
**WITNESS STATEMENT OF
JOHN BARRADELL**

1. I have been passed a request by the Inquiry Solicitor dated 25th May 2020 in relation to the request for evidence under rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006, to provide a supplementary statement, the details of which are set out below. I am authorised by the Corporation to make this statement.
2. In order to deal with the request and assist the Inquiry, I set out below my responses to the questions asked.
3. *Question 1. Please set out the membership of the LAP, which you chaired, as of June 2017?*
4. The following were members of the Local Authorities' Panel as of June 2017:
 - John BARRADELL - Chair of Local Authorities' Panel
 - Charlie ADAN - Chair of South West Sub-Regional Resilience Forum (Chief Executive RB Kingston)
 - Mary HARPLEY - Chair of West Sub-Regional Resilience Forum (Chief Executive LB Hounslow)

- Doug PATTERSON – Chair of South East Sub-Regional Resilience Forum (Chief Executive LB Bromley)
- Lesley SEARY - Chair of North Central Sub-Regional Resilience Forum (Chief Executive LB Islington)
- Eleanor KELLY - Chair of Central Sub-Regional Resilience Forum (Chief Executive LB Southwark)
- Kim BROMLEY-DERRY - Chair of the North East Sub-Regional Resilience Forum (Chief Executive LB Newham)
- Charlie PARKER – Chair of the Local Authorities’ Panel Implementation Group (Chief Executive City of Westminster)
- John O’BRIEN - Chief Executive London Councils
- Dr Fiona WILCOX - Westminster’s Coroner
- David KERRY - Practitioner Advisor to the Chair (RB Kensington & Chelsea)
- Mark SAWYER - London Local Authority Chief Executive Liaison (Resilience)
- Marsha OSIVWEMU - Department of Communities and Local Government (Resilience and Emergencies Division)
- John HETHERINGTON - London Resilience Group Secretariat
- Graham BURBAGE - London Resilience Group (Minutes)

5. *Question 2. It is understood that the LAP met three times a year. Please provide minutes for the LAP meetings for the period from 2015 to the time of the fire in 2017?*

6. I can confirm that the Local Authorities’ Panel did meet three times a year from 2015 to June 2017. Minutes of all the meetings have been submitted, as requested (JB/001 to JB/008).

7. *Question 3. How was strategic guidance communicated to local authorities on civil resilience activity? Was this via the LAP implementation group and/or Local Authority sub-regional resilience meetings (paragraph 12 of your statement)?*

8. Strategic guidance is disseminated to local authorities via a number of routes and at a number of levels. Government guidance is shared by the Cabinet Office and Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government in circulars to Chief Executives or via the

London Resilience Group. The Local Government Association circulate information to Council Leaders.

9. Strategic guidance determined by the Local Authorities' Panel is disseminated on a regular basis to the Chief Executives of London Committee (CELC), it is included in an annual report to Leaders Committee of London Councils and where requiring development and consideration of the means of implementation, it is discussed by the Local Authorities' Panel Implementation Group. Routinely, strategic guidance is shared with Directors with strategic responsibility for resilience and emergency planning and emergency planning teams via the London Resilience Group.

10. *Question 4. Please provide the LAP business plans for 2015, 2016 and 2017 (paragraph 12 of your statement)?*

11. The Local Authorities' Panel Business Plan 2015/17, versions 1.1 and 1.2 have been submitted as requested (JB/009 / JB/010).

12. *Question 5. Please provide a complete copy of the papers/reports presented to the LAP and in due course the Leaders' Committee of London Councils in relation to London Assessments for the period 2015 to 2017 (paragraph 15 of your statement).*

a. *Please provide the precise date of the Local Authorities Panel "Paper 08b: MSL Self Assessment Results 2017" (GOL00000133) and any further final or approved version of this assessment.*

b. *Please provide the precise date of the Local Authorities Panel "Paper 04: MSL Peer Review Results 2016" (GOL00000136).*

13. Reports to the Local Authorities' Panel and Leaders Committee relevant to London assessments have been provided as requested (JB/011 to JB/022).

a. The precise date of the Local Authorities' Panel "Paper 08b: MSL Self Assessment Results 2017" was 11th October 2017.

- b. The precise date of the Local Authorities' Panel "Paper 04: MSL Self-Assessment Results 2015" was 2nd February 2016.

14. *Question 6. Please provide details of the nature of "an enhanced assessment of operational preparedness" adopted by all local authorities in September 2018 (paragraph 15 of your statement).*

15. On the 18th April 2018 the Local Authorities' Panel endorsed an assurance framework produced by Sean RUTH, consultant and ex-Chief Fire Officer of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. The framework recommended the means by which London local government, could individually and collectively assure their organisations preparedness, particularly their capacity and capability, through a credible, transparent, efficient and cost-effective approach. The report was titled 'London Local Government - Providing individual and collective assurance' (JB/023).

16. By endorsing the framework, the Local Authorities' Panel approved significant changes to the existing Minimum Standards for London (MSLs) and commissioned Sean RUTH to replace them with Resilience Standards for London (RSLs) by the autumn of 2019. A key objective for the Local Authorities' Panel was for the RSLs to focus on operational capacity and capability (i.e. assuring a Borough's response, rather than that it had followed the process of developing its arrangements).

17. At the Local Authorities Panel meeting on 6th June 2018 recommendations for the interim and long-term approaches as detailed in 'Paper 03d: Assurance Approach - Stage 2 Development' (JB/024) were endorsed (JB/025). This included agreement that Boroughs would complete an Interim Assurance Process (IAP) to maintain the momentum with developments identified in the light of the Grenfell Tower fire, London Bridge terrorist attack and other recent major incidents in 2017. The IAP was designed to offer Boroughs their first exposure to the revised assurance standards, with a focus on 'Immediate Response Capabilities'.

18. On the 10th October 2018 the Local Authorities Panel agreed the recommendations in 'Paper 03g: Long term Assurance Approach – Sean Ruth update' (JB/026) and 'Paper 03f: Interim

Assurance Process' (JB/027 / JB/028). As a result, all boroughs completed self-assessments, sub-regional peer challenges were conducted in all six local authority sub-regional resilience groupings and a consolidated report providing a London Resilience Assurance overview was presented to the Local Authorities Panel on 7th February 2019 (JB/029).

19. *Question 7. Please provide an update as to the development and implementation of “the new Resilience Standards for London for implementation during 2019” (paragraph 15 of your statement).*
20. On the 19th July 2019 the Resilience Standards for London (RSLs) (JB/030) were launched at the Guildhall, London. All London local authority chief executives and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive of the City of London Corporation were invited along with their Directors with strategic responsibility for resilience and emergency planning. a presentation deck used during the launch event and detailing the approach and other key information (JB/031) was shared with all attendees and local authority emergency planning g teams immediately after the launch.
21. Following the launch on the 19th July 2019, all boroughs completed self-assessments against the standards between August 2019 and January 2020. The sub-regional peer challenge/good practice sharing component of the annual assurance cycle were not completed in full, only three out of the six completed due to the onset of COVID-19. The external peer challenge component facilitated by the Local Government Association (JB/032) completed assessments in four boroughs and was unable to complete the scheduled fifth visit due to the onset of COVID-19. A revised schedule for reinstating the LGA component of the assurance process was presented to the Local Authorities' Panel and agreed on 27th July 2020 'Paper 03f: LGA Peer Challenges (JB/033).
22. *Question 8. At paragraph 21 of your statement you outline the communications process which was developed “to support the mutual aid process”. In the period from 14 June 2017 to 20 June 2017 (inclusive) was the London Resilience Partnership (“LRP”) Gold Communications Group utilised to facilitate a link between the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (“RBKC”) communications and other bodies including, but not limited to, the Greater London Authority (“GLA”) and the British Red Cross (“BRC”)? If so, please*

provide further details? If not, why?

23. In my statement to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, dated 1st February 2020, I included in paragraph 21 reference to the mutual aid process all London local authorities and the City of London Corporation signed up to in 2010 (JB/034) and regional communications arrangements. Both elements in my statement are independent of each other, with the mutual aid process being managed locally by an affected borough or in large incidents, the affected borough(s) can be supported by the London Resilience Group working in the London Local Authority Coordination Centre facility.
24. With regards to the London Resilience Partnership (“LRP”) Gold Communications Group, this is a multi-agency group of press and media professionals, with membership drawn from a range of London Resilience Partner organisations. The role and responsibilities of the Group will be detailed in protocols and procedures agreed by its members and referenced in the London Strategic Coordination Protocol. This is endorsed by the London Resilience Forum.
25. I am aware that from the outset of any significant major incident, the Gold Communications Group should stand up in support of the London Strategic Coordination as part of the London-wide response. Details of engagement between the Gold Communications Group, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and other bodies will be held by the Metropolitan Police, whom I believe Chaired the Gold Communications Group, and or the London Resilience Group, whom I believe provided support and advice to the Group.
26. *Question 9. As referred to at paragraph 25 of your statement, please clarify when the Memorandum of Understanding between the LAP and the BRC (“the MoU”) was signed and whether this post dates events in June 2017?*
27. I can confirm that the Memorandum of Understanding (JB/035) between the LAP and the British Red Cross (“the MoU”) was developed in order to reinforce the partnership approach to managing major incidents and ensure support is available to local authorities for training Rest Centre staff. Both parties signed the first MOU in July 2018 which post-dates events in June 2017. A subsequent MOU was signed for the financial year 2019/20 and plans are in

place to finalise the MOU for this current financial year, a delay occurred due to the onset of COVID-19.

28. *Question 10. Please confirm when and how you become aware of the Grenfell Tower fire?*

29. I received an email from Matt Hogan, London Resilience Manager at 04:37 on the 14th June 2017. This email informed me that the London Fire Brigade, had called for a teleconference Strategic Coordination Group meeting at 0500, that day (GOL00000192). I received a further email from him at 04:38 on the 14th June 2017, advising that the London Fire Brigade had declared a major incident, in response to a 40 pump fire in a tower block (GOL00000165).

30. I do not recall if I was alerted to the initial email and cannot state if it was that notification that made me aware of the incident or I was alerted at the point that I awoke on that morning.

31. *Question 11. Please set out any contact you had on 14 June 2017 with Andrew Blake-Herbert, the initial primary London Local Authority Gold (“LLAG”)?*

32. I do not recall any specific contact that I had with Andrew BLAKE-HERBERT of the 14th June 2017. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone, but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.

33. *Question 12. Please set out any contact you had on 14 June 2017 with Chris Naylor, who became LLAG from 09:00?*

34. I do not recall any specific contact that I had with Chris NAYLOR on the 14th June 2017, prior to the 17:30 conference call. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone, but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.

35. *Question 13. Please set out any contact you had on 14 June 2017 with John O’Brien, Chief Executive, London Councils?*

36. I do not recall any specific contact with John O’BRIEN on the 14th June, prior to the 17:30 conference call. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone, but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.

37. *Question 14. Please set out any contact you had on 14 June 2017 with London Resilience officers?*

38. I have disclosed all emails received from the 14th June to the 16th June, the point at which I took on the role of London Local Authority Gold. Within that disclosure there are a number of emails from the London Resilience team (GOL00000218 / GOL00000176).

39. I do not recall any specific contact with London Resilience Officers on the 14th June, prior to the 17:30 conference call. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone, but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.

40. *Question 15. Were there any discussions with any of the above, or any other person, regarding the ability of RBKC to cope, the need for additional assistance and/or the activation of the Gold Resolution? If there were, please provide details.*

41. No, the nature of the information received from London Resilience was by way of information updates only. With copies of all emails received within my disclosure marked (GOL00000218 / GOL00000176 / GOL00000232).

42. *Question 16. What actions, if any, did you carry out prior to the 17:30 telephone conference on the evening of 14 June 2017?*

43. I do not recall carrying out any actions, directly relating to the incident, prior to the 17:30 telephone conference, other than that detailed in para 43. I was though, aware of the status of the response through being copied into email updates provided by the London Resilience Group (GOL00000151 / GOL00000218 / GOL00000176 / GOL00000182 / GOL00000210 / GOL00000205 / GOL00000232 / GOL00000201 / GOL00000208) and being copied into email exchanges that offers from colleagues in the City of London Corporation resilience team were offering support (GOL00000238).

44. As the day progressed and in line with an approach adopted after the recent London Bridge terrorist attack, I asked Mark SAWYER 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 myself. John HETHERINGTON, Deputy Head of London Resilience set up the conference call for 17:30. The purpose of the call was recorded in an email sent by John HETHERINGTON at 16:10 on 14th June 2017 (GOL00000155) and an email summary of the discussion circulated by John HETHERINGTON at 18:59 on 14th June 2017 (GOL00000181).

45. *Question 17. When was your first contact with Nicholas Holgate and RBKC? If it was prior to the telephone conference on the evening of 14 June 2017, please provide details and any emails and/or notes of the contact?*

46. My first contact was on the 17:30 conference call on the 14th June 2017. The notes from this meeting were circulated by John HETHERINGTON at 18:59 on 14th June 2017 (GOL00000181).

47. *Question 18. Were you in contact with central government on 14 June 2017? This is to include, but not be limited to, the Home Office, the Department of Communities and Local Government (as it was then known as) and the Cabinet Office. If you were, please provide details of this contact and any written logs, minutes or notes?*

48. I do not recall any contact with central government on 14th June 2017. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone, but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.

49. *Question 19. Prior to the telephone conference at 17:30 on 14 June 2017 (paragraph 31 of your statement), what was your assessment of the immediate aftermath and the ability of RBKC to provide emergency relief?*

50. Outside of the information being received through the email communications, I was not able to make an assessment. I was, that day (14th June 2017), engaged in an interview process and at this time had no role in the response.

51. *Question 20. What were the circumstances which led to the arrangement of the 17:30 telephone conference (paragraph 31 of your statement)? Further to this telephone conference:*

a. Please provide any agenda, minutes, notes or actions created for, or arising from, this

meeting?

- b. Please provide details of the “various issues” which were the subject of “extensive discussion”?*
- c. What advice did you give to Nicholas Holgate?*
- d. What advice was given to Nicholas Holgate by others?*
- e. Were any concerns expressed regarding the ability of RBKC to cope with the immediate aftermath and the provision of emergency relief?*
- f. Was activation of the Gold Resolution discussed? If it was, what was the nature of the discussion and outcome?*
- g. Please outline how it was envisaged that the peer support, provided by Eleanor Kelly and yourself, would operate?*
- h. Please clarify the mode of communication in which Nicholas Holgate agreed to the attendance of Mark Sawyer on 15 June 2017 (paragraph 33 of your statement)?*
- i. Was there a further telephone conversation with Nicholas Holgate after the 17:30 telephone conference? If so, please outline why and set out the details of the conversation including the participants and areas discussed?*

52. See paragraph 43 for purpose and outcomes of the 17:30 call.

53. I do not recall any further communication with Nicholas HOLGATE outside of the call. I do not specifically recall the mode of communication in which Nicholas HOLGATE agreed to the attendance of Mark SAWYER. However, having spoken with Mark SAWYER, I was aware that Mark SAWYER was attending at 08.30 on 15 June 2017.

54. *Question 21. Please set out any contact you had on 15 June 2017 with the primary LLAG, Chris Naylor? Were there any discussions regarding the ability of RBKC to cope, the need*

for additional assistance and/or the activation of the Gold Resolution?

55. I do not recall any specific discussions with Chris NAYLOR on the 15th June 2017. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.
56. *Question 22. Were you in contact with central government on 15 June 2017 before your 17:00 meeting with Nicholas Holgate? This is to include, but not be limited to, the Home Office, the Department of Communities and Local Government (as it was then known as) and Cabinet Office. If you were, please provide details of this contact and any written logs, minutes or notes?*
57. I do not recall any specific contact with central government on the 15th June 2017. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.
58. *Question 23. What contact, if any, did you have with the Mayor of London or his chief of staff David Bellamy on 15 June 2017? Please provide details, if any, of this contact and any written logs, minutes or notes?*
59. I do not recall the specific contact made with David BELLAMY but from my emails, I can see a note from David at 1920hrs on the 15th June that suggests we had spoken on the telephone. I have disclosed both emails (GOL00000147 / GOL00000196).
60. *Question 24. What, if any, contact did you have with Nicholas Holgate on 15 June 2017 prior to the 17:00 telephone conference? Please provide details, if any, of this contact and any written logs, minutes or notes?*
61. I do not recall any contact with Nicholas HOLGATE prior to the 17:00 telephone conference. If any contact did occur, it would have been on the phone but I can find no record of it being recorded by me.
62. *Question 25. Did you speak to anyone else on 15 June 2017 regarding the ability of RBKC to cope, the need for additional assistance and/or the activation of the Gold Resolution prior*

to the 17:00 telephone conference?

63. Whilst not recollecting any specific discussion, I am likely to have spoken with my colleague Eleanor KELLY, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Southwark. As deputy chair of LAP and an experienced colleague, it would be normal for us to speak during an ongoing incident and also given the incident that took place on London Bridge the weekend before.

64. *Question 26. What actions, if any, did you carry out prior to the 17:00 telephone conference on the evening of 15 June 2017?*

65. I have no recollection of carrying out any actions, directly relating to the incident, prior to the 17:30 telephone conference.

66. *Question 27. Please provide further detail as to the time you requested a teleconference for 17:00 on 15 June 2017? Who was the request made to? Please provide any written records confirming this?*

67. On the afternoon of the 15th July 2017, I received updates on the status of the response being provided by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea through monitoring national media and information received from Deborah COLLINS, Ms SCOTT and Mark SAWYER. Although I have no written record of these updates, from my recollection, it indicated that the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea were finding the complexity and scale of the response challenging and as a result, I asked Mark SAWYER to suggest to Nicholas HOLGATE that he convene a conference call. The purpose of the call 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.

68. *Question 28. Further to the 17:00 telephone conference:*

a. Please provide details of the “information received” from Deborah Collins, Gerri Scott and Mark Sawyer respectively, on 15 June 2017 (paragraph 34 of your statement)?

b. Please provide any agenda, minutes, notes or actions created for, or arising from, this

meeting?

- c. What was the duration of the telephone conference?*
- d. Please provide details as to why “it became clear to me that further support was needed” (paragraph 35 of your statement)?*
- e. What advice did you, or others, give to Nicholas Holgate and how was this received?*
- f. Was activation of the Gold Resolution discussed? If it was, what was the nature of the discussion and outcome?*
- g. What was the position by the end of the call?*

69. I am not aware of a formal record being taken of the 17:00 conference call on 15th June 2017, I did not take personal notes and I am unable to confirm the length of time on the call or the exact detail of what was discussed. The purpose of the call was as detailed in paragraph 67. From my recollection, the call left me believing that additional assistance was required to support Nicholas personally, and also the overall Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea response to supporting the bereaved, those who had lost their homes and the wider community.

70. *Question 29. What was the purpose in contacting John O’Brien after your 17:00 telephone conference with Nicholas Holgate on 15 June 2017 (paragraph 36 of your statement)? Further to this call:*

- a. Please provide any minutes, log, notes or actions created for, or arising from, this telephone conference.*
- b. Please provide details of the “concerns” you set out to John O’Brien?*
- c. What was the outcome of your telephone conference with John O’Brien?*

71. I do not recall the telephone conversation in question with John O’BRIEN and I am not aware of a formal record having been taken. However, it would be normal to speak with John O’BRIEN regarding an ongoing incident in London and I believe in this instance to further

discuss the additional assistance referred to in paragraph 69.

72. *Question 30. After your telephone conference with John O'Brien, you state "following a further series of calls, Nicholas Holgate requested my support" (paragraph 36 of your statement).*

Further to this:

- a. Please clarify who was involved in these "series of calls"?*
- b. Was this solely contact between you and Nicholas Holgate?*
- c. How many calls were there?*
- d. Please provide any minutes, log, notes or actions created for, or arising from, these calls?*
- e. Please provide further details of what was discussed in these calls?*
- f. Was any advice given to Nicholas Holgate?*
- g. Please confirm what the requested support was to entail? Specifically, was there a request from RBKC for the activation of the LLAG Gold Resolution?*

I am not aware of a formal record having been taken of these calls and as such, I am unable to say specifically who was involved in these calls and precisely how many there were. I recall, however, speaking with both John O'BRIEN and Doug PATTERSON regarding the arrangements that may need to be put in place. I do not recall any specific advice that was given to Nicholas HOLGATE. Discussion was around a request was for additional experienced personnel and support, as well as a request to consider the activation of the LLAG Gold Resolution.

73. *Question 31. What was the objective in attending RBKC Town Hall on the morning of Friday, 16 June 2017 (paragraph 38 of your statement)?*

74. The purpose of attending RBKC Town Hall was to provide peer support to Nicholas Holgate in view of concerns regarding his personal resilience due to the sustained demand of the incident. This was initially to support by chairing the RBKC Gold Group to assist with providing resilience and coordination support. Further detail is provided in paragraphs 80 to

82.

75. *Question 32. Was a log kept of events and actions by you, or on your behalf? Please provide a copy of any such logs for the period of 14 June 2017 to 20 June 2017 (inclusive).*

76. Logs were kept on my behalf and have been exhibited at JB/036 - JB/046 and JB/062.

77. *Question 33. What were your observations of the RBKC Gold meeting that you attended at 10:00 on Friday 16 June 2017 (paragraph 38 of your statement)?*

78. A record of the meeting was circulated (GOL00000228/GOL00000160), but I did not make a personal record of the meeting or any observations arising from it.

79. *Question 34. In light of the request for support from RBKC on the evening of Thursday 15 June 2017, why did the activation of the LLAG Gold Resolution occur at 2pm the following day, 16 June 2017 (paragraph 39 of your statement)?*

80. The result of the call on the evening of the 15th June was that support was offered. As my earlier explanation of the concerns raised on that teleconference and subsequent exchanges with David Bellamy, it was felt that Nicholas Holgate required further support and there were concerns around his personal resilience due to the sustained demand of the incident.

81. During the morning of the 16th June, I was able to better appraise myself of the current situation as well as chairing the Gold group meeting I was able to speak directly with Nicholas and better understand the current response.

82. It was agreed by Nicholas that we would activate the London Local Authority Gold arrangements that afternoon and my records are that I took on that responsibility at 1400. I am aware that an email was circulated by London Resilience at 13.27 (GOL00000157). The request was made by Nicholas at between 1300 to 1330 on the 16th June and we dialled into the Ministerial COBR meeting at 1400, where we informed the group of the activation.

83. *Question 35. What contact did you have with DCLG (as it was then known) on 16 June 2017?*

Further to this, did you have any contact with Melanie Dawes on Friday 16 June 2017? If so, did you provide her with an update and what was the nature of this update?

84. I had contact with Jo Farrar and I exhibit an email record that refers to the exchange (JB/047).

85. *Question 36. What did you consider were the primary issues to be addressed when you became LLAG at 14:00 on Friday 16 June 2017?*

86. The primary issues were as follows:

- Humanitarian assistance with wrap around support for families;
- To work through the victim journey, i.e. immediate support over the next 24 hours to longer term;
- Support for families;
- Ensuring an accurate picture of the number who were bereaved;
- Ensuring an accurate picture of the number of people in the building beyond the number of residents by matching public lists of data on a per flat basis;
- The provision of accommodation in the local area over the medium term and support from other Boroughs in providing this.

87. *Question 37. How quickly did you consider that LLAG would be able to make a positive impact on the provision of emergency relief/humanitarian assistance?*

88. I would expect for a positive impact to be felt within the first 24hrs, if not sooner. The role of London Local Authority Gold (LLAG) is to support affected local authorities by ensuring a collective and coordinated response is provided by London local authorities. LLAG is empowered by the Gold Resolution (JB/048 / JB/049) to commit resources and expenditure on behalf of the affected borough(s) based on specific requests for support provided by the borough(s) and with their agreement. In situations where multiple boroughs are affected LLAG is empowered to represent those boroughs and the wider London local authority community at Strategic Coordination Group meetings.

89. The established procedure for single borough major incidents is for the affected borough to seek mutual aid via its Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC), Usually,

although not restricted, this is facilitated through neighbouring boroughs. Should this approach fail, then the London Local Authority Coordination Centre can be asked to assist. I am aware that areas of support identified by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea between 14th and 16th June 2017 were met, and included Communications Team assistance, strategic support and BECC staff. The provision of this support was not reliant on the LLAG role. I was not aware prior to formally accepting the role of LLAG in support of the Grenfell Tower fire that any requests for support had not been delivered.

90. Following the formal request from Nicholas HOLGATE to invoke the LLAG arrangements, I immediately set about identifying key senior local authority chief executives who would support the assessment of need and develop plans to address the challenges faced and provide the necessary emergency relief/humanitarian assistance.

91. *Question 38. Was the activation of the Gold Resolution, a means in which LLAG could provide greater support to RBKC in providing emergency relief or was it in effect LLAG taking over the provision of emergency relief?*

92. As detailed in my response to question 37 the role of London Local Authority Gold is to provide London-wide support to the affected local authority response which is managed by that local authority. Each London local authority is sovereign. Any involvement of LLAG in direct decision making on behalf of that authority or any demonstration of delegated authority would need to be with the full knowledge and endorsement of that authority.

93. *Question 39. What was your assessment of the situation and key issues on Saturday 17 June 2017?*

94. The key areas of the strategic intention were:

- Looking after those immediately affected
- Assisting the statutory authorities with their investigations
- Responding quickly and effectively to manage the incident

- Providing visible leadership
- Community Tension and community engagement
- Having clear lines of communications to affected residents

95. *Question 40. The minutes of the ministerial meeting for Saturday 17 June 2017, which you attended, state that:*

“There was a meeting planned with members of the local community later that day. It was important that the government and Recovery Gold were represented to hear directly from those affected and answer questions on the response”.

Subsequent notes suggest this meeting was cancelled.

Was the meeting cancelled? What were the circumstances that led to its cancellation?

96. I have no recollection of this specific community meeting, at this time RBKC were still involved in continuing actions from before the LLAG activation. I am aware through an email that the Metropolitan Police had a planned community meeting and that a member if RBKC staff had been requested (JB/050).

97. *Question 41. At the same meeting, it was noted that: “Recovery Gold and DCLG were to work together to deploy a highly visible physical presence in the locality to facilitate access to support services”. What was done to progress these actions noted at this meeting?*

98. At this time, British Red Cross were providing a visible presence at the rest centre. An additional on-street resource, of Westminster City Council City Inspectors, were deployed to the local area to provide community support. They were issued with hi visibility tabards in order to be identified by the community. Further support from the ‘London Ambassadors’ was received on Monday 20th June 2017.

99. *Question 42. What was your assessment of the situation and key issues on Sunday, 18 June 2017?*

100. The key areas of the strategic intention were:

- Looking after those immediately affected
- Assisting the statutory authorities with their investigations
- Responding quickly and effectively to manage the incident
- Providing visible leadership
- Community Tension and community engagement
- Having clear lines of communications to affected residents

101. *Question 43. It is understood that there were a number of actions that arose out of the ministerial meeting on Sunday 18 June 2017 for the LLAG.*

- a. What was the outcome of the action entitled “Cabinet Office Comms, working closely with LA GOLD COMMS, to finalise leaflet today suammarising key information for local residents”?*
- b. Please provide the summary of resources deployed on the ground as actioned in the ministerial meeting on Sunday 18 June 2018?*

102. Following the identification for the local community in North Kensington to be provided with information to increase understanding of where to seek support, I commissioned the newly formed Grenfell Fire Response Team, based with me at Portland House Westminster, to produce a leaflet. As recorded in the London Local Authority Gold Meeting I Chaired at 20:00 on 18th June 2017 (JB/051), I requested staff in high-viz jackets to have the flyer ready to hand out before the COBR meeting the next morning.

103. From recollection, I believe a number of resources with hi-viz jackets were deployed on the ground from 18th June 2017. These ranged from London Ambassadors, Westminster City Council Inspectors and other staff.

104. *Question 44. What was your assessment of the situation and key issues on Monday 19 June 2017?*

105. The key areas of the strategic intention were:

- Looking after those immediately affected
- Assisting the statutory authorities with their investigations
- Responding quickly and effectively to manage the incident
- Providing visible leadership
- Community Tension and community engagement
- Having clear lines of communications to affected residents

106. *Question 45. How was the distribution of financial assistance to those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire proceeding? Were there any issues regarding the effective distribution of funds?*

107. I have disclosed the SitReps that detail the coordination of money through the Westway rest centre. On the 19th June 2017, Sitrep 15 reports ‘Cash grants - further 50k requested, 25k are being approved to be delivered by tomorrow morning (10k still already in safe at Rest Centre) (GOL000000109). I do not recall any issues regarding the effective distribution of funds being raised with me at the time.

108. *Question 46. The minutes of the Ministerial meeting on Monday, 19 June 2017, noted:*

“The RECOVERY GOLD highlighted that there were issues with the provision of hot water and gas to a number of affected properties situated within the wider cordon (around 400 households in total). The RECOVERY GOLD raised concerns about the effectiveness of Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (TMO), who managed Grenfell Tower and surround properties. In conjunction with the DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, RECOVERY GOLD was tasked with considering how these concerns could be addressed. It was noted that all such affected households were entitled to hotel accommodation and access to the discretionary fund.”

a. What were the concerns regarding the effectiveness of RBKC and the Tenant Management Organisation which led to the reference in the minutes of the ministerial meeting on 19 June 2017?

b. How were those concerns addressed?

109. Through participation in Strategic Coordination Group Meetings and being aware of information provided in situation briefs, I was aware of the possibility of increased tensions in the North Kensington area. In my opinion, there was likely to be an adverse reaction to TMO staff in and around the Lancaster West Estate. One of my key objectives was to ensure tensions were lowered. I appreciated that TMO staff may not have been able to address the remediation of the hot water in the wider estate and as a result of these concerns, I requested at the 13:00 Strategic Coordination Group meeting on 18th June 2017 and as detailed in the SCG Action Tracker 15:30 on 18th June 2017 (JB/052) military assistance in providing advice on engineering and logistics. In addition I sought expert advice from staff engaged with City West Homes.

110. *Question 47. What was your assessment of the situation and key issues on Tuesday, 20 June 2017?*

111. The key areas of the strategic intention were:

- Looking after those immediately affected
- Assisting the statutory authorities with their investigations
- Responding quickly and effectively to manage the incident
- Providing visible leadership
- Community Tension and community engagement
- Having clear lines of communications to affected residents

112. *Question 48. How was the distribution of financial assistance to those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire proceeding? Were there any issues regarding the effective distribution of funds?*

113. Financial assistance was continuing to be distributed to households, based on the information with CRIP 8, 37 grants had been paid against a possible of 110-120 households (JB/053).

114. *Question 49. What were the concerns about the management of the Westway Centre that you*

raised at the ministerial meeting on 20 June 2017? Further to this:

- a. *Why were these not resolved in the period following the activation of the Gold Resolution on 16 June 2017?*
- b. *What was done to address these concerns?*
- c. *How long did it take for these concerns to be resolved?*

115. As the situation developed on the 17th June and based on the footage that I saw on the media, and sitreps being received, I wanted a view to be taken on the facilities on the ground and tasked Alex Woodman to attend in the early afternoon of Saturday 17th June 2017. I recall receiving a call from him where he made me aware that the Westway Centre was not, in his opinion, suitable for the needs of the families. He advised me that he had been briefed by two LALO's on scene of their concerns and recommended that I attend myself.

116. I attended the Centre that afternoon with Eleanor KELLY and met two LALO's, Rupinder HARDY and Phillip LEE-MORRIS. I have included correspondence from Eleanor, Rupinder & Phillip that set out the concerns identified (JB/054 to JB/061).

117. Changes were made to the Leadership at the rest centre with Paul NAJSAREK, Chief Executive of LB Ealing taking responsibility. His team and their response, by having a single borough lead, provided better coordination of the facilities at the centre.

118. *Question 50. How did the implementation and deployment of key workers assist those affected by the fire?*

119. *Question 51. Were there any issues? If so, when did these arise and how were they addressed?*

120. The principle of identifying key workers was to ensure that there was wrap around support for families. It was a function that was more closely aligned with social workers, due to their system understanding of local authorities and family support.

121. The work of the key worker was coordinated through the humanitarian assistance group

(HASG), chaired by both Carolyn Downes, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Brent and Mary Harpley, formerly the Chief Executive of the London Borough of Hounslow. It was the HASG that coordinated the delivery of the key workers and oversaw their activities, and as such I would defer to those colleagues to be better placed to respond.

122. Relevance Review – I have supplied all records as set out within the Inquiry’s request and as such I have not withheld nor redacted any parts of the documents. The disclosure is such that it relates to complete records or published documentation and has not required me to search for selected parts or elements of documentation.

123. I have disclosed all documentation in my possession within the terms of the request of the Inquiry Solicitor and I am not currently searching for or proposing to search for any further documents as I believe that I have been able to provide, in full, without any redactions, all documentation and information requested. I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and published on the Inquiry’s web site.

The contents of this my witness statement are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.



Signed:

Dated: 03/08/2020