other communications with those listed, if they did occur, would have been on the phone or in person, but not recorded by me.
82. *Question 20. Please provide notes and details of the telephone conference between you, John Barradell and Andrew Meek (London Borough of Haringey) on the evening of 16 June 2017 (approx. 21:00).*
83. I have no record of the time of the call with Andrew Meek. I believe the call was related to the Humanitarian Assistance Steering Group and the need to identify additional support.
84. On review of emails I received on 16th June 2017, I note one I was copied into one from Andrew Meek at 18:57 (MS/8) which was sent to Beverley TARKA. This email contained attachments relevant to the Humanitarian Assistance Centre arrangements and role of the Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officer. At 22:25 I sent an email to Andrew MEEK, Beverley TARKA and Malcom DAVIES from London Borough of Croydon (MS/10), providing them with the full address and some instructions for attending Portland House the next morning. This was the building I had relocated to following the need to evacuate the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Civic Offices.

85. *Question 21. Why did you request that the London Local Authority Coordination Centre ("LLACC") move from Merton to Portland House? Why was this request initially refused and what caused you to make a second request on 16 June 2017?*
86. I have no recollection of a conversation on the 16th June 2017 regarding the LLACC moving from Merton to Portland House. On the 18th June in the afternoon, I spoke to John HETHERINGTON and Toby GOULD, both from London Resilience Group and asked them to move the LLACC to Portland House. The reason for this request was to assist with a joined-up response and by placing the LLACC near the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster BECCs at Portland House, this would have allowed face to face discussions between the BECC and LLACC Managers, faster exchange of critical information, direct access to Cell's in Portland House to assist with situational awareness and finally enhance the development of collaborative approach's to problem solving where necessary.
87. Although I do not have a formal record of the conversation, I recall that there was a reluctance to move the LLACC as it was already established at Merton, there was low confidence in the wi-fi network at Portland House and the ability to print would be problematic. This all caused a concern that the effectiveness of LLACC operations could be affected.
88. Following a conversation with John BARRADELL on 18th June 2017, when I informed him of John HETHERINGTON and Toby GOULD were reluctant to relocate, I was asked to speak to John HETHERINGTON again. I spoke to John HETHERINGTON again and requested again that the LLACC move to Portland House the next day. John HETHERINGTON agreed to the request and arranged a phased transition from Merton to Portland House the following morning.
89. At 15:25 on 19th June 2017 I received an email from the LLACClink Officer (MS/122) confirming 'On request of LLAG we have moved the LLACC operations to Portland House in Westminster City Council.'

90. *Question 22. How effective was the operation of the LLACC between 14 June and 20 June 2017 inclusive?*
91. It is my opinion that the response of the London Local Authority Coordination Centre (LLACC) was effective. The LLACC stood up early on the morning of the 14th June 2017 as indicated by an email from Toby GOULD at 08:03 (MS/290). This decision will have ensured any requests for mutual aid, support with engagement with regional partners or other coordination functions requested by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea would have been available without delay.
92. Throughout the period between 14th and 20th June, it is my opinion that the staff in the LLACC discharged their responsibilities for coordination and communication in line with established protocols and procedures. I am aware that the LLACC facilitated a significant amount of London local authority mutual aid and shared regular situational updates with all London local authorities and partner agencies.
93. The only notable aspect of operations they were not required to undertake was the production of formal LLAG and LLACC situation reports. This was due to the incident being centred on a single borough and a situation report was being produced by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster Borough Emergency Control Centres (BECCs).
94. *Question 23. Do you have any observations and/or concerns on how London Resilience performed in the 7 day period after the Grenfell Tower Fire?*
95. In my opinion, the London Resilience Partnership response was in line with established protocols and procedures. The challenge faced, however, was the scale in terms of number of residents who sadly lost their lives, the significant rehousing need, complexity such as the loss of the boilers supporting the Lancaster West estate creating a larger impact footprint, the local political dynamic and finally the community reaction which from the outset laid the blame on the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the Tenant Management Organisation. These challenges will have made the response extremely difficult to coordinate from the outset.

96. *Question 24. It is understood that LLAG provided Sit Reps which were compiled by LLACC. Please confirm the process in relation to this and provide copies of all Sit Reps for the period 14 -20 June 2017 (inclusive).*
97. From review of my emails between 14th and 20th June 2017, I can confirm that I received two types of situation reports from the LLACC. Email updates containing situational information were produced and circulated initially by the London Resilience Group and then the LLACC. On 16th June at 13:27 I received a specific situational update email sent by John HETHERINGTON to all Local Authority Chief Executives on behalf of Nicholas Holgate and John Barradell (MS/7) advising that the LLAG arrangements had been invoked.
98. In addition to the emails, I received situation reports circulated by the LLACC from 16th June 2017 which were produced by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster BECCs. I believe a specific LLAG situation report was not produced by the LLACC because this incident affected a single borough, and all relevant information was held within the BECC structure established to deal with the specific incident.
99. *Question 25. Please set out any other actions or involvement in supporting RBKC and LLAG in relation to the response to the Grenfell Tower Fire on 16 June 2017?*
100. Prior to the need to relocate from Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Civic Offices to Portland House at approximately 16:50 on 16th June 2017, I undertook a number of administrative and support tasks.
101. These tasks included forwarding the draft agenda for the 10:00 Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Gold Group Meeting at 07:45 on 16th June 2017, to John Barradell for his thoughts (MS/221), liaising with John HETHERINGTON on the time for the mornings London Strategic Coordination Group (SCG) meeting and suggested to John HETHERINGTON that he seek agreement from the Metropolitan Police Service to convene at 11:00 and not 10:00 to allow the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Gold Group to meet at 10:00 (MS/252). The purpose was to allow Nicholas HOLGATE to participate in the SCG with a clear understanding of the situation from the local authority perspective and the aspects of the response he was coordinating.

102. I received an update from Sue Redmond the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Humanitarian Assistance Lead Officer on the proposed terms of reference and agenda for the meeting she was chairing that day.
103. Following the evacuation from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Civic Offices, I travelled with Nicholas HOLGATE, John BARRADELL and Alex WOODMAN from Westminster City Council, to Portland House.
104. On arrival at Portland House, I supported the establishment of the facility as a Recovery Coordination Centre. This involved multiple tasks including working with the staff in the Westminster Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) to support the set-up of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea BECC in Portland House and discussing options for merging the two BECCs to enhance operations.
105. At I time I cannot confirm in the evening of the 16th June 2017, I contacted Malcom DAVIES, from the London Borough of Croydon Council, and requested his assistance in helping Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to deal with the significant number of physical donations that were being received. Malcolm DAVIES agreed to attend Portland House the following morning to help.
106. To support BECC operations the following day, I sent an email at 22:44 and 16th June 2017 to Kelly JACK, Resilience Manager at London Borough of Croydon, containing details for Portland House (MS/262). This was because Kelly JACK had arranged for Croydon Council staff to work in the BECC at Portland House.
107. Very late in the evening on 16th June 2017 I was informed that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Building Control Service would not be able to discharge its responsibilities in relation to Grenfell Tower and an alternative approach was required. I contacted the City of London Corporations Head of Building Control, Bill WELCH, and sought his views on identifying a suitably qualified independent building surveyor to take over responsibility for the Tower. Bill WELCH was attending a dinner with professional colleagues from across London at the time of my call and agreed to discuss this matter with colleagues and get back to me. For the response please see paragraph 116.
108. 17th June 2017

109. *Question 26. For 17-20 June 2017, please provide details (including emails, notes or logs) of communications in connection with the Grenfell Tower Fire response, if any, you had with:*
- a. John Barradell;*
 - b. Nicholas Holgate;*
 - c. London Resilience officers;*
 - d. David Bellamy on behalf of the Mayor of London; and*
 - e. the Home Office, MHCLG and/or the Cabinet Office.*
110. Recorded details of contact with any of the listed individuals and organisations will be contained in the emails I have submitted (MS/1 to MS/294).
111. All other communications with those listed, if they did occur, would have been on the phone or in person, but not recorded by me.
112. *Question 27. Please set out any other actions or involvement in supporting RBKC and LLAG in relation to the response to the Grenfell Tower Fire between 17 June and 20 June 2017?*
113. During the period from 17th June to 20th June 2017, I undertook a range of administrative and support tasks to ensure the Portland House provided an effective location to coordinate the recovery process and had the right agencies represented and staff engaged.
114. I also provided direct support to John BARRADELL and the other local authority chief executives who supported the collective effort to address the impacts on the bereaved, those residents in hospital, those evacuated from Grenfell Tower and the wider community. This included working with the Cell structure established following the establishment of the Recovery Coordination Centre at Portland House and forwarding offers of support and information to the leads of each as necessary, fielding multiple calls from the GLA and Government Ministerial support staff and linking them all to the right personnel in Portland House staff and John BARRADELL as necessary.
115. Below is an indication of the nature of my activities during the period from 17th June to 20th June 2017:

116. At 00:09 on 17th June 2017 I received an email from Jim WELCH, Head of Building Control at the City of London Corporation (MS/291). Jim WELCH provided four names of suitable Chief Building Control Officers who could be approached to assist following the identified need for Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea to withdraw from delivering the service at Grenfell Tower.
117. At 01:05 on 17th June 2017 I was copied into an email from Matthew PUNSHON (MS/292) from the Metropolitan Police Service which was sent to Nicholas HOLGATE confirming Nicholas HOLGATE's agreement to authorise an independent building surveyor to operate on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
118. As a result of Nicholas HOLGATE's agreement, I spoke to Jim KING from the London Borough of Harrow and he agreed to help with delivering the building control function if agreed by his chief executive, Michael LOCKWOOD. I then contacted Michael LOCKWOOD, then chief executive at London Borough of Harrow, who confirmed his agreement. This was then followed by an email I was copied into from Nicholas HOLGATE to Matthew PUNSHON at 08:47 on 17th June 2017 (MS/293) confirming 'while retaining responsibility, I agree to the delegation to Jim Kelly (Harrow) to support building control functions on the site.'
119. Throughout the morning of 17th June 2017, conversations continued on what the Memorandum of Understanding between Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and London Borough of Harrow re building control function should contain to provide the appropriate level of assurance. At 10:20 on 19th June 2017 I received an email from Matthew PUNSHON (MS/22) confirming 'the formal handover took place on Saturday afternoon and Jim King from LB Harrow is now in the lead'
120. In the early evening of 17th June 2017, I was contacted by Emma Strain from the Greater London Authority (GLA) concerning the deployment of a GLA and Mayor of London communications representative into the Recovery Coordination Centre. This concluded with agreement at 18:26 (MS/264) that James RYAN would arrive at Portland House by 19:00 on 17th June 2017.
121. At 07:11 on the 18th June 2017, having recognised the high level of activity that had taken place the previous day and the need to ensure John BARRADELL had the appropriate level

of support, I sought John BARRADELL's agreement (MS/15) to obtain additional direct administrative support from the City of London Corporation. This was agreed by John BARRADELL in an email I received at 07:22 on 18th June 2017 (MS/146).

122. At 07:27 on 18th June 2017, I highlighted to Mary HARPLEY, Chief Executive London Borough Hounslow and John BARRADELL in an email (MS/17), that the Humanitarian Assistance strand would benefit from additional resource to support its activities. I also included the suggestion that we try to involve Sue Redmond as she is committed and will have local knowledge. This suggestion was agreed by John BARRADELL in an email I received at 07:33 on 18th June 2017 (MS/176). At 10:00 on 18th June 2017 I received an email from Twm PALMER, Head of Contingency Planning and Resilience, London Borough of Hounslow (MS/90) confirming to Mary HARPLEY that additional support for the Humanitarian Assistance work had been sourced.
123. At 12:07 on 18th June 2017, I received an email from Lizzie CLIFFORD, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, (MS/208) confirming that she was looking to source some additional support for Barbara BROWNLEE, Westminster City Council, to assist with temporary housing work.
124. At 23:16 on 18th June 2017 I received a request from Sue REDMOND, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (MS/55) asking me to bring an email containing personal reflections to the attention of John BARRADELL. At 00:28 on 19th June 2017 I responded (MS/279) to confirm John BARRADELL had seen the email and agreed.
125. At 11:57 on 19th June 2017, I received an email from Tony REDPATH, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, (MS/100) concerning offers he was receiving from community organisations and individuals to arrange meetings with local organisations. I acknowledged receipt at 13:05 on 19th June 2017 and confirmed I had escalated the matter to Doug PATTERSON, chief executive London Borough of Bromley, (MS/268) and he would call Tony REDPATH in a couple of hours.
126. Additional Questions
127. *Question 28. Within the Grenfell Fire Recovery Coordinating Group Action Tracker, dated 24 June 2017, you were tasked to "Consider lessons capture process. Community*

Engagement subgroup to consider capture of lessons from the community". Please provide further details of what was done in relation to these actions.

128. On review of the minutes of the Grenfell Fire Recovery Coordinating Group meeting held at 13:00 on 24th June 2017 (MS/316), I note that this was incorrectly recorded as a complete action for me to address. From recollection, I believe that I was initially tasked with discussing the generic approach to lessons capture with staff based at Portland House. The specific task of considering the capture of lessons from the community was made to the community engagement representative who was in attendance at the meeting.
129. The matter was corrected in the action tracker dated 27th June 2017 (MS/317) with Hilary PATEL from MHCLG, added to the organisation box and the following text added to the Action/Update box: 'Action superseded – proposal that all work streams ensure they have a process in place for a feedback /learning loop to inform continued provision of services.'
130. *Question 29. What is the current position in relation to the implementation of the recommendations set out in the LAP Emergency Planning into the 2020's: April 2018 - Refresh?*
131. Progress in delivering refreshed EP2020 recommendations (MS/318) has been a standing item and consistently discussed at all meetings of the Local Authority Implementation Group (LAP IG) and the Sub Regional Resilience Programme Boards. Where issues required escalation, these were raised at Local Authorities' Panel (LAP) meetings.
132. The recommendations and associated implementation plan were incorporated into the LAP Business Plan 2017 – 2020. All recommendations were assigned a lead officer and actively progressed (MS/319). Where not complete, the recommendations have clearly defined action plans but due to the response to COVID – 19, these will need to be reviewed and adjusted to ensure they remain on track wherever possible.
133. One of the overarching recommendations was the adoption of the assurance framework recommended in the Sean Ruth Review 2018 (MS/326). New 'Resilience Standards for London' (MS/327) were adopted by LAP on 13th June 2019. Included in the assurance approach are individual local authority self-assessments which all completed in full by the end of January 2020 and Local Government Association (LGA) facilitated independent peer

challenges, with three conducted in London prior to the response to COVID – 19 curtailing activity in March 2020.

134. In my opinion, the London local authority response to COVID – 19 since late February 2020 has demonstrated the principles of EP2020 were correct and that they have been embedded in local authority arrangements across London. All London local authorities have demonstrated corporate-wide engagement and ownership of resilience through the way they have organisationally responded to the system-wide challenges presented by COVID - 19, sub-regional coordination has added value and provided support and assurance to the local level, and engagement with local authority professional networks such as Human Resources Directors, Heads of Communications Teams, Housing Directors and London Association of Directors of Social Services, in advance of COVID – 19 has allowed the networks to provide effective professional advice and assistance.
135. I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and published on the Inquiry's website.

Signed



Mark Sawyer

Dated: 1st July 2020

