## OPUS<sub>2</sub>

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY RT

Day 282

May 23, 2022

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

Phone: 020 4515 2252
Email: transcripts@opus2.com
Website: https://www.opus2.com

1	Monday, 23 May 2022	1	Q.	Could I take you to your third statement. That's
2	(10.00 am)	2		{MOL00000180}. Again, on the right—hand side we can see
3	(Proceedings delayed)	3		it is dated 19 February 2021.
4	(10.08 am)	4		There's a signature on page 10. Again, can you
5	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to	5		confirm that that is yours?
6	today's hearing. We're going to begin today by hearing	6	A.	It is.
7	evidence from a representative of the office of the	7	Q.	Have you had an opportunity to read each of your
8	Mayor of London.	8		statements recently?
9	Yes, Ms Malhotra.	9	Α.	Yes.
10	MS MALHOTRA: Good morning, Mr Chairman. Good morning,	10	Q.	Can you confirm that the contents are true to the best
11	members of the panel.	11		of your knowledge?
12	Could I please call Mr David Bellamy.	12	A.	There are two things that I wanted to mention.
13	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you.	13		One was that the exhibit to the first statement of
14	MR DAVID BELLAMY (affirmed)	14		the strategic co-ordination protocol, the incorrect
15	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Now, please	15		version was submitted. I believe it was 6.5 when it
16	sit down and make yourself comfortable.	16		should have been 7.3, which was in force at the time.
17	THE WITNESS: Thank you.	17		The second thing was in the first statement at
18	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.	18		para 62 and the third statement at para 24, I think the
19	Yes, Ms Malhotra, when you're ready, thank you.	19		implication could have been made that the $K+C$ Foundation
20	Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY	20		was in some way part of the Royal Borough of Kensington
21	MS MALHOTRA: Good morning, Mr Bellamy.	21		and Chelsea, and I don't believe that to be the case.
22	A. Good morning.	22	Q.	Thank you for those clarifications .
23	Q. Can I start by thanking you for attending today to give	23		Mr Bellamy, the focus of my questions today will be
24	your evidence to the Inquiry and for your assistance.	24		the following four topics: firstly , your background,
25	Just a few words by way of introduction, if I may.	25		role and responsibilities; secondly, the Greater London
	1			3
1	Could I invite you, please, to keep your voice up so	1		Authority and its roles and responsibility; thirdly, the
2	that we can hear you clearly. It also helps not to nod	2		role of the Mayor of London in civil emergency; and,
3	or shake but to say "Yes" or "No", because nods and	3		fourthly, your response and that of the Mayor of London
4	shakes don't get picked up on the transcript.	4		and the GLA in the immediate aftermath of the fire.
5	If any of my questions are unclear, please say so	5		So turning first to your background, if I may.
6	and I will happily rephrase the question.	6		You were at the time of the fire and still are
7	Lastly, if you feel you need a break at any time,	7		employed by the Greater London Authority; is that right?
8	please do let us know. Is that all right?	8	Α.	Yes.
9	A. Yes.	9	Q.	You have been employed by the Greater London Authority
10	Q. I'm going to turn to your statements next.	10		since May 2016; is that correct?
11	You made three statements to the Inquiry. They will	11		Yes.
12	appear on the screen in front of you. Could I please	12	Q.	Your role at the Greater London Authority is the Mayor
13	take you to them now.	13		of London's chief of staff; is that correct?
14	Your first witness statement, $\{MOL00000025\}$ . We can	14		Yes.
15	see on the right—hand side it is dated 28 September	15	Q.	The Mayor of London was at the time of the fire and
16	2018.	16		remains today Sadiq Khan; is that so?
17	If we go to page 26 of your first statement, we can	17		Yes.
18	see a signature there at the bottom; is that yours?	18	Q.	Your role as chief of staff means you are directly
19	A. Yes.	19		responsible to the Mayor for the leadership of his
20	Q. Could I take you to your second statement. That's	20		office, advisers and the co-ordination of his
21	${MOL00000166}$ . On the right—hand side we can see it is	21		administration; is that right?
22	dated 28 June 2019.	22		Yes.
23	Now, on page 2, we can see a signature there; is	23	Q.	Would you agree, Mr Bellamy, that that puts you at the
24	that your signature?	24		heart of his administration?
25	A. Yes.	25	Α.	Yes.

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- 1 Q. You have served as the Mayor of London's chief of staff
- 2 since he was elected the Mayor of London in May 2016; is
- 3 that so?
- 4 A Yes
- 5 Q. Before being appointed as chief of staff to the Mayor of London in 2016, did you have any experience in civil 6
- contingencies and emergency planning?
- 8 A. So I would have had a very small amount of knowledge
- from some of the preparatory work which took place for 10 the event of the Mayor being elected, but substantively,
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- 12 Q. Once you became the Mayor's chief of staff, did you 13 receive trainings or briefings about civil
- 14 contingencies?
- 15 A. So there was the -- there was a briefing book prepared
- 16 for the incoming Mayor which had a couple of pages in it
- on resilience, and, as I just indicated, I saw a draft 17
- 18 of that during the election campaign, and I had
- 19 a session in the first week, I believe on the first
- 2.0 Thursday, with the GLA's city operations lead, who
- 2.1 served as our duty officer most of the time then, to
- 2.2 take me through arrangements.
- 2.3 Q. Thank you.
- 2.4 I'd like to ask you next about the Greater London
- 25 Authority and where it sits within the civil resilience

- 1 framework for London.
- Is it right the Greater London Authority is a body 2
- 3 corporate that is established by statute, that's the
- 4 Greater London Authority Act of 1999? Is that correct?
- 5
- Q. The Greater London Authority is made up of the Mayor of 6
- 7 London and the London Assembly; is that right?
- 8
- 9 Q. Is it the case that the Greater London Authority, the
- 10 GLA as I'll refer to it, is the overarching body, and
- 11 the role of the Mayor of London sits within it?
- 12
- Q. Is it right that the functions given to the Greater 13
- London Authority are exercised in one of three ways: 14
- 15 first . by the Mayor of London on behalf of the GLA:
- 16 secondly, by the London Assembly on behalf of the GLA;
- 17 or by the Mayor and Assembly on behalf of the GLA?
- 18 A. Yes, and there are schemes of delegation pertaining to
- 19 the first two of those.
- 2.0 Q. The Inquiry has heard evidence from Mr Hetherington, who 21 is now the head of London Resilience, regarding
- category 1 and 2 responders. You also deal with this  $\,--\,$ 2.2 2.3
- we don't need to go to it  $\,--\,$  at paragraph 16 of your 2.4 first statement {MOL00000025/5}.
- 25 Category 1 responders, if I can just summarise it in

- this way, are, for example, the emergency services and
  - local authorities; category 2 responders include
- 3 transport and utility companies, for example.
- 4 Can you confirm if the Mayor of London is
  - a category 1 responder?
- A. I think the Authority is, yes. 6
- 7 Q. The Greater London Authority is a category 1 responder,
- 8 and became a category 1 responder in 2011; is that 9
  - right?
- 10 A. I believe so.
- 11 Q. For us to better understand how the Greater London
- 12 Authority fits into the civil resilience framework, it
- 13 might assist us if you can help us with the historical
- 14 context
- 15 Is it the case that in 2002, following the 9/11
- 16 attacks, the London Resilience team was formed?
- 17 A. I believe so.
- 18 Q. At that time, did it form part of the Government Office
- 19 for London?
- 20 A. Yes, that's my understanding.
- 2.1 Q. The Government Office for London closed in 2010; is that
- 22 right?
- 2.3 A. I believe so.
- 2.4 Q. This is when responsibility for resilience in London was
- 25 devolved from the Government Office for London to the

- 1 Greater London Authority; is that right?
- 2. A. Yes
- 3 Q. In your first statement -- I'd like to take you to it,
- that's {MOL00000025/6}, paragraph 24, and the final
- 5 sentence there -- you say:
  - "The functions of LRT and responsibility for the LRF
- 7 were then transferred to the GLA."
- 8 A. Yes.

- 9 Q. Does it follow the GLA had oversight of these aspects of 10 resilience in London?
- 11 I think it follows that the GLA had its responsibilities
- 12 as a category 1 responder, plus those set out in the
- 13 statutory guidance.
- 14 Q. Well, we'll come to what those functions were shortly.
- 15 On 1 February 2015, the functions undertaken by the
- 16 LRT, the London Resilience team, on behalf of the
- 17 Greater London Authority were transferred, and they were
- 18 transferred to the London Fire and Emergency Planning
- 19 Authority, known as LFEPA; is that right?
- 2.0 A. Yes
- 21 Q. The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority was
- 2.2 also a category 1 responder; is that right?
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- 24 Employees of the London Resilience team were transferred
- 2.5 from the GLA to LFEPA; is that the case?

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- 2 Q. And these employees merged with the LFB's own planning 3 department, which, according to Hamish Cameron, who was 4 one of the three heads of London Resilience at the time 5 of the fire, was completed in 2016; is that your understanding? 6
- 7 A. I think he was one of the deputy heads, but yes, I think 8 there was a merger some time following the transfer.
- 9 Q. Upon completion of the merge, the London Resilience 10 Group, which we have heard about from Mr Hetherington, 11 was formed; is that right?
- 12 A Yes

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13 Q. Now, in your first statement -- we have it in front of us -- page 6 {MOL00000025/6}, paragraph 25, you say 14 15

> "Regulation 7(1) of the CCA [Civil Contingencies Act] Regulations provides that in order to facilitate cooperation under regulation 4, responders may enter into a protocol with each other. Regulation 8 provides that each general Category 1 responder may: (a) perform a duty under s.2(1) of CCA jointly with another responder, (b) make arrangements with another responder for that responder to perform such a duty on behalf of the general Category 1 responder."

Is it your understanding that these regulations

- 1 provide the basis for the GLA's working arrangements?
- 2. A. Yes
- 3 Q. I'd like to look at those arrangements now, if I may.

As it was at the time of the fire  $\,--\,$  I appreciate it has somewhat changed since -- is it correct that the arrangement between the GLA and LFEPA was governed by a protocol?

- A. I'm not -- I believe there was something in place. I'm 8 9 struggling to remember whether it was a protocol or 10 a memorandum of understanding. Obviously it was put 11 into effect before my time.
- 12 Q. Yes.
- 13 A. But I know there's some document that governs it, yes.
  - Q. Perhaps I could help you, Mr Bellamy

If we could go to {MOL00000042}, it is dated 28 January 2015, and it is a protocol relating to the discharge of statutory resilience functions by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority on behalf of the Greater London Authority. We can see that.

Could we go to page 4  $\{MOL00000042/4\},$  please. At (H) we can see the purpose of the protocol is set out, and it says this:

"The purpose of this Protocol is to reflect the agreement reached by the Parties that the functions currently undertaken by the [London Resilience team] on behalf of the GLA, comprising the LRF Secretariat role and other resilience functions set out in Schedule 1 (the 'Specified Functions'), shall be carried out by the Fire Authority on the GLA's behalf. This is permitted by the CCR [Civil Contingencies Regulations] 4(5), 7 and 8 as set out above. As a Category 1 responder itself, the Fire Authority has the necessary statutory powers to carry out the functions in question."

Moving to schedule 1 on page 28 {MOL00000042/28}, then, we can see the responsibilities that were transferred to LFEPA are listed here. I'm not going to go through all of them, or in fact any of them, but we can see at the bottom of the page there it says which of those functions remained with the GLA.

If we can turn over the page  $\{MOL00000042/29\}$ , we can see there that these are the responsibilities that were retained by the Greater London Authority:

- " Strategic oversight for resilience .
- 19 " . Continuance as the home of London Resilience 20 through the facilitation of key meetings on site at the 21 GLA's City Hall, such as the London Resilience Forum and 22 maintaining and improving as necessary the London 23 Prepared website."

Mr Bellamy, can you assist us, please, what is your understanding of strategic oversight for resilience

- 1 here?
- A. So, as I say, obviously this was before my time. What 2 3 I interpret that as meaning was that although London
- Resilience team at LFEPA were carrying out these
- 5 responsibilities for the GLA, it wasn't transferring the
- 6 GLA's ultimate responsibility, as set out, you know, as
- 7 a category 1 responder and as set out in the statutory
- 8 guidance.
- 9 Q. Can you assist us with whether the Greater London 10 Authority have oversight of the London Resilience Group, 11 the London Resilience Forum and the London Resilience
- 12 Partnership that we have heard about? 13 A. So the Authority is a member of the partnership, and 14 thus a member of the forum. It obviously —— the Mayor 15 obviously appoints the chair of the resilience forum and

so there's, you know, a potential relationship there.

17 In terms of the London Resilience Group as now is, 18 clearly they're carrying out responsibilities for LFEPA 19 as was, the local authorities and the GLA, and, 2.0 you know, there's certainly a relationship there between 21 the GLA and London Resilience Group, given all those

23 So could I just clarify , then, by virtue of the 2.4 responsibilities that we've seen, the strategic 2.5

oversight role for resilience that the Greater London

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- 1 Authority has, does that mean that the Greater London 2 Authority has oversight of the London Resilience Forum?
- 3 A. No, I don't think there's anything in statute that sets
- 4 out -- that gives us any greater responsibility than any
- other category 1 responder. You know, the guidance does 5
- say -- it says for the time being that the Mayor is or 6
- 7 appoints the chair of the forum, but I don't think
- there's actually anything in statute or guidance that 8
- 9 gives the GLA some form of strategic oversight for all
- 10 of resilience in London. It's very much a partnership 11
- 12 Q. So would it be wrong in that case, then, to suggest that
- 13 the chair of the London Resilience Forum is the person
- 14 who would have oversight of the work of the London
- 15 Resilience Forum?
- A. So I think you would say they were probably the ultimate 16
- 17 person. They have the programme board, I think it's
- 18 called, where key members of the partnership would come
- 19 together and agree and oversee the work programme, so 2.0
- having more focus, so I think I would possibly look to 2.1
- that programme board, but clearly the role of the 2.2 chair's important.
- 2.3 Q. Are you aware of any mechanism or ability of the Mayor
- 2.4 of London or the GLA to scrutinise the work of the
- London Resilience Forum?

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- 1 A. So I don't -- at the time that this was introduced and.
- 2 you know. 2016 when we came into office. I don't think
  - there was any such mechanism. There is one now.
- Q. Can you tell us what that mechanism is, please?
- 5 A. So as part of the changes we introduced at the GLA,
- I chair a corporate investment board which, you know, 6
- 7 considers all the key decisions before the GLA before
- 8 they're submitted to the Mayor, and we have formed
- 9 a number of subcommittees of that board. One of those
- 10 is a resilience committee, which is very much focused
- 11 on, you know, the GLA's responsibilities under the CCA,
- 12 associated guidance, et cetera, and as part of that, we
- 13 work with John Hetherington, and the chair of the
- 14 resilience forum, of course, now is the deputy mayor for 15 fire and resilience, and so we have somebody in the GLA
- 16 in a way we didn't back then who very clearly has a lead
- 17 responsibility around resilience.
- 18  $Q. \;\; \mbox{So just so I've understood it correctly} \; , \; \mbox{the way that} \;\;$
- 19 the Mayor of London and the Greater London Authority
- 2.0 have oversight of the work of the London Resilience
- 21 Forum is through a board that has, since the fire, been 2.2

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- created; is that right?
- 23 Yes, and through, you know, the works of the
- 2.4 deputy mayor.
- 25 Q. Before moving on, then, Mr Bellamy, and for

- 1 completeness, we should point out that on 1 April 2018,
- 2 after the fire, LFEPA was abolished and replaced by the
- 3 London Fire Commissioner; is that right?
- 4 A That's correct
- Q. Is it the case that the responsibilities of LFEPA then 5
- transferred to the London Fire Commissioner? 6
- 7
- Q. Can we take it that, as a result of that change and 8 9 replacement, it didn't result in any responsibility
- 10 change on behalf of the Greater London Authority?
- 11 A. Not as with regard to resilience . There were clearly
- 12 other things for the Authority that changed as a result 13
  - of that governance change.
- Q. Now, the Inquiry has heard evidence from Mr Hetherington 14
- 15 regarding the structure of the London Resilience
- 16 arrangements, the London Resilience Partnership, the
- 17 Group and the London Resilience Forum and its subset
- 18 structures, including sector panels. Would you agree
- 19 that the structural arrangements are complex?
- 20 A. I'm not sure I would, no.

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- 2.1 Q. Can you assist the Inquiry with who has responsibility
- 22 for creating the structures that sit within the broad
- 23 term "London Resilience", and by that I mean the London
- 2.4 Resilience Group, the LRP, the London Resilience
- 2.5 Partnership, and the London Resilience Forum?

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- 1 A. It would be the London Resilience Forum, because the
- 2 structures are there to -- you know, their duty to
  - co-operate and carry out their respective
- responsibilities under the Act and guidance.
- 5 Q. Now, I would like to move on to the role of the Mayor of
- 6 London and the Greater London Authority, and that is
- 7 addressed in chapter 9 of the statutory guidance,
- 8 Emergency Preparedness, which is dated March 2012.
- 9 If we could go to {LFB00061171}, this is chapter 9
- 10 of the statutory guidance, Emergency Preparedness.
- If we could go to page 11 {LFB00061171/11}, 11
- 12 paragraph 9.22, we can see here it gives us some
- 13 indication as to what the role of the Mayor of London
- 14 and the Greater London Authority is. It says:
- 15 "As the elected leader of London's regional 16 government, the Mayor of London plays a full part in
- 17 supporting the effective implementation of the Act and
  - improving the preparedness of the capital. "In particular, the Mayor/GLA:
    - "• is closely engaged in high—level discussions and
- 2.0 21 decisions relating to the management of emergencies in 2.2
- 2.3 " • (or an appointed deputy) is currently Chair of 2.4 the LRF:
- 25 " • contributes as necessary to the pre-informing of

1 Londoners about the content of emergency plans, the 2 correct behaviour in an emergency and good practice in 3 terms of preparedness in the home, as part of 4 initiatives organised both locally and at the UK level; 5 "• prepares to play a key role in warning and informing the public during an emergency in London; and 6 7 "• takes responsibility for civil protection issues 8 in connection with the management of Parliament and 9 Trafalgar Squares.' 10 If we can go to the next page {LFB00061171/12}: 11 "The GLA is a Category 1 responder under the Act and 12 as such has the same responsibilities as other 13 Category 1 responders. However, there are a number of 14 duties that the GLA currently takes on in relation to 15 London that are additional to other Category 1 16 responders " 17 Just pausing there for a moment before we go on to 18 the next part. The statutory guidance doesn't list the 19 Mayor of London as a category 1 responder, does it? 20 A. It didn't —— well, it says that the GLA is, and, as 2.1 we've discussed, the Mayor of London is a part of the 2.2 GLA and has essentially the executive responsibility 2.3 there. So, for my purposes, the two would be 2.4 synonymous. 25 Q. It goes on at 9.25: 17 1 "In particular, the GLA: "• is responsible for the secretariat of the LRF 2 3 [London Resilience Forum]; "• is responsible for producing and maintaining

"• is responsible for producing and maintaining a pan—London risk assessment; and publishing all or part of it in line with regulations; and

" ullet is responsible for the planning and exercising of pan-London emergency plans."

I would like to move on to a document that you make reference to in your statement and you corrected this morning, it's the strategic co—ordination protocol.

You mentioned this morning that in your statement you referred to version 6.5, but in fact there was a more up—to—date version that was in place at the time of the fire , and I'd like to take you to that. It's  $\{RBK00036718\}$ .

This is version 7.3, we can see, and it's dated February 2017. Can you see that?

19 A. Yes.

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20 Q. I'd like to take you to page 25 {RBK00036718/25}, 21 please. If we could look at paragraph 2.8.9 first , it 22 says there:

"The Mayor of London and the Greater LondonAuthority

"2.8.9. In the event of any disruptive incident it

is likely that the Mayor's Office will require initial and regular information about the situation. This function will usually be carried out by the London

4 Resilience Group in conjunction with the relevant lead 5 response organisation(s), and by the Mayor's Press 6 Office. In addition, the Mayor may obtain specific

7 advice at a senior level through the Mayor's Advisory 8 Group ..."

9 It then goes on to say:

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"The Mayor will collaborate closely with the Strategic Coordinating Group, and where appropriate, central government. The Mayor may also be invited to attend meetings of COBR."

Just pausing there for one moment, if I may, is the
Mayor of London's attendance at a COBR meeting
automatic?

17 A. No, it's at the ultimate discretion of the Prime 18 Minister, although I think the guidelines now in 19 place -- not necessarily at the time, but now in

20 place —— are —— you know, recommend to the

21 Prime Minister that that be the case.

Q. What about ministerial meetings, as the type that
 occurred in response to the Grenfell Tower fire? Was it
 automatic that the Mayor of London would attend

a meeting of that nature?

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A. No, I mean, it's entirely a matter for the ministers
 convening the meeting.

Q. Going back to 2.8.11:

"The Mayor of London has a key response role as the 'voice of London'. The role of the Mayor is to support the operational response to an emergency in London by providing a unified statement — a 'voice' for London. It will be the Mayor's role to provide regional information and reassurance throughout the duration of the response and into the initial stages of the recovery phase — this role is complementary to, and in support of, local responders and operational spokespeople."

It then goes on to talk about how that occurs.

Mr Bellamy, would you agree with me, firstly, that
this term, the term "Mayor(sic) of London", didn't occur
in the statutory guidance, Emergency Preparedness, that

17 we looked at a moment earlier?

A. I mean, as I say, it comes back to what we talked about

earlier: the GLA is the corporate body, and then the

earlier: the GLA is the corporate body, and then the
Mayor of London is essentially the executive arm of the

GLA, and so, you know, it's a clarification , this

 $22\,$  document, for people, that, you know, within the GLA, it

would be the Mayor of London who is taking on these

24 responsibilities , not the London Assembly.

25~ Q. Thank you. The question I was asking -- I'll try it

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again: the term "voice of London" that is used here in

- 13 national and international interest in these things -14 really to contextualise what is happening and give 15 Londoners the information that they need to understand 16 what has happened and how it might impact on them. You 17 know, I should say, it is clearly distinct, as is said 18 there, from communications from other responders that 19 may be more tightly focused on the scene and those more 20 directly impacted by the incident.
- 21 Q. Does the Mayor of London or the GLA have an operational 2.2 role in an emergency? What's your understanding?
- 2.3 A. No, with the possible exception of if there were a major 2.4 incident on GLA land. So obviously you saw in the 25 statutory guidance the mentions of Trafalgar Square and

- 1 Parliament Square, which the GLA's responsible for. But 2 in the general case, I would say no.
- 3 Q. I'd like to move on, then, to events on 14 June, if
- 5 Your colleague Jon-Paul Graham was the duty officer 6 that night; is that correct?
- 7 A. Yes.

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- 8 Q. At the time of the fire, he was the city operations and 9 major -- mayor events lead at the Greater London 10 Authority; is that right?
- 11 A. Major events lead.
- 12 Q. Major events.

In his statement -- I'll take you to it, it 's  $\{GLA00000004\}$  —— we can see there at paragraph 4, he says this, at the end of the second line:

"In this role I supported the Mayor, Chief of Staff and Mayoral Directors by providing high-level support and advice in relation to major incidents and rising tide/civil contingency type scenarios. I also led the GLA's involvement in the strategic oversight and delivery of major and high impact events across London."

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- 2.2 Is that right?
- 23
- 24 Q. How experienced would you consider he was in relation to 25 dealing with serious incidents and attending strategic

co-ordination group meetings at the time of the fire?

- 2 A. It's hard for me to comment on his -- on the level of
- 3 experience he had as of May 2016 because, of course,
- 4 I wasn't privy to it. I would say that, you know, he
- 5 was experienced in attending strategic co-ordinating
- groups that occurred since then, and, you know, had good 6
- 7 contacts around, you know, category  ${\bf 1}$  and category  ${\bf 2}$ 8 responders, particularly the GLA group, to support him
- 9 carrying out that role.
- 10  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Q}}.$  He was first made aware of the fire at 3.09 by the then 11 London Fire Commissioner; is that right?
- 12 A. I believe so.

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- 13 Q. Both you and the Mayor of London were contacted by 14 Ali Picton, head of the Mayor's private office, and you 15 say in your statement that the Mayor was notified
- 16 between 3.20 to 3.30
  - Can you recall what time you were notified?
- 18 A. I believe it was 3.26.
- 19 Q. That's very precise.
- 20 A. It's a moment one doesn't forget.
- 2.1 Q. Yes. I'm sure.
- 22 Could I ask you next about the strategic 23 co-ordination group protocol -- well, I've asked you 2.4 about the strategic co-ordination protocol; I'd like to 25 ask you about the SCG meetings.

- 1 We can see here, if I could take you to
- 2 {LFB00123769/7}, please, looking at this diagram at the
- 3 top of the page -- I'm not sure if we can zoom in,
- thank you. We can see here that the Greater London
- 5 Authority, at about 10 o'clock on this diagram, is shown
- 6 as part of the composition of an SCG; is that right?
- 7 A Yes
- 8 Q. Now, the Greater London Authority had its own civil 9 contingencies response plan at the time of the fire.
- 10
- 11 A. It did
- 12 And I'm going to take you to that document now. It's {MOL00000040}. We can see there the full title is 13
- "Major incident and civil contingencies response 14
- 15 protocol, Mayor of London's Gold Cell", and it's dated
- 16 November 2016. I'm going to refer to it as the civil
- 17
- 18 If we can go to page 16 {MOL00000040/16}, please, it
- 19 sets out there the role of the duty officer . It says:
- 2.0 "The GLA duty GLA Gold Officer needs to be 21 contactable at all times whilst on call.
- 2.2 It then goes on to say that they need to:
- 23 "Write down the information known at the time and 2.4 establishing the reason that they are invoking the
- 25 [Mayor's Gold Cell]."

- 2 A. I believe so
- 3 Q. Record the date and time of the notification, start 4 recording details and actions taken and transfer of the 5 MGC incident log, once available. It then goes on to give practical advice as to where meetings should take 6 7
- 8 Is it also the role of the GLA duty officer to 9 attend an SCG?
- 10 A. That -- yes, they normally would do that.
- 11 Q. Is it right that Mr Graham attended the first three 12 meetings on 14 June, followed by Emma Strain, who was 13 the assistant director of external relations at the 14 Greater London Authority. She attended all other SCGs 15 during 14 to 20 June, save for the 18th, which you yourself attended; is that right? 16
- 17 A. That's right, yes.

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18 Q. I'd like to ask you next about the Mayor's Gold Group, 19 if I may.

> If we can go to page 12 on this document  $\{MOL00000040/12\}$ , we can see here at paragraph 4, I'd like to take you to the second paragraph of that, because it tells us what the MGC is. It says it's:

" ... designed to ensure that the Mayor is well informed about any major incident or rising-tide

situation in London and so allow him to effectively carry out his role until acting as the spokesperson for the capital as well as providing civic leadership and reassurance. It will also support them in fulfilling the other responsibilities of the Office of Mayor of London during a crisis, e.g. establishing a Disaster Appeal Fund."

And then goes on to set out at appendix A who the members of the Gold Cell are.

If we could go over the next page to page 13  $\{MOL00000040/13\}$  and look at paragraph 4.2, it tell us when the Mayor's Gold Cell will be activated. It would:

" ... normally be invoked once a major incident has been declared by an emergency service in London. Alternatively, there may be occasions where the MGC is activated in response to a rising -tide event such as a flu pandemic, severe weather warning, impending widespread industrial action or anticipated public disorder.'

Finally, if we can go to page 19, please, of this document {MOL00000040/19}, we can see here who the permanent members of the Mayor's Gold Cell are. We can see that you are listed as chair, Mr Graham is listed, as is Ms Strain. Is that right?

25 A. Yes.

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- Q. The Mayor's Gold Cell was activated in the early hours 2 of the morning by Mr Graham; is that correct?
- 3 A. It is

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GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY RT

4 Q. Now, there are a number of passages, next, of 5 Mr Graham's witness statement I would like to take you to, starting with page 7. So that's {GLA00000004/7}, 6 7 paragraph 35, please.

He says the following about the 14 June  $6.30\ SCG$ : "I recall the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ('RBKC') provided an update during the meeting

11 stating they were in the process of consolidating 12 rest centres into one centre. RBKC also said that their 13 Gold group would be meeting at 11:00. I was very 14 shocked to hear that RBKC had not already held 15 a Gold Group and were not planning to do so for another four and a half hours. RBKC were the responsible local 16 17 authority dealing with a very serious incident which 18 clearly required a strategic response from its senior

19 management." 2.0 He goes on in the next paragraph, paragraph 36, to say this: 2.1

"The fact that the RBKC Gold Group was not scheduled until 11:00 made me consider they were not necessarily coping with the demands of the incident even at this early stage. I felt that on one hand RBKC were giving

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1 the impression that they were in control of the 2 situation e.g. referring to arrangements for rest

3 centres, but on the other hand the timing of their first

Gold group meeting suggested a lack of any strategic direction at RBKC." 5

6 Now, Mr Bellamy, was this information relayed to 7 you?

8 A. I don't recall whether it was included in the update 9 from the SCG meeting. I never had the chance, really, 10 to have much more discussion with Mr Graham beyond that 11 point because, as you know, he found out his mother died 12 and so obviously came off duty.

13  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Q}}.$  He went off duty at 10 o'clock that morning; is that 14 right?

15 A. Around then, ves.

16 Q. If these concerns had been relayed to you, do you think

17 there was something that you might have done in response 18 to it?

19 A. It's hard to say. You know, would I definitely have

2.0 done something? I don't think I can say I definitely 21 would have. It certainly would be, you know, a piece of

2.2 intelligence that -- you know, and situational awareness

23 that would help me to understand the picture and that

2.4 perhaps not everything was going as it should be.

25  $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{Well},\;\mathsf{let}\,\mathsf{'s}\;\mathsf{see}\;\;\mathsf{if}\;\;\mathsf{we}\;\mathsf{can}\;\mathsf{help}\;\mathsf{at}\;\mathsf{all}\;.$ 

At paragraph 39 of Mr Graham's statement  $\{GLA00000004/8\}$  that we have in front of us still, we can see at the end of the second line:

"I do not recall raising my concerns with RBKC's timings for its first Gold Cell meeting as I was focused on relaying updates from the SCG meeting and organising what the Mayor needed to do that morning."

So we know that's what Mr Graham's position is, that he can't recall at the time he provided this statement whether he relayed that information or not, and I'd just like to explore this with you, Mr Bellamy, if I may.

We know, because you say so in your statement and you've provided us with documentation to support that, that the Mayor's Gold Cell meeting was held at 8 o'clock on 14 June; is that right?

16 A Yes

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- 17 Q. I'd like to take you to {MOL00000009}, please. We can 18 see here that these are actions from the Gold Cell 19 meeting. At the top of the page, it tells us who was 2.0 present, and we can see that you chaired that meeting, 21 and that Mr Graham also attended that meeting; is that 22 right?
- 2.3 A. Yes.
- 2.4 Q. Was the meeting convened especially for the Grenfell Tower fire?

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- 1 A It was
- Q. Were any concerns about the local authority expressed at 2 3 this meeting by anyone?
- A. I don't recall that -- that meeting.
- Q. Do you consider that if anyone present had formed concerns about the local authority at this early stage, 6

7 this would have been an appropriate forum for raising 8

- 9 A. I would, with the qualification that, given the scale of 10 the incident, and we're at a very early stage, one 11 wouldn't necessarily expect, you know, everything about 12 the local authority's performance to be perfect, and so, 13 again, you know, colleagues would be trying to form, 14 you know, overall situational awareness, and I guess see 15 whether there was anything in that context that gave 16 them concern.
- 17 Q. On one interpretation, Mr Bellamy, this could be 18 a missed opportunity; would you agree with that?
- 19 A. It would be a missed opportunity if -- yes, if -you know, if you took the RBKC decision not to have 2.0 21 a Gold Group until 11.00 as a major indicator of their 2.2 problems
- 23 Q. It's also a fact, isn't it, that these concerns of 2.4 Mr Graham that he expresses in his statement are not
- 25 recorded contemporaneously in a meeting or a note, are

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- 2 A. So there's -- I mean, he would have taken a note of the
- 3 SCG and I believe that would have been circulated by
- 4 email. You know, you've got in front of us the only
- 5 record we have of the Gold Cell meeting.
- Q. Just going back to the civil contingencies protocol for 6 7 one moment, if we may, that's  $\{MOL00000040/16\}$ . We have looked at it already. We can see here the 8 9 responsibilities of the GLA Gold officer. It's the

10 first bullet point. We can see:

11 'Write down the information known at the time and 12 establishing the reason that they are invoking the MGC.

13 Record the date and time of the notification.

And the second bullet point:

"Start recording details and actions taken and transfer to the MGC Incident Log once available."

17 Mr Graham compiled a note between 4.30 and 10.00 am 18 which we can see here. That's {MOL00000039}. This is 19 the note that he prepared setting out the information 2.0 that he was receiving.

21 If we can scroll through it, I hope you can accept 22 from me, Mr Bellamy, that it doesn't refer to any 23 concerns in this document, does it?

2.4 It's very much a factual record of, you know, what was 2.5 happening.

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- Q. It doesn't record his concerns, does it? 1
- 2 A. It does not.
- 3 Q. Whilst we are on the topic of notes, could I invite you

to go back to the civil contingencies protocol, please,

 $\{ {\rm MOL00000040}/15 \}.$  We can see here, in your own 5

6 protocol, at paragraph 4.4 it refers to record-keeping,

7 and it says this, it's just the first paragraph I'm 8 going to read to you:

9 "Maintaining an accurate record of key events. 10 actions and decisions together with their reasons is

11 paramount and the MGC Operations Director will appoint 12

a dedicated log keeper."

13 Now, this didn't occur in response to the

Grenfell Tower fire. No incident log was kept for the

15 Gold Cell. Is that right?

16 A. That's correct.

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- 17 Q. There are no informal or formal minutes of the MGC 18 meetings either, are there?
- 19 A. Not beyond the action list that you've seen.
- 2.0 Q. The actions we've already looked at and we can see that
- 21 there is no record there of any concerns held by
- 2.2 Mr Graham, or anyone else for that matter. In fact, the
- 23 first time that any concerns or any actions arising from
- 2.4 concerns about the response are seen on 16 June. Would
- 25 you agree with that?

arrangements where there was anybody trained and in

place to act as a log-keeper, so that didn't happen.

A. No, I would say — prefer to say that we weren't in full

book said, so to speak, but not having resources to

implement it at that stage, or do you think people just

A. I think it's a case primarily -- I think that, you know,

there was possibly more to do in terms of training and

a factor, as I say, you know, of some very constrained

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embedding some of the protocol. I think it's also

familiar with your own civil contingencies procedures at

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Was this a case of knowing what the

Q. Would it be fair to say, then, that you were not

A. Well, I would need to read through them all but -resources, and a period where we'd had the terror attack 2 Q. Let me take you to that. 2 at Westminster, we'd had the Manchester Arena attack and 3 A. Well, you know, I'm sure there will be on 16 June, I'm 3 the consequent move to critical threat level, which has 4 sure what you say is right. I haven't, you know, got 4 an impact on London, and the London Bridge 5 all of those actions in front of me to check, but I've 5 Borough Market terror attack, and so there was an awful no reason to disagree. I'm sure you're right. lot that was -- you know, we were dealing with 6 6 7 Q. Can you assist us, then, why no incident log or minutes 7 responding, and that obviously took away what limited 8 were kept? 8 capacity we had from: right, how do we get to the full 9 A. Yeah, I need to give you a bit of context around this 9 implementation of our protocol? 10 protocol 10 You know, we now do have 24/7 members of staff who 11 So when we came into office and you asked me about 11 are trained to keep incident logs and, indeed, we're 12 12 training and so forth earlier, none of this procedure currently implementing specialist software to enable 13 existed, and so, you know, through my initial training 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. 14 I would, you know — I would, you know — had some 14 15 feeling that there needed to be a bit more here than 15 MS MALHOTRA: You have answered my next question. 16 16 Could I move on to the 8.30 SCG, and I'd like to there was and, indeed, there was an incident response 17 framework put together in July 2016 as a response to my 17 take you to Mr Graham's statement again. That's 18 concerns 18 {GLA0000004/8}, paragraph 41. He says the following 19 We then had, in the autumn, a couple of major 19 from the SCG meeting at 8.30: "I recall explaining at the meeting that the Mayor 2.0 2.0 incidents, so there was the attempted bombing on the 21 Jubilee Line and there was the tram crash in Croydon, 21 intended to visit the site given his responsibilities to 22 and really out of that experience it became clear to us 22 act as the voice of London. Mr Holgate seemed very 2.3 23 interested in my proposal and insisted that RBKC be that we needed, you know, for the way -- for the Mayor 2.4 to carry out his responsibility as the voice of London, 2.4 involved in any such arrangements. I was very surprised 25 we needed kind of clearer processes in place, and so the 2.5 at this and it seemed, again, to reinforce RBKC's skewed 35 1 purpose of writing this protocol was to set those out. 1 priorities in the aftermath of the fire. Mr Holgate seemed to be more preoccupied on this call with minor 2 At the start, aspects of it were necessarily 2 3 somewhat aspirational, because the resource wasn't there 3 issues such as the Mayor's proposed visit to the scene to do it. As we discussed earlier, for instance, and the possible attendance of Nicholas Paget-Brown 5 Mr Graham, this was -- you know, this side of things was 5 (Leader of RBKC), rather than more important strategic only part of his job, he had other significant 6 issues regarding the handling of this crisis. 6 7 responsibilities as well, and that's the resourcing 7 Mr Holgate was insistent that Mr Paget-Brown should be 8 level we had. And so at the time of the fire, we were 8 present for any visit by the Mayor. This was an issue 9 implementing various points of it, you see that in him 9 I would need to discuss further with colleagues at the 10 keeping the initial record, but we hadn't got to the 10

He then says in the next paragraph:

"As noted in the minutes, the update provided by RBKC focused on rest centres and the provision of referral numbers for displaced people. These are issues which will be relevant for many major incidents e.g. the evacuation of residences due to a WW2 bomb. However, there did not seem to be any acknowledgment by RBKC of the apparent scale of this incident. RBKC certainly did not ask for any assistance from other partner agencies during this call."

The final paragraph that I'd like to take you to from his statement is at paragraph 44 on this page  $\{GLA00000004/9\}$ :

"I remained concerned that RBKC was still lacking any strategic direction for this crisis , particularly

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Opus 2 Official Court Reporters

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Day 282

1 given its first Gold group meeting was not due to start search is for survivors only." 2 for another two and a half hours. The next SCG was 2 So we can see his last message was at 10.05. 3 arranged for 14:00." 3 Without going through every single one of them, 4 Can you recall, Mr Bellamy, if this information was 4 would you accept that there is no reference to concerns 5 relaved to you? 5 on the morning of 14 June? A. No, I don't believe it was. A. I would, yes. 6 6 7 Q. Would you have expected concerns of this nature to have 7 Q. Do you accept that this would have been an appropriate 8 been brought to your attention? 8 channel to express any concerns? 9 A. I would. I think the explanation for why follows in 9 A. It was a possible channel, or, yes, it could have been 10 10 Mr Graham's statement. done in a meeting or he could have come to see me 11 Q. We can come on to that. We don't need to turn to it 11 directly. 12 Q. Have you, since the Grenfell Tower fire, considered your 12 now, but he deals with it in his witness statement and 13 you do too, but for personal reasons Mr Graham handed 13 own civil contingencies response procedures in terms of over his GLA duty officer role to Emma Strain at, he 14 14 raising concerns about a category 1 responder if there 15 says, around 10.00/10.30 on 14 June. 15 16 I would like to focus on the events before he handed 16 A. So we are currently engaged in a process of completely 17 over his role, if I may. 17 rewriting the protocol as, you know, part of 18 Mr Graham set up a WhatsApp group, and he deals with 18 a fundamental review, taking on board learnings not only 19 this at paragraph 26 of his witness statement 19 from 2017, but also work on -- you know, relating to 2.0 {GLA0000004/5}. I don't think we don't need to go to 20 no-deal Brexit and COVID-19, which obviously are major 2.1 it now, but is it right that there was a WhatsApp group 2.1 incidents, have been preoccupying us for the last 22 for the Mayor's Gold Group Cell? 22 two years. So, you know, we're engaged in a very major A. For the Mayor's Gold Cell, yes, it pre-dated the fire. 2.3 23 overhaul of those at the moment. 2.4 2.4 I would like to ask you next about Ms Katharine Hammond Q. We can see, if I can take you to, please, {GLA00000854}. this is a typed transcript of these messages, and it 2.5 from the civil contingencies secretariat. 39 Could I take you to {CAB00003021}, please. Let's go 1 runs to some 68 pages. I'm not going to go through all 1 2 of those, but could I just highlight some of those 2 to the top of the page. 14 June, it's an email at 8.05. 3 messages. 3 We can see it was addressed to you from So on page 1 we can see 14 June, 3.19: Katharine Hammond. "Jon-paul Graham: MAJOR INCIDENT: Fire at 5 5 If you can look further down, on 14 June at 7.45, we 6 Grenfell Tower W11. 40 pump incident. 60 people 6 can see that you sent an email to Ms Hammond saying: 7 7 missing. There will be mass fatalities.' "Here's the latest update we have. Casualty 8 If we can then go to page 5  $\{GLA00000854/5\},$  please, 8 information is confidential. 9 9 we can see a message here at 5.52. Jon-Paul Graham Below that we can see that this was the read-out or 10 10 the overview of the SCG from Mr Graham. Is that right? 11 "Strategic Coordinating Group Gold Call and update 11 Yes. I think some of that will be information he had 12 from LFB Commissioner updated circulated by email." 12 before the first SCG, but yes, that's the view he had at 13 Can you see that? 13 that time. A. Yes. 14 14 Q. If we can go to the transcript of Ms Hammond's evidence, 15 15 Q. Next could I take you to page 7 {GLA00000854/7}, please. please, it's {Day281/37:3}, please. So this is 16 We can see there, towards the bottom of the page, at 16 Ms Hammond's evidence to the Inquiry last week, and at 17 8.32, a message from Mr Jon-Paul Graham: 17 line 3, she's asked about going to her statement, and 18 "RBK&C are having their first gold meeting will be 18 she goes on to say -- forgive me. 19 at 11:00." 19 (Pause) 20 2.0 Can you see that? Bear with me one moment. It should be Day 281, 2.1 21 A Yes page 37.

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A. Yes, I can see that.

(Pause)

In her evidence -- I hope you'll accept it from

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Q. Forgive me, we may have to come back to that.

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Q. Finally to page 9 {GLA00000854/9}, please. At 10.05

for survivors and have reached the 13th floor. This

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"They are doing a systematic search of the building

Mr Graham sends this message:

Opus 2 transcripts@opus2.com
Official Court Reporters 020 4515 2252

- 1  $\mbox{me} \ -- \mbox{ Ms}$  Hammond says that she was in regular contact 2 with you during the response to the Grenfell Tower fire. 3 Would you agree with that? 4 A. So I would agree that she stated it; indeed, I can see 5 it on my screen, her evidence there. We've seen an email between us, so definitely we were in touch. 6 7 I have a recollection of being in a meeting room at the then City Hall on the phone to Ms Hammond. I'm not --8 9 I believe that was during the Grenfell incident, but I'm 10 not certain. It could have been another one. And 11 I would have seen her on -- in the margins of the
- ministerial meetings as well. 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, she says that she recalls being in touch with you periodically over a number of 14 15 days. It doesn't sound to me as though you would 16 disagree with that.
- 17 A. I wouldn't disagree. It's certainly possible.
- 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.
- 19 MS MALHOTRA: Was it part of your role and responsibility to update the civil contingencies secretariat? 20
- 2.1 A. No.

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- 2.2 Q. Was this out of convention or was there a duty on you?
- 2.3 A. No, this was entirely kind of, you know, good
- 2.4 partnership working. The formal updates, of course,
- 25 should have come from the government representative on

- the SCG, who then would have fed back into the civil 1 2 contingencies secretariat.
- 3 Q. Why is it that you felt the need to update Ms Hammond?
- A. Well, clearly it's a very major incident, and we always 5 strive to work closely with the centre of government in 6 such circumstances, and, you know, it's always possible 7 that, you know, (a) different parties have different 8 additional sources of information, and/or different -you know, things can get conveyed sometimes perhaps 10 slightly differently and not fully from an SCG, and
- 12 doing about that, it's just good to be in touch.

just, you know, then in terms of what parties may be

- 13 Q. Did you and the GLA and the Mayor of London's Office 14 have a good working relationship with the CCS?
- 15 A. I think it was -- would be a very limited relationship. 16 I think we, you know, probably only would deal there in 17 context of incidents, but, you know, they would 18 certainly reach out to us if we could help with 19 something. But obviously normally they would go through 2.0 DCLG and through them to the resilience forum.
- 21 Q. I would like to move on to the first ministerial 2.2 meeting. So we're moving on in time, then, please, on 2.3 14 June, to 4 o'clock in the afternoon, which is when 2.4 the first ministerial meeting took place.
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  - The Mayor of London dialled into that first meeting,

it was chaired by Mr Nicholas Hurd, and you attended in 2 person; is that right?

3 A. Correct

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Q. I would like to take you to your statement, please, at page 16  $\{MOL00000025/16\},$  and paragraph 75, please. You say here:

"A ministerial meeting was convened by central Government at 16.00 on 14 June 2017. This was not a COBR meeting. The meeting was chaired by Nick Hurd (Minister of State at the Home Office). The Mayor dialled in to the meeting and I attended the meeting on his behalf, in case there were any problems with the conference call system. The Chief Executive of Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ('RBKC') also dialled in to the meeting. The meeting was attended by several ministers."

Now, Mr Bellamy, the panel have heard evidence that in fact Mr Holgate -- well, directly from Mr Holgate himself that he did not attend this meeting. You say in your statement that he did dial in. Do you think you may be wrong about this?

- 22 A. I think I may be wrong, yes. Yeah. Yeah, I've seen 2.3 other evidence, yes, that suggests that he didn't.
- 2.4 Q. Would you have expected him to attend this meeting?
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- 1 Q. Do you recall anyone mentioning his absence?
- 2. A. I don't. I have very limited recall of that meeting.
- 3 Q. Can we take it, therefore, that you didn't raise his 4 absence with anybody?
- 5 A. Not that I recall.
- 6 Q. The Inquiry has heard evidence from Ms Hammond of the
- 7 CCS, who we've referred to before, that there are two
- 8 versions of the ministerial minutes of this meeting. In
- 9 one version, which I'll take you to now at
- 10 {CAB00013811}, if you can look at the bottom of this
- 11 page, these are the minutes from 14 June, at
- 12 subsection (b), under the heading "Immediate shelter and
- 13 medium term rehousing", at the bottom of that paragraph

14 it says:

15 "The MAYOR OF LONDON pressed for further reassurance 16 and requested that contact was made with the local 17 Council to ensure that affected individuals are not left 18 without accommodation."

19 Can you see that?

2.0 A. Yes

- 21 Q. If I can take you to another version of those minutes at 2.2 {CAB00002714}, under that same section, subsection (b)
- 23 of the minutes, we can see that that does not appear.
- 2.4 Can you see that?
- 25 A. Yeah, I can see it's not there.

Opus 2 Official Court Reporters Q. Now, the Mayor of London in his statement -- I'd like to take you to it . It's {MOL00000189/8}, please, at paragraph 30, where he says this:

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"I remember that at the meeting I repeatedly emphasised the need to consider as an urgent priority the implications of the fire for other people living in high rise buildings across London and the whole of the country. It was clear that people living in those buildings would be feeling very anxious and distressed and an urgent investigation was needed so that some reassurance could be provided. A swift assessment of how many similar blocks there were across the country needed to be made, given that many had been refurbished or re—cladded. I urged the importance of this being co—ordinated from central Government, given that it was a national issue, and stated that a clear message from Government that this was underway was vital."

He then goes on to say in the next paragraph of his statement at paragraph 31:

"I have seen a note of the meeting of 14 June which has been exhibited to the witness statement of Katharine Hammond of the Cabinet Office ... and has been disclosed to the Inquiry [he then gives the URN] ... As far as I can remember this note accurately reflects the discussion at the meeting."

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I'd like to see if we can explore this a little bit further, because in his statement, it's not clear whether the Mayor of London has seen the minute where comment is attributed to him, but I would like to take you to a handwritten note now that we have been provided, and this is a note that the Mayor of London, his head of private office, Ali Picton, produced following a debrief of this meeting, and we can see that at {MOL00000181}.

This is the handwritten note, and we can see there in the middle of the page:

"SK and Nick Hurd.

"Concern about other buildings and residents in tall blocks.

"Rescue and recovery on the ground and ..."

You might have to assist us with what that says.

- 17 A. "Close contact LFB". I imagine that was the Mayorsaying he was in close contact with the Fire Brigade.
- 19 Q. Then:

"This is priority — but need to know cause to reassure people in other blocks."

Is that right?

- 23 A. Yes
- Q. Now, whilst we can see "rescue and recovery" and "thisis a priority", there doesn't appear to be, in this note

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at least, any mention of concerns regarding the response; would you agree with that?

- A. Not in that note, no, although it does talk about,
   you know, rescue and recovery on the ground as being
   a priority, but it doesn't, yeah, give any specific
   concerns.
- 7 Q. Now, the Inquiry has heard about the GLA oversight
  8 committee meetings, and we will come to those again in
  9 due course. But for now, in your evidence to the
  10 oversight committee on 23 November 2017 I can take
  11 you to the transcript for that. It's {MOL00000017}. We
  12 can see here this is a transcript of that meeting, where
  13 you gave evidence as well as Mr Barradell and others.

If I could take you, please, to page 7 of this transcript  $\{MOL00000017/7\}$ , at the bottom of page 7 we have a record of what you were saying. Towards the bottom of it, you say this -- if we can go over to the next page  $\{MOL00000017/8\}$ , please. At the top of that page you say:

"It is fair to say that on the Wednesday, there were a lot of people getting their heads around things.

The Mayor at the meeting on the Wednesday asked a lot of questions and was pushing for a lot of action."

Are you referring here to the ministerial meeting at 4 o'clock on 14 June?

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1 A. I was, yes.

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- Q. Before I actually ask you a question about that meeting
   and what the Mayor of London may or may not have said,
- 4 could I take you to your note of that meeting. It's at
- 5 {MOL00000151}. Such as it is, is this your note of that 6 ministerial meeting?
- 7 A. It is, very brief, because the Mayor and colleagues were 8 on the call, so I didn't need to note much down.
- 9 Q. Can you assist with what questions and actions the Mayor 10 of London raised at that meeting at 4 o'clock on 11 14 June?
- you know, was really, you know, raising a number of
- points and pressing, you know, for things to be done
- 16 repeatedly. I note that there were, you know, two
- 17 things in the draft minutes. I'm sure he did raise
- 18 those. I've no doubt he raised other things. I can't,
- 19 I'm afraid, remember the specifics, and I'm afraid
- 20 I never saw those minutes, either the draft version or
- 21 the final version, until I was preparing to give
- evidence to the Inquiry. I believe they weren't
- 23 circulated at the time.
- 24 MS MALHOTRA: Sir, I'm about to move on. Perhaps now is
- 25 a convenient moment for a break.

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Does it suit you? 1 A. Yes MS MALHOTRA: Yes, it does. 2 Q. Are you able to say what impressed the Mayor of London 2 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. 3 about the central government response at that stage? 4 Well, Mr Bellamy, we do have a break during the 4 Was there any discussion that he had with you? 5 morning and this is a good time to take it. So we'll 5 stop there. We'll resume at 11.35, please. I have to Q. I'd like to take you to the Mayor of London's statement, 6 6 7 ask you, please, not to talk to anyone about your 7 please. That's  $\{MOL00000189/8\}$ . If we can look at 8 evidence or anything relating to it while you're out of 8 paragraph 32, the Mayor of London says this: 9 the room. 9 "I remember that I spoke to Sajid Javid at 18.15 on 10 THE WITNESS: Of course 1.0 14 June 2017. As I had visited the Grenfell Tower area 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right? Thank you very much. 11 earlier that day, our discussion first reflected my 12 12 Would you go with the usher, please. experiences during that visit and my deep concern about 13 (Pause) 13 the situation faced by the bereaved, survivors and 14 14 others in the local community. Having seen the chaos on Thank you very much. 11.35. 15 MS MALHOTRA: Thank you. 15 the ground I recall I expressed the need for a single SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. 16 16 point of contact and advice for the local community, and 17 17 (11.20 am) for visible support from local and national Government. 18 (A short break) 18 I recall suggesting that a 'one stop shop' for advice 19 19 (11.35 am) and support be put in place to help those who were 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Bellamy, all ready to 20 desperately seeking support." 2.1 carry on? 21 Could I next take you to a note. That's THE WITNESS: I am, thank you. 22 2.2 {MOL00000182}, please. This is a note by Ali Picton, SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much. 2.3 2.3 and we can see, towards the bottom of the page, it says: 2.4 Yes, Ms Malhotra. 2.4 "SJ [I think that is] 25 MS MALHOTRA: Well, Mr Bellamy, we talked about events in 2.5 "Single point access. Phone line established? One the afternoon of 14 June. I would like now to turn to 1 1 stop shop. Visible support on ground. "Follow-up on list of cladding buildings in London. 2 the evening of 14 June. 2 3 At 6.15, the Mayor spoke with the Secretary of State 3 London Councils can help ..." for DCLG, and we can see a read—out of this call which Is that MH -- can you decipher -was circulated at 6.56. I'll take you to that read—out. 5 5 A. That will be "MHCLG", yes. It's at  $\{CLG00003011\}$ . 6 Q. Although at the time I believe they weren't called 6 7 7 MHCLG, they were DCLG at the time of the fire. We can see here the section I want to take you to: 8 8 "Hi all. It says: 9 9 "Legal support and assistance and need for "Please find a quick readout of the 10 [Secretary of State]'s call with the Mayor of London 10 public inquiry. 11 below: 11 Bearing in mind the Mayor of London's observations 12 " • Sadiq Khan dialled in to the [first] ministerial 12 in his statement there, can you assist us with what your 13 13 meeting chaired by Nick Hurd this afternoon ...' assessment of the response was at that stage? 14 And it goes on to say that he was "impressed with 14 A. Sorry, the response in general? 15 15 the Government's response so far". Q. The response in general. 16 There is then a discussion about rehousing and the 16 A. Yes 17 Fire Brigade, where the Mayor of London flagged whether 17 Q. The local authority response. 18 there was enough counselling facilities for the 18 A. Well, I think the important thing to say is  $\,--\,$  and you 19 firefighters . 19 see it through the SCG minutes, you see it through the 2.0 2.0 Were you on this call? ministerial  $\mbox{ meeting minutes } -- \mbox{ is the wide range of }$ 21 21 issues that were being dealt with. Obviously we saw 2.2 Q. It doesn't appear as though you were copied in to this 2.2 just before the break, you know, references, you know --23 23 read-out either; is that right? Underground, the safety of the Underground, the 2.4 A. That's a government read—out, so no. 2.4 stability of the tower, the A40, the local schools. The

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list went on, didn't it? So there was a, you know, very

Q. This was an internal DCLG email; is that correct?

- Q. Could I ask you this, then, Mr Bellamy: given the Mayor of London's role, as you accept, as a category 1
   responder and the Greater London Authority's role as
   a category 1 responder, should you have had better
   visibility of what was happening on the ground?
- A. So I think the point about category 1 responders is 16 17 around, you know, the duty to co-operate. It doesn't 18 give the, you know, right to get into the internal 19 workings of any one partner. I -- you know, whilst accepting that, that it's a strategic co-ordinating 2.0 21 group, it clearly would have been helpful if, you know, 22 any partner there had had the ability, whilst 2.3 recognising the wide range of issues the SCG was dealing 2.4 with, to, you know, question a bit more RBKC about what 25 they said.

- Q. Your statement sets out the contact that you or the
   Mayor of London had with senior central figures in
   central government. What contact did you have with the
   local authority on 14 June?
- 5 A. Personally, I didn't have any.
- 6 Q. Can you assist us with what contact the Mayor of London 7 had with the local authority on 14 June?
- 8 A. So, as I think he says in his statement, he spoke to the
  9 then leader of the council when he was on the way there.
  10 There was an offer for the leader to join the Mayor in
  11 person on the Mayor's visit, but the leader, I believe,
  12 wasn't able to take that up.
- Q. Did you have any contact with the duty LLAG, or John Barradell, the chair of the LAP, on 14 June?
- 15 A. No.
- 16 Q. In retrospect, do you consider that you or the Mayor of 17 London should have?
- A. I think had we had awareness of the issues that there
   were, then clearly we would have taken action of that
   sort, as indeed I did the following day.
- Q. I would like to ask you about that visit that you'vereferred to on 15 June.
- 23 At 2.00 pm, the Mayor visited the site; is that 24 right?
- A. So I referred to the visit on the 14th. There was

1 also — -

- Q. Forgive me, there was a visit on the 14th. I would like
   to ask you about the one on 15 June.
- 4 A. Okay.
- 5 Q. Is it right that the Mayor visited the site at 2.00 pm 6 on the 15th?
- 7 A. I couldn't comment on the exact time. I wasn't there.
- 8 Q. So you didn't attend with the Mayor of London?
- 9 A. No.

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Q. We can see here an email at {LFB00061233}. This is
 an email from John Hetherington, deputy head of London
 Resilience at the time, on 15 June at 6.11 in the
 evening. He says:

"Sorry to be the bearer of bad news. Just had a chat with MPS Gold following his private call with Nicholas. The Mayor was mobbed on scene earlier, there is a community meeting later today which is showing concerns of civil unrest, he is therefore not satisfied any more to be handing over to recovery tomorrow."

I'd like to take you to the Mayor of London's statement again, please. That's {MOL00000189/11}. We can see there at the bottom of the page on paragraph 46 he says this of his visit:

"46. During this visit the full scale of the tragedy was starting to become clear and some members of the

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community were clearly very upset. Completely
understandably, people were angry and wanted answers
from someone in a position of authority so my visit drew
a large crowd. I remember someone threw a bottle of
water at me as I passed by.

"47. I had not made plans to visit the Notting Hill Methodist Church. Following my visit to the Centre, as I spent time speaking with those affected ..."

He then goes on to say at paragraph 48:

"During my visit to the church, a large crowd congregated outside the front entrance. Like the Prime Minister and several other senior politicians, I have a police protection team. I was advised by my security team to exit the church video via the back entrance but I felt very strongly that it was my duty as Mayor to listen to the communities' concerns first hand so I left via the front door and the visit was extended for around another hour so that I could listen to those affected."

Are you able to assist us with whether in fact the
Mayor of London was mobbed on his visit on the afternoon
of 15 June?

A. I don't care for the word "mobbed". Here was
 a community in grief that had clearly been let down
 before, during and after the fire, and I think it's

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- 1 entirely right that they would want to, you know, speak 2 to somebody in a position of responsibility and 3 authority about what happened.
- 4 Q. I'd like to try and follow matters as chronologically as possible. Could I invite you to look at this: 5 {MOL00000183}. We can see here this is a transcript of 6 7 media interviews that were given by the Mayor of London 8 on 14 and 15 June.

At page 14  $\{MOL00000183/14\}$ , the very bottom of the page, it says this:

"Important the council provides housing to those who have lost it, and guidance to all those who want to help who are turning up with vanloads of goods. I sensed the frustration from volunteers at ...

- 15 A. Sorry, can I just pause you, I'm not seeing that on 16
- 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right. Can we go back a bit, 18 please.
- 19 A. Yeah, can we just get it on screen and then ... Right, 20 so we're -- sorry, I think we may be starting in the 2.1 middle of the paragraph, so that's why I lost you.
- 2.2 MS MALHOTRA: It's page 14, can you see that?
- 2.3 A. So what's the first few words of where you're starting 2.4 and then I can follow you?
- 25 Q. At the very bottom of that page, three lines up from the

- 1 bottom, right at the very end:
- 2 "Important the council provides housing ... ' 3
- Can you see that there?
- A. Yeah, okay. I'm with you now. Let's run from there.
- Q. "Important the council provides housing to those who have lost it, and guidance to all those who want to help who are turning up with vanloads of goods. I sensed the frustration from volunteers at Westway at things not being properly co-ordinated - so important - we will signpost people at City Hall to where they need to go."

We can see here in what the Mayor is saying that there were concerns with the response; would you agree with that?

A. Yes 14

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- 15 Q. When did you first become aware of concerns with the 16 local authority response?
- 17 A. So I think I became aware — you know, I did ask 18 before -- so I went to the ministerial meeting that I'm 19 sure we'll come on to, which was at I think 3.30, and 2.0 I did ask before I went to that that, you know, was 21 there any information vet from the Mayor's visit, but at 2.2 that point there wasn't. It's possible before I went 2.3 I saw some of the scenes of the Mayor's visit on the 2.4 television . But I think, you know, I really formed
  - concerns about RBKC's response at the ministerial

- 1 meeting and then, you know, when I returned to City Hall 2 after it
- 3 Q. So are you able to say when you had concerns? Was it
- 4 before the ministerial meeting, if I've understood you 5 correctly?
- A. No, I don't believe I had any significant concerns 6
- 7 before the ministerial meeting, but if I'd seen the TV
- 8 footage or colleagues had made me aware of what had gone 9 on on the Mayor's visit, then clearly I would have seen
- 10 that, you know, things were not as they should be
- 11 Q. Well, you've mentioned that second ministerial meeting 12 at 3.30 on 15 June. I'd like to turn to that now.
- 13 You attended that meeting on behalf of the Mayor of 14 London; is that right?
- 15 A. Correct.
- 16 Q. And that meeting was attended by Nicholas Holgate, then 17 the chief executive to the Royal Borough of Kensington
- 18 and Chelsea; is that right?
- 19 A. I believe so, yes.
- 20  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Q}}.$  Can you tell us what impression you formed of Mr Holgate 2.1 at that meeting?
- 22 A. I'll be honest, I don't really have much direct
- 23 recollection of that meeting and not of Mr Holgate.
- 2.4 I just remember coming away with a real sense of
- 2.5 unhappiness and concern about the response, and that

- 1 there was something that was really not right.
- 2. Q. Was this your first interaction with Mr Holgate? Was 3 this the first time you'd seen him?
- A. Since the beginning of -- well, I think he dialled in,
- 5 so I didn't see him. I think it's the first interaction
- 6 that I would have had with him since the fire. I had 7 met him previously before the fire.
- 8 Q. I would like to take you to paragraph 79 of your first 9
- witness statement {MOL00000025/16}, please.
- 10 Paragraph 79, you say this:

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- "A second ministerial meeting took place ..."
  - You then go on to say in the second line:
- 13 "Following the meeting, I was sufficiently concerned 14 at the lack of progress being made with the recovery
- 15 operation that on my return to City Hall. I telephoned
- 16 John Barradell, Chief Executive of the City of London
- 17 Corporation and Chair of the Local Authority Panel
- 18 ('LAP') to enquire about the progress of the recovery
- 19
- operation from his standpoint and discuss what action 2.0 could most helpfully be taken.'
- 21
- Are you able to assist us with what specifically 2.2 concerned you at this point in time, so during that
- 23 ministerial meeting which started at 3.30 on 15 June?
- 2.4 So, firstly , I think my concern was about -- you know, 25 probably described as response and recovery. As we

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Opus 2 Official Court Reporters know, the kind of boundary between the two isn't a clear

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2 one at all times 3 I don't think it was really specifics . It was, 4 you know, what, you know, came out of the meeting, and I've seen some of the evidence from other people who 5 were at that meeting. It was also when I -- as 6 7 I returned to City Hall, I -- before I could get to my 8 desk, I was met by colleagues who said, you know, "Look, 9 David, you know, RBKC are really just -- it's failing, 10 it's just not working", which I think they judged both 11 from the Mayor's visit and also contact they had 12 received from other, you know, probably political 13 figures in the -- in that area of London, who would have 14 passed on information and -- you know, so I think we 15 just -- you know, we weren't really clear on precisely 16 what the failings were. We could just see that things 17 were really not working and something needed to be done 18 about it 19 Q. Well, I'd like to next try and piece together as best we 20 can the sequence of events that then followed this 2.1 22 Could I take you to {GLA00000854}, please. We've 2.3 looked at it before. This is the transcript of the 2.4 WhatsApp messages --25

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Q.  $\,--\,$  between the Mayor's Gold Group. Could I take you to page 26 {GLA00000854/26}. I'd 2 3 just like to look and read through some of these exchanges that we can see here, starting at the top of 5 the page. It's 15 June, and 17.22, Ms Strain says: "I've reached out through a number of routes re RBKC 6 7 messaging re donations/volunteers/support including 8 contacting chief execs office. Will keep on it but no 9 response so far.' 10 We can then see, a little later at 5.31, one of your 11 colleagues says: 12 "Is there a way we can get across that rbkc are 13 totally out of their depth? Jeff - should we speak with London councils resilience lead? They need a lot of 14 help." 15 16 Then it goes on, "DB" -- is that you? A. Yes.

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18 Q. "... going to talk to John Barradell."

19 Then it says at 5.39:

"John on line to nick holgate CEO RBKC right now.

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21 Aware of problems. Will call back shortly.'

2.2 Just pausing there, this may help us with the 23 sequence of events and timing, but is it right that you 2.4 were talking to Mr Holgate at this stage?

A. No. I asked my executive assistant to get me

John Barradell on the phone and -- you know, so I walked 2 back in the office. As I said, colleagues relayed 3 concerns in general terms, which chimed with what I felt 4 coming out of the ministerial meeting. So, as I say, 5 I asked my assistant to get John Barradell on the phone. John came to the phone and said essentially he was on 6 7 the other line with Nicholas Holgate and, you know, was 8 aware there were some problems and that he would call me 9 10 Q. So is it the case that you didn't speak directly with 11 Mr Holgate? 12 A. Correct.

13 Q. John Barradell, as we've seen in the passage that 14 I referred you to in your statement before, was the 15 chief executive of the City of London Corporation and 16 chair of the local authority panel, which the Inquiry

17 has heard about, what that is. He had not been involved 18 in any strategic co-ordination group meetings at this

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20 A. No

2.1 Q. He had not been involved in the ministerial meetings,

22 had he?

2.3 A. No.

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2.4 At this stage, the response was being led by the Royal

2.5 Borough of Kensington and Chelsea; is that correct?

1 A. The local authority duties, yes.

2 Q. When giving evidence to the GLA oversight committee —— 3 and I'll take you to that transcript now, it's

 ${MOL00000017/37} -- you say this:$ 

"When I came out of the ministerial meeting on the Thursday afternoon it was abundantly clear - accepting things are always going to be difficult on the first day after the incident for obvious reasons - that the response and the beginnings of the recovery operation were not what they needed to be. Immediately when I came back to City Hall I rang John and said, 'What is going on? What are you [doing] ... about it?" Discussions were ... underway, as had been earlier

14 outlined, which led to the invocation of mutual aid."

15 A. I'm sorry, the transcript says, "What are you going to

16 do about it?", not, "What are you doing about it?"

17 Q. Forgive me.

I would like to ask you about this passage,

19 "discussions were ... underway". Can you explain what 2.0 you meant by that?

21 A. Okav. "Discussions were ..."

2.2 I think -- whether that's an error in the transcript 23 or whether I misspoke at the time, that should say 2.4 "Discussions were already underway", and, as I say,

2.5 Mr Barradell was on the phone with Mr Holgate and others

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- 1 when I called him.
- $2\,$   $\,$  Q. So it's not the case that there had been discussions
- 3 ongoing prior to your call to Mr Barradell?
- 4 A. Not involving me.
- 5 Q. Were you aware that London Resilience had had a call
- 6 with Mr Holgate the day before, on 14 June?
- 7 A. No
- Q. Do you consider your responsibility and that of the
   Mayor of London that that is information that maybe you
- 10 ought to have been aware of?
- 11 A. I'm not sure I do. Clearly, you know, it was
- 12 an internal local authority matter in terms of their
- $13\,$   $\,$  response, and it comes back to, you know, the Civil
- 14 Contingencies Act concept of this being a partnership
- $15 \hspace{1cm} \text{and each partner conducting their own legal} \\$
- $16\,$   $\,$  responsibilities . As I say, you know, nobody thought to
- say, "Okay, yes, we have got some, you know, concerns
- perhaps at this point and we should talk to the Mayor or
- $19\,$  his chief of staff about it", you know, it's very much
- 20 I think, you know, local authorities saying, "Well, what
- concerns have we got, what can we do about it?", which of course is the point of the mutual aid system that
- 2.3 they have.
- Q. What was your purpose in speaking to Mr Barradell?
- A. My purpose in speaking to him was that it had become

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- 1 clear to us that the response was, you know, very far
- 2 from what it needed to be, and something needed to be
- 3 done, but it wasn't, you know, immediately apparent to
- $\begin{array}{ll} 4 & \text{me what, you know, the options available $--$ indeed,} \\ 5 & \text{whether there were any options available to address the} \end{array}$
- 6 matter.
- 7 Q. I'd like to take you to an email, please. It's at
- $\{GOL00001473\}$ , please. It's the second email at 7.50,
- 9 which is towards the bottom of the page. It's an email 10 from Mr Holgate to the London Resilience Group and the
- 11 LLAG oncoming and off—going duty officers, where
- 12 Mr Holgate says this:
- "... I do not (yet) think LLAG needs to gear up."
- 14 Can you see that?
- 15 A. I can.
- 16 Q. It then goes up, the next email at 8.15:
- 17 "Just for information we have been in touch with
- both Nicholas Holgate, Chris Naylor as oncoming LLAG and
   Andrew Blake—Herbert as Offgoing LLAG. All are content
- 20 at the moment that RBKC retain [the] lead at [this] 21 point."
- Then the top of that email chain, we can see
- 23 Mark Sawyer responds at 8.18 on 14 June:
- 24 "Looks like job done. Cheers."
- 25 Do you see that?

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- 1 A. I can see it.
- $2\,$   $\,$  Q. Can you assist us with what your understanding of LLAG
- 3 arrangements were at the time of the fire?
- 4 A. At the time of the fire, I'm -- you know, so it's hard
  - for me. So as we touched on earlier, at the beginning
- of January 2016 I started with no knowledge about resilience. Today I have the knowledge I have, an
- 7 resilience . Today I have the knowledge I have, and 8 clearly I have gone through a process. It's very hard
- 9 to look back and say: well, right, exactly what did
- 10 I know at that time?
- Clearly, I didn't at that time know enough about
- 12 LLAG as an internal local authorities process for me to
  - kind of look at exploring that. Instead, as we've
- 14 discussed, I went to Mr Barradell when I realised there
- 15 were problems.
- 16 Q. So can you assist us with what your understanding of
- 17 LLAG arrangements were?
- 18 A. So I think that's just what I answered previously.
- $19\,$   $\,$  Q. Did you understand the activation of LLAG to mean that
- 20 one local authority would take over a response?
- 21 A. As I say, I'm not clear on what I understood, if I knew
- of it at all, about LLAG. At the time, I don't think
- 23 I had a comprehensive understanding, as clearly
- $24\,$  the Inquiry itself has had some debate about the finer
- points of this.

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- $1\,$   $\,$  Q. Do you consider that you ought to have had?
- A. No, because it was it's an internal matter to the
   local authority response.
- 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: The fact that you contacted
- 5 John Barradell might suggest that you thought that he
- 6 had some active role to play; was that the case?
- 7 A. No, I contacted him because I knew him, I knew he was
- 8 the deputy chair of the resilience forum, and clearly
- 9 was the kind of local authority leader on resilience .
- 10 We'd got a problem, I didn't know whether he knew about
- 11 the problem or not, but it's very clear there was
- 12 a problem, that something needed to be done, so I wished
- $13 \hspace{1cm} \hbox{to discuss with him what we could do about matters.} \\$
- 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes. Thank you.
- $15\,$   $\,$  MS MALHOTRA: As I say, dealing with things as
- chronologically as best we can, can you tell us what was
- discussed in your call with Mr Barradell?
- 18 A. So that first call was very brief, because he was on the
- 19 other line to Nicholas Holgate, and he basically -- so
- 20 I said, "Look, John, we've got a" -- you know,
- 21 paraphrasing, "We've got a problem here". You know, he
- acknowledged that, said he was on, you know, a call at
- the moment with Nicholas Holgate, and that he'd ring me
- $24\,$  back when that -- you know, after that call.
- $25\,$   $\,$  Q. I would like to take you to your handwritten note of

1		your conversation with Mr Barradell. That's	1		call, as you can see here, he just informs me of what
2		{MOL00000175}.	2	0	course of action they were taking.
3		You say that you were on the phone to him, he was on	3	Q.	Is that the note where it says "K&C involved" —— you
4		the line to Mr Holgate. Was there an occasion when you	4		might have to assist me with your handwriting, I'm
5	۸	spoke to him again?	5	٨	afraid.
6	Α.	Yes. So, firstly, apologising for getting his surname	6	Α.	Apologies, it's not great at the best of times:
7		wrong in that note. What the WhatsApps show is that	7		"• K&C invoked for Chief Exec cover & other support.
8		that call must have concluded just before 18.49, because	8		"— Another [chief exec] as [Local Authority] Gold —
9		then I informed colleagues at that time via WhatsApp of	9		[and it says] formally start."
L0		the outcome of the conversation, so it clearly would	10		I assume I just didn't manage to keep up.
L1	_	have been about 6.45.	11		Presumably I was saying "formally start tomorrow at some
L2	•	We'll come to those ——	12		point".
L3		Indeed.	13		And then:
L4	Q.	— WhatsApp conversations in a moment.	14		"JB & [I think that's supposed to be] EK to support
L5		Just looking at this note, it says, "With	15		them plus Mary (Hounslow)"
L6		Eleanor Kelly". Was Ms Kelly in the room with	16		So that's Mary Harpley, who was at the time the
L7		Mr Barradell when you were having a conversation with	17		chief executive of London Borough of Hounslow, and
L8		him?	18		"Doug", who is Patterson, I think, who at the time was
L9		That's my understanding, yes.	19		the chief executive for the London Borough of Bromley.
20		Are you able to assist with why she was there?	20		And then it says:
21	Α.	So I now know that Ms Kelly was the deputy chair of the	21		"K&C will do community resilience & cohesion,
22		local authorities panel and so worked closely with	22		housing & displaced."
23		Mr Barradell, and clearly they then —— you know, that's	23		Presumably a reference to those in the walks.
24		been demonstrated both in the subsequent Grenfell	24		There's a reference $$ I think that is "London",
25		response, you know, further to this, also in terms of	25		reference to "mortuary", and then the last note's rather
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1		the medical Davids are seen and the COVID 10 means	1		In complete.
1		the no—deal Brexit response and the COVID—19 response,	1		incomplete:
2		where they worked, you know, very closely together in	2		"External [chief executive] oversight with K&C
3	_	the SCG arrangements we established.	3		director on"
4	Q.	Let me ask you this: at the time of your call with	4	^	And then it stops.
5		Mr Barradell, when Eleanor Kelly was present, can you	5	Q.	So what was your understanding, now your memory's been
6		tell us whether you had expressed a view to him about			
7			6		refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen
8		what you thought should be happening in the response?	7		refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?
	A.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel $$	7 8	Α.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was
9	A.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel $$ I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the	7 8 9	Α.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the
LO	A.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel $$ I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know,	7 8 9 10		refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call? So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.
L0 L1	A.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel $$ I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they	7 8 9 10 11	Q.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?
L0 L1 L2		No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed?	7 8 9 10 11	Q. A.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding? Yes.
L0 L1 L2 L3		No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but	7 8 9 10 11 12	Q. A. Q.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place?
L0 L1 L2 L3	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do?	7 8 9 10 11 12 13	Q. A. Q.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place?  I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp
L0 L1 L2 L3 L4	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do? So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14	Q. A. Q.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps
L0 L1 L2 L3 L4 L5	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do?  So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know,	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15	Q. A. Q.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally
L0 L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do?  So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know, a real issue. I didn't —— you know, I did not know at	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Q. A. Q.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call? So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters. So to work alongside, was that your understanding? Yes. When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally start" and I didn't note down, so I think —— I don't
L0 L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do? So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know, a real issue. I didn't —— you know, I did not know at all what our options were to address that issue, and so	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Q. A. Q.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally start" and I didn't note down, so I think —— I don't really have a strong memory. It's probably been too
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do?  So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know, a real issue. I didn't —— you know, I did not know at all what our options were to address that issue, and so clearly as, you know, an experienced person who would	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q. A. Q. A.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally start" and I didn't note down, so I think —— I don't really have a strong memory. It's probably been too polluted by everything that we've read subsequently.
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do? So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know, a real issue. I didn't —— you know, I did not know at all what our options were to address that issue, and so clearly as, you know, an experienced person who would understand all that, I wanted to discuss that with him	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	Q. A. Q. A.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place?  I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally start" and I didn't note down, so I think —— I don't really have a strong memory. It's probably been too polluted by everything that we've read subsequently. We can come to those WhatsApp exchanges in a moment.
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do? So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know, a real issue. I didn't —— you know, I did not know at all what our options were to address that issue, and so clearly as, you know, an experienced person who would understand all that, I wanted to discuss that with him in order that hopefully we could agree on the most	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q. A. Q. A.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally start" and I didn't note down, so I think —— I don't really have a strong memory. It's probably been too polluted by everything that we've read subsequently.  We can come to those WhatsApp exchanges in a moment.  I just want to ask you this about Ms Hammond. We
LO L1 L2 L3 L4 L5 L6 L7 L8 L9	Q.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do? So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know, a real issue. I didn't —— you know, I did not know at all what our options were to address that issue, and so clearly as, you know, an experienced person who would understand all that, I wanted to discuss that with him in order that hopefully we could agree on the most appropriate course of action.	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q. A. Q. A.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally start" and I didn't note down, so I think —— I don't really have a strong memory. It's probably been too polluted by everything that we've read subsequently.  We can come to those WhatsApp exchanges in a moment.  I just want to ask you this about Ms Hammond. We know that you were in contact with her. Did you express
10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18	Q. A.	No, I don't believe I did. As I say, I didn't feel —— I don't think I was sighted on the specifics of what the issues were, just that there were issues and, you know, the question really was: what could be done so that they were properly gripped and addressed? It may be obvious and you may have answered this, but what was it that you were asking him to do? So, as I say, when I rang him just after 5.30 was, as I said, because I could see that we had, you know, a real issue. I didn't —— you know, I did not know at all what our options were to address that issue, and so clearly as, you know, an experienced person who would understand all that, I wanted to discuss that with him in order that hopefully we could agree on the most	7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	Q. A. Q. A.	refreshed by this note, of what was going to happen after that call?  So my understanding was that another chief executive was going in to K&C alongside Mr Holgate to help with the co—ordination of matters.  So to work alongside, was that your understanding?  Yes.  When was your understanding that that would take place? I can't remember if there was anything in the WhatsApp history that, as you say, we might come to that helps with that. You know, as you can see, I say "formally start" and I didn't note down, so I think —— I don't really have a strong memory. It's probably been too polluted by everything that we've read subsequently.  We can come to those WhatsApp exchanges in a moment.  I just want to ask you this about Ms Hammond. We

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for action on the response to take place?

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to Nicholas Holgate, I'll  $\,$  call you back". The second

Q. I'd like to take you to Katharine Hammond's evidence, please. That's  $\{Day281/74:17\}$ . Let's hope I can see it this time.

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Q. We can see here Ms Hammond is asked about what she says in her witness statement, and  $I'\,II\;$  just take you to the start of the question that she's asked to give it some context:

"Question: In the light of what you say there [referring back to her witness statement], was it your understanding of the LLAG arrangements that LLAG would assume the same executive authority and powers vested in the relevant chief executive, ie Nick Holgate?

"Answer: Yes, I assumed that Mr Barradell was acting on behalf of Mr Holgate in respect of this area of his responsibilities . That was my understanding at the time

"Question: What was the basis of that understanding?

"Answer: I think the way I learned about this was through conversation with Mr Bellamy, so that would be the basis

2.3 "Question: Can you remember what he said to you? 2.4 "Answer: Not in precise words, I'm afraid." 25

Do you agree with Ms Hammond in her recollection of

a conversation with you.

2 A. So I don't have -- I think this is -- just being -- just 3 so I'm clear, going back to line 1 and 2, this is Friday 4 morning, is it? Just so we're clear. I don't have

a recollection of that conversation. I'm quite prepared 5 to believe that it happened. 6

7 I think what we see from the -- and you may be 8 coming to this, so apologies -- note of the Gold Cell  $\,$ 9 meeting, you know, it's  $% \left( 1\right) =-1$  still -- was it 8.30 in the 10

morning, 9.00 in the morning, whenever the Gold Cell 11 meeting was, it still wasn't clear at that point who was

12 taking on the LA Gold responsibilities, but that was 13 reported to the  $11.00~\mathrm{am}$  SCG, and so that was -- our

14 then duty officer reported that via the WhatsApp 15

conversation at, I believe, 11.25. 16

 $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{I}\;\;\mathsf{believe}\;\;\mathsf{Ms}\;\;\mathsf{Hammond}\;\mathsf{is}\;\;\mathsf{speaking}\;\;\mathsf{about}\;\;\mathsf{a}\;\;\mathsf{conversation}$ 17 with you on 15 June. Can you assist us with whether you 18 had a conversation with her on the 15th?

19 A. Well, I may or may not have done, but that clearly was

20 before there was any suggestion of John Barradell

2.1 getting involved. I think what you're showing me on the 22 screen at the moment is about the morning of the 16th.

So you don't recall having a conversation with 2.3

2.4 Ms Hammond on 15 June where you said to her that

2.5 Mr Bellamy(sic) would be acting on behalf of Mr Holgate

1 in respect of those responsibilities ?

A. So, firstly, I'm Mr Bellamy, so no. Secondly, as I say, 2

3 that only happened on Friday the 16th. Thirdly, as

I said earlier, I may well have had a conversation or

5 conversations with Katharine Hammond, you know,

6 throughout this matter, I'm perfectly prepared to

7 believe I did, I just don't have any specific

8 recollection of them, I'm afraid.

9 Q. You say in your witness statement  $\{MOL00000025/16\}$  — we 10 don't need to turn to it now — that you were reassured by your conversation with Mr Barradell, who told you 11 RBKC were planning to invoke mutual aid that evening.

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13 That's the evening of 15 June.

14 When you spoke with Mr Barradell, what did you 15 understand "invoke mutual aid" to mean?

16 A. I understood it to mean that appropriate colleagues from 17 wider London local government would be getting involved 18 in assisting with the response and providing perhaps the 19 capacity and experience that, you know, it appeared from

the failings RBKC were lacking. 2.0

 $\mathsf{Q}.\;\;\mathsf{I}$  would like to take you to those WhatsApp messages, the 21 2.2 transcript of them. That's {GLA00000854/26}, please.

23 We had got up to the stage of the message at 5.39

2.4 "John on line to nick holgate CEO RBKC right now.

25 Aware of problems. Will call back shortly."

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1 Can you assist -- and I appreciate this message was 2 not written by you -- what were those problems that are 3 suggested here? 4

- A. So Dr Bowes sat in the same office as me and was 5 essentially , you know, listening to my conversation or heard my immediate summary as I put the phone down, and 6 7 what he's saying there is that John Barradell was on the 8 phone to Nicholas Holgate at that time, as I spoke to 9 John Barradell, that John was aware that there were 10 problems and that John would call me back shortly.
- 11 Q. We can move forward in time to the message at 6.49 that 12 vou've already referred to. You write here:

Spoke to John Barrowdale [we know that you mean Mr Barradell]. A LA chief exec is being assigned to share the load."

16 Was that your understanding at the time?

- 17 A. Yes, that's my shorthand for the note of the meeting 18 that you've already seen.
- 19 Q. And your evidence was that you didn't know who that 20 chief executive was going to be?
- 21 A. Correct.

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- 2.2 Q. "Please can people tell me what K&C issues we are seeing 2.3 and I will feedback to John [as] they can be picked up."
- 2.4 "... so they can be picked up."
- 25 Q. And then your colleague then responds back at 6.52:

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"That's really helpful. I know emma was aware of some issues. Tony devenish's pa came upstairs and said H&F were struggling to make contact and help."

Is that Hammersmith and Fulham?

- 5 A. Yeah, Hammersmith and Fulham Council, yes. It would 6 have been. So Mr Devenish, for your information, is 7 the -- was and is the London Assembly member for central 8 and west London, which includes both Hammersmith and 9 Fulham and Kensington and Chelsea.
- 10 Q. Were there issues with getting hold of RBKC, as we can 11 see is suggested here?
- 12 A. I believe there were. I think that's shown throughout 13 the evidence, including evidence from my GLA colleagues.
  - Q. We can then see that Ms Strain sends a message about some of the concerns of the team, and we can see, and I can take you to that in due course, the email that she

I just want to ask you this before we move away from this topic of the conversation with Mr Barradell.

Given that the Mayor of London -- you have been referred to his witness statement and what he says about his observations on the second visit that he had on 15 June, the concerns that you had on 15 June following the ministerial meeting, were you satisfied, Mr Bellamy,

to wait for information about what chief executive would

be in a supporting role? Were you satisfied with the 2 response that you received?

3 A. So I was satisfied that, you know, local authorities in 4 London were taking what they considered to be

appropriate action. I considered that Mr Barradell. as 5

clearly a local authority chief executive of some 6 7 experience, particularly with regard to resilience,

8 would have a far better understanding than me of, you

know, what was required to be done, and doubtless, from

10 his discussions with Mr Holgate, what some of the issues 11

may be. And so, you know, I was, you know, satisfied 12 that, you know, action was being taken that Mr Barradell

13 considered to be appropriate.

14 Q. I asked you about an email earlier sent by Mr Sawyer, 15 where he says "job done". I would just like to take you 16 to one more email exchange. That's {LFB00061229}, 17

> Now, this is an email again from Mr Hetherington. sent to his London Resilience Group colleagues. I appreciate you weren't on this email. It's not one that was copied to you. But what he says in that second paragraph towards the bottom, three lines up from the bottom of the second paragraph:

" ... I have made the point to Mark that they should look to consume this in everyday business as far as

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1 possible so that we don't get drawn into a long term 2 support, Mark agreed with this, I think we will need to 3 do something but I think if possible some advice early days to bring the right people together then let them 5 get on with it."

Was there an impression or did you form the impression that there was reluctance on the part of the LLAG and Mr Mark Sawyer and London Resilience to get

9 involved in helping RBKC? 10 So, I mean, I had no knowledge of this at the time.

11 That's not how I interpret this email at all. 12 I interpret this email as being from London Resilience

13 Group and, you know, London Resilience Group were,

14 you know, saying, "So that we don't get drawn into

15 a long-term support" -- and that, you know, would

16 reflect that, you know, London Resilience have,

17 you know, always got to be ready for, as events sadly

18 showed, the next incident that will happen. They still

19 would be -- clearly would have some involvement here, 2.0 they still had some involvement in matters related to

21 the London Bridge and Borough Market terror attacks.

2.2 which were, what, 11 days, I think, prior to Grenfell

fire, and so I think what I see there is, you know, 23

2.4 London Resilience Group saying, "Well, we need,

25 you know, RBKC to set themselves up to handle what is

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- 1 clearly going to be an ongoing situation". but then what we see from the Gold Cell WhatsApp group 2 Q. Could I invite you to look at your first witness 2 is that it was reported to the SCG, and so I was 3 statement at paragraph 79 {MOL00000025/16}, please. 3 informed at 11.25 that John Barradell was the person 4 It's the very bottom of paragraph 79. You say: 4 taking that LLAG role. "I was reassured by this." SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, and I imagine at that stage you 5 5 6 By that it means -- let me read out the first few understood that he was going to take on the role of 6 7 lines : 7 LLAG. London Gold. under the Gold resolution? 8 "I was informed by Mr Barradell that he was 8 A. I wouldn't be certain about that. As I say, I wouldn't 9 currently on a separate call with RBKC who had informed 9 have had -- not being from a local authority, I wouldn't 10 10 him that they were planning to invoke mutual aid that have necessarily had knowledge of the Gold resolution or 11 evening. I was reassured by this. However this did not 11 the scope of it or so forth, which of course is --12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right. in fact take place until the following day." 12 13 A. So I think what that is doing is, you know, there's --13 A. If I'd had that knowledge, my conversation with 14 so I'm aware of the Inquiry's, you know, debates and 14 Mr Barradell on the Thursday might have been slightly 15 looking into this. I have to say I find it surprising 15 different, might have been, "Why isn't ..." rather than 16 16 "What should we do?" that -- you know, I don't pretend to understand the 17 legalities of the Gold resolution between local 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, thank you. 18 authorities. I find it surprising that a situation in 18 MS MALHOTRA: I'd just like to show you this email, 19 which a chief executive can incur expenditure on behalf 19 {GOL00000196}. It's the email that you sent to 2.0 of another authority is able to occur without some 20 Mr Barradell at 7.48 that evening. In the last sentence 21 sort of written statement, although I suppose one can 21 of that first paragraph. You say: 22 22 imagine circumstances where it's just not possible to "... it's worth flagging that building a list of 2.3 23 obtain that. And I think, you know, what we see there people known to live in the tower as something they have 2.4 2.4 is, as I think the Inquiry's teased out, the kind of apparently so far failed to do." 25 difference between, you know, the start of mutual aid 2.5 Are you referring to RBKC here? 83 and then John Barradell himself taking a more leading 1 1 A. I am, yes. role in terms of, you know, directing the response and Q. Would you agree that the issues on the ground, as they 2 2. 3 recovery operation. 3 have been referred to, were acute? 4 Q. Would you say that you were surprised that it took place A. I think the evidence before the Inquiry shows that they 5 the following day? 5 were, yes 6 A. So, yeah, I think I would. I think I would have 6 Q. I'd like to next turn your attention to some other 7 7 expected that that -- you know, following, you know, emails from your colleague Ms Strain, and again that conversation, the agreement of Mr Holgate --8 8 I appreciate you were not on these emails. You're not 9 9 obviously. I wasn't sighted on -- it sounds like there copied in to them, but I'd like to see if you could help 10 were various conversations to get him to the point of 10 us with the topics that they do cover.
- 15 would take that responsibility. 16 Q. So we know that LLAG was not in fact activated until the 17 following day, the afternoon of the following day. Did 18 you take any steps to question what was happening?

agreeing, but, you know, I would have thought that

fairly quickly at that stage, you know, a decision would

be taken on whether that would be the current primary

London Local Authority Gold or whether somebody else

A. So I'm not sure I know that. I know that John Barradell went there on the Friday morning, and I'm not clear -you know, what I know is that -- so on the Friday morning, at the 8.30 Gold Cell, we reflected that we didn't know who was taking on that responsibility. I had -- I was given an action to find out. I don't

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2.4 25 remember anything specific subsequent to that action,

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that avenue should it be required.'

The first is {LFB00067777}. This is an email from

"Had a call with Emma Strain at the GLA. Given the

John Hetherington -- forgive me. This is an email from

Mr Hetherington to his internal LRG colleagues talking

about a conversation with Ms Strain, your colleague at

situation at RBKC she has said that if we have further

issues to raise then we can do so through her which will

be passed through David Bellamy, anonymously if needed.

"Obviously this will be sensitive, so not a wish

list of gripes but just to make you all aware we have

Can you assist us with what the sensitivity was

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concerns at City Hall regarding the grip on the

here?

the GLA. It says this:

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1 A. So, you know, I think you could almost regard this as 2 Emma saying -- so obviously I'd asked Emma to pull 3 together a list of issues so that, you know, I could 4 inform John Barradell for whoever London Local Authority 5 Gold would be, so that they were informed and could address these points, and clearly she's spoken to 6 7 John Hetherington to try and, you know, see: are there 8 any other things that we should be aware of? 9

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I think the point about sensitive, I think the analogy might be with a whistleblowing situation, so that if for any reason anybody in London Resilience Group saw things related to their responsibilities towards local authorities and, you know, the work they were doing with RBKC, they had an avenue in which those could be raised without, you know, them being kind of accused of, you know, telling tales or whatever it might be. You know, just really a desire that we needed to know the facts in order that they could be addressed.

Q. I'd like to take you to another email exchange. That's {LFB00061241}. It's the email in the middle of the page from Ms Strain, 15 June at 22.31, and she says this:

"Just worth noting that there are reports from people locally that firefighters have told them it's over 100 fatalities. It's not sustainable to continue the announcements how they've been going. Will be a big

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risk that our (us/HMG [Her Majesty's Government]/K&C [Kensington and Chelsea]) response is not commensurate with the scale of the tragedy."

Did the uncertainty in confirmed fatalities affect or impact on the Mayor of London's voice of London role?

or impact on the Mayor of London's voice of London role? A. So I think this reflects , you know, a situation in which clearly there are proper processes that must be followed in terms of identifying fatalities, and so, you know, we started with a very low number of fatalities, which anybody looking at it could see was very, very low. Because there wasn't, you know, a definitive figure coming from that source, and it was very slow, and because, you know, the Casualty Bureau and RBKC operations hadn't said, "Oh, look, right, there are this many people in the tower, right, we know about this many people, we've got a certain number in hospitals, so this gives us a number presumed missing", which might then give you an approximation for the potential range of potential fatalities , because that wasn't there, we're in a situation where the communications were very much about the official position, which of course is all we can communicate, but quite rightly people in the community would look at that and say, "Well, that's self-evidently not right, and, you know, we have been failed, you know, so completely by authorities, is this

another attempt to downplay the severity of what we saw?" And I think that was Ms Strain's point.

Q. I'd like to turn to the investigations by the Greater
 London Authority oversight committee that we have seen
 the transcript of your contributions to. It's right to
 say that there were three sessions in respect of that
 response to Grenfell Tower fire: one on 4 September,
 November and 31 January 2018; is that right?

9 A. I know they had three sessions. I don't recall the 10 precise dates.

Q. On, as we have already established, 23 November 2017,
 the committee looked in more detail at the Mayor's role
 in the response and recovery phases; is that right?

14 A. That would be the session that I and borough chief15 executives attended, yes.

Q. Going back to that transcript, then, on 23 November
 2017, that's {MOL00000017/37}, you say in the second
 paragraph:

"For me, there are three lessons at a high level to be learnt from Grenfell. The first is that the mutual aid processes were not invoked early enough. They should have been invoked immediately. Clearly, we have, as discussed, the peer review underway to try to stop that issue ever happening again."

25 Just pausing there, dealing with the first issue

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that you identified there, what do you mean by saying that the mutual aid ought to have been invoked earlier?

A. So I think there's what I meant at the time, and then
I would put an additional comment on it now. What
I meant at the time was that the scale of the incident
and RBKC's, you know, preparedness to respond to it,
clearly the incident was, you know, beyond their
capability, and they really needed to get help in
a structured way to put a proper operation in place.

The thing I would add to that now is that, reading the version of the humanitarian assistance framework, 5.0, that was draft — that was in use at that time, is, you know, I think actually that makes fairly clear that mutual aid should have been invoked, and also, of course, that, you know, a humanitarian assistance liaison officer should have been appointed immediately.

Q. You then say:

"The second issue — which the Chair rightly referred to — is that, with the best response in the world, pre—existing conditions in the community and the relationship between the community and its council can create a challenge that the theory of a response and recovery operation may not anticipate. We could have a perfect response recovery operation ready to go but it deals with real people and real situations and so we

1 have to deal with that. The third high-level area of Paragraph 118, the end of the second line: 2 learning is about the resources that were available to 2 "There are clear limits to the Mayor's role in 3 LLAG to deploy and whether we have the right 3 an incident of this nature. Given the Mayor does not 4 capabilities available to us. We have talked about one 4 have any direct operational responsibility to respond to example in terms of liaison with affected families. 5 5 such an incident, he could not have pursued a more There is a lesson to be learnt that that was not quite active role in terms of the resilience arrangements 6 6 7 right." 7 post-Grenfell without both breaching agreed protocols You have already alluded to one additional comment and taking responsibility from RBKC (itself 8 8 9 that you would make as to what you saw the concerns 9 a democratically-elected public authority) without any 10 10 being. With the passage of time, have you since legal basis for doing so. Instead he offered and 11 11 provided active support to those who had those powers." reflected on any other? 12 12 A. I mean. I think that stands up well in terms of the. At paragraph 119 you go on to say: 13 you know, key issues. I think clearly there were, 13 "I stated in my evidence before the Oversight 14 you know, some issues about preparedness of boroughs, 14 Committee [you give the reference for it] ... that 15 particularly K&C, and all the processes that should have 15 the Mayor had 'a role in terms of communication in 16 16 been there to ensure that boroughs were prepared. But amplifying the messages from those with operational 17 17 command'. This emphasises the fact that the Mayor's equally I can understand the challenges in achieving 18 that. But that's, I think, another real area of focus 18 primary role is to communicate and provide reassurance 19 19 to Londoners with regard to an incident of this nature. 20 Q. Have you since reflected that maybe there was more that 2.0 The existing resilience arrangements do not envisage, or 2.1 you could have done to ensure that the response in those 21 permit, the Mayor to intervene in terms of coordinating 2.2 early days was well managed? 22 any operational response. Whether that is a 2.3 A. So I think in terms of the specific incident, you know, 23 satisfactory state of affairs is a matter the Mayor 2.4 the GLA as a partner didn't receive the information 2.4 urges the Inquiry to consider." 25 about what was going on on the ground and the failings 2.5 In his statement, the Mayor of London -- if we can 89 go to that statement, it's  $\{MOL00000189/24\}.$  He says at 1 that there were in order for us as a partner to raise 1 2 concerns and try and see to them, that they were 2 paragraph 102 at the bottom of the page: 3 addressed, and that was for us the fundamental 3 "... the key point is that under the relevant 4 challenge, is the lack of visibility into what was going arrangements it is entirely for the borough in which 5 5 a civil emergency occurs to decide when to request Q. Having had that reflection, what have you or the GLA 6 mutual aid. There was and still is no process which 6 7 7 done since to rectify that? allows a third party to step in and insist that mutual 8 8 A. So on that specific point, we now have a team, the aid is invoked. This means that if a borough is not 9 9 London situational awareness team, which is a 24/7 dealing with an emergency effectively but for some 10 function which monitors information about what is going 10 reason does not ask for help, there is nothing that 11 on in London, so both information from resilience 11 London Resilience or anyone else can do to take control of the situation." 12 partners but also open-source information on the 12 13 internet, social media and so forth, and maintains 13 At paragraph 113  $\{MOL00000189/27\}$ , he goes on to 14 relationships with the relevant government machinery in 14 say, in the middle of the paragraph: 15 15 "... for the Mayor to have the ability to determine order that, you know, we get, first, early notification 16 of incidents and, secondly, regular reporting on them. 16 whether aspects of the response and recovery from 17 17 So we have that capacity, and then, you know, they're a civil emergency should be left with the local borough 18 also there when a major incident is declared in support 18 or assigned at a [local] level." 19 of our involvement in the SCG in terms of creating 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: "... a London level." 2.0 2.0 an incident log and other such things. MS MALHOTRA: "... London [local] level."

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I would like to explore this a little further with

present at all the SCG meetings between 14 and 20 June,

A representative of the Greater London Authority was

you, if I may, please.

weren't they?

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Q. I'd like to move on to another topic, please.

London, and I'd like to ask you about that.

In your first witness statement -- and we'll have it

up in front of us -- page 25 {MOL00000025/25},

paragraph 118, you refer to the role of the Mayor of

- 1 A. They were.
- 2 Q. The three of you that attended, we've already
- 3 established, were members of the Mayor of London's
- Gold Group in response to the Grenfell Tower; that's 4 5 right, isn't it?
- A. The Gold Cell, yes. 6
- 7 Q. The Mayor's Gold Cell would meet often multiple times
- 8 a day, would it?
- 9 A. As we felt necessary, yes.
- 10 Q. There were also two ministerial meetings, one on the
- 11 14th and another on 15 June. You attended both of those 12
- meetings and the Mayor of London dialled in to the
- 13 meeting on the 15th; is that correct?
- 14 A. No, he dialled in to the meeting on the 14th. He didn't 15 attend in any way the meeting on the 15th.
- 16 Q. Thank you. You attended both of those meetings; is that 17
- 18 A Yes
- 19 Q. Would you agree that these meetings were attended by key
- 20 ministers involved in the response to the Grenfell Tower 2.1
- 2.2 A. I would agree that they were attended by relevant
- 2.3 ministers, you know, from the government department --
- 2.4 the key government departments related to the incident.
- 25 Q. And from 16 June, those meetings morphed into the

- 1 Grenfell Tower recovery taskforce meetings, which took
- 2 place once a day, the majority of which were chaired by
- 3 the then Prime Minister; is that right?
- A. Yes, that's right.
- 5 Q. You attended four out of five of those meetings between
- 16 to 20 June; is that right? 6
- 7 A. So I think in that total you're also including
  - official  $-\mbox{level}$  meetings, which weren't chaired by the
- 9 Prime Minister but by the Deputy National Security
- 10 Adviser, but yes. Other than the meeting on the
- 11 Saturday, I attended all the others, yes.
- 12 Q. And the Mayor of London attended two out of five of
- 13 those meetings between 16 to 20 June; is that right?
- 14 A. Yes, I believe -- or was it three? He attended on the 15 Saturday, the Monday, and then possibly we've just
- 16 slipped outside your time period, the Wednesday.
- 17 Q. It was open to you or the Mayor of London to raise any
- 18 issues in those meetings, wasn't it?
- 19

- 2.0 Q. You spoke with Katharine Hammond, as we have heard, and
- 21 you had an opportunity to raise any concerns with her
- 2.2 privately if needed; is that right?
- 23
- 24 Q. Would you accept that the Mayor of London and his office
- 25 had access at a very high level to those who could

- influence the trajectory of the response?
- 2 If you -- well, as we say, the response, obviously, is
- 3 across the partnership, responding to a range of aspects
- 4 of it . Clearly , you know, we had -- you know, certainly
- the Mayor spoke to the leader of RBKC. We spent a lot 5
- of time trying different officers to speak to RBKC, as, 6
- 7 the evidence showed, did others, and failed to do so. 8 So we certainly, you know, as partners, had the
- 9 theoretical ability, but it clearly proved challenging
- 10 to do so
- 11 Q. Would you accept, by virtue of the Mayor of London's
- 12 presence at key meetings, that there was opportunity to
- 13
- So opportunity to influence what? 14
- 15 Q. Opportunity to influence what was happening on the 16
- ground.
- 17 A. So there was the opportunity to contribute to the
- 18 co-ordination — through the SCG, there was opportunity
- 19 to be involved in the co-ordination of what was going on
- 20 on the ground. Clearly what the SCG wasn't seeing from 21
- RBKC is any detail about what was or was not happening 22
- in order that, you know, we could say, "Well, hang on
- a minute, that's a problem, isn't it?' 23
- 2.4 Do you consider the Greater London Authority and the
- 2.5 Mayor's role as having oversight responsibility for

- 1 London Resilience that they would have had influence and
- 2 authority in what occurred in the aftermath of the
  - Grenfell Tower fire?

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- A. So we touched on this earlier. Our responsibilities for
- 5 London Resilience are as a category 1 responder, which,
- 6 as we said, is a slightly unusual situation, because
- 7 we're not an operational responder, we're a strategic
- 8 authority, but clearly that was the mechanism that was
- 9 taken to get us involved in the LRF so that we could 10
- take on those responsibilities .
- 11 From there, you know, as a responder, we have our
- 12 duties under the Act to co-operate, and they're
- 13 overwhelmingly referring to the preparedness. It didn't
  - give us any powers to involve ourselves in the response
- 15 activities of any individual responder.
- 16 Q. Do you consider, Mr Bellamy, that if the existing
- 17 procedures -- and by that I mean the LLAG and mutual aid
- 18 agreements -- had been effectively deployed, there would
- 19 still remain a need to strengthen the role of the Mayor
- 2.0 of London as you suggest?
- 21 A. So I consider that if the frameworks and protocols in
- 2.2 place had been followed perfectly, ie at, let's say,
- 23 4.00 am on Wednesday the 14th RBKC had said -
- 2.4 you know, looked at the humanitarian assistance
- 25 framework, you know, activated that, appointed

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a suitably experienced and qualified humanitarian assistance liaison officer, and recognised in accordance with the framework that they needed mutual aid, and if, through that and discussions with London Local Authority Gold, the appropriate structure for that local authority partnership effort could have been established, then there would have been, you know, no need for the Mayor to have any further power. Because, to be clear, what we absolutely see is, you know, what we saw belatedly happen after Grenfell, was local authority colleagues stepping in to, you know, help and contribute, because they're emphatically the people with the skillset to do this. The GLA, as a strategic policy authority, in general wouldn't have the people with the right skills to carry out the responsibilities of a local authority, nor would we seek to do so, as the Mayor said in his

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- Q. Would you accept that there were a number of reviews that have been undertaken into London Resilience since the Grenfell Tower fire, culminating with the EP2020 refresh report written by Mark Sawyer? None of those reports suggest a greater role of the Mayor of London, do they?
- A. So in terms of reviews of London Resilience, yeah,
   you're talking about the Riordan and Ney review related

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- to local authority arrangements, not London Resilience generally, and no, they —— yeah, that review doesn't suggest a change, no.
- Q. Mark Sawyer, when giving his evidence to the Inquiry,
   was asked about the role of the Mayor of London, and we
   can go to his transcript. It's {Day278/184:3}. He was
   asked the question:

"Question: What is your view as to the suggestion which is made by the Mayor of London in their opening submissions to this module that there may be a need for the formal role of the Mayor of London in a civil emergency to be expanded in carefully defined circumstances to require the invocation of mutual aid and appropriate leadership arrangements? In other words, it seems to have some role in the activation of the Gold resolution.

"Answer: I would suggest that that may well be legally challenging, to find a solution to that. But that said, I believe that by better defining the role of Local Authority Gold, by establishing that proactive approach to ensuring that we don't wait to be asked, we actually ask —— the Local Authority Gold asks, 'Do you need help, support?', by applying that more proactive approach, we will hopefully have addressed the concerns that arose during Grenfell."

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1 A. Could I respond to that? Is that ...?

So, respectfully, I disagree with him. I think what the evidence shows from Grenfell is that there were lots of people offering aid and assistance to RBKC, but they were fine, thank you, and didn't wish to avail themselves of it. I think —— and that is the challenge.

Where I think Mr Sawyer is right is that legally there is no power and no ability for the Mayor currently to step in . Boroughs are sovereign, as we know, and -- but, of course, you know, the law can be changed.

The question I put is that if you look at what happened, and we've had the discussion about the evening of the 15th and then obviously matters went on into the 16th, you know, we were reliant on the chief executive of RBKC accepting mutual aid, and if a decision needs to be made in a case where a chief executive is not -- you know, through shock or whatever reason, not understanding the scale of what's before them, who is to make that decision?

So with Grenfell, it could have been the chief executive of the City of London Corporation, as chair of the London Council, but I fail to see what democratic accountability there is in a chief executive from one area taking, you know, a decision that ultimately, as we saw on the Friday, was taking away — you know, it took

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away powers from a borough chief executive. It could be the chair of London Councils, who at the time was the leader of Haringey, but, again, what's Haringey got to do with Kensington and Chelsea?

And that's where I come back to the Mayor of London as somebody elected by the people of all of London, including K&C.

8 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, but this is a political
9 question, isn't it? Because what's being suggested is
10 the Mayor should have powers to intervene, overriding
11 the role of the boroughs, or a particular borough, and
12 whether that's desirable or not would seem to me to be
13 a political question.

14 A. Well, I'm not sure. I think sometimes, with respect, 15 people describe things as political questions when 16 I wouldn't, I think they're questions. I think, 17 you know, the question is: who takes the decision? 18 You know? For really important matters, such as 19 matters, you know, like you say, potentially taking the 2.0 responsibility away from a borough for a period of time 21 and assigning it to somebody else. I'd rather those 2.2 decisions were taken by somebody democratically elected 23

24 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, all right, thank you.

25 MS MALHOTRA: You may have already answered this, but

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1	considering all of these matters, do you still share the	1	Is there anything you would wish to add to your
2	Mayor's view that the role of the Mayor in civil	2	evidence that is relevant to the Inquiry's
3	emergencies should be expanded, as he says in his	3	investigations that I have not covered with you?
4	statement at paragraph 113 {MOL00000189/27}?	4	A. I think I'd just like the opportunity to say that
5	A. Yes, with appropriate safeguards about the role,	5	obviously mine is an internal—facing role, and I just
6	thinking about —— you know, it could be that, you know,	6	wanted to take this opportunity publicly to say,
7	it's about receiving, perhaps, a report or assurance	7	you know, to the survivors, the bereaved, local
8	from the strategic co-ordination group that the Mayor	8	residents, how very sorry I am for what happened.
9	could then consider if need be. You know, I'm not here	9	I consider that they were failed not just here and
10	suggesting a kind of unilateral thing, that the Mayor	10	there, but I think the evidence of this Inquiry has
11	can just, you know, decide whatever the Mayor of the day	11	shown that, you know, they were failed by us as
12	wishes.	12	a society, and I think it's incumbent on all of us to,
13	MS MALHOTRA: Thank you, Mr Bellamy. Those are the	13	you know, do whatever we can to ensure that nothing like
14	questions I have for you.	14	that ever happens again.
15		15	I think I've kind of outlined in evidence some of
16	Thank you.  SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Right, thank you.	16	
			the things that we at the GLA have done since then, and
17	Well, Mr Bellamy, when we get to this point, we have	17	that's very important that we all do that, and that
18	to have a short break, first to let counsel check that	18	everybody looks critically at that.
19	she has asked all the questions she should have asked,	19	I also want to, in that spirit, acknowledge those
20	and also to allow other people who are following the	20	people who, when RBKC failed, came to help. They didn't
21	proceedings from elsewhere to suggest questions that	21	have to do so. The only reason that they did was
22	we haven't thought of but they think perhaps we should	22	a desire for public service, and I think that's the
23	put to you.	23	spirit that all of us need to keep in our minds as we,
24	So we're going to take a short break. I'm going to	24	you know, move forward and do all we can to ensure that
25	say that we'll come back at 1 o'clock, and at that point	25	nothing like this ever happens again.
	101		103
1	we'll see if there are any more questions for you $$	1	MS MALHOTRA: Well, thank you, Mr Bellamy. All that's left
2	THE WITNESS: Okay.	2	is for me to thank you for coming today to give your
3	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: $$ and how we go from there.	3	evidence.
4	All right?	4	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
5	While you're out of the room, I have to ask you,	5	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I'd like to add my thanks,
6	please, not to talk to anyone about your evidence, as	6	Mr Bellamy, on behalf of the panel as a whole. It's
7	before.	7	been very interesting to hear what you have to tell us,
8	THE WITNESS: Of course.	8	and very helpful to us as well. So thank you very much
9	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right?	9	for giving us your time to come and give evidence.
10	THE WITNESS: Thank you.	10	Thank you.
11	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go	11	THE WITNESS: Thank you, I'm grateful for the opportunity.
12	with the usher, please.	12	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Now, of course, you're free to go.
13	(Pause)	13	Thank you.
14	Ms Malhotra, I said 1 o'clock. I know that's	14	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
15	a short time. If you find that you need more time, will	15	(The witness withdrew)
16	you ask the usher to come and tell us?	16	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much, Ms Malhotra.
17	MS MALHOTRA: I'm very grateful.	17	Well, we have another witness, but not until after
18	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.	18	the break. So we'll stop now for lunch and we'll
19	(12.54 pm)	19	resume, please, at 2.05. All right?
20	(A short break)	20	2.05, please. Thank you.
21	(1.02 pm)	21	
22	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Right, Mr Bellamy. Well, we'll see	22	(1.05 pm) (The short adjournment)
23	if there are any more questions for you.	23	(The short adjournment) (2.05 pm)
24	Yes, Ms Malhotra.	24	
	•		SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
25	MS MALHOTRA: Just one question, Mr Bellamy.	25	MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, good afternoon. Good

A. Yes.

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7		acknowledged through your solicitors, which we'll come to, can we confirm that the contents are true?  Apart from that material correction, yes.  Yes.  Now, I'm going to look at three areas with you: firstly, and briefly, your background and role at the time of the fire in June 2017; secondly, the role of the Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
5 6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6		Apart from that material correction, yes. Yes.  Now, I'm going to look at three areas with you: firstly, and briefly, your background and role at the time of the fire in June 2017; secondly, the role of the Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
6 7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6		Yes.  Now, I'm going to look at three areas with you: firstly , and briefly , your background and role at the time of the fire in June 2017; secondly, the role of the Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
7 8 9 0 1 2 3 4 5 6	Q.	Now, I'm going to look at three areas with you: firstly , and briefly , your background and role at the time of the fire in June 2017; secondly, the role of the Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
8 9 .0 .1 .2 .3 .4		firstly , and briefly , your background and role at the time of the fire in June 2017; secondly, the role of the Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
9 .0 .1 .2 .3 .4 .5		time of the fire in June 2017; secondly, the role of the Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
.0 .1 .2 .3 .4		time of the fire in June 2017; secondly, the role of the Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
.1 .2 .3 .4 .5		Home Office more broadly; and, thirdly, your own involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
.2 .3 .4 .5		involvement in the response in the first seven days.  Can I then turn to your political background.
.3 .4 .5		Can I then turn to your political background.
.3 .4 .5		-
.4 .5 .6		I am right, I think, that you are a member of the
5		Conservative party; yes?
6	Δ	I am.
		And previously the Member of Parliament for Ruislip,
	۷.	Northwood and Pinner; yes?
8	۸	That's right.
9		In relation to your ministerial career, I think you were
0	Q.	
1		Parliamentary Secretary, Minister for Civil Society,
		between May 2010 and July 2014; is that right?
2		That's correct.
3	Q.	And Parliamentary Under—Secretary of State at the
4		Department for International Development between 2015
5		and 2016.
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1	Α.	That's correct.
2		And Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry at
3	٦.	the BEIS, the Department for Business, Energy and
4		Industrial Strategy, between July 2016 and June 2017.
5	Α	That's correct.
		Yes, thank you.
	٦.	Now, at the time of the Grenfell Tower fire, I think
		you had just been appointed Minister of State for
		Policing and the Fire Service.
	Δ	That's correct.
		You had been in post, I think, for something like
	Q.	
	۸	two days before the fire .  I think I was appointed on the Monday evening.
	Q.	Right, so two days.
		Now, the ministerial role fell, I think, within the
		ambit of the Home Office's responsibility; is that
		right?
		That's correct.
	Q.	Yes. On 26 June 2017, I think you were appointed
		Minister for the Victims of the Grenfell Tower Fire; is
		that right?
2		That's correct.
	Q.	Yes, and whose decision, do you know, was it to create
		that role?
4	A.	I can't be sure. I've always assumed it came from
4		
	6 7 8 9 .0 .1 .2 .3 .4 .5 .6 .7 .8 .9 .8 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9 .9	7 8 8 9 9 0 A. 11 Q. 2 2 3 A. 4 Q. 5 6 6 7 8 A. 9 Q. 11 12 A. 13 Q. 14

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afternoon, members of the panel.

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- Q. What did your role and responsibilities as Minister for
   the Victims of the Grenfell Tower Fire involve?
- 4 A. I think they were three-fold.

The first was to support the victims unit in trying to give direct assistance where we could to victims, and I know the word "victims" is sensitive, but I will use it because that was the name of the unit.

The second was to try and act as some sort of bridge between the community and central government at a time when it was clearly needed, because the context was one of zero trust and engagement.

And I think there was a third, longer—term dimension, which was a recognition that the road to recovery was going to be long, and the experience from precedents such as Hillsborough suggested that there might be value in having a minister in the system that would effectively act as some sort of advocate for the community within the system, because life and politics and the media, always a risk that they might move on and that the critical issues that the community still required might lose some sense of focus inside government. I think there was a risk around that.

So those were the three dimensions of the role as

So those were the three dimensions of the role as I understood it.

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- 1 Q. That ministerial role, am I right, sat within the
- 2 Department for Communities and Local Government, DCLG?
- 3 A. That's right.
- 4 Q. Right. Did that overlap with your Home Office role?
- 5 A. Yes.
- 6 Q. Right.
- 7 Is it right that you held that role, the Minister 8 for the Victims of the Grenfell Tower Fire, until the 9 2019 general election?
- 10 A. Yes, when I stood down.
- Q. When you stood down. Did anybody take that ministershipup, that ministerial post up, on from you?
- $\begin{array}{lll} 13 & \text{A. No, the arrangement with the Prime Minister was that} \\ 14 & \text{I would continue to perform a role on a voluntary basis} \\ 15 & \text{as an independent adviser to him, supported by} \end{array}$
- 16 Elizabeth Sanderson.
- 17 Q. Right.
- Now, I think it's right, isn't it, that on

  26 March 2020, you were appointed the Prime Minister's
  independent adviser on Grenfell? Is that right?

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- 21 A. Could you repeat the date?
- 22 Q. March 2020.
- 23 A. That sounds about right.
- $24\,$  Q. Are you still in that position?
- 25 A. Yes

- Q. So does that involve advising the Prime Minister and
   ministers and public bodies on Grenfell—related issues?
- 3 A. Yes
- $4\,$   $\,$  Q. And you occupy that role today, do you?
- 5 A. Yes
- Q. What type of Grenfell—related issues would you or willyou be addressing?
- 8 A. A very live one in recent months has been the process of 9 decision—making and engagement on the highly sensitive 10 issue of the future of the tower.
- 11 Q. Right.
- 12 Would your role involve examining and advising on 13 the effect of the report and the recommendations of this 14 panel?
- A. One of the my memory is that one of the first things
   that we did in the new role was to encourage new
   processes inside government and mechanisms of
- accountability to make it clearer to the community what progress was being made against the recommendations of your first report, Chair.
- Q. And that fell, and falls even today, within your remit, does it?
- 23 A. There's no official remit. I think the role that 24 Elizabeth Sanderson and I play is to pick up -- is to
- stay engaged with the community, pick up problems, raise

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- $1 \hspace{1.5cm} \hbox{them with government, and where there are issues and} \\$
- 2 difficulties and sensitivities , try and make sure that
- 3 the government fully understands the community's
- 4 position .
- $5\,$   $\,$  Q. Right. But does that involve, or might it involve,
- $\,$  6  $\,$  examining and advising on the effect of the report and
- 7 the recommendations of this panel?
- 8 A. So, again, one of the feedback we got from the community
- 9 in the early days was, "We don't know what the
- government is doing in relation to the recommendations
- of the first report". In my experience, not
- 12 untypically, actually there was a huge amount going on,
- but the government was absolutely lousy in communicating
- it, and there wasn't a system inside the government to
- 15 really drive accountability for it, including the London
- Fire Brigade. So our recommendation, which was
- 17 accepted, was there would be a ministerial group to
- drive that forward, and within that a process was
- developed to deliver a dashboard that the community
- 20 could access which would allow them to get to the
- information they wanted, specifically on the progress
  made against the recommendations made by this Inquiry.
- 23 So that would be one example of something where we'd
- heard some feedback from the community, took it into
- government, and through, you know, our advice to the

- Prime Minister and Number 10, tried to engineer something that we thought was helpful.
- Q. Right. I mean, is it right that your role, as described
   just now, will examine the effect of the report and the
   recommendations of the panel based, as it might be, in
   part, on the evidence you're giving today?
- 7 A. As I said, the remit is very broad. Where we feel the
  8 Prime Minister needs advice, we will give it. Normally,
  9 I would say, in practice, we are heavily led and
  10 influenced by what we hear from our relationship and our
  11 engagement with the community.
- Q. Have you or, to your own knowledge, the Prime Minister
   considered the risk and extent of any conflicts inherent
   in your accepting that role or continuing to occupy that
   role, the independent adviser to the Prime Minister, at
   the same time as being a witness?
- 17 A. I don't remember any material conversation around that.
   18 The system, if I can use that shorthand, was well aware
   19 that I was a core participant. No issues were raised in
   20 that respect.
- Q. Was any consideration given, to your knowledge, within
   central government, by you or anybody else, to how it
   could be that you could at one and the same time be
   a factual witness to the Inquiry, but at the same time
   be the Prime Minister's independent adviser in respect

- 1 of it?
- 2 A. Well, I think — with the current Prime Minister, 3 I think the basis of the ongoing relationship was rooted in a desire to see some continuity, because there was 5 a recognition that Secretaries of State have come and gone, ministers have come and gone, and that there was 6 value in having some people helping to advise who had 8 been involved in the process since the immediate 9 aftermath of the terrible disaster. I think that was 10 the primary driver of the current arrangement.

As I say, I don't recall any conversations about potential conflicts of interest, and there was, as far as I understand it, awareness that, you know, I might be called here as a witness at some point in the process.

- Q. Now, let's turn to your knowledge of the CCA, the CivilContingencies Act 2004.
- 17 Can I take it that you have heard of that piece of 18 legislation?
- 19 A. I have.
- Q. Yes. At the time of the fire , June 2017, were you awareof the regulations promulgated under that Act?
- 22 A. No

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- Q. You weren't? Were you aware of the statutory guidance,Emergency Preparedness?
- 25 A. No

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- 1 Q. And I think we can take it that you were not aware,
- $2 \hspace{1cm} \hbox{therefore, of the non-statutory guidance, Emergency} \\$
- 3 Response and Recovery.
- 4 A. No.
- Q. Or what's been called ConOps, which has the ratherlonger title of, "Responding to Emergencies: The UK
- 7 Central Government Response, Concept of Operations".
- 8 A. No.
- 9 Q. No. Had you ever read any of that material?
- 10 A. No, there was no reason for me to do so.
- 11 Q. During your ministerial career, have you ever or had you
- 12 ever received any training on civil resilience?
- 13 A. None
- 14 Q. I want to ask you about your time as Minister for
- Policing and the Fire Service at the Home Office, but
- before I do, can I just ask you: is it the case that
- since January 2016, the Home Office was responsible for
- 18 fire funding and policy framework in which the fire and
- 19 rescue authorities operated?
- 20 A. I believe that's the date. It certainly was my -- one 21 of my responsibilities as a new minister.
- 22 Q. Yes
- Now, turning to June 2017, was it your understanding at the time that the Home Office was the lead government
- department, or LGD, at least in respect of the immediate

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- 1 response?
- 2 A. It was made clear to me.
- 3 Q. By whom?
- 4 A. I can't recall exactly, but my expectation is it would
- 5 be David Lamberti, from whom I think you have received
- 6 evidence
- 7 Q. Yes. David Lamberti?
- $8 \quad \ \ A. \ \ Lamberti. \ \ For give the mispronunciation.$
- 9 Q. Yes. I think he was one of the Home Office —— he was 10 a Home Office official?
- 11 A. He was one of my senior officials at the Home Office.
- 12 Q. Yes, and we'll come to see his name when we see the list
- 14 A. Exactly.
- 15 Q. -- at the 16.00 14 June meeting, perhaps.
- Can you help us, when did the Home Office relinquish the role of lead government department in respect of the
- Grenfell Tower response or recovery?
- 19 A. I'm not entirely sure there was a moment, or certainly
- $20\,$  I wasn't part of the moment. My sense is that during
- 21 the course of, if I can shorthand, Thursday, there was
- a sort of growing recognition that CLG at the time was
- effectively becoming the lead ministry in terms of the
- 24 evolution into the recovery phase.
- $25\,$   $\,$  Q. Right. Was it your understanding that the CLG had some

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- 1 responsibility as lead government department for some 2 part of the response?
- 3 A. My understanding was always that in -- particularly in 4 relation to the performance of the local government 5 level 1 responder, I would naturally expect that the department with overall responsibility for local 6
- 7 authorities would, in effect, take the lead in terms of the relationship and decision-makers in that specific 8
- 9 context. For the blue lights, my expectation,
- 10 of course, would be that the Home Office would lead on 11 that.
- 12 Q. Right.
- 13 What was your understanding generally of the role of 14 a lead government department in the response, the 15 immediate response to an incident such as this?
- 16 A. My basic understanding was that the principal role was 17 of leading the co-ordination of the kind of support of 18 the national government to the response, in line with 19 the, you know, processes the legislation envisaged.
- 20 Q. Right. Did you have a clear understanding of the 2.1 responsibilities of a government department?
- 22 A. I wouldn't describe it as very clear, Mr Millett. As 2.3 you said at the top, I'd been in post for a day.
- 2.4 Q. Yes.
- 25 Did you understand —— and I'm quoting from ConOps,

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- 1 chapter 2, 2.8, but let me put it to you without going
- 2 to the document -- that the lead government department
- 3 usually takes overall responsibility for assessing the
- situation, ensuring that its ministers and other
- 5 relevant ministers are briefed, handling media and
- 6 parliamentary interest, and providing co-ordinated
- 7 policy and other support as necessary to local
- 8 responders?
- 9 A. Yes, I think that was broadly what was explained to me, 10 and I was aware that the Home Office had led in the 11 production of the sitreps, and the fact that I was asked 12 to chair the first meeting I think was evidence of clarity around the role of the Home Office in that
- 13 14 specific immediate context.
- 15 Q. Now, you say, "it was explained to me"; was that by 16 David Lamberti or other officials?
- 17 A. It wasn't explained in great depth. As we'll come on to
- 18 see, the circumstances of that first day meant that 19
- there wasn't a lot of time for detailed explanation of 2.0 the mechanics and detailed roles and responsibilities .
- 21 I was asked to chair a meeting and was pitched pretty
- 2.2 quickly into that.
- 23 Q. Yes. Well, let's turn to that. That's the 14 June 2.4 16.00 meeting.

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25 A. Correct.

within the Cabinet Office?

A. That's my understanding.

meeting?

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- 13 Q. Right. In general, can you help us --14 A. And that was relayed — sorry, that was relayed to me
  - 15 through the private office . I didn't speak to anyone 16 directly

Q. Now, it was called a cross-Whitehall ministerial

meeting. That was a meeting, am I right, convened by

the CCS, the civil contingencies secretariat, sitting

Q. Who was the person in that who asked you to chair the

A. The person I think I first met and who briefed me was

Katharine Hammond. The communication -- the decision

about the meeting was communicated to me I think at some

point in my visit to the tower around the middle of the

- 17 Q. Right.
- 18 Let's go to {CAB00000118}, please. If we can go to 19 the bottom of the page, page 1, we can see it's an email
- 2.0 from Alastair Whitehead on 14 June 2017 at 10.04, and he
- 21 is sending an email to the civil contingencies 22 secretariat . Do you see that?
- 23 A. I do.
- 2.4 If you turn to the top of page 2 {CAB00000118/2},
- 2.5 Alastair Whitehead says:

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- "Thanks. I've discussed with Stuart, and the 1
- Prime Minister has asked for a cross-Whitehall 2
- 3 coordination meeting this afternoon - given Home
- Secretary availability, I suggest we do this at Minister
- of State level, so chaired by Minister Policing & Fire, 5
- 6 with Ministers from Health, Transport, Housing, London,
- 7 etc. attending with the Mayor of London and operational
- 8 commanders. We'll need to cover, among other
- 9 things ...

10 Then there are four bullet points, and the third of

11 which you will see:

- 12 "Affected persons - immediate and medium-term
- 13 rehousing, potential financial support if appropriate."
  - Now, the Home Secretary at the time, I think, was
- 15 Amber Rudd: is that right?
- 16 A. That's correct.

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- 17 Q. Clearly there was an availability problem. What was
- 18 that, do you know?
- 19 A. I'm not aware of it.
- 2.0 Q. Right. Was there anything unusual about you personally
- 21 being asked to chair this meeting as opposed to her.
- 2.2 given that she was Secretary of State?
- 23 I wouldn't have known at the time because I wasn't aware
  - of precedent. I had never been in that situation
- 25 before. I'll be honest and say I felt it was strange at

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Opus 2 Official Court Reporters

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- 1 the time, but when you're given that instruction, you 2 take it
- 3 Q. You were given the instruction. You call it an 4 instruction. Who instructed you? I mean, you say --
- 5 A. As I said before, I received a message, I think, if my memory is correct, on my -- either on my way down to the 6
- tower or back from it saying, "There's a meeting in 7
- 8 Whitehall, you're being asked to chair it and we need to
- get back". 9
- Q. I mean, I ask the question in view of the document on 11 the screen. Was it your understanding at the time that 12 the instruction, or perhaps I should say suggestion, had come from Number 10? You can see it comes from --13
- A. No, I don't think I was clearly aware of that. 14
- Q. Right. 15

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- Now, can you help with whether the chairing of that 16 17 meeting by you as opposed to the Home Secretary made any 18 difference to the official status of the meeting in your 19 understanding at the time?
- 20 A. Could you clarify what you mean by official status? 2.1 Because I'm aware that --
- 2.2 Q. Yes.
- A. -- you were trying to tease out of Katharine Hammond 2.3 2.4 some of the definitions around COBR.
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- 1 A. I'm here to be helpful, so perhaps direct me to what 2 you're particularly interested in.
- 3 Q. Yes, absolutely. Second line of the email at the top of
- "... given Home Secretary availability, I suggest we 5 6 do this at Minister of State level ...'
- 7 Now, was the lack of availability by the Home 8 Secretary a reason why this was done at a different Minister of State level, in other words a more junior
- 9 10 Minister of State level? 11 A. I honestly can't answer that question. This is the
- 12 first time I've seen that email. I was just simply told, "There's a meeting and you have been asked to 13 14 chair it".
- 15 Q. Was it your understanding at the time that the meeting. 16 being at Minister of State level, had a different status 17 from the same meeting had it been chaired by the 18 Home Secretary?
- 19 A. I think I was aware that that is a different type of 2.0 meeting, and I subsequently went on to participate in 21 the meetings chaired by the Prime Minister, and that was 2.2 clearly a different level of meeting. So, yes, that ...
- 23 Q. Right. But just focusing on the very first part of that 2.4 answer, when you say that that is a different type of 25 meeting, are you telling us that had Amber Rudd been
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- available for the meeting and chaired it, it would have
  - had a different status, a more exalted status?
- 3 A. I'm not -- with respect to Amber Rudd, I'm not sure. My
- personal -- if I'm allowed to express a personal view, 4
- 5 my personal view is that those first two meetings should
- have been chaired and populated at a more senior level, 6
- 7 and I'm happy to give my reasons why. Part of those reasons why I think are about signalling, and we can  $-\ -$
- 9 I can expand on that if you want. I do, however,
- 10 perhaps register some sympathy with the position that
- 11 Katharine Hammond was trying to articulate with you,
- 12 that I'm not entirely sure that that would have resulted 13 in a different meeting.
- 14 Q. Right
  - Then let's turn to the question of COBR.
- 16 Can we go, please, to Melanie Dawes' witness 17 statement for this part of the Inquiry. This is at 18 {CLG00030653/36}, paragraph 119. We can see there she 19 savs in the second line, second sentence:
- 2.0 "When the Prime Minister chaired COBR on the Friday 21 this was very effective. It sent greater focus through 22 the system and had a positive impact on the wider
- 2.4 Then she savs this:

Government response.'

2.5 "Had the initial COBR meeting on the day of the fire

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- been chaired at Cabinet level, or by the Prime Minister, 1
- 2 it might have provided an additional layer of
- 3 questioning and challenge about the local response to
- that being provided by MHCLG and the Home Office."
- 5 First, was it your understanding on the day that 6 that initial meeting was a COBR meeting, as she seems to 7 suggest there?
- 8 A. No, it was called something else.
- 9 Q. Well, we will see the minute and the other documents
- 10 around it, but I think it was a cross-ministerial -
- 11
- 12 Q. -- meeting. But was it your understanding -- I think
- 13 you've said no, but to repeat the question, is this
- 14 right: your understanding was that this was not a COBR 15 meeting?
- 16 A. That was my understanding, yeah.
- 17 Q. And where did that understanding come from?
- 18 A. Perhaps not rooted in a deep understanding of, you know,
- 19 the COBR system, but my understanding of the COBR -- of
- 2.0 a COBR meeting is that it's peopled by Secretaries of
- 21 State and often the Prime Minister in the chair. That
  - may have been my uninformed view, but that was my
- 23 definition of what a COBR meeting is, full fat.
- 2.4 Q. Right. Okay.
- 25 What was your understanding at the time of the

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- circumstances in which a COBR meeting full fat, as you describe it, would have been necessary or appropriate?
- 3 A. Again, I come back to the point that at that moment on 4 that day, I didn't have any profound personal experience of this to be making judgements, but, you know, I refer 5 you to Katharine Hammond's evidence that, you know, 6 7 a full -fat COBR, if you like, is called where it's very, 8 very clear that national government has a major role to 9 play and decisions are required by senior ministers, and 10 I think you heard from her that wasn't necessarily the 11 judgement on the first day.
- 12 Q. Well, we'll work out in due course --
- 13 A. Of course, sorry.

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14 Q. — what we did and didn't hear from her, but I want your
 15 understanding.

Was it your understanding at the time that, whatever it was —— and we are on 14 June, when the meeting is called —— the Grenfell Tower fire at that point was not the kind of emergency which justified a full —fat COBR meeting?

A. No, what I was told was that there was a cross—Whitehall ministerial meeting that, as the Minister for Policing and the Fire Service, two of the blue lights most directly involved in the response phase, I had been asked to chair the meeting. It wasn't until I got to

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- the meeting, had the briefing, that I had a full understanding of the purpose meeting (sic) and went straight into it.
- Q. By the time of the meeting, at 4 o'clock on that day,
   were you surprised in your own mind that a COBR meeting
   properly so called, as you understood it to have been,
   had not been convened?
- 8 A. I think I have already expressed my personal view that 9 it would have been appropriate to call a meeting at 10 a more senior level from the start.
- Q. Now, looking at what Melanie Dawes says there on the
   screen, she says that if the meetings had been COBR or
   chaired by the Prime Minister, they might have provided
   an additional layer of questioning and challenge about
   the local response. Do you agree with that?
- 16 A. No. I agree with the first part of her statement. As 17 I said, I think that meeting should have been at the 18 most senior level from the start. But that is largely 19 because of the sheer weight of the moment and, you know, 2.0 we are talking about a situation in which the country 21 had woken up to one of the worst disasters in our 2.2 memory. We all remember how we felt that day. I just 2.3 felt that response was not proportionate to the anxiety 2.4 and trauma in the community and the country, and that
  - people expected to see a more senior level of leadership

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from the start. That remains my private view.

2 However -- and I'm sorry if this is nuanced -- I do 3 think the fundamental problem in those two meetings from 4 the point of view of central government was the lack of 5 ground truth and the lack of reliable, good information about what was actually happening on the ground, which 6 7 was completely unacceptable, and therefore my concern is 8 that even if attendance had been at a more senior level, 9 the brief would have been the same, the information to 10 the meeting would have been the same, and that's why 11 I caution against Melanie's extrapolation that somehow 12 that would have resulted in a different level of 13

challenge. I think the basic problem was the lack of ground truth in those meetings.

Q. Now, just in that last answer, just picking out the

thread of it, you say you felt that the response was not proportionate to the anxiety and trauma in the community and the country, and that people expected to see a more senior level of leadership from the start.

Was that your view at the time, on the day, or is that your view as a result of later events?

A. Well, thank you for allowing me to clarify that.
 I was — I think I've already said I was surprised on the day, but when you're asked to do things, you do it.
 So it is a judgement that has formed over time. But

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I do register again my caveat to that judgement: I don't

2 think people should extrapolate that necessarily as

3 a result of that upgrading of the meeting to a more

senior level, that necessarily the experience of the

bereaved, survivors and residents would have changedmaterially in that first day.

7 Q. Now, in paragraph 10 of your first statement
8 {HOM00046080/3} — I don't think we don't need to go to
9 them — you set out the objectives for the meeting in
10 the chair's brief, which I think you were provided with
11 by the Cabinet Office.

12 A. Correct.

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Q. Let's go to that. It's at {HOM00046083}. The panel
 have seen it a number of times with earlier witnesses.

Paragraph 1:

"You are chairing a Ministerial meeting at 16:00 on the Grenfell Tower fire. The objectives for the meeting are to ensure a shared understanding of the latest situation and outlook, determine any national support that is needed for the immediate response and to discuss emerging key policy issues."

Who prepared this document, do you know?

- A. I don't believe I ever asked. I think my assumption is
   it was produced by CCS with inputs from other people.
- $25\,$   $\,$  Q. Right. So not from the Home Office officials directly ,

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- 1 or is that wrong?
- 2 A. I can't be sure. I was aware that the Home Office had
- 3 played a role in line with their responsibility in
- 4 assembling the sitreps and the information into that
- $\,\,$   $\,\,$  meeting. In terms of who actually produced this chair's
- 6 briefing, I'm not sure I ever asked.
- Q. Now, in both of your witness statements you have
   referred to the fact, as you say, that Nicholas Holgate
- 9 dialled in to that meeting. I think you would wish to
- 10 correct that.
- 11 A. No, that was a mistake.
- 12 Q. Can you explain how that mistake arose?
- 13 A. Some muddle in my mind in terms of perhaps conflation of
- meetings. I know that I wasn't alone in that muddle,
- but I apologise for that muddle. I think, if I'm
- 16 honest, it probably also reflects an assumption that he
- would have been there.
- 18 Q. Right. So can we take it that you had not read
- 19 Katharine Hammond's witness statement before you
- $20\,$  provided your evidence or hadn't seen --
- 21 A. No, no, I hadn't read her witness statement at the time 22 in 2019 when I produced mine.
- in 2019 when I produced mine.
- $23\,$   $\,$  Q. No, and there may be a chronological reason for that.
- Just to be very clear, in the light of the answer
- you have just given, we have to correct, do we,

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- paragraph 9 of your first statement and paragraph 5 of
- 2 your second statement, where you refer to the fact that
- 3 Nicholas Holgate was on the call, or had dialled in to
- 4 the call?
- 5 A. Yes, and I apologise again if I've misled the Inquiry in
- 6 any way.
- 7 Q. Now, Nicholas Holgate was chief executive of Royal
- 8 Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, wasn't he?
- 9 A. Correct.
- $10\,$   $\,$  Q. And do you accept that his attendance at this meeting,
- 11 given that RBKC was the local authority category 1
- 12 responder, was extremely important?
- 13 A. Yes
- 14 Q. Did you expect him to attend?
- 15 A. Yes, I believe so.
- 16 Q. And therefore his absence -- is this right? -- from the
- meeting or from dialling in to the meeting by
- 18 teleconference would have been an obvious omission,
- 19 an obvious gap.
- 20 A. There's always a danger of looking at these things
- $21\,$  through the lens of hindsight. Again, I'd ask
- 22 the Inquiry to understand the circumstances. I'd just
- 23 come from the tower, I'd walked into the Cabinet Office
- $24\,$  building, into a briefing, you know, I'm engaged with
- $25 \hspace{10mm} \hbox{the need to chair a highly pressured and important} \\$

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meeting, I'm going straight into a briefing, and I'm being talked through the brief. There's a time pressure. I don't think there was a lot of time for debate around attendees, and I imagine I received some assurances that the information that the meeting required from the local authority was going to be

supplied in different ways.

You'll also see, Mr Millett, from the chairman's brief that the questions that you might reasonably expect to be directed at the council, I'm encouraged to direct them to the Minister at the Communities and Local Government.

- Government.
   Q. What was the source, as far as you can recall, of the
   information about what was happening on the ground and
   what RBKC was doing, if not Nicholas Holgate?
- 16 A. My understanding was that the information was going to
  17 be provided through the Department of Communities and
- Local Government, which is why the chair directed me to
- 19 ask those questions at Marcus Jones. I think was the
- 20 minister at the time, and we also, as you know, had the
- Lord Mayor, I believe, on the phone at that meeting as well.
- Q. Well, yes. Now, let's look, then, in the light of that,at the documents.
- 25 Can we go to the meeting minutes, please, and I want

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to show you two versions of this and see if you can

Can we have up first, please, {CAB00002714}, and I'm going to have at the same time, please, to save time, a second or different version of the minutes at {CAB00013811}.

First of all, we can see the first page, and they look reasonably similar, but I want to direct your attention, please, on the left—hand side, to, under the "Key issues" section, (b), with the title "Immediate shelter and medium term rehousing". Can you see that?

A. I can.

13 Q. Yes, and that says {CAB00002714}:

"The local Council were presently identifying temporary accommodation for those residents of Grenfell Tower. Longer—term re—housing would also be the responsibility of the Council. The Council were not currently asking for additional support."

Now, if you look at the right—hand side {CAB00013811}, this is a different version of the minutes, for the same meeting, and under the same heading, under (b), "Immediate shelter and medium term rehousing", it says this:

"THE MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT stated that the local Council were presently identifying temporary

- 1 accommodation for those residents of Grenfell Tower. 2 Longer-term re-housing would also be the responsibility 3 of the Council. The MAYOR OF LONDON pressed for further 4 reassurance and requested that contact was made with the local Council to ensure that affected individuals are 5 not left without accommodation." 6 7 Now, first, are you able to help us understand why 8 there are two versions of this minute with different 9 texts under that heading?
- 10 A. I can't. As I think the Inquiry are aware, these
   11 minutes were not circulated and the first time I've seen
   12 them is in preparing for this session.
- 13 Q. So that answers my next question.

Then doing the best you can with your recollection,
can you assist us with whether what we see on the
right—hand side of the screen, which is longer and more
detailed, was what was said?

18 A. I can't be sure. Where I'm guided to is the actions 19 from the meeting, which explicitly require the 20 department to liaise with the council in terms of 2.1 support for housing. So -- and accommodation. So 22 that -- my understanding of that, there would be 2.3 a discussion in the meeting, there may have been the 2.4 position on the left stated, which the council were not 25 currently asking for additional support, and there may

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- well have been a debate that resulted in that action.

  The level to which the Mayor of London participated in that debate, I can't quite remember.
- 4 Q. No.
- Do you recall, first of all, the Minister for Local
  Government who I think was Marcus Jones, wasn't it?
- 7 A. That's my recollection.
- 8 Q. Yes. Does that help you with who was providing the 9 update in respect of the local council?
- 10 A. I think, with respect, I'd already answered that. It
  11 was the department and he was the minister, and he was
  12 the one I was directed to ask the questions to in the
  13 chairman's brief
- $14\,$   $\,$  Q. Yes, and therefore -- I'm sorry to press.
- 15 A. No.
- Q. Therefore, is it your recollection that it was the
   Minister for Local Government, Marcus Jones, who said
   the local council are presently identifying temporary
   accommodation?
- A. I can't be sure because I don't have a very accurate reflection of the flow of the conversation, but the minute states that position was stated and my extrapolation of this and the actions is that there was a debate around that point and an action for the

department to liaise with the council, and that may or  $134 \label{eq:constraint}$ 

- may not have reflected a level of uncertainty and lack of confidence in the statement that they didn't need support.
  - Q. Do you recall the Mayor or the Mayor's representative there pressing for the further reassurances identified in the second part of that paragraph on the right?
- 7 A. I can't recollect it clearly, but that's not to say it didn't happen.
- 9 Q. Looking at the left—hand side and the last sentence, it 10 says:
- "The Council were not currently asking for additional support."

Do you recall that being said?

- 14 A. I can't remember it being said explicitly, but if it's
  15 minuted this explicitly then I think it's reasonable to
  16 assume that it was stated as such.
- 17 Q. Yes.

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Now, just picking up on the chair's brief you referred to —— and you're right to say that you were directed to ask Marcus Jones the question. Let's look at that. That's at {HOM00046083/2}, paragraph 5d. It's at the top of page 2. There it is, and if you look at 5d:

"ASK DCLG (Marcus Jones MP) what other support has been put in place to assist those affected (in

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particular whether sufficient rest centres have been established and if support being provided to victims' families )."

Did you ask that question, do you think?

- A. I can't recall explicitly asking it, but I do note that in the minutes of the meeting, if they're accurately reported, it makes clear that the chair gave every department the opportunity to raise problems, and what I can see clearly is that no problem was raised in that respect, or otherwise it would have been recorded in the minutes and I would have hoped some actions would have flowed from it.
- So I'm sorry not to be more clear on that, but that's the best that my memory can assist with at the moment.
- Q. We can see, if we look back at it but take this from
  me because it's gone from the screen there is no
  record in either version of the minutes of any
  discussion of that nature?
- A. No, and I accept that, where what I do see is that
   that section of the conversation in the meeting threw up
   an action in relation to liaison with the council about
- provision of accommodation, which suggests that there
- was a debate around the position that had been stated by
- 25 the department and a requirement of the department to

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- 1 liaise more closely with the council to see whether they 2 could help with something that was clearly an urgent 3 problem 4 Q. There was no discussion about rest centres or their --5 A. I think if there had been a discussion on the rest centres, it would -- likely to have been recorded. 6 7 You will know that in the CRIP or the sitrep there are 8 some basic facts about the establishment of the 9 rest centres. It may be that the department recorded 10 that. In the absence of anyone -- and, of course, this 11 is unforgivable in hindsight, but in the absence of 12 anyone raising a problem, the conversation moves on. 13 And I know that's very difficult for people to 14 understand now we know the reality that was being 15 endured by families at that time. But no problem was 16 raised  $\,--\,$  I believe that no problem was raised in that 17 meeting as it should have been. 18 Q. Allied to that, let's go back, then, to the version of 19 the minutes, the slightly longer version,  $\{{\sf CAB00013811/2}\}.$  If we can go to the top of page 2, 20
- affected and families", and it says:
   "There was discussion around offering Trauma
   Counselling to firefighters and ambulance workers
   involved in the incident. THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR

please, we can see a section headed, "Support for those

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1 HEALTH said that NHS England provided Bereavement and 2 Trauma Counselling services and that these could be made 3 available to those who needed it."

There is no record there of any discussion about actual support for the families affected, the bereaved or potentially bereaved, is there?

- A. No, and I think there is a problem with this minute, if I might explain, because I have some personal responsibility for this particular focus on trauma counselling for firefighters. So there was a discussion around it. I'm as clear as I can be it did not take place within the context of conversation around support for those affected and families. Why would it? And I'm happy to explain why prominence was given to that issue, if it's of interest to the Inquiry.
- if it's of interest to the Inquiry.
  Q. Well, it might be, but first, factual question number 1:
  was there a discussion about this kind of counselling
  being offered to the families at this meeting?
- A. Well, if I can just explain why emphasis was given on
   counselling to the firefighters , I can explain that
   because I have personal responsibility for it.
- 22 Q. Yes

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A. So I had come to this meeting straight from a visit to
 the tower. As you might expect, I'd been very affected
 by the horror of that spectacle. I had met Dany Cotton,

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the Fire Commissioner. I had asked her whether she had —— and this is all set out in my witness statement, and she had made one ask, and that was this specific ask for support for her firefighters. And so I had come from that meeting with her at the tower into the meeting, and I had kind of not wanted to lose sight of that point and, therefore, I registered —— my memory, which may be faulty, which is that I registered it at the top of the meeting, and there is a logical place to do that, where the first section talks about the needs of the blue lights, and I believe that I would have registered that at the top of the meeting. The fact that in the action list it is registered as the first action I think bears that out, because the action list follows the flow of the conversation.

So I completely understand, Mr Millett, why it would seem very strange that the meeting should give emphasis to blue light counselling in this context, however important that issue is, but I think the minutes play the right notes but in the wrong order.

- Q. Right. But are you saying that there was a different
   discussion at a different part of the meeting about
   offering counselling to the bereaved and the families?
- A. I think the basic point I would want to try and
   emphasise here, that as it says at the top, this was

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a meeting designed to flush out problems, and so there
may or may not have been a discussion about it. It
would have been incumbent on the NHS to brief the
meeting and to bring to the table any problems or any
requests for additional support. If they didn't, it
wouldn't have been registered, and I think that's what
happened.

- 8 Q. Was there any discussion about what support was to be 9 put in place for those affected, other than housing, as 10 we've seen?
  - A. Not that I can directly recall, but, again, the meeting was a problem—flushing meeting, and if people didn't recognise or didn't know there were problems at that time, they didn't bring it to the meeting and, therefore, the meeting focused on the wide range of problems that we did know about, and as you can see from the chairman's brief, there were about 18 different lines of questioning to different departments, each of those covering highly sensitive and difficult issues, and I was very conscious that one of my main challenges as the chair was to get across all those issues and make sure that nothing was left out, and I feel I did that.

But, again, I make my central point: that was a meeting to flush out problems. If problems weren't flushed out, there wasn't a debate or discussion.

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1	Q.	Let's go back to the brief, then, in light of that.	1	Q.	16, "Media and communications":
2		That's at $\{HOM00046083/2\}$ . You can see there that under	2		"There is significant coverage on Sky News and BBC
3		paragraph 6, under "Requests for additional support", it	3		news, with video coverage of the fire submitted from
4		says:	4		members of the public.
5		"ASK DCLG (Marcus Jones MP) if there have been any	5		"For earlier media coverage please refer to previous
6		requests for mutual aid from the Strategic Coordination	6		SitReps.
7		Group. ASK if any offers of additional support have	7		"Nick Hurd took questions from the Press around
8		been made by neighbouring Boroughs."	8		1700hrs."
9		Was there any discussion on those topics?	9		Do you see that?
10	Α.	Not that I can remember specifically. I have noted in	10		I do.
11		the CRIP that by the time of this meeting it's recorded	11	Q.	It's reported that you say, in answer to the question
12		there was an offer of assistance from Hammersmith and	12		"Tell us what was discussed", in the third square bullet
13		Fulham, so I $$ participants who had read the CRIP would	13		point it says:
14		have been aware of that.	14		"It was a meeting of senior ministers and senior
15		Right.	15		officials from cross [sic] the systems and I leave it
16	Α.	But I don't recall any debate, and of course the absence	16		feeling reassured that the resources are in place and
17		of Nicholas Holgate or anyone from the council would	17		the capacity is in place to support people through this
18		have rather undermined the opportunity to have any	18		immediate emergency response."
19		debate about that.	19		What was it that reassured you that resources were
20	Q.	Right. Can you explain why there wasn't a debate about	20		in place and that there was capacity in place to support
21		those matters, requests for additional assistance?	21		people?
22	Α.	I can't — you know, I can't explain why there wasn't	22	Α.	Well, in part because that's what the meeting was told.
23		any debate. I think part of the explanation may lie in	23		In large part because that's what the meeting was told.
24		the absence of the council, because obviously, you know,	24		Again, it's a meeting to flush out problems and,
25		the question people would want to ask is, "Why have you	25		you know, I come back to my central point: that meeting
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1		not taken up this offer of support?", and only he or his	1		was not adequately informed by the ground truth of what
2		colleagues could have answered that.	2		was happening in the area. And to my eyes now, in
3	Q.	Yes.	3		hindsight, clear failures of intelligence in terms of
4		Now, let's go, then, to what happened next after the	4		bringing the right information to that meeting and,
5		meeting.	5		therefore, you know, unacceptable, as it looks today,
6		Can we go, please, to $\{HOM00046089\}$ . Now, this is	6		because it reads terribly complacently. I could only
7		a very long email collection, I think is the right word.	7		report what the feeling of that meeting was, which was
8		We can go to page 14 within it $\{HOM00046089/14\}$ . At	8		at that point in time, on day one, there was $$
9		page 14 we can see an official sitrep number 4,	9		you know, the message was, you know, "We can cope, we
10		14 June 2017, received at 17.29. Do you see that?	10		have the resources, we have the capacity".
11	Α.	Yes.	11	Q.	But the "we" there is RBKC, isn't it?
12	Q.	Yes. It's exhibit number 7 to your first witness	12	Α.	To some degree and most importantly, but, you know, this
13		statement.	13		is a $cross-Whitehall$ meeting where every department $$
14	Α.	Yes.	14		and the minute is very clear that I left space for every
15	Q.	It says:	15		department to signal any problems, and, you know, the
16		"Please find below SitRep 4 for the ongoing fire	16		actions show where the debate focused, which was
17		related incident at Grenfell Tower in Latimer Road,	17		immediately recognition of the challenge that
18		London. Please direct any queries to the HO Fire Duty	18		the council were going to have in relation to temporary
19		Officer at"	19		accommodation and an action that the department needed
20		Then there is an email address.	20		to engage urgently with them, notwithstanding their

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statement that they didn't need any support. So there

media were very quick on to the national issue, which

was the fact that people were going to bed that night

As you will see from the rest of the interview, the

clearly was some active debate around that.

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A. Yes.

If we go, please, to "Media and communications",

which I think we need on page 16  $\{HOM00046089/16\},$  you

can see that there is a question from the press about

the  ${\ensuremath{\mathsf{cross}}}{-}{\ensuremath{\mathsf{ministerial}}}$  meeting earlier that day.

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- 1 alarmed about the safety of the buildings they were in,
  - and so that, as you would expect, did occupy some space
- 3 of the meeting in terms of a ministerial response to
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- 5 Q. Yes, indeed, and you cover that next in the Q&A.
- A. Yes. 6
- Q. By this point, were you aware that there were others,
- not from Grenfell Tower but from the surrounding 8
  - buildings, particularly the walkways, who had been
- 10 evacuated and were going to be needing emergency
- 11 temporary accommodation?
- 12 A. My honest answer to that is I don't think that meeting
- 13 was sufficiently aware of that point, and I'm not sure
- if I -- my memory of the CRIP sheets or the sitreps, 14
- 15 which is what the -- kind of the information feed at
- 16 that meeting, I don't think they capture that truth
- 17 adequately either, is my honest recollection.
- 18 Q. Now, you mentioned earlier in your evidence today that 19 you had come to the 4 o'clock meeting from, if I can
- 20 call it this, the incident ground, from the building;
- 2.1 yes?
- 2.2 A. Correct.
- Q. And you had visited that, I think, in your capacity as 2.3
- 2.4 Minister for Policing and the Fire Service at about
- 25 1 o'clock that day, 1300 hours.

- 1 A. Around that time, yeah.
- 2 Q. Just to be clear, is it right that you didn't, at that
- 3 stage, visit any of the surrounding areas, including
- rest centres?
- 5 A. No, I wish I had and I can explain why not.
- Q. Why not? 6
- 7 A. The most practical issues that I had been informed -- my
- 8 recollection is I had been informed about the meeting on
- 9 the way down or at some point during the visit, and the
- 10 advice was, quite rightly, I needed to get back to
- 11 prepare for what was a critical meeting. In practical
- 12 terms, that's the most direct reason.
  - In hindsight, I wish I'd have gone down earlier and seen more. There were frustrating delays in getting
- 15 authorisation to make a visit, so, in effect, my visit
- 16 was unauthorised.
- 17 Q. Now, you went down there. Presumably you went to the 18 cordon.
- 19 A. Correct.
- 2.0 Q. Did you go through the cordon?
- 2.1 A. Yes.

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- 2.2 Q. How close did you get to the tower?
- 23 A. My recollection is I stood at the foot of the tower with
- 2.4 the deputy fire commissioner, Steve Apter, and the fire

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25 commissioner. There were police officers there and

- there were ambulance services there. The fire was still 2
  - active, there was a fire engine still being deployed and
- 3 there were firefighters resting on the grass, from
- 4 memory.
- 5 Q. Now, before you went through the cordon, did you have
- 6 a chance to observe what was happening in the streets?
- 7 A. I  $\,--$  my recollection was that it was very difficult to
- 8 get to the site, and my hazy recollection is that it was
- 9 a confused landscape in terms of manoeuvering around 10 and, as you might expect, an atmosphere that it's very
- 11 hard to describe.
- 12 Q. Can you describe it?
- 13 A. Well, I think part of the, you know ... not adequately,
- 14 if I'm honest, Mr Millett. I was in the cordon -- it
- 15 took a bit of time to get there, but I was in the cordon
- 16 where, obviously, by definition, there was a sort of
- 17 insulated feeling, but the horror of the building was,
- 18 you know, very powerful.
- 19 Q. Now, at any part of your visit, first of all, were you
- 20 accompanied by anybody from RBKC?
- 2.1 A. No.
- 2.2 Q. Did that strike you as strange?
- 2.3 No, because I come back to the genesis of the visit,
- 2.4 which was, rightly or wrongly, I looked -- I had been
- 2.5 sitting frustrated in the Home Office, wanting to go

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- 1 down. I was a newly appointed fire and police service
- minister. I felt I was in the wrong place sitting in 2
- 3 the Home Office. I wanted to go. As my witness
- statement says, I'd had a conversation earlier that
- 5 morning with Deputy Commissioner Steve Apter. He had 6
- made it clear that I was welcome to go down there and 7
- I was keen to do so, had suffered frustrations in terms 8
  - of getting authorisation to do so.
- 9 So my lens was very much as a Minister for Police 10 and the Fire Service who didn't at that stage recognise
- 11 that I was about to be pitched into a sort of wider
- 12 responsibility in terms of chairing that meeting.
- 13 In hindsight, of course, I wish it would have been
- 14 different, because I might have gone into that meeting
- 15 with some ground truth that meeting didn't have.
- 16 Q. Right.
- 17 Did you feel that, although the Home Office being
- 18 responsible for fire meant that it was lead government
- 19 department in respect of the response to this civil
- 2.0 emergency, you were adequately briefed and trained in 21 that aspect of your portfolio?
- 2.2 I don't see how I could have been, given that this was
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- 24 And finally on this, did you observe at any time during
- 25 that visit anybody from RBKC or, so far as you might

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1 have been able to tell. KCTMO? 2 A. No. To be honest, though, I'm not sure I would have 3 expected to -- I don't know what the rules around the 4 cordon were, but that was a space in which the blue 5 lights were working. Q. Now, let's turn to 15 June. 6 Can we go, please, to  $\{HOM00046090\}$ . If we could 7 pick up the second email, please, at the foot of the 8 9 page, it's an email from your private secretary, 10 I think, to the office of Sajid Javid, "FAO James -11 Access to Cash and sleeping materials", and it's timed 12 at 8.45. The email confirms that both offices have 13 spoken and there were concerns raised by you

> If you look at the second and third bullet points. The second bullet point is right at the foot of page 1:

"The Minister has been told that there is an urgent issue with access to cash for former residents of Grenfell Tower. He's also been told via Margot James MP (BEIS Minister) that the Post Office - there is local one just around the corner from the tower, have offered to facilitate access to money for residents. He would be really grateful if your teams were able to facilitate a link between the Post Office and the local Council so that they can make people aware.'

Then the third bullet point {HOM00046090/2}:

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"There have also been a couple of concerns raised with him about the quality of the sleeping materials that were available for people last night and asked if there was anything HMG could do to help the Council upgrade?"

Now, just looking at that, Mr Hurd, would it be right to say that, based on this email, concerns about residents getting access to cash and about the quality of sleeping materials at the rest centre were raised with you either late on 14 June or early morning on Thursday, the 15th?

12 A. Yes

- 13 Q. Can you recall which it was? Was it late on the 14th or 14 was this the first -- was it just before you sent this 15 message?
- 16 A. No, I can't be sure, but my instinct is that these would 17 have been concerns raised towards the end of the day 18 previously, which were recorded and sort of despatched 19 into the system first thing in the morning. But I may 2.0 be wrong on that.
- 21 Q. Let's then turn to your first contact with RBKC.

Can we go, please, to the first email on page 1 in this same email string {HOM00046090/1}. This is the continuation of that discussion, and this is an email back from Sajid Javid at 9.44 that morning, which

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confirms that both offices had indeed met since the 2 earlier email at 8.45 that I've just shown you. "James, 3 it was good to meet you earlier" is how it starts, and 4 then it confirms in the third paragraph:

> "The Minister is keen that i) someone from HMG speaks to the CEO of the PO and ii) link is made to the Council and that residents are able to access money as soon as possible unless there are already alternative arrangements in place?"

We can see in the second paragraph reference is made to the leader of RBKC council, and specifically a suggestion that Nicholas Holgate be the right person for the Post Office to connect with. Do you see that?

14 A. I do.

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15 Q. Yes, in the second paragraph there.

16 Now the leader of the council was 17 Nicholas Paget-Brown, wasn't it?

18 A He was

19 Q. Yes. Did you speak to him?

20 A. I did at some point during these proceedings, as I set 2.1 out in my witness statement. I do not recall 22

a conversation with him about this specific subject. 23 Q. Do you think you spoke to the leader before 9.44, or

2.4 perhaps before 8.45 that morning?

2.5 A. I don't recall explicitly having a conversation with him

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1 about this urgent issue about access to cash. It may well be that it was processed by other people. 2.

3 Q. Right. It's a timing point really .

A. I understand, yeah.

5 Q. Can we narrow down the timing of your call to

6 Nicholas Paget-Brown to at a point, some point, before 7 9.44 on that morning, looking at the second paragraph?

8 A. I can see why you might lead to that. I am -- and I'm 9 frustrated by this. I am struggling to recall exactly 10 when I had that call with Nicholas Paget-Brown, because 11 I may have confused myself with my error about the 12 attendance of Mr Holgate in the first meeting. My best 13 estimate at this moment is that I had the conversation 14 with Mr Paget-Brown at some point on the Thursday 15 morning, is my best recollection, and it may well have

16 been in line with your line of questioning.

17 Q. Right. Okay.

18 Now, in your second statement {HOM00050072/4}, 19 paragraph 7 -- and we don't need to go to it -- you 2.0 refer to speaking first with Nicholas Holgate, the chief 21 executive of RBKC, your first conversation with him.

2.2 Can you remember when you first spoke to

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2.4 So correct me if I'm wrong, but are you assuming that

25 I had these conversations? Because I'm not necessarily

- 1 assuming that from reading this email.
- 2 Q. No, let's go to the statement then.
- 3 A. Yeah.

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- 4 Q. I'm not using the email to base my question, I'm
- 5 using --
- A. The first time I heard Mr Holgate's voice was in the 6 7 meeting of 15 June, in the cross-ministerial meeting.
- 8 Q. You are clear about that, are you?
- 9 A. I'm as clear as I can be, yeah.
- 10 Q. Let's see if we can be clearer even more.

If we go, please, to  $\{HOM00050072/4\}$ , your second statement, paragraph 7, you say in the middle of the paragraph:

"My first interaction with the leadership of RBKC 14 15 had been with Nicholas Holgate, the Chief Executive ... of RBKC " 16

17 Now, that suggests that your first conversation with 18 Nicholas Holgate was before your first conversation with 19 Nicholas Paget-Brown: ves?

20 A. Yes, but I think this plays into my misunderstanding and 2.1 my muddle around which meetings Mr Holgate attended. So 22 my first recollection was that the call with

2.3 Mr Paget-Brown followed that meeting.

- 2.4
- 25 A. I'm now in doubt about the sequence.

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- 1 Q. I see. I understand. I follow. I understand that.
- 2 A. Thank you.
- 3 Q. So in fact it's possible, looking at the email I showed
- you, that you spoke to Nicholas Paget-Brown first and at
- 5 some point before 9.44 on the morning of the 15th, but
- didn't speak to the chief executive, Nicholas Holgate, 6
- until the meeting that afternoon?
- 8 A. That's possible.
- 9 Q. Yes, it's possible. What's your recollection so far as 10 vou have -
- 11 A. Probable.
- 12 Q. Right.
- Now, when you did speak to Nicholas Holgate, can you 13 14 remember what you spoke to him about?
- A. Mr Holgate or Mr Paget—Brown, sorry? 15
- 16 Q. Mr Holgate.
- A. So my recollection is the  $--\ \mbox{my}$  first conversation with 17
- 18 Mr Holgate was as chair of the inter-ministerial meeting
- 19 and he was an attendee attending by phone, so I never
- 2.0 saw him, I never had a -- I don't believe I had a prior
- 21 conversation with him.
- 2.2 Q. Right. So essentially we have to read paragraph 7 of
- 23 your second statement in the light of what you have told 2.4

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- us?
- 2.5 A. In the light -- exactly.

1 Q. I follow.

2 Now, sticking with 15 June, on that day and indeed

- 3 around that time, I think it's right, isn't it, that
- 4 parliament wasn't sitting?
- A. Because of the election, yes. 5
- Q. Because of the election. But, nonetheless, it's right 6
  - that an extraordinary meeting was convened on 15 June;
- 8

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- 9 A. Correct
- 10 Q. Yes. Do you know who called that meeting?
- 11 A. No. I mean, I think it's what's described as the usual
- 12 channels, so it would have been an agreement somehow
- 13 between the parties at the Leader of the House level or
- 14 at the whips level. I'm guessing, I've never asked, but
- 15 I assume that is how these occasions are agreed.
- 16  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Q}}.$  Right. And what was the purpose of the meeting, so far 17 as you understood it?
- 18 A. Oh, I'm very clear on that. As I alluded to earlier,
- 19 you know, this was, you know, one of the worst national
- 20 disasters to have affected this country in peacetime.
- 21 It would be absolutely right for our democracy to debate
- 22 and discuss it . You know, obviously the primary issue
- 23 was, you know, the local condition and issues that arise
- 2.4 around support for the community affected, but it was
- 2.5 a national issue as well in which, you know, MPs were

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- 1 having to cope, having to deal with enquiries from their
- 2 constituents, who were either very concerned about the
- 3 event and the response then, or very concerned about
- their own personal safety in the tower blocks they're
- 5
- in. So it's a long answer, but it was entirely
- 6 appropriate that, you know, our democracy should not 7
- ignore the moment.
- 8 Q. Now, did you attend a briefing session before that
- 9 meeting?
- 10 A. I believe so.
- 11 And that, I think, was with Alok Sharma MP, who was then
- 12 the Minister of State for Housing and Planning.
- 13 Yes, and possibly other attendees as well.
- Q. I think Andrea Leadsom as well; yes? 14
- 15 A. That would make some sense.
- 16 Q. Well, she was Leader of the House.
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- 18 Q. That meeting started, according to the record, at 13.30.
- 19 Would that --
- 2.0 A. That sounds right.
- 21 — accord with your recollection?
  - Is this right: you led that meeting, together with
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- 2.4 A. Yes, which was very unusual. It was an exceptional
- 25 meeting in every sense, and I can explain why.

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Q. Could you, please?

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- 2 A. Because if parliament had been sitting normally, the
- 3 meeting would have been chaired effectively by the
- 4 speaker, and the ministers responsible would have been
- 5 held to account at the despatch box. This was a wholly
- 6 unusual meeting where, in effect, I was chairing the
- 7 meeting as well as answering questions to the
- 8 government, alongside Alok Sharma. It was extraordinary
- $9\,$   $\,$  in the sense it was held in a different room. It was
- $10\,$   $\,$  a highly emotionally charged meeting. So it was
- 11 exceptional in every circumstance.
- $12\,$   $\,$  Q. Now, you say in your statement that you fielded a large
- number of questions from MPs who, amongst other things,
- 14 were concerned about the residents. Was there
- a discussion on that topic?
- 16 A. Yes, and in large part it resulted in the -- effectively
- 17 the guarantee that Alok Sharma made about offering
- housing within the local area, which I think, in my
- 19 recollection , flowed in part from the debate in that
- 20 meeting, which obviously had a large number of London
- 21 MPs in it, as well as representatives from all over the country.
- 23 Q. So discussion about housing. Was there any discussion
- $24\,$  about any other aspect of the impact of the fire on
- 25 residents or, more broadly, families, bereaved or

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- 1 potential bereaved, and surrounding residents?
- 2 A. Not that I can recall directly. That doesn't mean it
- didn't happen. One of the exceptional features of this
- $4 \qquad \mbox{ meeting is that there is no recording of it, as} \\$
- 5 I understand it, there's no filming of it, as
- 6 I understand it, which is frustrating .
- 7 However, to be fair to my parliamentary colleagues,
- 8 I recall that there was, you know, a great deal of
- 9 concern expressed in that meeting about the welfare of
- $10\,$   $\,$  the -- of, if I may say, the living victims of the fire .
- 11~ Q. Now, according to Alok Sharma's witness statement -- we
- don't need to go to it, but it's at  $\{CLG10009731/7\}$ , paragraph 23 the meeting finished at 3.15, 15.15 pm.
- paragraph 25 —— the meeting limitined at 3.15, 15.15 pm
- Would that accord with your recollection?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 Q. So it was quite a long meeting.
- 17 A. Yes.
- $18\,$   $\,$  Q. And you yourself I think that very morning had raised
- concerns about the support being provided to those
- affected, as we've seen from the emails.
- 21 A. Yes
- $22\,$   $\,$  Q. Yes. Did your concerns in your mind on the morning of
- that day occupy any time of the meeting?
- $24\,$   $\,$  A. I remember ... I remember speaking to the need for the
- state to effectively put its arms round the community,

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and I remember talking about the need to avoid plodding bureaucracy in that process, and I think that was the

3 sort of general sense of the meeting as well. So -- and

 $4 \qquad \quad \text{obviously that meeting then flowed into the second} \\$ 

5 meeting, where, as you can see, at the top of that 6 meeting, from the minutes of the meeting, that I'd made

7 it very clear that I wanted that meeting to focus on 8 individuals .

9 Q. Yes, and we're going to come to that in just a moment.

Before we do, can I ask you, please, to look at your first statement, page 9 {HOM00046080/9}, and go, please, to paragraph 27. In the middle of the paragraph, you pick up the meeting with Alok Sharma, and then just

14 after halfway down you say:

"I gave a statement and the meeting was also used as an opportunity for parliamentarians to ask questions of the Government. It was held in Westminster Hall and we fielded a large number of questions from MPs who, amongst other things, were concerned about the residents being rehoused and the safety of other buildings across the country. The special meeting reflected the deep shock felt up and down the country."

Now, the only two topics you mention specifically there are rehousing and the safety of other buildings across the country. Was there any discussion, to the

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- best of your recollection , on any other topic?
- 2 A. I'm sure there was, because I think Members of
- 3 Parliament wanted to register their deep shock at how
- 4 something like this could happen in Britain. I'm sure
- that there was a discussion or position—taking on why
   this had happened. I'm sure that a range of other
- 7 issues were debated and discussed. I say debated, but
- 8 it was more of a series of Members of Parliament giving
- 9 statements and positions. I may have just chosen those
- two issues because they fed into the meeting that I wenton to chair.
- 12 Q. Well, let's go to that, then.
- That meeting started, I think, at 15.30. This is the second cross—Whitehall ministerial meeting.
- 15 A. Yes, Alok and I went straight from parliament to that 16 meeting.
- Q. Right. And, as you told us before, Nicholas Holgate diddial in to that meeting.
- 19 A. He did.
- 20 Q. Yes

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- Then there is a chair's brief again. Let's look at that: {HOM00046131}, which is your exhibit 4 to your first statement, and as you say, at the top of the
- $24\,$  briefing note, in the third line:

"In particular, you will want to probe on progress

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, the time doesn't have to be 1 on the provision of support to victims and the emergency 2 services and the provision of fire safety advice to the exactly 3.20. We can allow you a certain amount of 3 public.' 3 indulgence. I don't think the witness will mind if we 4 So that had become -- is this right? -- something at 4 go on for a few more minutes. 5 the top of your agenda, progress on the provision of 5 A. I don't mind at all. support to victims and the emergency services? MR MILLETT: Let's --6 6 7 7 A. Nor do I need a break if you need the time. 8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Well, there are others who would Q. Yes 8 9 Now, if we go, please, to {CAB00002720}, let's pick 9 welcome one. 10 10 up the minutes of the meeting. We can see who was there A. Others may, yes. 11 from the first page. You can see there you're in 11 MR MILLETT: Let's take this in stages. I'm never one to 12 12 the chair. list of names. Bottom of the screen. refuse an indulgence from the Chairman. 13 Nicholas Holgate dialling in. 13 Right, let's go, please, to page 3 {CAB00002720/3}, Top of page 2 {CAB00002720/2}, please: 14 14 then, item 2(a) 15 "THE CHAIR opened by emphasising the need for 15 "2. Key issues. rigorous understanding of the situation affecting 16 16 "a) Immediate shelter and medium term rehousing 17 individuals to inform the response." 17 "Those affected were being placed into hotels for 18 Was that as a result of the concerns raised with 18 immediate shelter, with 77 from Grenfell Tower and 25 19 19 you, as well as the direction in the brief? people from the surrounding area in hotels. A large A. I think it  $\ensuremath{\text{reflects}}$  a growing understanding that there 20 2.0 number of people are assumed to have gone to stay with 2.1 was a problem which arguably should -- almost certainly 21 friends and family, though the Westway centre had 2.2 should have been there the day before, so  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{I}}$  just wanted 22 capacity for 300 to stay and only 30 were there the 2.3 23 to make it very clear that I wanted to focus that previous night." 2.4 meeting on support for individuals and understanding 2.4 Did you have clarity at that meeting about whether what was needed and what was going on. 25 those figures of those housed in emergency accommodation 161 related to individuals or households? What were those 1 Q. And what was the precise problem that you were 1 increasingly understanding? 2 2 3 3

A. Oh, you know, I think there was a growing sense that we

had not been sufficiently informed about the ground truth. The Inquiry will be very well aware that, in parallel, there's a kind of very sustained and intensive sort of media story building, which, from my recollection -- I think this is borne out by the CRIPs on the first day -- was very much around; how could this have happened? But then, I think quite rightly, soon evolved into exploring some of the failings on the ground in support for the community.

So my recollection may be hazy on that, but I sense that this was part of an overdue shift on the part of central government to really focus on actually what was happening on the ground to support bereaved, survivors and residents.

18 MR MILLETT: Yes

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Mr Chairman, I have a number of questions still on this minute, but I think I probably won't finish before 3.20, so I'm happy to make a start --

2.2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Would you rather break at this point 23 or do you want to finish the questions?

2.4 MR MILLETT: Let me get to exactly 3.20, and I may have come 25 to --

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A. I can't recall exactly, but I think you'll be aware from the action list , from memory the two first actions from

5 this meeting were related to clear uncertainty and 6 concern about the quality of data and information

7 available. From memory. I haven't got the action 8 points in front of me. But by now we were very

9 concerned about the quality of information and data we

10 had about some very basic things, like how many people 11 were in the tower and how many people actually needed

12 support, and when we come on to Mr Holgate's testimony,

13 that was at the crux of his lack of credibility .

14 Q. Right. But this, I think, was something that you had 15 been aware of from earlier that morning, isn't it, this 16 problem about numbers and consistency?

17 A. Yes, it had definitely grown through the day as a very 18 clear concern that we -- our knowledge of how many 19 people were in the tower and how many people needed

2.0 support was not fit for purpose.

21 Q. Let's just leave that document on the screen, and can we 2.2 then go at the same time, please, to {HOM00046089/21}.

23 This is within the bundle of situational reports, or

2.4 sitreps, which you exhibit at LH/7, and this one is at

25 9.00 am on 15 June, as you can see; yes?

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evacuated, and yet only 25 had spent the night in accommodation. Did that inconsistency concern you? A. I think that just merely reinforces my central point.

There was too much inconsistency around numbers, which is why that meeting focused very much on trying to put in place processes to improve our understanding of the

11 Q. Yes. Yes, thank you. We may come back to this --

12 A. Of course.

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MR MILLETT: -- minute in due course but Mr Chairman is 13 14 that a convenient moment for the afternoon break?

15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: I think it is, yes, thank you.

> Well, as you know, Mr Hurd, we have a break during the afternoon for the benefit of all sorts of people, so we're going to take it now. We will resume, please, at 3.40, and while you're out of the room, I have to ask you, please, not to discuss your evidence with anyone. All right?

21 2.2

THE WITNESS: Thank you. 23 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go

2.4 with the usher, please

> (Pause) 166

Thank you, Mr Millett. 3.40, then, please.

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3 (3.23 pm)

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(A short break)

5 (3.40 pm)

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Hurd, ready to carry 6

on. I hope?

8 THE WITNESS: Yes.

9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.

10 Yes. Mr Millett.

11 MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, thank you.

12 Mr Hurd, can I ask you, please, to go back to the 13 document we were on, which is the sitrep

14 {HOM00046089/22}, on the right—hand part of the screen,

and look at the penultimate bullet point, where it says:

"Rest Centres: Some heated flare—ups between 17 individuals especially regarding media intrusion. The

18 West Way rest centre staved open overnight for those who

19 had not been provided with alternative accommodation.

2.0 Further humanitarian assistance centres will open

2.1 today "

22 Now, first, were any flare-ups discussed during the 23 meeting, do you think?

2.4 Not that I can recall.

25 Was it clear to you how many humanitarian centres would

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1 be opened?

2. A. I can't recall.

3 Q. Was it clear to you who was responsible for opening them 4

5 A. My assumption would be the local authority.

6 Q. Right. Did you leave this meeting feeling reassured

7 that the resources and capacity were in place to support

8 those affected by the fire?

9 A. The overall and most powerful recollection from this 10 meeting was the complete collapse in the credibility of 11 Nicholas Holgate when under questioning. That is the

12 overriding impression of this meeting.

13 Q. Right. I think that might answer the next question, but 14 let's pinpoint it exactly in your first statement. Can 15 we go to that, please, at page 5  $\{HOM00046080/5\}$ , 16 paragraph 17. You say, about three-quarters of the way 17 down the block of text that you began to lose faith in

18 RBKC's ability to deal with the situation.

19 At what point on the 15th, I think it is, of June 2.0 did you begin to lose faith in RBKC?

21 A. Well. I think this meeting was a defining meeting, and 2.2 I think you've heard that from other sources. It was --23 because of his failure to attend the previous day, this 2.4 was the first time, effectively, the council was kind of

25 open to questions, and as we discussed before the break,

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- 1 there was a growing concern about data, the reliability 2 of data, and numbers, and he really wasn't able to 3 answer some questions that anyone might reasonably ask 4 him -- expect him to answer, and you've seen the 5 reactions to the meeting. I think it was instrumental 6 in the dropping of the penny across the system.
- 7 Q. Can you give us a concrete example of a question which he wasn't able to answer which you had been expecting 8 9 him to be able to answer?
- 10 A. So my recollection, the focus of the discussion was 11 around housing need. You'll be aware that the housing 12 minister. Alok Sharma, had come to that meeting from parliament, where he had made effectively a guarantee about rehousing in the local area. You'll know that he'd been pressing the council leader, I think, the night before for numbers, numbers, numbers, and it became quite clear from the questioning and the investigation in that meeting that the council weren't on top of the numbers, both in terms of numbers of people in the tower and the broader housing requirement, 21 and I can still see the faces round the room of 2.2 incredulity.
- Q. Right. 2.3

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2.4 Can I just ask you, though, the Alok Sharma 25 guarantee you just referred to, was that to rehouse

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- 1 everybody affected by the fire within three weeks?
- 2 A. No, that was the -- it was a guarantee to rehouse within
- 3 the local area those who wanted to be rehoused in the
- local area. There wasn't a timeframe put on it on the
- 5 Thursday, when the procedure got escalated to what I've
- called full -fat COBR. It was effectively the 6
- 7 Prime Minister that drove the decision to put
- 8 a timeframe on it.
- 9 Q. I see, thank you.
- 10 Now, what did you do as a result of this loss of 11 faith?
- 12 A. Well, I think as you can see from the evidence around 13 the system, it was a defining moment, so it was the 14 moment that the penny dropped with Number 10, who were 15 there at the meeting. I think you've seen the evidence 16 from Helen MacNamara and other people from the 17 department who were at the meeting. I think you've seen 18 the reaction of Katharine Hammond at CCS. It was the 19 moment when I think the system belatedly recognised that 2.0 the council were failing and were not on it and that 21 something needed to change, and I think it's from that
- 2.2 moment on that the wheels started to turn.
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- 2.4 Do you agree with Katherine Richardson's assessment 25 of Mr Holgate in that meeting that he was quite

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- defensive and tried to assure ministers that no
  - additional help was required?
- 3 A. I think he was still on that page, and I think that was,
- 4 again, where the incredulity and the lack of credibility
- started to build. We couldn't have had a clearer 5 6 picture.
- 7 Q. What measures were in place to monitor or oversee that
- 8 RBKC had the necessary resources from central government
  - effectively to be able to carry out their
- 10 responsibilities from the start?
- 11 A. I think those are questions best directed at the
- 12 Department for Communities and Local Government. My 13 short answer is they were inadequate.
- 14 Right. And that appeared to you at the time, did it?
- 15 A. Well, by now -- and this may be part hindsight
- judgement -- I think I, as chair, and the rest of the 16
- 17 system were getting very frustrated about the lack of
- 18 ground truth and the lack of our understanding of what
- 19 was really happening on the ground, and that suggested
- 20 a major information failure.
- 2.1 Q. Did you have another conversation with
- 22 Nicholas Paget-Brown after this meeting?
- 2.3 My recollection is I had only one conversation with
- 2.4 Nicholas Paget-Brown, because obviously he is the
- 2.5 political leader, rather than the chief executive, so

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- 1 I wanted to get a different perspective. It turns out
- 2. the contents of that meeting were exactly the same as
  - the conversation he had with Alok Sharma.
- 4 Q. Did you speak to Nicholas Holgate after this meeting
- 5 and, indeed, at any time in the ensuing few days?
- 6 A. No, I don't believe so, because from this meeting, the
- 7 wheels were turning that would eventually lead to regime
- 8 change.

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- 9 Q. Sticking with paragraph 17 {HOM00046080/5}, in the last 10 sentence there you say:
- 11 "Further, I appreciate that, given the scale of the 12 disaster, it is likely that RBKC was quite simply
- overwhelmed." 13 Now, is that a hindsight observation on your part or
- 14
- 15 was that your impression or observation at the time?
- 16 A. I think it was fast becoming the impression at the
- 17 moment. After this meeting, I was taking calls from
- 18 friends and acquaintances who were involved in the area, 19
- and I had -- was introduced to Alan Everett, who was the 2.0 vicar at the time at St Clement St James's, and he took
- 21 me through dispassionately, and the picture was emerging
- 2.2 very clearly of totally unacceptable co-ordination and
- 23 support for the community.
- 24 Right. So to be clear, given everything that you had
- 25 done up until that point, including chairing these two

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concerns about how the response on the ground is working eg getting information to people affected. Some of this is for the police rather than K+C but we should consider a stronger offer of support."

Were you continuing to raise concerns that morning about how the response on the ground was working?

A. Yes, and I think it's recorded through my private office 's -- as I've just said, I had a series of calls the night before directly from community people working as volunteers, ie sort of non-official calls that were really trying to impress on me how bad things were and the need for the government to get its act together. That included a conversation with someone I didn't know. who was the vicar of St Clement St James's.

Q. Right. So just filling in the blanks for us there: the meeting happens on the afternoon of the 15th, but between the meeting ending and early morning on the

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16th, I think you're telling us that you had had discussions with people from the community -

A. Yes

Q. — about what was actually happening on the street?

5 A. Yeah. In the meantime, of course, as you've got evidence, wheels were beginning to turn in the system 6 7 that had belatedly recognised that there was a major problem that required a change in position.  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{I}}$  was 8 9 simply having those calls and those conversations and, as you have evidence, I fed those in on the Friday morning first thing.

12 Were those calls coming to you or were you soliciting 13 them, as it were, finding out --

14 No, they were all coming to me -- coming in to me from 15 people I knew or vaguely knew or perhaps knew I was 16 involved and found ways of getting hold of me, and

18 to Alan Everett, the vicar of St Clement St James, and

someone. I can't remember who, offered to introduce me

19 his -- because obviously they were absolutely at the

epicentre of this and had a very clear view on the

failings, his very kind of dispassionate account of the 22 failings left a deep impression on me.

2.3 Right. Did anybody from the Muslim community, from the 2.4 Al Manaar Mosque, for example, get in touch with you or try to get in touch with you directly?

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A. I can't remember, but one of my first visits was there 2 and I heard directly from them their experience as well. 3 I can't put an exact date on that visit, but it's in my

witness statement.

5 Q. Now, if you look a little bit lower down the chain, 6 earlier on the morning of 16 June, you can see at 07.57 7 there's an email from -- I apologise, if we go to page 2 8 {CLG00018939/2}, we can see it more clearly. Middle of 9 page 2, there is an email at 7.41 from Lorna Gratton at 10 Number 10 to the office of Sajid Javid, copied to 11 Alastair Whitehead, who was the Prime Minister's private 12

secretary, subject "CLG support to RBKC". It says: "Hello

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"I spoke to Helen Mac yesterday after the cross government meeting. There are still concerns here about how well organised the response effort is for those in receipt of it on the ground. Would it be helpful for them to have more support from CLG (e.g a small team of people seconded similar to the victim support unit?)? Could you let me know what you think.

"Thanks.

"Lorna."

So would it be right to take from that that there were concerns within Number 10 about the effectiveness of the response at this stage?

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1 A. Before this email, I think you've got evidence that leadership or reliable sources of information or any 2 immediately after the meeting that I chaired before, 2 3 Lorna Gratton had a direct conversation with senior 3 4 officials at the department to express her view in 4 response to what she'd heard from Nicholas Holgate, and 5 5 I think, as I said, wheels were beginning to turn the 6 6 7 night before. This is just a building of the drumbeat. 7 8 8 Q. Right. 9 Now, just to put one more piece of the puzzle in 9 10 place, could you go, please, to {CLG00008234}. If we go 10 11 to page 1 in this email run, third email down, this is 11 12 an email from your office -- Deborah Morrison, 12 13 I think -- to the office of Sajid Javid, 16 June. This 13 is at 8.56, a little bit later than we've been looking 14 14 15 at, copied to Katharine Hammond: 15 16 "Hi lames Tom 16 17 "With many thanks (Tom) for your time on the phone -17 18 the Minister is receiving direct feedback this morning 18 19 that the coordination on the ground in terms of i) 19 2.0 connecting families and ii) coordinating the volunteer 20 21 effort is not quite there yet and is perceived as 2.1 22 'chaotic' 22 "He feels it would be helpful for us collectively to 2.3 23 2.4 identify who is actually responsible for coordinating 2.4 both efforts (as in a person) and what, if any, more 2.5 177 support they may need." 1 1 2 Now, that direct feedback, was that the feedback 2. 3 you've just been explaining to us, in other words direct 3 Q. Yes. conversations you were personally having with people on 4 5 5 the ground --6 A. I believe so. That's my reaction to your question, yes. 6 7 7 Q. What did you do as a result of that feedback? 8 8

- A. What I've just described, which is I fed it into the 9 system, and I think that this is just one of the proof 10 points of that, yeah.
- 11 Q. I see. So this is you essentially feeding it in to 12 Sajid Javid's office?
- 13 A. Yes, because by that time, clearly, his department was leading 14
- 15 Q. Right.

16 Now, following those issues being raised by your 17 office with DCLG, what did your office continue to do 18 better to support the local council with the problems 19 they were facing locally?

- 2.0 A. Are you asking what we -- what I did?
- 2.1 Q. Yes, what you did. What you and your office did.
- 2.2 A. We registered this concern. We asked that question.
- 2.3 I think that reflects the feedback that you've had from

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- 2.4 evidence, that one of the fundamental frustrations and
- 25 causes of distress was the inability to identify any

visible co-ordination of the humanitarian support, if I can use that language, and there had been a delay in setting up the co-ordination mechanism for that. So at this point I am registering concerns and asking questions.

You'll be aware that around about this time or very shortly after, a decision had been quite rightly taken to go to  $full-fat\ COBR\ with\ the\ Prime\ Minister\ in$ the chair, as I think a result of the drumbeat I described earlier, in terms of growing awareness that there needed to be change.

Then let's move on -- inch on. I think -- by a few minutes later into the morning of 16 June. {CAB00001152}, please. This is an email from your office to Katharine Hammond at the civil contingencies

secretariat at 9.33, if we go, please, to the second email on the page. Can you see that?

Q. It comes again from your private secretary,

Deborah Morrison, and it says:

"Katherine.

"Thank you so much for your time on the phone earlier this morning."

So was this you speaking to her or was this your

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private secretary speaking to Katharine Hammond?

 $A. \ \ \, \text{This is my private secretary}\,.$ 

She savs:

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 $\ensuremath{^{\prime\prime}}\xspace As we discussed, in advance of the meeting this$ afternoon the Minister would be really grateful if the Secretariat could pull together a written summary of what we are doing across the system to:

"i. support victims:

"ii . provide support for emergency services personnel;

"iii . action taken to so far to [sic] identify and check similar buildings;

14 "iv. action taken so far to re-house people and what 15 is our common understanding (DLG/RBKC) of the commitment 16 to re-house people locally;

"v. action taken so far to reassure people about their fire safety; and

"vi. an update on access to cash (and how it's working on the ground/any updates from local Banks?)

"We've touched on all these questions over the last two meetings but the Minister thinks it would be helpful to have a summary that we can work through point by point. He feels it is important that we use this

meeting to really stress test the reality on the ground, 180

4 "Would that be possible?" Now. why did you consider it necessary to convey 5 that detail or those questions to the Cabinet Office, 6 7 A. Because I think the assumption -- the context here is 8 9 that we are preparing and expecting for a third in the 10 series of the meetings that I chaired, and I wanted to 11 be sure that that meeting kind of drilled down into the 12 issues that we'd raised and some of the challenges we 13 raised. So I think this is to the Cabinet Office asking 14 them to prepare something specific for me in the 15 anticipation, as I think you can see from the email at 16 the bottom of the page, that I would be chairing the 17 next meeting. As we now know, the decision was taken 18 that the Prime Minister would, quite rightly, chair the 19

given the conflicting reporting and as this is likely to

be the 'handover' meeting before we switch into recovery

20 Q. Now, going back to the bottom of page 1 {CAB00001152/1}, 21 you can see that I read to you that you are recorded as

feeling it important to use the meeting to really stress test the reality on the ground. Why was that necessary?

What had led to that need?

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25 A. Because of the cumulative picture that I've tried to

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1 convey to you that this process of cross-Whitehall 2 co-ordination was terribly undermined by poor 3 information, lack of ground truth, and data that wasn't keeping up with reality, which made a difficult 5 decision-making environment even harder. So I think 6 this is partly an exercise of a chair wanting to make sure that there was momentum and continuity from the last meeting and that we really drilled down into what 8 9 we said we would look into -- what felt most important 10

11 Q. And what was the conflicting reporting? You need to go 12 to the top of page 2 {CAB00001152/2}, I'm afraid, but if 13 we go to the top of page 2-

14~ A. I think -- let me please just check the  $\dots$ 

 $15\,$  Q. "... given the conflicting reporting ..."

A. So I think this, in part, relates to the point that you
 were trying to tease out of me, which is around the
 confusion around data and numbers, which was causing
 real frustration.

20 O So inconsistent reporting

20 Q. So inconsistent reporting from RBKC, rather than 21 conflicting reporting from different parts of 22 government? Is that --

 $23\,$   $\,$  A. I think it's the former, to the best of my recollection.

Q. Now, I think you have just made the point, but confirm
 for us, that you at that stage still expected that you

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would be chairing the further cross—Whitehall meeting that afternoon.

Day 282

3 A. Yes

4 Q. Yes.

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If we go, please, to {CLG00008289}, if we move further forward into the morning, 16 June. Page 1, second email in chain, please, towards the bottom of page 1. Here's an email from Alastair Whitehead at 10.50 confirming that the Prime Minister had decided to chair the meeting that afternoon herself.

If we go to the top of page 2 {CLG00008289/2}, please, you can see what he says:

"All,

"The Prime Minister has decided that this afternoon's CCS Ministerial meeting will now be the first meeting of the Prime Minister—chaired Grenfell Towers Recovery Taskforce at 1330 in 70 Whitehall (CCS will confirm with a Calling Notice), with SoSs from DCLG, HO, DfE, DWP, MoJ, HMT, DH attending, along with the Policing and Fire Minister, Minister for London, operational partners and the Mayor of London and RB Kensington and Chelsea.

"The CRIP should be circulated by  $1200 \dots$ "

Then there is a list of bullet points which are the topics.

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1 It's clear that those topics, those six topics, have
2 been either cut and pasted or very closely copied or
3 mirror those set out in the topic list that
4 Deborah Morrison had sent at your instruction earlier
5 that morning to Katharine Hammond; yes?

6 A. It looks very similar. This is the first time I've seen this email, so ...

8 Q. Right. Right.

Do you know what it was that changed to take this from a ministerial meeting number 3 to a Prime

Minister—chaired taskforce meeting?

A. I think the Prime Minister's personal visit, if I recall the timing correctly, the day before will have had a powerful effect upon herself. She was by then —— and I'm simply deducing this from the evidence that you've

 $\begin{array}{ll} \hbox{16} & \quad \text{received} \; -- \; \text{receiving advice that, you know, the council} \\ \hbox{17} & \quad \text{was failing} \; \text{and there were major problems about the} \\ \end{array}$ 

support for the community. She'll have been advised

that it was time to escalate the process, because it was likely that the central government was likely to play

21 a bigger role than perhaps had been imagined at the

22 start.

23 Q. Now, I think you continue to attend the meetings --

24 A. I did.

25~ Q.  $\,--$  which had become known as the taskforce meetings.

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1 A. I do. 2 Q. Yes 3 Just pick this up. At {CAB00011967}, here is an email from Alastair Whitehead late on the day of the 4 5 16th, at 18.25, to Katharine Hammond, where he says: " ... we are going to have another PM-chaired meeting 6 7 tomorrow (sorry), given the seeming chaos on the ground due to RBKC not gripping this. We will then maybe do 8 9 a call on Sunday, but hopefully not a full physical 10 meeting. 11 Was it still the case on the Saturday, 17 June, 12 notwithstanding that the Prime Minister was now chairing 13 what was called a taskforce, that RBKC was still not 14 gripping this, or rather that there was still chaos on 15 the ground due to RBKC not gripping this, as it's said?

16 A. Yes.

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Q. Given that, by that stage, RBKC had ceded control to
 John Barradell as London Local Authority Gold by that
 stage, was there an expectation that RBKC would grip it
 or continue to do so?

A. No, this may be —— I can't speak for Alastair in that
 context. This email is obviously going out around the
 point of the transition. I don't think it changes the
 fact that there was chaos or there was perceived to be
 chaos on the ground and the need for a clearer sense of

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grip which a PM-chaired meeting would bring.

Q. Then sticking with the 16th, I think Andrea Leadsom visited RPT, didn't she, Rugby Portobello, where she met a volunteer called Sof McVeigh and Eddie Daffarn. Do you remember that?

6 A. I wasn't with her. I remember that she visited the 7 area.

Q. And do you recall —— well, let me show you a document, {IWS00002250}. Here is an email from Sof McVeigh, and you can see that it's timed at 9.22 on 26 October, so it's a long time afterwards. But if you go then down to the foot of page 1, you can see another email much earlier in the string on 22 June 2017, and then if you turn to page 2 {IWS00002250/2}, you can see that this is a response to Andrea Leadsom from Sof McVeigh, and here you see, underneath that, Sof McVeigh's email to Andrea Leadsom on 17 June at 16.50:

"Thank you for coming to visit RPT yesterday, we were together meeting with Eddie, a Grenfell Tower resident first thing.

"In the meeting you gave the impression that your priority would be to get someone in charge in place as a matter of priority, and act in a co—ordinating capacity.

"As it stands, there are a number of local groups 186

mainly staffed by volunteers working 24/7 trying to deal with this disaster, there is no central co—ordinated point of contact for information or residents needs.

Day 282

4 "The government needs to appoint a
5 minister/department & team in charge immediately to
6 co-ordinate all the different relief efforts.

"Most of the people on the ground are volunteers, or community based operations, and most of us do not have disaster experience or training, there has been no lead on this.

"Very urgently — no one has been visiting the hotels to check the residents — some are elderly, all are very disorientated and most do not have English as a first language. For example just now a RPT volunteer had to drive a doctor from the Westway to one of the hotels. Grief counsellors and medics need to be at the hotels on a daily basis."

Now, we don't see that Andrea Leadsom responded to the email, but my question for you is: did she discuss these topics with you at that point?

21 A. Not that I recall.

Q. Would you have expected someone in her office to have raised these matters with you?

A. I was only aware of a visit, I wasn't aware of this conversation or what the substance of her visit was.

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Q. So she raised — is this right? — no concerns with you
 about the need for a single central government point of
 contact for bereaved, survivors and residents?

4 A. Not that I recall, but that doesn't mean that she didn't raise it with others.

6 Q. Now, you've already touched on the creation of the role
7 of Minister for Grenfell Victims. Do you recall whether
8 the need for such a role arose either wholly or in part
9 from the concerns raised by Sof McVeigh and
10 Edward Daffarn with Andrea Leadsom on 16 June as

10 Edward Daffarn with Andrea Leadsom on 16 June as recorded in this email?

12 A. I don't believe so directly, although obviously this 13 very powerful email talks to a lot of the entirely 14 unacceptable reality of experience of people who had 15 every reason to demand better. So I think it --16 although I've never seen this email, it is absolutely 17 consistent with the picture that was beginning to form 18 in the government's mind, which is why, on the Friday, 19 you can see very clear evidence of the central

20 government mobilising in a way that it hadn't done so on 21 the Wednesday.

Q. I mean, did the government give thought to appointing
 a minister or department and team in charge to
 co-ordinate all the different relief efforts at this

25 time or later?

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Opus 2 Official Court Reporters

- 1 A. So the two meetings I chaired were designed to
- co-ordinate the support of central government to support 2
- 3 the response and recovery process, as per the blueprint
- 4 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and the presumption
- 5 of sovereignty and everything that you've explored. So
- there was a co-ordination function up and running from 6
- the start, as I've -- the point I've laboured is that
- I think that process was terribly undermined by the 8
- 9 quality of information that went into that system.
- 10 Q. You say terribly undermined; I mean, was this
- 11 an enduring flaw or had it been -- was there a time when
- 12 it came to be cured by the fact that John Barradell was
- 13 now in charge and pan-London arrangements were in place?
- 14 A. It certainly -- and you've got independent advice on 15 that, it improved quickly.
- 16 Q. Now, let's turn to 17 June.
- 17 It's right, I think, that you and Amber Rudd, the
- 18 then Home Secretary, visited the Westway Centre that 19
- 20 A. Correct.
- 2.1 Q. Whom did you meet there?
- 2.2 A. We met a range of people. The meeting that sticks most
- 2.3 closely in my mind is a meeting I'd organised with
- 2.4 a representative group of volunteers, who, as you well
- 25 know, were by then a very, very important part of the

- 1 landscape in terms of support for the community, and
- 2 I felt it was important for Amber Rudd to hear directly
- 3 from them some of the issues that they faced.
- Q. And one of the issues that they faced was the issue of
- 5 money being distributed to affected families, wasn't it? A. Yes, one of a number of issues, yeah. 6
- 7 Q. A number of issues, also including support for people in
- 8 hotels and communications.
- 9 A. Yes.
- 10 Q. So those problems were persisting; yes?
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- 12 Q. Notwithstanding the appointment and entry into action of
- 13 John Barradell the day before.
- A. Although to -- yes, to be fair, he'd only been in the 14
- 15 seat for a day and he was inheriting a chaotic
- 16 landscape. So, to be fair to him, I think it would be
- 17 reasonable to expect him to have a little bit more time
- 18 to impose improvement.
- 19 Q. Yes. I think you observed a number of problems with the
- 2.0 response which you wanted to raise with John Barradell;
- 21 ves? We have a letter to that effect.
- 2.2 A. Yes, a joint letter with Amber Rudd, yeah.
- 23 Q. A joint letter, and that is at -- to put it up in front
- 2.4 of you -- {HOM00046091}. That's the letter, isn't it?
- 25 A. That's the letter.

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- Q. Yes, and it goes to Robert and John. John is
  - John Barradell. Who is Robert?
- 3 A. I'm not entirely clear who Robert is.
- Q. Right. 4

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- A. I apologise for that. 5
- Q. It is going to David Gauke MP's PPS, and it may be him. 6
  - Now, it's a long letter and there's a list of
- 8 problems in it, but were all those problems persisting
  - at the time of your visit?
- 10 A. I assume so, because they were relayed directly to us on 11
  - that day, yes.
- 12 Q. Yes.
- 13 Now, if we look, please, at the last paragraph, you
- 14 can see that the letter was also sent to Number 10, if
- 15 you go to page 2 {HOM00046091/2}, please. Yes? It goes
- 16 to Gavin Barwell. Alastair Whitehead --
- 17 A. Yes
- 18 Q. -- and others at Number 10.
- 19 You say in your first statement that you were
- 20 subsequently given to understand that the £500 cash
- 21 payment would be distributed to the affected families on
- 22 18 June, and then they would get a chit to enable him to
- 23 receive the £5,000 payment.
- 2.4 What was the source of that information?
- 25 A. The source of the information of the problem?

- 1  $\ensuremath{\mathsf{Q}}.$  The source of the information of the process to be run 2
- 3 A. I can't recall, but I think through the CRIPs and the
- sitreps , there's a reasonable account of how that -- the
  - mechanisms for payment were set up.
- 6 Q. Right.

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- 7 Do you remember that the confusion about
  - distribution of money was one which was first grasped
- 9 on -- I think we've seen this from your own email early
- 10 in the morning on 15 June, but was still uncured as at
- 11
- 12 A. Yes. I think -- I may be wrong on this -- the earlier
- 13 conversation with the Post Office was about making it
- 14 easier for people to access their cash. This is
- 15 a conversation in part about the ability of people to
- 16 access the cash that was promised by the Prime Minister
- 17 on, I believe, the day before.
- 18 Q. Yes. In fact, I think the record shows -- and correct
- 19 me if I'm wrong about this -- that this was still
- 2.0 a problem come 19 June, the Monday.
- 2.1 A. I believe so.
- 2.2 Q. Yes. Do you know why? Why was it a problem that
- 23 endured through the weekend?
- 2.4 A. I don't think I'm the person best placed to give you
- 25 a reliable answer on that

- Q. Well, can you give us a clue?
- 2 A. Not one that you can rely on.
- 3 Q. All right.

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Would you accept, though, overall, that the policy governing how payments would be made was still being devised within government as late as the --

- 6 A. Yes. I mean, I don't think that's completely surprising . The policy  $--\ {\rm I}$  mean, obviously the 8 9 Prime Minister wouldn't have announced it if there 10 hadn't been some precooking, as it were, but it wouldn't 11 be completely abnormal for some of the detail to be 12 worked out subsequently and some things probably not 13 thought through fully that needed to be ironed out. 14 I don't think that in itself would be completely
- surprising .
  Q. Let me show you what Sadiq Khan has said about this.
  Can I show you his statement, please.
- 18 A Of course

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- 19 Q. This is {MOL00000189/14}, paragraph 60, I'll read it to 20 you, he says:
  - "One thing from that meeting that stuck out in my  $\label{eq:mind} \mbox{mind} \ \dots \mbox{"}$
- And this was the meeting on the Saturday, and you can —— take this from me —— pick that up at paragraph 57.

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- 1 A. Yes. I remember.
- 2 Q. He says:

"One thing from that meeting that stuck out in my mind, was a fairly lengthy discussion that took place about how much financial support should be given to families displaced from their homes, either in the tower or close by, and whether this should be paid as a lump sum, or in instalments. There appeared to be a reluctance by some to give those who needed support this payment in a lump sum. A figure of £500 was discussed, to be given to families who had lost everything in the fire as an 'instalment' rather than a lump sum of £5000, which I believe was based on relief given to those forced to leave their homes in areas across the country hit by floods. I recall I intervened to ask why it was an issue here in the Grenfell community to make one lump sum payment rather than instalments when it hadn't been the case after a flood. I couldn't understand why the residents of Grenfell Tower would be treated any differently and said so. It was eventually agreed that this would be paid as one lump sum of £5000. Looking back, I consider this was symptomatic of the prejudice and institutional indifference towards the bereaved. survivors and residents we were to see in the months and years that followed."

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Now, first, did Sadiq Khan, to your knowledge, raise
the point about difference in treatment between the
victims of floods on the one hand, who got a lump sum,
and the victims or the residents of Grenfell Tower on
the other?

A. I recall there was a discussion about the right
 structure. I don't recall it in the terms that
 Sadiq Khan relates, and I can't, to be honest, recollect
 him having a direct intervention into that conversation.

That, of course, doesn't mean it didn't happen. There
was a discussion for sure.

Q. Right. Were you party to the discussions leading to the
 eventual agreement that it would be paid as a lump sum
 of £5,000?

A. No, because at this point this was being driven,
 I presume, by DWP and the Treasury, and, from memory, it
 was £500 cash and the balance in a bank account. I may
 be wrong on that.

There was definitely a discussion around what was the right balance and structure, but I don't —— but I think it was entirely being driven by what's the most sensible and appropriate thing to do, rather than some of the assertions that are made ——

Q. Can you enlighten us, what was the reason for the difference in treatment?

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A. To be honest, I'm not aware — I wasn't involved in the
 flood, in the flood process, so I'm not aware that there
 was a difference in treatment or why, if there was,
 there should be.

5 Q. Right.

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Now, the Mayor's retrospective or hindsight opinion is that it was symptomatic of the prejudice and institutional indifference towards the bereaved, survivors and residents that he says we were to see in the months and years that followed. Do you share that view?

12 A. No, I don't. But you might expect me to see that. What
 13 I do absolutely accept is that the response in the
 14 immediate aftermath of the fire was wholly inadequate
 15 and might have led some people to believe there was
 16 institutional indifference.

17 Q. Can we --

18 A. I know there wasn't, but I understand why some people 19 might have felt that.

Q. Can we then turn to {HOM00046091}, which is the letter
 again, and if we go, please, to the foot of the screen,
 "Support for people in hotels", it says:

"It was clear that many of the families that were being housed in hotels were not receiving sufficient care and attention. For example, some had been housed

- 1 on the top floor of buildings. There were complaints of 2 hotels not providing food at times suitable for those 3 fasting, which given the make—up of the area was 4 a significant number of people. There was also the 5 feeling that people in hotels were 'out of sight and out of mind'. (John - do Kensington and Chelsea Housing 6 7 have the resource they need to engage these families one on one to ensure they are ok? Do you need any support 8 9 from HMG?)"
- 10 The John is John Barradell there.
- 11 A. I presume so

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- 12 Q. Did you receive a response to that question?
- 13 A. I didn't personally. I don't know if Amber Rudd got 14 a formal response to this or not.
- 15 Q. Looking further down, "Communications":

"It was clear that the communications work that had happened to date was not filtering down to the ground. This is not necessarily a surprise when people do not have phones."

Then it goes on:

"As such the Home Secretary has commissioned her Director of Communications, Simon Wren, to produce a leaflet, on behalf of the government, clearly setting out government advice in multiple languages. This will then be distributed to the community."

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- 1 Now, this is the 17th, this is the Saturday.
- 2. A. Yes
- 3 Q. Why was that not considered sooner? Why were leaflets 4 not considered sooner?
- A. I can't necessarily answer that. What I am very clear 5 about is that was one of the clearest takeaways from 6 7 that visit . I remember Amber Rudd being particularly 8 exercised by this, and it's consistent with all the 9 evidence you've received that one of the most common and 10 utterly reasonable complaints was, you know, "No one was 11 telling us anything, we simply didn't have the 12 information that we needed at a time when we desperately
- 13 needed", and that message, you know, Amber and 14 I received loud and clear, and she was determined to 15 take an immediate action on it.

16 The context of that trip was it was -- we were 17 effectively on a fact-finding visit . It was about 18 trying to build our understanding of what was actually 19 happening on the ground that reflected our lack of 2.0 confidence of what we'd been told up to that point. So 21 by this point, another department was in the lead, but 2.2 we wanted to sort of play our part in trying to find 23

- 24 Q. Do you know when a leaflet did eventually get --
- 2.5 A. I think it was very quick, within days.

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- 1 Q. Would you accept that that could have been and should 2 have been done faster?
- 3 A. Yes, like many things.
- Q. Let's then go, please, to  $\{HOM00046081\}.$  This is your 4
  - exhibit 14. It's a letter from the local MP, then
- Emma Dent Coad, to Amber Rudd, the then Home Secretary, 6
- 7 and if you can see at paragraph 2 on that page, towards
- 8 the foot of the screen -- I should have shown you the
- 9 date: it's 17 June 2017.
- 10 A Yes

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11 Q. Paragraph 2, under the heading "Immediate support for 12 those affected":

13 "There must be officials from all relevant 14 government departments and agencies on site to deal with 15 benefit claims, identity documents, any issues related

16 to immigration status and all other key administrative 17 and bureaucratic issues."

18 Did officials from the Home Office first arrive at

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2.1 A. I believe it was Sunday. I believe there were three

22 departments there on the Sunday, and the Home Office was

2.3 one of them, yeah. 2.4 But not before?

25 I believe not

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the Westway Centre only on the Sunday, 18 June, and not

- 1 Q. And why was that?
- A. I can't be sure. It may well be that, as part of our 2
- 3 visit, it was clear to us that the government needed
- more visible representation on the ground, and it may
- 5 well be that Amber accelerated that as a result of our
- 6 visit, but I think it was also part of a broader process
- 7 of central government weighing in more heavily, being 8
- more visible, being more aware of the need to provide 9 support. In the case of the Home Office, a clear need
- 10 to help with the replacement of documents, for example.
- 11 Q. Immigration documents?
- 12 All manner of documents, but including immigration
- documents. 13
- 14 Q. Right. I think it's right that the Home Office set up
- 15 a 24-hour telephone line to assist with immigration and
- 16 passport issues.
- 17 A. Yes
- 18 Q. But only four days --
- 19 A. And I think that may have front-run the physical 2.0
  - presence, but I may be wrong on that.
- 2.1 Q. Right. But that, I think, was some four days after the 2.2 fire, in the end. It wasn't until the Saturday or the
- 23
- 24 A. That may well be the case.
- 2.5 Q. Right. And do you know why it took so long?

Day 282

1	Α.	Because I think it feeds into the bigger, wider problem,	1		"This afternoon Suzanne and I accompanied Nick Hurd
2		which is central government was too slow.	2		and Liz Sanderson (from No 10) to a series of community
3	Q.	I think there was some $$ can you help with this $$	3		meetings at St Clements Church in North Kensington."
4		confusion around the automated menu which was	4		Then cast your eye down a little bit further. There
5		established, which didn't make it clear that there was	5		is a title, "General reflections", and it says:
6		a specific line for Grenfell—related enquiries. Did you	6		"We are still letting these people down. They do
7		come to know that?	7		not feel as if government is responsive and we must fix
8	Α.	If I did, I don't recall it today.	8		that. Clearer lines of communication will help but we
9	Q.	You can't help with that?	9		have to be much more active and present in person at
10	Α.	I'm afraid I can't.	10		every level if we want people to believe that the
11	Q.	You also visited the scene and surrounding areas on	11		Government cares and will keep its promises. They
12		a number of occasions after the 14th. I think one was	12		consistently said they wanted things written down (our
13		with Alok Sharma on 19 June; is that right?	13		housing letter is a very good idea and we need to think
14	Α.	That wasn't a visit, it was a public meeting.	14		about doing more of that)."
15	Q.	A residents' meeting, I think it was, wasn't it?	15		Then the second bullet point is about:
16		In truth —— and I think this is confirmed from other	16		"The hardest question why it wasn't possible to
17		evidence —— it was a meeting predominantly but not	17		be clearer about the numbers who were in the tower."
18		exclusively with the bereaved, as it turns out.	18		Third bullet:
19	Q.	At all events, was it at the Harrow Club?	19		"All of the groups were critical about the lack of
20	Α.	It was.	20		any visible authority on the ground in the immediate
21	Q.	Right.	21		response and still now."
22	•	If you go, please, to {HOM00046086}, you can see	22		Focusing on the first bullet point, and the
23		a letter dated 24 June, which starts:	23		criticism, perhaps, in the third bullet point, did you
24		"Dear all,	24		share Helen MacNamara's views that are reflected in her
25		"Thank you for inviting us to join the Community	25		reflections as a result of the meeting that you had with
		201			203
1		Safety Partnership meeting on Monday evening."	1		her that day?
2		The Monday evening was the 19th, I think. Yes.	2		Yes.
3		It covers a large number of topics, and we can	3	Q.	Can you explain why it was that, even as late as
4		scroll down. We can see "Practical support at the	4		29 June, you were of the view that government was still
5		Westway Centre", "Financial support".	5		letting the local community down?
6		Then if we scroll to page 2 $\{HOM00046086/2\}$ , we can	6	Α.	By then, I had taken on the new role that you asked me
7		see "Rehousing for people whose homes were destroyed",	7		about on the start, and as I've said in my witness
8		and there in the first bullet point is the	8		statement I'd taken a decision to try and have personal
9		Prime Minister's commitment to rehouse everybody within	9		meetings with families or individuals that wanted to see
10		three weeks.	10		me, and through those meetings, as well as trying to
11		Then to page 3 $\{HOM00046086/3\}$ , "Support for people	11		help them with their personal issues, you know,
12		whose homes are not fit for habitation", "Immigration",	12		a picture was forming quite clearly about how $$ some of
13		and then "Public Inquiry".	13		the failings that were still in the system and the way
14		Can you help us, why was that letter only sent some	14		that people, you know, continued to feel let down.
15		five days after the meeting on the 19th? Why was it	15		I would also say that because of the failure to grip
16		only sent on 24 June?	16		it in the early days, the situation that John Barradell
17	Α.	I can't be sure. It would have been a letter that would	17		and others inherited was made even more difficult, and
18		have to be cleared through the system. Sometimes that	18		as I think others have said, if you don't get a grip on
19		could be unacceptably slow. In this context, it clearly	19		these things early, then it becomes very hard to
20		was unacceptably slow.	20		reassert any sense that, you know, the system's got the
21	Q.	Can we go to {CLG00004304}. This takes us outside the	21		situation under control. I think the perceptions were

says: 25 Q. Can we look at your first witness statement, please, at 202 204

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in terms of trust.

set very early and were very difficult to shift and, as

I think Helen points out too, there was a huge problem

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seven—day period, but it's an email of 29 June 2017 from

the office of Melanie Dawes, subject, "Reflections on

today's meetings", and it says:

Helen MacNamara to a number of people in DCLG, including

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1	page 7 $\{HOM00046080/7\}$ , paragraph 22. You say in the	1	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.
2	second sentence, top of the page:	2	(4.32 pm)
3	"It was not evident to me that a blueprint existed	3	(A short break)
4	for managing the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower	4	(4.40 pm)
5	disaster ."	5	SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Mr Hurd. Well, we'll see
6	What do you mean by that? What point are you	6	if there are any more questions.
7	making?	7	Yes, Mr Millett.
8	A. I'm in part making a perception that I was walking into	8	MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman.
9	a system that was in shock because it had not	9	Just one question, Mr Hurd, and it's this: looking
10	anticipated an event like this in terms of some of the	10	back on it, looking back on the visits you had at the
11	worst—case planning, and so I think that was reflected	11	time, your interactions at the time, and reflecting on
12	in some of the early processes. I think, with the	12	it now, is there anything that you would have done
13	benefit of hindsight, that statement also takes on board	13	differently in the role you occupied at the time?
14	the reality that the system struggled to adapt to the	14	A. Well, I'm ashamed, you know, of the failure of the
15	reality of the Grenfell disaster and a situation in	15	system I was part of to provide, you know, fellow
16	which one of the first —level responders clearly couldn't	16	citizens with the most basic support and comfort that
17	cope but wouldn't admit it.	17	they had every reason to feel totally entitled to in
18	Q. So you're making a point about ——	18	arguably their darkest hour.
19	A. There was —— it's a bit of a hindsight point, but the	19	I've thought hard about this. I genuinely feel that
20	system struggled to cope with a —— what I think was	20	I did the best I could with the information and
21	a first —time situation, where one of the first —line	21	experience available to me, but if the Inquiry feels
22	responders was not asking for help in a system that was	22	that best wasn't good enough, I, like others, will be
23	built on the premise that if people needed help, they	23	held to account for it .
24	asked for it.	24	I have very briefly two reflections.
25	MR MILLETT: Thank you very much.	25	I was part of a system that failed to be alive early
	205		207
1	Mr Hurd, those are the prepared questions I've got	1	enough to the possibility / probability that the
2	for you, although there may be one or two others I have	2	Kensington and Chelsea Council would not be able to
3	inadvertently missed.	3	cope. And this isn't a judgement around preparation or
4	I'm going to ask the Chairman now to take the normal	4	even competence; I think it should have been evident to
5	break. It's a little bit later than I would have liked	5	us earlier that the scale and complexity of the seismic
6	him to do that, but I'm going to do that.	6	impact of this disaster was always going to be too much
7	SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.		
8		7	for one council to cope with. Add to that the very
9	Well, I think you may have been here when	7 8	for one council to cope with. Add to that the very clear impression that was forming quickly on the first
	Well, I think you may have been here when I explained to the last witness why we have to have		
10		8	clear impression that was forming quickly on the first
10 11	I explained to the last witness why we have to have	8 9	clear impression that was forming quickly on the first day that the council was going to struggle to have the
	I explained to the last witness why we have to have a break at this point, so I won't go all through that	8 9 10	clear impression that was forming quickly on the first day that the council was going to struggle to have the moral authority to lead, I think that we collectively
11	I explained to the last witness why we have to have a break at this point, so I won't go all through that again, but we do need to have a break.	8 9 10 11	clear impression that was forming quickly on the first day that the council was going to struggle to have the moral authority to lead, I think that we collectively should have been quicker to put in place risk monitoring
11 12	I explained to the last witness why we have to have a break at this point, so I won't go all through that again, but we do need to have a break.  I should think ten minutes is enough, isn't it, Mr Millett? Well, if I said 4.40?	8 9 10 11 12	clear impression that was forming quickly on the first day that the council was going to struggle to have the moral authority to lead, I think that we collectively should have been quicker to put in place risk monitoring that gave us more direct observation of what was
11 12 13	I explained to the last witness why we have to have a break at this point, so I won't go all through that again, but we do need to have a break.  I should think ten minutes is enough, isn't it, Mr Millett? Well, if I said 4.40?  MR MILLETT: Yes, 4.40.	8 9 10 11 12 13	clear impression that was forming quickly on the first day that the council was going to struggle to have the moral authority to lead, I think that we collectively should have been quicker to put in place risk monitoring that gave us more direct observation of what was happening on the ground that in turn might have
11 12 13 14	I explained to the last witness why we have to have a break at this point, so I won't go all through that again, but we do need to have a break.  I should think ten minutes is enough, isn't it, Mr Millett? Well, if I said 4.40?	8 9 10 11 12 13 14	clear impression that was forming quickly on the first day that the council was going to struggle to have the moral authority to lead, I think that we collectively should have been quicker to put in place risk monitoring that gave us more direct observation of what was happening on the ground that in turn might have empowered us to be more effective in our challenge of
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you have been presented with from bereaved, survivors

and residents in that period was the way people were

need more time, just let us know. All right?

MR MILLETT: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman.

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1 made to feel, and you've had language like this: 2 impersonal, second-class citizens, the specific 3 instances of -- totally unacceptable. And I have -- was concerned then and am still concerned now about the 4 5 degree to which those involved in the human contact in the emergency response are trauma informed. I know 6 7 I wasn't sufficiently trauma -- but we are talking about a community in deep trauma and those helping them, or 8 9 trying to help them, need to be, in my view, better 10 informed about what that actually means, and I don't 11 feel that's been picked up elsewhere, but it's very 12 clear to me. 13 Those would be my two reflections, and then I have 14 just one closing comment with your permission, Chair. 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Of course. 16 A. So you have, for reasons that I completely understand, 17 decided to draw a line on the seventh day, and I totally 18 respect and understand that, but you will be as aware as 19 anyone that, you know, the road to recovery and what 2.0 some people call a new normal is still work in progress, 21 as I think some statements have put it, and continue to

> One observation I make, having been involved in this process, is where any progress has been made, it has been where the state has realised that it needed to

be very difficult for many people.

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think and act differently , the critical distinction between doing things with people rather than doing things to people. And where we have had any progress is where the NHS or even the council under new leadership have recognised that.

To make that work, you need people to work with, and I know that I would be supported by many people who have worked in the public service over these years to want to acknowledge that, you know, individuals, families. committees, representative groups who took in many ways a very brave decision to engage with us despite everything that was going on in their lives, despite every reason not to trust the state, took a decision that they wanted to work with us to try and help us make better decisions on behalf of their representatives or their neighbours, and I know many people would just want to register our thanks and gratitude for that. It's an extraordinary community that deserved a lot better.

19 Thank you.

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2.0 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.

21 MR MILLETT: Well. Mr Hurd, it only remains for me to thank 2.2 you very much for coming here and assisting us with our

23 investigations. We are extremely grateful to you, so 2.4 thank you very much.

25 THE WITNESS: Thank you. Thank you.

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SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Mr Hurd, I must add my own thanks 2 but also the thanks of my fellow members of the panel to 3 you for coming to give your evidence. I think you have 4 been able to give us a very unusual and I might even say 5 unique perspective on some of the aspects that we're examining in this module, and it's been very helpful to 6 7 us, and I think I can say with some confidence that 8 we've learned a lot. 9 So thank you very much indeed for giving up the time 10

to come and give evidence to us. 11 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Chair, and I know how important

12 your process of delivering truth and accountability is 13 to the community, and I wish you every strength in that. 14

15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, and now, 16 of course, vou're free to go.

17 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.

(The witness withdrew)

20 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much, Mr Millett.

2.1 MR MILLETT: Yes.

19

SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Now, that must be it for the day. 22

MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, thank you, and again, thank you to 2.3 2.4 everybody, including our transcriber, for sitting

25 a little bit later to accommodate me and the witness.

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SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, of course 1

2 And tomorrow we'll have another witness.

3 MR MILLETT: Yes, Ms McManus, who will be examined by

Ms Malhotra of counsel.

SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you. So we break there and we 5

6 resume at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, please.

7 MR MILLETT: Thank you.

8 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.

9 (4.46 pm)

10 (The hearing adjourned until 10 am 11 on Tuesday, 24 May 2022)

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