

OPUS2

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY RT

Day 285

May 26, 2022

Opus 2 - Official Court Reporters

Phone: 020 4515 2252

Email: transcripts@opus2.com

Website: <https://www.opus2.com>

1 Thursday, 26 May 2022
 2 (10.00 am)
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to
 4 today's hearing. Today we're going to hear evidence
 5 from Dame Melanie Dawes who, at the time of the fire,
 6 was the Permanent Secretary at the Department for
 7 Communities and Local Government.
 8 Yes, Mr Millett.
 9 MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman, good morning. Good morning,
 10 members of the panel.
 11 I now call, please, Dame Melanie Dawes.
 12 DAME MELANIE DAWES (affirmed)
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Thank you very much. Now, please
 14 sit down and make yourself comfortable.
 15 (Pause)
 16 Is that chair not --
 17 THE WITNESS: I'll just bring it down slightly.
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: All right?
 19 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Yes, Mr Millett.
 21 Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY
 22 MR MILLETT: Yes, thank you, Mr Chairman.
 23 Dame Melanie, good morning. Can I start by thanking
 24 you very much for coming yet again to give evidence to
 25 the public inquiry. We are extremely grateful to you.

1

1 You are, I think, one of a handful of factual witnesses
 2 who have been asked and have been good enough to come
 3 more than once, so you will know what I'm about to tell
 4 you, but I will nonetheless repeat it.
 5 First, could I ask you, please, to keep your voice
 6 up so that the transcriber can get your evidence down
 7 clearly on the transcript. Also not to nod or shake
 8 your head; you have to say "Yes" or "No", as the case
 9 may be.
 10 We will be taking breaks during the course of the
 11 day at the usual time, but if you feel you need a break
 12 at any other time, we can take a break.
 13 Finally, if there is anything I ask you which you
 14 don't understand or you would like me to repeat or put
 15 in a different way, I can do that.
 16 Now, you have made three statements to the Inquiry,
 17 the first two of which relate to this module, Module 4,
 18 and your third statement relates to Module 6, which you
 19 were asked about by Kate Grange Queen's Counsel when you
 20 gave evidence in Module 6 in March of this year.
 21 I won't be asking you about that statement, but I will
 22 be asking you about your first two statements, which
 23 will appear on the screen in front of you, as will all
 24 of the documents to which I'm going to take you.
 25 Let's go to that first statement, then. It's at

2

1 {CLG00030653}. Is that your first witness statement
 2 dated 20 May 2019?
 3 A. Yes, it is.
 4 Q. If we go, please, to page 39, you can see a signature
 5 above the date. Is that your signature?
 6 A. Yes, it is.
 7 Q. Your second statement is at {CLG00030784}, dated
 8 3 November 2020. Is that the first page of your second
 9 witness statement?
 10 A. Yes, it is.
 11 Q. Thank you.
 12 If we go, please, to page 15, you can see
 13 a signature there above the date, although it's
 14 an electronic signature. Can you please confirm that it
 15 is yours?
 16 A. Yes, it is mine.
 17 Q. Thank you.
 18 Have you had the opportunity to read these
 19 statements recently?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Can you confirm that the contents of each of these
 22 statements is true?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. Thank you.
 25 Now, I just want to ask you one or two further

3

1 questions about your background. We've heard quite
 2 a lot of evidence already about it, but just to confirm:
 3 at the time of the fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017,
 4 you were the civil service head of the Department for
 5 Communities and Local Government, DCLG; yes?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. Yes, and that was a role I think you had held since
 8 1 March 2015.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. You left that post in February 2020; yes?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. At the time of the fire, then, you were -- is this
 13 right? -- responsible for the overall leadership and
 14 management of the department.
 15 A. Yes, at the civil service level, yes.
 16 Q. At a civil service level, yes.
 17 Now, looking at the structure of the DCLG at the
 18 time of the fire, is it right that there were three
 19 commands across the department, each led by a director
 20 general?
 21 A. Yes, that's correct.
 22 Q. We've heard a little bit of that in Module 6, but just
 23 to recap, and help me with this and confirm, the first
 24 of those commands, I think, was housing and planning,
 25 led by Helen MacNamara; yes?

4

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. The second was local government and public services, led
 3 by Dr Jo Farrar; yes?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And we heard from her yesterday.
 6 Is it right that the third was Simon Ridley leading
 7 on economic growth and devolution?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Yes. I think there were also three director-led
 10 commands who oversaw corporate activities, including
 11 finance, human resources and strategy.
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. That's correct, is it?
 14 A. Yes, it is correct.
 15 Q. They all reported to you, did they?
 16 A. Yes.
 17 Q. In relation to ministers, I think it's right that the
 18 department had five Ministers of State; yes?
 19 A. I believe so. Sometimes we had six, sometimes we had
 20 five during that period, but, yes, I think it was five
 21 at the time.
 22 Q. Very well.
 23 One of those ministers at the time was Alok Sharma
 24 MP, who was Minister of State for Housing and Planning.
 25 A. Yes.

5

1 Q. Yes. He, I think, was appointed on 13 June 2017, so the
 2 day before the fire.
 3 A. Yes, in the evening.
 4 Q. In the evening?
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Right. So he was in post for a matter of hours?
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Is it right that the Secretary of State for the
 9 department was Sajid Javid MP?
 10 A. Yes.
 11 Q. And he had been appointed on 14 July 2016, so he had
 12 been in post for nine months or so.
 13 A. Yes, he was reappointed after the general election in
 14 2017.
 15 Q. And reappointed after the general election, which
 16 happened, I think, on 8 June.
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. They were both key ministers in responding to the
 19 Grenfell Tower fire; yes?
 20 A. Yes, they were.
 21 Q. Now, if you go, please, to your first witness statement,
 22 page 36 {CLG00030653/36}, paragraph 120, you say this at
 23 the foot of the page, you say:
 24 "In addition, the fact that some ministers were
 25 newly appointed also made their jobs harder in the early

6

1 days, as they learnt about the issues for which they
 2 were responsible at the same time as getting to grips
 3 with the situation created by the fire. In my opinion,
 4 the Department was very lucky to have Alok Sharma and
 5 Sajid Javid as our two key ministers at the time. The
 6 fact that the Secretary of State already knew the
 7 Department, and had strong working relationships with
 8 the senior team, was essential. His and Alok Sharma's
 9 wholehearted commitment to helping the individuals and
 10 families affected was clear from the start."
 11 Now, is it your recollection that the very recent
 12 appointment before the fire of the Minister of State for
 13 Housing and Planning, namely Alok Sharma, had an impact
 14 in any way on the department's ability to respond to the
 15 fire?
 16 A. Well, it certainly had an impact on Alok Sharma himself.
 17 He arrived, to the best of my recollection, for the
 18 first time in the department on that Wednesday morning,
 19 and, of course, was dealing with some of the issues in
 20 North Kensington, but was also the lead Minister of
 21 State on all the issues to do with building safety that
 22 we were dealing with at the time. So he had a very,
 23 very steep learning curve to get through. I believe my
 24 colleagues in the department, and particularly
 25 Helen MacNamara, were supporting him, did a very good

7

1 job in helping him with that, but he had an enormous
 2 amount of material to absorb. I think he did that
 3 extremely well, but I'm sure he would have wished that
 4 he had had, you know, more time to get across the brief
 5 before the crisis hit.
 6 Q. Looked at coolly, did the gradient of his learning curve
 7 have an adverse effect on his response to the fire, or
 8 the department's ability, perhaps, to respond to the
 9 fire in the early hours?
 10 A. I can't honestly think of any issue where Alok's newness
 11 in the role made a difference. I spoke to him a number
 12 of times and I thought he was very, very quick to get to
 13 the heart of the issues that he was addressing. But,
 14 you know, as I said, it made his life a lot harder.
 15 I should add that the Prime Minister had no choice
 16 but to appoint a new housing minister, because
 17 Gavin Barwell had been housing minister but had lost his
 18 seat in the general election the previous week, so the
 19 vacancy had to be filled somehow.
 20 Q. Right. I'm going to turn to a different subject.
 21 Before I do, can I just ask you, your voice is
 22 coming through a little bit dim to where I'm sitting.
 23 A. Oh, I'm sorry.
 24 Q. It may just be the angle to which you're sitting, so far
 25 as the microphone is concerned.

8

1 A. Let me try --
 2 Q. That's better.
 3 A. Okay, my apologies.
 4 Q. Not at all. That's better, thank you.
 5 Now, can I turn, then, to the subject of RED.
 6 It's right that within the DCLG -- and that may be
 7 a question -- sits something called RED, the resilience
 8 and emergencies division; is that right?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Did you have a role in the operating function of RED in
 11 June or as at June 2017?
 12 A. Not specifically, no, I was not part of the command
 13 structure, but RED was located within DCLG and, as
 14 I think you may be hinting, it was effectively
 15 a cross-government resource, and that's how I always saw
 16 it, and it was part of the overall civil contingencies
 17 machinery which was, of course, headed and led at
 18 a strategic level and at an operational level in the
 19 Cabinet Office, but RED's role was at the local level,
 20 to do the liaison with local resilience fora and then,
 21 in a crisis, to be the main point of liaison between
 22 central and local government. So I always saw RED as
 23 effectively pointing towards the overall Cabinet Office
 24 leadership, but the people were clearly part of our
 25 department and their leadership individuals were part of

9

1 my senior team.
 2 Q. I think you have answered my next question, but just to
 3 tick them off: Katherine Richardson, deputy director --
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. -- reported to you?
 6 A. Yes, she reported to Jillian Kay, who reported to
 7 Jo Farrar.
 8 Q. Right. Perfect. Exactly.
 9 Then turning to the function of DCLG -- well, sorry,
 10 before I move on, did any of those individuals report
 11 across government, for example to anybody in the CCS?
 12 A. No, I don't think they did. I think that's a good
 13 question. I think Jillian Kay had wider
 14 responsibilities, and not just for RED, as a director.
 15 Katherine Richardson's role was entirely within RED.
 16 But I don't recall there being anything like a dotted
 17 line, for example, which could have provided some
 18 management oversight and feedback and so on as part of
 19 performance reporting, I don't recall that, and I think
 20 it's a good question as to whether that could have been
 21 helpful.
 22 Q. Thank you.
 23 Looking at DCLG and its function, what is the
 24 department's function when an emergency occurs? It's
 25 a broad question, but can you enlighten us?

10

1 A. Well, firstly, there is RED, of course, and their main
 2 function is to provide liaison between local responders
 3 and the centre of government, and of course that varies
 4 depending on the nature of the crisis, but that's one
 5 part of what DCLG was supposed to do. As I say, very
 6 much on behalf of the Cabinet Office.
 7 And then we also held a number of, if you like,
 8 capabilities. So I would include in that the Bellwin
 9 financing scheme. We were there to hold that system and
 10 to work out when that financing system needed to be
 11 deployed in response to a request from local responders,
 12 local government.
 13 In addition to that -- and I think some of this was
 14 not as clear as it could have been at the time, if I'm
 15 honest -- there were -- there was, of course, the
 16 national risk assessment and the national risk register,
 17 and DCLG, as then was, was -- had been the recovery lead
 18 for some emergencies over the preceding years, and
 19 I particularly remember the floods of 2015/2016, over
 20 that winter, when we took up the recovery lead role.
 21 I remember that being a decision that was taken at the
 22 time, it wasn't automatic, but I knew at the time that
 23 the fire hit that we were likely to have a role in
 24 co-ordinating cross-government efforts on recovery. But
 25 I don't believe that was as clear at the time, to be

11

1 honest, as it might have been.
 2 And then, finally, there were certain risks on the
 3 national risk register of which we were a part. I think
 4 in 2016/2017 we were the designated lead government
 5 department for response for returning British nationals
 6 or others arriving from overseas, but not in any other
 7 risk, and so we had capabilities in RED able to
 8 discharge that risk should it have materialised and
 9 should we have needed to swing in to lead any government
 10 response on it.
 11 Q. Right. In light of that answer, was RED the DCLG
 12 element which might respond in the response phase to
 13 emergencies arising out of risks other than returning
 14 nationals?
 15 A. I don't think so, no. Not automatically anyway. So
 16 I would draw a distinction between RED, which was
 17 a capability for the whole of government and very much
 18 part of the overall system of oversight for civil
 19 contingencies headed by the Cabinet Office -- by the
 20 way, I should add that one thing I don't think was
 21 a problem here was the lack of such a system or of an
 22 understanding of it in the way that there was a lack on
 23 building safety. It's quite different. There was
 24 a system; I think the question is whether or not it had
 25 any holes in it which need to be addressed and still

12

1 hadn't been addressed, but perhaps we'll come on to some
2 of that.

3 But I would distinguish between that role and the
4 role that we then played in the days following the fire
5 on what I would call the department's core
6 responsibilities. So that included housing, including
7 temporary accommodation, and it included some of the
8 things we did in working with other departments to set
9 up the victims unit later in the week.

10 And we could have, and sort of did, lodge that
11 victims unit alongside the RED capabilities, but I don't
12 think it would ever be automatic for the department to
13 have it. I think it's quite important to have
14 a separation between RED and its role and things the
15 department might do as part of a response or recovery
16 effort alongside.

17 Q. Yes, I see. We may come back to the victims unit later
18 in your evidence and examine what happened there.

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. But coming back to the question of recovery which you
21 have mentioned, was it the case that DCLG's involvement
22 in the recovery phase after an emergency would be
23 dictated by the national risk register?

24 A. So my recollection is that the national risk register
25 had us as the recovery lead for floods, and I think the

1 understanding was that we were likely to be the recovery
2 lead for other crises, particularly those happening at
3 a local level, which are being led by a local authority
4 on the ground. But I don't remember that latter, more
5 general default role for DCLG really being written down,
6 and I'm not sure it was very clear.

7 Q. I see. Well, let's look at that a little bit more
8 closely in looking at the lead government department.

9 Just before I do that, do you remember, at the time
10 of the fire, was DCLG involved in any other recovery
11 phase, any other emergency?

12 A. We had, through RED, mobilised throughout the summer
13 following the series of terror attacks at London Bridge
14 and in Manchester, and also earlier in the year,
15 I recall, Westminster Bridge -- am I right about that?
16 But -- perhaps the timing was different, but there had
17 been a series of other attacks. So we had mobilised
18 quite a lot, along with the rest of Whitehall, in
19 response to those events.

20 Q. Right. Does that mean that your staff in RED were, to
21 some extent, already deployed in the recovery processes
22 after those emergencies?

23 A. I don't recall whether there was very much by way of
24 recovery for Manchester and London Bridge. My
25 recollection is that the local authority and other

1 responders were very much leading on that.

2 One small thing that we were still involved with was
3 the remaining work following the floods of 2015/2016,
4 because there was continued support needed for local
5 families, local businesses, and we were holding -- still
6 holding a very small and I believe almost complete set
7 of actions and duties on that.

8 Q. Did the continuing role of the DCLG -- or RED, perhaps,
9 but I think DCLG generally -- in attending to the
10 recovery phase of those emergencies have an adverse
11 effect on resourcing in order to deal with either the
12 response or the recovery phase of the Grenfell Tower
13 fire?

14 A. I don't think so, no, but those who were more directly
15 involved in it would -- you know, I would not want to
16 say -- I would not want to disagree with them if they
17 said they did feel it had had an impact, because they
18 would be better placed to say. I think what definitely
19 was the case was that people were very tired. There had
20 been a series of events to respond to and, of course,
21 there was the Finsbury Park attack the following week as
22 well, so I think it had been a relentless few months for
23 RED and, indeed, for the civil contingencies secretariat
24 in the Cabinet Office.

25 Q. Turning, then, to the topic of lead government

1 department. We've heard evidence from Katharine Hammond
2 from the CCS about that.

3 At the time of the fire, was DCLG acting as the lead
4 government department in any other existing emergency?

5 A. Apart from the very small remaining legacy issues on the
6 floods, no.

7 Q. What did you understand the role of the lead government
8 department to be?

9 A. The lead government department for response -- is that
10 what you're referring to, or recovery?

11 Q. Well, take response first.

12 A. Take the two. Okay.

13 So the lead government department for response,
14 of course, DCLG didn't really have any of those
15 responsibilities, apart from that quite narrow question
16 of handling people arriving from overseas, but my
17 understanding is that such a department should have got
18 plans in place, should have thought about the sorts of
19 issues that would arise, should be thinking about who
20 they were turning to to lead the recovery effort and
21 part of their response planning, and would be liaising
22 with the Cabinet Office on working out whether or not
23 the COBR machinery needed to be mobilised or any
24 cross-government ministerial meetings needed to be
25 mobilised in response to a crisis.

1 Q. And as recovery?
 2 A. As recovery, I mean, that really does depend, and
 3 of course a lot of the time there isn't a particular
 4 need for central government to get involved in recovery,
 5 but there, I would expect the recovery department to be
 6 owning whatever the cross-government set of activities
 7 were that needed to be carried out, and if it was only
 8 maybe one department involved, I wouldn't necessarily
 9 expect there to be a very big cross-government recovery
 10 effort to be needed. But for something like
 11 Grenfell Tower, or indeed the floods, you've got lots of
 12 departments involved, the business department and all
 13 sorts around the table, and so the role of the recovery
 14 department is to co-ordinate that, with support from CCS
 15 in the first instance, but actually in the end operating
 16 on their own, because typically you're talking about
 17 these things continuing over a long period of time.
 18 Q. And Dr Farrar told us, I think, yesterday that the role
 19 of a lead government department was to act as first
 20 point of contact, but not to be operational on the
 21 ground.
 22 A. Oh, yes, that's absolutely clear. I should have said
 23 that already, really. The key principle within all the
 24 civil contingencies guidance and planning is that of
 25 locally-led response, in terms of the substantive

17

1 response that's needed to support the communities that
 2 are affected.
 3 Q. Now, can I show you a document, {HOM00013085}, please.
 4 This is a document entitled "Departments
 5 responsibilities for planning, response, and recovery
 6 from emergencies, March 2009". Were you familiar with
 7 this document?
 8 A. Not particularly, no.
 9 Q. It's a document, as you can see, prepared in March 2009,
 10 but Katharine Hammond told us in her evidence that she
 11 thought it was still current as at June 2017. Would
 12 that accord with your recollection?
 13 A. Yes, especially if Katharine had confirmed that.
 14 Q. Right, I see. So you can't do better than her? You
 15 can't confirm or ---
 16 A. No, I can't really add anything to her recollection, no.
 17 She was much closer to that and to the operational
 18 leadership of it.
 19 Q. Right.
 20 Then let's go to page 5 {HOM00013085/5}, please,
 21 item 10, bottom of the page:
 22 "Hazardous materials - Chemical, biological or
 23 radiological materials released other than as a result
 24 of terrorist activity and where not covered in 9 above
 25 or 11 below."

18

1 9 above is "Radiation Hazards", and 11 below --- take
 2 this from me --- is "Serious Industrial Accidents".
 3 You can see from that that the lead government on
 4 recovery --- the columns, I should just explain, are
 5 "Risk" in the left-hand column, central column is
 6 "Response", and right-hand column is "Recovery".
 7 The CLG is the lead government department for
 8 recovery "where mainly displaced people/wider
 9 disruption" occurs in relation to an event from
 10 a hazardous material. Does that accord with your
 11 recollection?
 12 A. Yes, it does.
 13 Q. Over the page {HOM00013085/6}, if we look at item 11,
 14 "Serious Industrial Accidents", you can see there that
 15 it says (a) to (c), which is HSE, wider economic and
 16 commercial impact, pollution arising from.
 17 If you look at the very top on the right-hand side,
 18 it says, "CLG if wide-ranging issues". Do you see that?
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. Then item 12, "Severe storms and weather", (a) to (c) is
 21 impact on transport, impact on power, impact on built
 22 environment, and then in the right-hand column:
 23 "a-c: Significant recovery activity unlikely and
 24 lead therefore likely to remain with response lead
 25 department unless otherwise determined if wide-ranging

19

1 consequences arise."
 2 Now, they are examples, I think, of where the DCLG
 3 is listed as a lead in the response.
 4 A. In the recovery.
 5 Q. Well, yes, in the recovery, in the recovery phase, as
 6 LGD. Again, would that accord with your recollection,
 7 looking at this document?
 8 A. Well, yes, it would. I think, though, that it's
 9 important to say that those are all conditional
 10 statements, "if wide-ranging issues", "if significant
 11 displacement of people" on the previous page. So my
 12 understanding at the time was that there was probably
 13 a default --- and I believe Katharine Hammond said this
 14 in one of her witness statements --- that DCLG would lead
 15 recovery in these sorts of circumstances, but I don't
 16 think it was automatic, and that was why on the morning
 17 of the fire I rang Jo Farrar or messaged her first thing
 18 to say, "I think we'll be leading the recovery here",
 19 because I didn't think it was automatic, and I thought
 20 it was quite important that we stepped in straight away
 21 and didn't wait to be asked, and that's what we did.
 22 However, I don't think it was clear, and I don't
 23 recall at any point anybody asking us to do that, and
 24 I don't particularly --- in fact, I don't at all recall
 25 the Home Office asking us --- as the lead department for

20

1 response after Grenfell, talking to us as the recovery
 2 partner. We just did it.
 3 Q. Right.
 4 Now, just looking to the central column, the reason
 5 I asked you about response is because if you look at
 6 (c), "impact on built environment", "England", the
 7 response phase is with the CLG in the response phase.
 8 Do you see that?
 9 A. In response to severe storms and weather, yes.
 10 Q. Yes. So that is an example, isn't it, where the CLG is
 11 the lead government department in the response phase,
 12 albeit in a particular impact arising as a result of
 13 severe storms and weather?
 14 A. Yes. I have to say that I don't recall that happening
 15 during the floods of 2015, when there was an impact on
 16 the built environment, in the sense that people had to
 17 leave their homes and businesses had to leave their
 18 businesses, but DEFRA were firmly in the lead on the
 19 response. What we pictured up were the recovery issues.
 20 Q. Right, I see.
 21 Then if you go over the page to item 15, page 7
 22 {HOM00013085/7}, you can see "Earthquakes", and there,
 23 "England: CLG", in the response phase; yes?
 24 A. Yes. I'm not sure that that column -- sorry, that row
 25 was still there by the time of the 2016 risk assessment.

1 Q. Right.
 2 A. Earthquakes, I mean. I don't recall that.
 3 Q. Right.
 4 If you go finally to page 9 {HOM00013085/9}, please,
 5 item 24, this I think is the instance you were referring
 6 to before, which is "Reception and Housing of UK
 7 Citizens evacuated from overseas", "England: CLG" in
 8 both phases.
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Both response and recovery.
 11 A. Yes, and the department held capability to be able to
 12 respond in those circumstances through RED.
 13 Q. Right.
 14 Now, looking at item 24 there, can you tell us
 15 whether the response and recovery for DCLG in the
 16 reception and housing of UK citizens evacuated from
 17 overseas would entail DCLG's involvement in housing
 18 those who had been displaced?
 19 A. Yes, I think it would have done. In my time in DCLG,
 20 I don't recall this becoming relevant, but I did, when
 21 I was at the Cabinet Office prior to that, pick up as
 22 one of my duties leading the emergency planning for
 23 eurozone scenarios, which included the possibility of
 24 countries in the eurozone leaving the eurozone and all
 25 the potential monetary and fiscal consequences that

1 could have resulted from that, which may well have led
 2 to citizens being evacuated and coming home to the UK.
 3 So I remember at the time co-ordinating that from the
 4 Cabinet Office, requiring DCLG to have their plans
 5 ready, and that was definitely about liaising with local
 6 authorities. And it was quite challenging, because you
 7 didn't know where exactly people might come home to and
 8 what their housing needs might be. So I remember those
 9 discussions at that point.
 10 Q. Now, I've shown you, I think, three examples of where
 11 the CLG is lead department in the response phase:
 12 there's severe storms and weather, impact on built
 13 environment; earthquakes; and reception and housing of
 14 UK citizens evacuated from overseas. Each of those,
 15 I think, would have a rehousing aspect, wouldn't they?
 16 A. Yes, they would. I'm really not sure though that the
 17 earthquakes or, indeed, the built environment in
 18 response to storms were still there at the time of the
 19 2016/2017 risk register. My apologies if I'm wrong
 20 about that, but my recollection is that the risk
 21 register slightly changed and that what was left was
 22 this one here under row 24.
 23 But, yes, you're right, it would have involved
 24 different forms of rehousing challenge. But I do --
 25 yes, and that would have been as much a recovery thing

1 as a response issue.
 2 Q. It appears that, as Katharine Hammond told us, this
 3 document remained the same in June 2017 as it had in
 4 March 2009. On that basis, just looking at the
 5 paperwork, it seems as if the DCLG did have a lead role
 6 in the response phase of an emergency in those three
 7 instances, and each of those, would you accept, involved
 8 as an outcome, potentially, mass displacement of
 9 individuals from their homes?
 10 A. Yes, I would accept that, and indeed I observed that
 11 during the floods. There were lots of people who needed
 12 to be rehoused locally in the floods of 2015/2016, and
 13 that was managed quite effectively, as I recall, by the
 14 local councils, of which there were many, which were
 15 involved.
 16 Q. Just help us with this: is there or do you know whether
 17 there was a system in place whereby this document would
 18 be updated annually or biennially to reflect revisions
 19 in the national risk register?
 20 A. Well, the reason why I am perhaps a little bit,
 21 you know, confused by this is that my understanding was
 22 that the national risk register was updated quite
 23 frequently, and that the most relevant version at the
 24 time of the Grenfell Tower fire was an update from early
 25 2017, for which the work had been done mostly during

1 2016, and that that had changed the risks that --
 2 compared to the ones shown in this document. So I'm not
 3 going to disagree with those who were closer to this
 4 about which document was extant at the time, but my
 5 understanding was that the most relevant risk register
 6 was much more recent than this one.

7 Q. Thank you.

8 Now, if we go to your first statement, we can move
 9 on with the point, at paragraph 14, please, page 5
 10 {CLG00030653/5}. You say there in the first bullet
 11 point:

12 "There was no precedent for an emergency that left
 13 so many households homeless and in crisis. While the
 14 Department was not involved in providing emergency and
 15 temporary accommodation, we were quickly drawn into the
 16 longer-term rehousing challenge. I cannot recall
 17 another occasion when the Department had to work with
 18 a council on long-term rehousing of individual families
 19 in this way."

20 Would you agree that it's envisaged from the list of
 21 lead government departments that we've just been looking
 22 at that the DCLG are or are supposed to be involved in
 23 the recovery phase, at least, where complex matters or
 24 wide-ranging issues are involved, particularly housing?

25 A. Yes, if those issues are presented in response to

25

1 events. However, I think you would always expect
 2 the council to be leading on those rehousing efforts, as
 3 indeed they did after Grenfell Tower. Even after the
 4 first week or so, they were still in the lead. So the
 5 department's role would have been to think about what
 6 support might be needed.

7 I still cannot recall any event where the department
 8 had to lean in so extensively on the longer-term
 9 rehousing challenge, and that was for a number of
 10 reasons after Grenfell, not least the fact that this was
 11 the most expensive housing market in the country that we
 12 were dealing with, and the need to rehouse people close
 13 to where they had lived before made it an extremely
 14 difficult challenge and a very expensive one, which was
 15 why the government leant in with so much resource.

16 So I still think -- I stand by this bullet. I still
 17 think that there was no precedent for quite the
 18 circumstances that we were faced and that the council
 19 was faced with after the Grenfell Tower fire.

20 Q. Right. Well, let's just see if we can take that in
 21 stages.

22 First, would you agree that it was envisaged from
 23 the documents we've been looking at that DCLG would be
 24 involved in the recovery stage where people were
 25 displaced, there was mass displacement?

26

1 A. Yes, in those circumstances. Although, as I say,
 2 I can't think of an example where that had happened, and
 3 where permanent rehousing was needed, because after the
 4 floods, this was temporary rehousing, not permanent
 5 rehousing that was needed.

6 Q. Yes, but we have also seen that the displacement could
 7 include housing of UK citizens evacuated from overseas.

8 A. Yes, to the extent that any government or local
 9 government support was needed for that, that was
 10 potentially something that the government might have
 11 needed to have got involved in, yes.

12 Q. And do you agree that that could reasonably involve very
 13 large numbers of people?

14 A. Well, as I said earlier, it could have done, but I think
 15 the circumstances of Grenfell, where there was a very
 16 large number of people requiring social housing, in
 17 other words provided by the state and paid for and
 18 subsidised by the state, in a local area and with so
 19 many others whose homes were also damaged from the other
 20 buildings surrounding Grenfell, I would not have
 21 expected the -- for example, the movement of people
 22 following a eurozone crisis to have had that same local,
 23 very intense impact and need for the housing teams
 24 locally. That was, I think, quite unusual.

25 And in the case of floods, often you're talking

27

1 about people who own their own homes and whose first
 2 port of call will, yes, perhaps be to go to hotels
 3 provided for by their local council, but again, not with
 4 the same level of trauma. I think that's the other
 5 thing that's important that was very different about
 6 Grenfell, that just made the whole set of circumstances
 7 so difficult and so much more in need of central
 8 government support in a number of different respects.

9 Q. What I'm really trying to get at is whether you might
 10 agree that the displacement of large numbers of people
 11 was an outcome which the department might reasonably
 12 have anticipated given its pre-determined role in the
 13 recovery phase of a number of emergencies.

14 A. Yes, I think we might have anticipated it, but I don't
 15 think we had experienced it before.

16 Q. No, that I follow, and you say there is no precedent for
 17 an emergency, but the fact that there wasn't a precedent
 18 for an emergency with an outcome of this scale, I think
 19 you are accepting -- is this right? -- is not itself
 20 a reason for not anticipating it and preparing for it?

21 A. No, but I think to have anticipated this particular set
 22 of circumstances would have been quite surprising.
 23 I think for a reasonable worst-case scenario planning to
 24 have anticipated this -- and I've just, you know,
 25 mentioned the words "in crisis"; people were homeless

28

1 and in crisis following an unbelievably traumatic set of
 2 events. So I'm not denying that some of the planning
 3 would have been useful, but I think, in response to
 4 Grenfell, it's unlikely that it would have taken us to
 5 quite the situation that was being experienced.
 6 Q. Are you drawing a distinction in your evidence between
 7 reasonably anticipating mass displacement as an outcome
 8 as a result of floods in those parts of the country
 9 where they have been experienced on the one hand, and
 10 mass displacement of densely housed individuals in
 11 social housing in an urban environment on the other?
 12 A. In part, yes. I think I'm also thinking of other
 13 previous events, such as, for example, Lakanal House,
 14 which I was not involved in and I have no recollection
 15 of myself, but my understanding there is that the local
 16 council managed that rehousing effort, at least I'm not
 17 aware of any particular issues surrounding that at the
 18 time.
 19 So I think a lot of what the department was thinking
 20 in working out how to prepare for any potential recovery
 21 lead that we might have had was a reasonably good track
 22 record of local councils actually managing their -- any
 23 local rehousing need pretty well on their own, and
 24 indeed the following week, the week following the
 25 Grenfell Tower fire, we saw Camden Council rehouse

1 hundreds of people following the evacuation of the five
 2 blocks because there were fire safety issues on that
 3 Friday, the week following the fire, and there was
 4 a pan-London response, hotels were provided, people were
 5 looked after, and there was no need on that occasion for
 6 central government to get involved at all. We were
 7 aware of what was going on, but we weren't involved at
 8 all.
 9 So I think there was a very strong track record,
 10 actually, of local councils being quite effective at
 11 rehousing people, both temporarily and, in the rare
 12 circumstances that were needed, permanently.
 13 Q. Does that answer tell us -- and tell me if I have
 14 misunderstood your evidence, Dame Melanie -- that the
 15 degree and nature of the preparation of DCLG for mass
 16 displacement following an emergency was conditioned upon
 17 the role that the local authority might play in the
 18 first instance?
 19 A. Well, yes, it would always be conditioned on the role
 20 that the local authority would be expected to play
 21 first. They were the ones with the housing duties, they
 22 were the first responders, and we would always have
 23 expected them to be discharging their duties, and in
 24 this case very specific duties in relation to housing
 25 homeless people, in fact. So I don't think it's really

1 that surprising that the department had not previously
 2 stepped in on a rehousing challenge like this and,
 3 therefore, was not particularly expecting that it needed
 4 to in response to Grenfell Tower.
 5 I think, with the benefit of hindsight, the scale of
 6 the rehousing challenge was so immense and the trauma of
 7 those who needed to be rehoused was so extreme that this
 8 was categorically different, in the sense that it was in
 9 a different category of crisis, and I think we
 10 recognised that quite early, actually, on the Wednesday,
 11 and began to sweep in on the housing issues. And,
 12 indeed, that was the one thing where the council did say
 13 that they needed help, and I think they realised that
 14 particularly the longer-term challenge was going to be
 15 something where they needed financial support.
 16 Q. Looking at the list -- and we don't need to go back to
 17 it, I don't think, unless you'd like to -- the 2009 list
 18 of relevant government departments for both response and
 19 recovery, is it right that there was no lead government
 20 department for fire?
 21 A. Yes, that's my recollection, yes.
 22 Q. Do you know why that was?
 23 A. No.
 24 Q. Did you ever ask that question at the time?
 25 A. No.

1 Q. Now, we know that in the response phase following the
 2 fire at Grenfell Tower, the Home Office was the lead
 3 government department; yes?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Do you know why they were the lead government
 6 department?
 7 A. Well, my understanding is that fire was added to the
 8 national risk register later, and not a fire
 9 specifically in a tower block in an urban area, but in
 10 a more general sense, and that the Home Office, as the
 11 lead government department for fire, were given that
 12 lead government department role for the response.
 13 Q. So is it right that there was therefore a policy -- or
 14 convention, perhaps is a better word -- whereby the
 15 response would sit with the department into whose remit
 16 the event creating the emergency fell?
 17 A. That seems to have been the case, yes.
 18 Q. So for fire, is this right, after January 2016, that was
 19 the Home Department?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. But before the transfer of the responsibility for fire
 22 to the Home Department, that would have been DCLG?
 23 A. Yes, that's right.
 24 Q. And in respect of the recovery phase after Grenfell, we
 25 are told that DCLG became the lead government

1 department.
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. That's right, is it?
 4 A. That is correct.
 5 Q. Do you know when exactly -- or even not exactly, but
 6 within a reasonable timeframe -- DCLG took over the role
 7 of lead government department?
 8 A. Do you mean after Grenfell itself?
 9 Q. After the Grenfell Tower fire, yes.
 10 A. Well, no, I don't think it's very clear, to be honest,
 11 and I think there is a wider point here, that the
 12 Home Office were the lead government department, but
 13 I think they saw that role primarily as observing and
 14 checking the blue light response, and in the early
 15 ministerial meetings, it was the fire and police
 16 representatives who were those who were most being
 17 called upon to provide information, is my recollection.
 18 I wasn't at the first two ministerial meetings, but that
 19 was certainly what I was told and that's what I observed
 20 at the later meetings. So I think the Home Office's
 21 role as lead government department was seen by them as
 22 fairly narrow.
 23 I think that on the recovery side, as I was saying
 24 earlier and as I mentioned in my witness statement, one
 25 of the first things I did on that morning was to contact

1 Jo Farrar and say, "We will be leading on the recovery,
 2 I believe", and I did that because Jo had been in the
 3 department for 10 months but had not, to the best of my
 4 recollection, experienced a major crisis through which
 5 DCLG would be responding, and I just wanted her to be
 6 really clear that that was my expectation.
 7 I don't recall, though, any moment in the subsequent
 8 days where the Cabinet Office, in the form of CCS,
 9 actually said, you know, "Who is doing the recovery
 10 phase? It's you, DCLG. Please explain to us how you're
 11 doing this work". We just simply stepped into that
 12 space. And I can see, having read others' witness
 13 statements, that I think they began to turn to that
 14 recovery question really on the Saturday, that's in
 15 Katharine Hammond's witness statement, and at that point
 16 I began to have conversations with Mark Sedwill about
 17 the recovery phase and how it should look and whether or
 18 not we needed a designated Gold lead for Whitehall as
 19 a whole.
 20 Q. Well, we will come to the events a little bit more
 21 closely later on.
 22 Just for the moment, can you tell us, what were
 23 DCLG's responsibilities, as you understood them at the
 24 time, of DCLG as a lead government department in the
 25 recovery phase?

1 A. Our role would have been to co-ordinate a wider
 2 cross-government effort. I think that's the sort of
 3 thing we did on the victim support side, for example.
 4 And also in making sure that issues like immigration
 5 issues for some of the families, all of those practical
 6 questions like driving licences and bank accounts and
 7 benefits payments, those were areas where the
 8 Cabinet Office was leading in the first instance, but
 9 where I would have expected quite a long tail of
 10 recovery work, potentially, and that we would have been
 11 in the lead in co-ordinating that.
 12 I would also have expected that we would have been
 13 in the lead anyway, even if someone else was leading the
 14 recovery, on the housing issues, which we were.
 15 Q. Would you agree -- I think you do -- that ensuring the
 16 right arrangements for the recovery phase should be in
 17 place already as a standing preparedness for any lead
 18 government department responsible for recovery?
 19 A. Yes, I do.
 20 Q. Yes.
 21 A. Yeah.
 22 Q. Now, if we go to your first statement, please, again,
 23 and go to page 5 {CLG00030653/11}, and go up a paragraph
 24 to paragraph 13, you say there:
 25 "Some elements of the Department's contribution to

1 the response to, and recovery from, the Grenfell Tower
 2 fire were therefore well rehearsed. The RED teams
 3 performed their usual role, Bellwin was activated very
 4 quickly, and the Department took on the role of
 5 coordinating the Central Government contribution to
 6 recovery (a role it continues to have)."
 7 Was there any aspect which you considered was not
 8 well rehearsed?
 9 (Pause)
 10 A. I think on the housing side, we had not previously
 11 thought through what a longer-term rehousing challenge
 12 might look like on this scale, and I think the scale
 13 matters, because if it was only a few families, I don't
 14 think we would have needed to have been involved, but it
 15 was the numbers and the extreme circumstances in which
 16 those people were in that made this so difficult.
 17 And -- so we had not rehearsed before what we would do
 18 if there was a huge rehousing challenge in a very, very
 19 expensive local authority that had almost no spare
 20 social housing.
 21 And I'm not sure, to be honest, that that kind of
 22 scale of challenge is really what is anticipated by the
 23 scenarios in the national risk register either. I think
 24 that government as a whole had a presumption that the
 25 local authority would normally deal with that. And

1 I think we were ready, actually, although we were not
 2 rehearsed, we were ready to respond to that housing
 3 challenge and we were able to send some people to help,
 4 and we were also ready, you know, with finance, the
 5 Homes and Communities Agency stepped in to help try to
 6 find actual homes and to work with developers towards
 7 that.
 8 So we were ready and I think we deployed quickly,
 9 but we were not rehearsed on that longer-term rehousing
 10 challenge, which, as I said, I believe was
 11 unprecedented, to the best of my knowledge and
 12 recollection .
 13 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Can I just ask, did you have any
 14 plans, put it that way, as to where you would go to find
 15 all this additional housing?
 16 A. No, we didn't.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: No one had given much thought to how
 18 you obtain it?
 19 A. No, and of course the Homes and Communities Agency
 20 didn't have a role in London anyway, so even if we had
 21 had a plan, it would almost certainly not have covered
 22 London as well as it had covered other parts of England.
 23 I think it's — you always have to think with
 24 planning as to what the scenarios are that you're
 25 planning for, and I still believe that the number of

1 circumstances in which a local authority can't manage
 2 this on their own are going to be very small and quite
 3 exceptional. So if this had happened in — even in
 4 another urban conurbation like Birmingham or Manchester,
 5 the Homes and Communities Agency I'm sure would have
 6 stepped forward to talk to the council, because the HCA
 7 owns land, it's often developing sites, it has a very
 8 strong relationship with local developers, and offering
 9 that help is something it would have been able to do.
 10 Should it have been doing more planning in advance
 11 for performing that role? I'm not sure whether that
 12 would have helped, if I'm honest, because they had
 13 a capability, we deployed it quite quickly, and it did
 14 actually make a difference, albeit that nothing was
 15 really able to cope with the scale of the problem that
 16 we were facing.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Thank you.
 18 MR MILLETT: Can I just tease out a further distinction
 19 arising from what you've just said. I mean, in your
 20 statement at paragraphs 13 and 14 here {CLG00030653/5}
 21 you have said what was well rehearsed, and then said in
 22 other respects the department's contribution to the
 23 relief effort was unprecedented. So I think would this
 24 be fair to you: that your explanation for those elements
 25 which were not well rehearsed were the unprecedented

1 nature of the outcome?
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. Right.
 4 Now, to what extent in the outcome was there
 5 a difference in that lack of preparedness between, on
 6 the one hand, Grenfell Tower being social housing and,
 7 on the other hand, another building in the borough being
 8 privately owned and full of tenants or leaseholders
 9 owning their own flats?
 10 A. Well, I think there is a difference, and it's a number
 11 of different factors that create the difference.
 12 I mean, in the private sector, where people own their
 13 own homes, then there will be insurance, and people are
 14 not looking to the government to provide them with
 15 a long-term housing solution. I think that is one very
 16 important difference.
 17 I think the other difference is that some of the
 18 families in Grenfell Tower were there as temporary
 19 accommodation, so they were already actually involved
 20 with the council's housing department, and had
 21 an expectation that I think was justified that
 22 the council was going to step in and support them very,
 23 very quickly. And so I think just the nature of
 24 social housing is very different. So I think the
 25 obligation on the authorities was different, and

1 particularly on the local authority, and that's partly
 2 a legal point in terms of temporary accommodation, but
 3 it's also just the nature of what families needed.
 4 Q. So was the thinking at the time, doing the best you can,
 5 that there was no need to include mass displacement of
 6 social tenants as a result of a disaster in their
 7 building because the response of the local council was
 8 reliable enough to take up the recovery phase?
 9 A. Well, I think the assumption was, firstly, that the
 10 local authority was responsible. Secondly, that this
 11 was an area where local government was very clear in its
 12 responsibilities, and despite the fact that the
 13 situation at the time was very challenging, especially
 14 in London — and we were certainly aware that there were
 15 real challenges for local authorities in finding
 16 temporary accommodation that was adequate or permanent
 17 accommodation — we believed that they knew what they
 18 had to do. And so, from that point of view, I wouldn't
 19 have expected the department to feel that it needed to
 20 be looking over the shoulder of local authorities and
 21 checking that they were dealing with certainly the
 22 temporary response to a housing challenge. And on
 23 a more permanent response, you've got a bit more time
 24 there to think about the issues, and I would have
 25 expected a local authority to come to us and say, "This

1 is where we need help", not least because it's often
2 going to be involving financial help, which may be
3 beyond their means, which is indeed what happened, even
4 to Kensington and Chelsea.

5 I hope that's helpful.

6 Q. It's fair to say, I think, is it, from your
7 understanding of the civil contingencies framework, that
8 even if a privately-owned block had suffered the same
9 disaster as Grenfell Tower had, RBKC, assuming that it
10 had happened in that borough, would be a category 1
11 responder?

12 A. Yes, of course, and hotel accommodation, certainly the
13 wider range of support that might be needed for people,
14 you would have expected the council to be able to
15 provide all of those things. But -- and I'm speaking
16 beyond any direct knowledge and about a scenario that
17 I'm not aware of having really happened in quite the
18 same way, but you would have -- I think when people own
19 their own properties, they have recourse to funding and
20 insurance that is different, and a different expectation
21 from the local -- of what the local authority is
22 expected to offer them, and indeed what they want to be
23 offered.

24 Q. So does it come to this, and maybe I'm putting it
25 a little bit bluntly, but when it came to preparedness

1 for the outcome of mass displacement as a result of
2 a fire, or perhaps structural collapse, of a tower
3 block, DCLG's preparedness was adversely affected by
4 an assumption, first, that if it was privately owned,
5 the tenants were insured and could look after
6 themselves, but if it was social housing, then the local
7 council would take up the recovery?

8 A. Well, I think that's what we would expect, yes.
9 However, there was no mention of a fire on the national
10 risk register of this nature at all, as far as I'm
11 aware, even in 2016/2017, and that has subsequently been
12 changed, and a major residential fire has been added,
13 but that risk wasn't catered for on the national risk
14 register. Had it been, I think the lead government
15 department would have been the Home Office, and I don't
16 believe that that planning for response had really been
17 done in government.

18 But I also believe that my own department's
19 assumption that the first response must be with the
20 local authority, whether it's a private or
21 a public-sector block, was correct, and all the history
22 we had was that local authorities were pretty good at
23 this, actually. They knew how to deal with temporary
24 crises, they had resilience arrangements with other
25 boroughs, particularly in London, that they could draw

1 on, and so although the circumstances of Grenfell Tower
2 were very exceptional, I think we were right to assume
3 that the council would step forward into the temporary
4 rehousing effort rather better than it actually did.

5 Q. Let's then turn to the events themselves.

6 We start on 14 June.

7 Can we start with {CLG00002877}. If we look
8 together at the email at the foot of the page, timed at
9 9.07 in the morning of that day, it comes from your
10 office to Nicholas Holgate, copied to Jo Farrar,
11 subject, "Fire incident", and you say:

12 "Dear Nick,

13 "I just wanted to express how shocked and sad I was
14 to hear about the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower this
15 morning.

16 "We are ready to help however we can from Central
17 Government -- Jo Farrar from DCLG is already leading on
18 this. Obviously today you will be dealing with the
19 immediate response but do let us know -- as and when it
20 is helpful -- if there is anything we can do."

21 Would it be correct to say that this email suggests
22 that you didn't think that RBKC would require assistance
23 from DCLG in the immediate response, at least that day?

24 A. I think my email is pretty open in offering support as
25 and when it is helpful, if there is anything we can do.

1 Obviously the last thing you would want to do,
2 particularly only a few hours after a crisis like this
3 has first started, is to get in the way from central
4 government, but I think this is a pretty open-ended
5 offer.

6 Q. Did you think at the time that assistance from the
7 department would be required immediately, either in the
8 response phase or very early stages in the recovery
9 phase?

10 A. Well, I don't think I really knew at that point. It was
11 clear within a matter of hours, certainly by
12 mid-afternoon, that they were going to need some help
13 with the longer-term rehousing challenge, and we swept
14 in to support them on that actually on Wednesday evening
15 and certainly on Thursday, both from the department and
16 through the Homes and Communities Agency. But more
17 widely, I don't think I knew at that point. And this
18 is, you know, 9 o'clock in the morning; my priority was
19 just to reach out to the council and make sure that they
20 knew we were there, and to make an offer of support and
21 to make contact.

22 Q. What was it about the incident that you knew at 9.07
23 that morning that prompted you to offer central
24 government's assistance?

25 A. Well, I was aware, of course, that, you know, the

1 Bellwin scheme, the support for families and individuals
 2 that was subsequently provided, the sums of money that
 3 were paid out through government support, those were two
 4 very specific things that must have been in my mind at
 5 the time. I don't recall sitting and writing a list or
 6 itemising it or anything like that, but I knew that
 7 central government support was likely to be needed,
 8 particularly financial support.

9 Q. Yes. The question I had was really one of impression.
 10 What impression had you gained from what you knew at the
 11 time which prompted you to offer central government help
 12 as opposed to thinking that it's the council's
 13 responsibility and they can cope without central
 14 government assistance?

15 A. Well, simply the tower itself and the scale of the fire
 16 and the damage. That was clearly going to be
 17 an enormous amount of work and require, as it has done,
 18 a huge amount of financial commitment to support. And,
 19 you know, just the scale of that made this obviously
 20 an enormous incident where it was unlikely that anyone
 21 was going to be able to cope on its own.

22 I mean, at the time, I wasn't, I don't think,
 23 particularly thinking about the humanitarian support for
 24 families, which I would have seen as very much for
 25 the council to lead. So I was more -- I suspect, but to

45

1 be honest, I'm really now inferring something about what
 2 I was thinking five years ago, and I don't want to go
 3 too far in that, or I may mislead you, but I was --
 4 I don't think I really thought about the fact that they
 5 would need help, it just seemed so obvious that they
 6 would, given the scale of what had happened.

7 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: I have to say that I read -- this
 8 was your first contact with Mr Holgate, was it?

9 A. Yes, it was.

10 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Yes. I read it as being a not
 11 entirely unconventional expression of support.

12 A. So you read it as being --

13 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: Well, I mean, if you're going to
 14 make contact with him, your department's responsible for
 15 local government --

16 A. Yeah.

17 SIR MARTIN MOORE--BICK: -- I don't find it surprising that
 18 you should make contact in these terms, offering
 19 support, without anything specific, just as a measure of
 20 solidarity.

21 A. Just to show that I was really there, really, that we
 22 were there. And I knew Nick Holgate a little bit, we
 23 had worked together in the Treasury some years before.
 24 I didn't know him very well, I didn't have his phone
 25 number, but just as a matter of human connection, that

46

1 was partly what I was trying to do. And, I mean, my
 2 second paragraph starts, "We are ready to help however
 3 we can from central Government".

4 MR MILLETT: Yes.

5 Then you go on to say:
 6 "... Jo Farrar from DCLG is already leading on
 7 this."

8 What was she leading on at that point?

9 A. So she -- as our director general for local government
 10 and also as the overall director general on RED, I knew
 11 Jo would be involved in thinking about the local aspects
 12 of this and what was going on in North Kensington,
 13 particularly not the housing issues. I mean, this is
 14 still very early in the day for us to have really worked
 15 out what we were dealing with, to be honest, and so
 16 later, Helen MacNamara -- later in the day, in fact --
 17 was very clearly leading on the rehousing issues with
 18 the council, but I would have expected and, indeed, my
 19 conversation with Jo earlier in the day had, I think,
 20 created an agreement amongst us that she was leading on
 21 the wider issues around the local response.

22 Q. Earlier in the day; do you remember when?

23 A. I believe it was at around 7.00 or 7.30 in the morning
 24 that I contacted Jo. It's in my first witness
 25 statement, I believe.

47

1 Q. Right, let's see. I think we can probably short-circuit
 2 that question.

3 Can we go to {CLG00030414/5}, please. What I'm
 4 showing you, Dame Melanie, is Dr Farrar's witness
 5 statement at paragraph 20, and she says:
 6 "I spoke by phone to Melanie Dawes at around 7.45am
 7 on my way into the Department. We discussed the fire;
 8 RED's response and involvement; MHCLG's role in
 9 supporting a locally-led recovery effort; and MHCLG's
 10 responsibilities in relation to housing and building
 11 safety. Given the location of Grenfell Tower, it was
 12 obvious that RBKC would have a key role in the relief
 13 effort. Melanie Dawes indicated that she knew
 14 Nicholas Holgate during her time at HM Treasury and
 15 would contact him to offer Government's support."

16 Does Dr Farrar's recollection of that telephone
 17 conversation accord with yours?

18 A. Yes.

19 Q. As you have told us just now, as she says in the last
 20 sentence, you knew Nicholas Holgate from HM Treasury,
 21 your time there.

22 A. Yes, I didn't know him very well, but we had worked
 23 alongside each other for a number of years, and I had
 24 seen him once or twice since I arrived at the department
 25 because of his role at RBKC, but I hadn't visited

48

1 the council or particularly got to know them.
 2 Q. Can we then go back to the email chain, please, at
 3 {CLG00002877}. We can see Nicholas Holgate's response
 4 to you at the next email up on page 1 at 9.09:
 5 "Many thanks. Plenty of blue light resource
 6 at present."
 7 Do you remember what your reaction to that was?
 8 A. I was a bit surprised. I didn't really think it was
 9 an answer to my email, to be honest. The fact that
 10 there was plenty of blue light resource didn't really
 11 seem to me to be especially relevant, to be honest, to
 12 what I thought I was offering in my previous email,
 13 which was a much more general support for the council as
 14 opposed to the blue light resource, which was clearly
 15 part of the immediate response, but was in some ways
 16 rather distinct from what the council were going to need
 17 to do. So I was a little bit surprised.
 18 I then went into a whole morning of meetings and
 19 didn't give it much further thought until later in the
 20 afternoon.
 21 Q. Now, let's see, just moving forward into the day
 22 a little bit more, if you can help us with a date.
 23 Can we go, please, to your first witness statement
 24 at page 9 {CLG00030653/9}, paragraph 23. You describe
 25 communication there with the council, and this is under

1 the broader heading, I think, of 14 June. I can tell
 2 you -- take it from me without scrolling up -- that this
 3 part of the statement deals with events on 14 June.
 4 If you go five lines down from the start of the
 5 paragraph, you can see you say:
 6 "Jo Farrar spoke to him ..."
 7 That's Nicholas Holgate.
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. "... at 12:30 ..."
 10 A. Yes, she actually spoke to him at 12.30 on 15 June,
 11 which I clarified in my second witness statement.
 12 Q. Exactly, fine, so that's clear.
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Nonetheless, let's just read on to the end of
 15 paragraph 23. You say:
 16 "As confirmed by email, their initial view, based on
 17 RBKC's strong track record of service delivery and their
 18 relatively healthy financial position, was that there
 19 were no risks to flag. We thought that RBKC's
 20 partnership arrangements with Westminster Council, and
 21 the general strength of cross-borough working in London
 22 (as had been recently demonstrated during the
 23 Westminster Bridge and London Bridge terror attacks),
 24 would further enable them to cope with a disaster on
 25 this scale."

1 Did you in fact have a conversation with Jo Farrar
 2 on 14 June regarding the council's ability to manage as
 3 you set out here, or did that conversation take place,
 4 and only take place, on 15 June?
 5 A. I can't recall, and my apologies that I got the date
 6 wrong when I was writing my first statement, so I did
 7 place these events on 14 June. The email that would
 8 help me to clarify that is the one that came from the
 9 local government risk teams in response to Jo's request
 10 which -- and whether that was on Wednesday or Thursday.
 11 My recollection is it might have been Thursday. But
 12 what -- so that would tie some of these conversations to
 13 Thursday rather than Wednesday.
 14 But I spoke to Jo a number of times during the
 15 Wednesday, and so I'm pretty certain we will have spoken
 16 about the council before the end of that first day once
 17 again and not just first thing in the morning.
 18 Q. Just building up a little further, then, were you aware
 19 that Jo Farrar had sought information from her oversight
 20 and risk teams about whether there were any general
 21 concerns about RBKC?
 22 A. Yes, I was, and I think she and I discussed it before
 23 she did it, and it's probably helpful just to clarify
 24 what those teams were and what the information was that
 25 they were giving us.

1 When I arrived in the department in 2015, the
 2 Audit Commission had just been abolished, and I was very
 3 concerned that I didn't have any oversight function that
 4 allowed me to discharge my responsibilities as
 5 accounting officer, particularly for the overall
 6 financial health of the local government system, with
 7 £45 billion a year of money going through the
 8 department's own accounts.
 9 So I set up a very small but quite focused team of
 10 about 10 or 15 people, and they held an overview, with
 11 support from the Local Government Association, of all
 12 councils on three dimensions: finance, leadership and
 13 service delivery. The service delivery element was
 14 pretty much entirely focused on children's social care
 15 and adult social care -- in other words, services for
 16 vulnerable people -- not wider services and certainly
 17 not resilience planning.
 18 So in seeking information for those teams -- from
 19 those teams, what Jo and I were doing was -- and
 20 I believe I was involved in this before she did it --
 21 asking: is there a red flag? We weren't asking: can you
 22 give them a clean bill of health? We were just asking:
 23 is there anything we need to know about? And the answer
 24 was no. Kensington and Chelsea was one of the richest
 25 councils in the country, so finance was not an issue;

1 there were no questions around their service delivery
 2 that we were aware of and, indeed, the tri-borough
 3 arrangements were generally perceived to be pretty
 4 strong and helping them in that respect; and we weren't
 5 aware of any issues around the leadership.
 6 Q. Let's go to {CLG00002954}, and the middle email on the
 7 page is at 14.05, from Alex Powell to Jo Farrar, which
 8 you get, if you go to the top of the screen, by way of
 9 passing on at 14.20 that day. You can see you receive
 10 what comes below.
 11 Let's go back down to the foot of the page and see
 12 how the email chain starts. It comes from Jo Farrar's
 13 office to Alex Powell and Emily Bliss at 13.43 on
 14 14 June:
 15 "Alex, Emily,
 16 "Jo [Farrar] would like a little more information on
 17 our relationship with Kensington and Chelsea. Are they
 18 on you radar for any reason, and if so, why? Or is
 19 there any other information it would be useful for her
 20 to note?
 21 "And thank you also for your help this morning with
 22 the phone number ..."
 23 Then Alex Powell back at 14.05:
 24 "Abigail - K&C aren't on our radar at all and
 25 therefore we don't hold anything on them. The

53

1 Ministerial Support Unit have an app/database on
 2 councils which can provide general info (facts and
 3 figures on funding, housing, TF, etc) if that's of use.
 4 The most recent development of note that I'm aware of is
 5 the break-down of the tri-borough agreement but
 6 I suspect Jo is already sighted on that."
 7 That comes to you.
 8 Now, would you agree that in the email from
 9 Alex Powell, who was the DD in local government
 10 stewardship, as you can see is the way he describes
 11 himself, there is no explicit statement that there are
 12 concerns or risks about RBKC?
 13 A. That's right, he's saying they're not on our radar.
 14 Q. And, indeed, nothing in this email that tells you
 15 anything of the kind that you have set out in
 16 paragraph 23, which I think you attribute to this
 17 message. So it looks as if the conversation that you
 18 had was, as you say, the next day, or is that wrong?
 19 Was there a conversation about the matters at 7.45 that
 20 morning?
 21 A. I'm sure there was a conversation with Jo -- between me
 22 and Jo on the Wednesday, and what I put in my witness
 23 statement is a full summary of what Jo and I believed
 24 about the council and its overall capability on the
 25 basis of the information that we had, which, as I said,

54

1 was narrow in some respects, because it was designed for
 2 a specific purpose.
 3 But I think I was aware of this exchange on the
 4 Wednesday. I'd be very surprised if I wasn't. So
 5 although I got the date wrong about Jo's call with
 6 Nicholas Holgate, which was on Thursday, not Wednesday,
 7 to the best of my recollection the other comments in
 8 that paragraph I think probably took place on Wednesday,
 9 having seen the date of this email, which was on the
 10 Wednesday.
 11 Q. Right, thank you. So the information at paragraph 23 of
 12 your statement is something you think you got from
 13 Jo Farrar during that early morning conversation?
 14 A. No, I think I ...
 15 Q. Or later in the morning?
 16 A. Could I just see what was in my witness statement again
 17 and then I may be able to help you about when.
 18 Q. Yes. Can we go back to your first statement, please,
 19 paragraph 23, page 9 {CLG00030653/9}.
 20 A. I mean, I say, "she subsequently sought information from
 21 her local government oversight and risk teams", so
 22 I think it probable, but I honestly can't remember in
 23 detail, that she and I discussed it in our early morning
 24 conversation at 7.45, and that then she sought
 25 information, and I think I am correct in my recollection

55

1 that I knew she was going to seek that information, and
 2 there were no concerns flagged. And we also thought
 3 that the partnership arrangements gave them extra
 4 resilience, and although the tri-borough arrangement had
 5 broken down because Hammersmith and Fulham had pulled
 6 out, they still had that partnership arrangement with
 7 Westminster Council, and we thought that would give them
 8 extra resilience.
 9 But I think it's important for me to say that this
 10 wasn't -- what we didn't do after this was go, "Oh,
 11 everything's fine". We were simply saying that there
 12 was no risk particularly to flag on the Wednesday that
 13 this council would not be able to cope.
 14 Q. Now, about this same time, your office did receive
 15 another email, I think, providing basic background on
 16 the leader and the chief executive. If we go to that,
 17 please, that's at {CLG00002952}.
 18 It's an email that comes to Alok Sharma's office
 19 from your office, I think, at 14.19, so it's about the
 20 same time as the emails that are being sent up to you
 21 from the Powell/Bliss team, as it were, Jo Farrar's
 22 team. It's copied to Helen MacNamara, subject,
 23 "background on Kensington and Chelsea council":
 24 "Hi Donella
 25 "This is some really basic background about

56

1 Kensington and Chelsea and the Departments relationship
 2 with them. Kris Krasnowski can provide further
 3 background if needed.
 4 "Info on Kensington and Chelsea — factsheet
 5 attached.
 6 "Leader [and there he is].
 7 " ... Nicholas Paget—Brown.
 8 " ■ His relationship with the Department is good. He
 9 is well respected and open to discussing various ideas.
 10 " ■ The general view of officials is that he is a
 11 safe pair of hands who runs a tight and steady ship.
 12 ■ Has been in post since 2013.
 13 " ■ Was part of the tri—borough system with
 14 Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster this will
 15 officially end in 2018.
 16 " ■ DCLG [Secretary of State] has spoken to him today
 17 (there has been no readout of this call) and the
 18 Minister for London is also trying to speak to him prior
 19 to the meeting later this afternoon."
 20 Then underneath that:
 21 "Chief Executive.
 22 "Nicholas Holgate [and there he is].
 23 " ■ Melanie has emailed and Jo has text today.
 24 " ■ He confirmed that [they] have received lots of
 25 blue light support."

1 Then over the page to the top of page 2
 2 {CLG00002952/2}:
 3 " ■ Previously worked in HMT — the Department has
 4 a very good relationship with him."
 5 Now, neither of those emails mention anything about
 6 the council's civil emergency capabilities, let alone
 7 capabilities to respond to the Grenfell Tower fire, do
 8 they?
 9 A. No, they don't, and we had no role in assuring those
 10 capabilities at the time, even through RED.
 11 Q. Did you have any concerns by this point, in the early
 12 afternoon of 14 June, about the ability of any council
 13 in the country to respond to a disaster such as the
 14 Grenfell Tower fire?
 15 A. I don't recall having any concerns about this particular
 16 council at that time.
 17 Can I just be reminded of when this email was sent?
 18 Q. Yes, if we go to the top of the screen we can see it,
 19 probably the easiest thing for me to do, 14.19.49. So
 20 literally —
 21 A. Yes. I mean, it may help just to say that I was not in
 22 the department at this point. I — during the morning
 23 and through the lunch period until about 3 o'clock,
 24 I was at a number of meetings in the department which
 25 particularly at the time were focused on building

1 safety. I was particularly concerned about that. And
 2 then I had to go to the weekly meeting of Permanent
 3 Secretaries at the Cabinet Office. I then came back to
 4 the department and then I went out to a meeting which
 5 lasted a couple of hours and came back in at 3 o'clock,
 6 so this conversation will have been going on before
 7 I came back, and it was really in the mid—afternoon that
 8 I began to pick up the threads of what was going on and
 9 I had meetings with some of my colleagues. I'm sure
 10 I would have spoken to Jo again at that point,
 11 I certainly spoke to Helen MacNamara, and that was when
 12 I began to get a sense of what was going on and what the
 13 issues were, aside from the building safety ones.
 14 Q. Now, given the limitations of the information in the
 15 emails that you had had so far, both the no red flags
 16 email that had come to you — making all allowances for
 17 where you were on the day — and the information, so far
 18 as it is information, in this email, considering the
 19 limitations of that information, why did you think that
 20 RBKC would be able, as you say in paragraph 23 of your
 21 statement {CLG00030653/9}, to cope with a disaster of
 22 this scale?
 23 A. Well, I think for the reasons I set out in my witness
 24 statement: that there were no flags, they had resilience
 25 from the tri—borough arrangements, albeit that those had

1 been scaled back, and the wider London Resilience, and
 2 that's actually extremely important, that we had seen
 3 that in action on the terror attacks over the summer and
 4 knew it to be strong, and knew that experience in London
 5 to be very strong, and we knew the cross—borough working
 6 relationships to be effective. So all of those things
 7 gave us some confidence that the council, with help from
 8 others, would be able to cope with this.
 9 And to this day I'm very surprised at the scale of
 10 their failure to cope, to be honest, and, you know, this
 11 is despite the fact that Nicholas Holgate and others,
 12 I know, are people who would always have tried to do
 13 everything they could in a situation like this, but
 14 their response was not adequate, and I remain surprised
 15 by that, and particularly surprised that the London Gold
 16 arrangements weren't put in more comprehensively right
 17 at the very beginning.
 18 Q. Can we just then go back to paragraph 23 of your
 19 statement on page 9 {CLG00030653/9}. You say there that
 20 the partnership arrangements with Westminster Council
 21 and the general strength of cross—borough working in
 22 London would further enable them to cope with a disaster
 23 on this scale.
 24 Was it your view that RBKC would be able to cope
 25 with a disaster on this scale without those partnership

1 arrangements and cross-borough working or only with
2 them?
3 A. The latter, only with them.
4 Can I just add that, of course, this early
5 assessment on the Wednesday turned out to be incorrect.
6 You know, we know that now, that they didn't cope. So
7 what I'm not saying here is that what's in paragraph 23,
8 you know, by the time we got to Thursday, was still our
9 view. It wasn't. We realised overnight, coming into
10 Thursday morning and particularly by Thursday afternoon,
11 that there were very serious concerns, and took steps to
12 address those on Friday morning. This was simply
13 stating to you honestly what our view was on Wednesday
14 afternoon about whether or not the council, with support
15 from others, would be able to manage this, and there
16 were no flags that suggested they couldn't.
17 Q. Well, no flags --
18 A. At that point.
19 Q. -- that would suggest they couldn't manage it alone or
20 no flags that would suggest they couldn't manage it with
21 cross-borough working?
22 A. The last sentence of paragraph 23 is extremely
23 important. That was a very important part of our
24 thinking.
25 Q. Right. So was it your view at the time that,

61

1 notwithstanding the absence of any flags, RBKC would not
2 be able to cope with a disaster on this scale without
3 cross --
4 A. I don't think any council could have coped with
5 a disaster on this scale on their own, and that's what
6 the local resilience arrangements are designed to
7 provide, is layers of support and resilience that can be
8 activated to provide support.
9 Q. Now, you've told us, as indeed Dr Farrar told us
10 yesterday, that you knew Nicholas Holgate from your time
11 at the Treasury, and you've said this morning not well
12 but you knew him.
13 Is it the case that you were more inclined to give
14 him the benefit of the doubt or perhaps be more generous
15 towards his management of the response than otherwise
16 might be the case had you not known him?
17 A. No, I don't believe that's the case at all.
18 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, is that a convenient moment?
19 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, all right, thank you.
20 Well, as you know, Dame Melanie, we have a break
21 during the morning, and this is a good time to take it.
22 So we'll stop there. We will resume, please, at 11.35.
23 You know this only too well, but I have to ask you,
24 please, not to talk to anyone about your evidence while
25 you're out of the room. All right?

62

1 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
2 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much. Would you go
3 with the usher, please.
4 (Pause)
5 Thank you very much, Mr Millett. 11.35, please.
6 (11.21 am)
7 (A short break)
8 (11.40 am)
9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: All right, Dame Melanie, ready to
10 carry on, I hope?
11 THE WITNESS: Yes, thank you.
12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
13 Yes, Mr Millett.
14 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
15 I would like to ask you about the housing
16 arrangements within the DCLG.
17 It's right, I think, that Sally Randall, at the time
18 of the fire, was the director for housing standards and
19 support.
20 A. Yes.
21 Q. Yes, and I think she was made responsible -- and tell me
22 if this is wrong -- for the initial programme of
23 building safety checks from the afternoon of 14 June.
24 A. Yes, I believe so. That was a decision made by
25 Helen MacNamara, I believe, but I think that's correct.

63

1 Q. Yes, and she, I think, as director for housing standards
2 and support, answered to/reported to Helen MacNamara.
3 A. Yes, she did.
4 Q. Yes.
5 Now, if we go, please, to {CLG00002883}, you can see
6 here is an email from Sally Randall to "Housing
7 Standards & Support", it looks like a team email
8 address, subject, "Grenfell Tower", timed at 10.33, so
9 this is earlier in the day, and she says this:
10 "Following the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower this
11 morning, teams across the Department are involved in
12 pulling together briefing for our ministers and
13 supporting the Resilience and Emergency Division on
14 their response.
15 "Inevitably there's a little bit of chaos and
16 hyperactivity in the Department this morning and some
17 potential for duplication and confusion. To try to
18 minimise that, could I ask that if anyone asks you for
19 any briefing or information, that you route through
20 Jane Everton, who will hold the main contact with RED.
21 "Thanks for all of your support already this
22 morning."
23 Now, would you agree with the description of the
24 department at that time, that there was a little bit of
25 chaos and hyperactivity in the department?

64

1 A. No, not particularly. There was a lot going on, and we
 2 had a lot that we needed to do and did in the subsequent
 3 days to put a structure around how everyone was
 4 communicating, but no, I don't think it was chaotic or
 5 hyperactive.
 6 Q. Now, Fiona Darby was the deputy director within
 7 Sally Randall's division, wasn't she?
 8 A. Yes, she was. She was one of the deputy directors, yes.
 9 Q. Yes, and she reported to Sally Randall --
 10 A. On homelessness, yeah.
 11 Q. I'm sorry, yes, and she reported to Sally Randall, and
 12 she was responsible for homelessness, I think, wasn't
 13 she?
 14 A. Yes, she was.
 15 Q. Now, let's go to {RBK00048990}. This is an email from
 16 Fiona Darby to Laura Johnson within RBKC, timed at 11.22
 17 on 14 June:
 18 "Hi Laura. DCLG are briefing Ministers on this and
 19 I have been asked to contact you to understand what has
 20 been done already by K&C and what support you
 21 potentially need from government. Could I call you
 22 please?"
 23 Do you know if the department received any response
 24 to that message?
 25 A. No, I was unaware of this email and I don't know if

65

1 there was any response.
 2 Q. Now, your offer of assistance to Nicholas Holgate that
 3 we saw earlier together, at 9.07 that morning,
 4 14 June -- is this right -- was the first offer of
 5 assistance from the department to the council?
 6 A. I don't know if there was any offer via RED in the SCG
 7 earlier in the morning, but subject to that, then yes,
 8 I think my email was the first email that went across.
 9 Q. Right, and subject to that, was this the second offer of
 10 assistance from central government, your department, to
 11 RBKC?
 12 A. I don't know if there were any other communications.
 13 Q. Then --
 14 A. I believe that Jo Farrar tried to text Nicholas Holgate
 15 after my email exchange with him, and prior to her
 16 conversation on the Thursday, but I'm not aware of any
 17 other direct offers of help, particularly at this early
 18 stage.
 19 Q. Then let's go to {CLG00030466}. This is an email, if we
 20 go to the top email, from Fiona Darby to Jane Everton at
 21 12.16 pm on 14 June, "RE: Grenfell Tower fire:
 22 Cross-govt meeting today". She says:
 23 "I haven't been able to get through to anyone at K&C
 24 and so have no information currently as to actual
 25 progress by K&C. I am still trying."

66

1 Were you aware by this point in the day, just before
 2 lunchtime on the 14th, that there was a problem in
 3 establishing communication with RBKC?
 4 A. No, I wasn't aware of that.
 5 Q. Now, just while we're on this email, we can see that she
 6 goes on to say:
 7 "In terms of re-housing -- media reports say that an
 8 emergency rest centre has been set up for those that
 9 were not able to stay with family or friends.
 10 "Assuming it is a council housing block, which it
 11 appears to be from the media reports then I would
 12 anticipate that the households will be moved from the
 13 emergency rest centre into hotels or emergency
 14 accommodation whilst the Council looks to longer term
 15 solutions."
 16 Was it appropriate that the department was relying
 17 on media reports for its information on what the local
 18 authority was doing in the response?
 19 A. Well, I think it's entirely appropriate that Fiona was
 20 giving whatever information she had, and that included
 21 what was in media reports, but, I mean -- I mean,
 22 I hadn't seen this email before, but she's saying in the
 23 first sentence that she hasn't been able to get through
 24 to anyone, and so she has no information currently as to
 25 actual progress, and that's, you know, clearly the

67

1 context for her then giving the information that she did
 2 have.
 3 Q. Yes. I mean, my question is perhaps better put: did the
 4 fact that there were problems getting through to K&C,
 5 necessitating reliance by the department on media
 6 reports, hamper the ability of the department to obtain
 7 reliable and up-to-date information? Was that your
 8 recollection at the time?
 9 A. Well, my recollection is that on Wednesday, Thursday and
 10 even into the weekend, actually, the lack of information
 11 about how those who had survived the fire were being
 12 offered accommodation, where they had gone, how many
 13 there were, that information was extremely hard to find.
 14 The council didn't have it themselves. It was one of
 15 the major problems, I think, for the Gold recovery
 16 effort once it started, that that data collection, that
 17 mapping, that listing of who had been offered what just
 18 somehow wasn't functional. And that, combined with what
 19 I think was rather a defensive approach by the council
 20 in not really opening up to others on the Wednesday,
 21 made our job very difficult. Yes, it did. And this is
 22 one of the early signs of that, I suppose, in this
 23 email, although I hadn't seen it before.
 24 Q. I see.
 25 Did you detect at this stage that there was or might

68

1 be a problem with RBKC leading the response in
 2 circumstances where -- and correct me if this is wrong
 3 on the chronology -- it was beginning to appear that the
 4 council may be the object of criticism about the cause
 5 of the fire?
 6 A. I don't see anything in this email about the cause of
 7 the fire --
 8 Q. No, no, (inaudible) --
 9 A. -- but you're asking a more general question about
 10 whether that was becoming a consideration.
 11 Q. Yes.
 12 A. Well, look, as I was explaining before the break, I was
 13 out of the department at this stage and it was really
 14 a bit later in the afternoon that I began to come back
 15 and form my own sense of what was going on. So at this
 16 stage I was not aware of any of this.
 17 I don't know when it was that that connection
 18 between the fact that the council owned the block, had
 19 refurbished it, you know, had been involved in the
 20 causes of the fire in some way, and also all the history
 21 of complaints and so on, I don't remember when those
 22 issues began to become part of the consideration.
 23 I just can't remember. I think by the time we got to
 24 Thursday, we were definitely aware of that wider
 25 context.

1 Q. At this point, do you remember thinking about or having
 2 discussions about deploying somebody either to the
 3 Town Hall to be the department's eyes and ears on the
 4 ground receiving information, or to the SCC at Lambeth?
 5 A. No, I don't recall that, and, as I said, I wasn't
 6 involved in any of those discussions.
 7 I think, with hindsight, when I look back on this,
 8 I think two things were a gap in our intelligence. One
 9 was whether or not London Gold arrangements had been
 10 mobilised. Even when they were mobilised on Thursday
 11 afternoon, that didn't come in through RED, and I think
 12 that was a gap, and something that we could have looked
 13 more for, actually, if I'm honest. I think Jo and
 14 I perhaps could have sought to find out about London
 15 Resilience on the Wednesday or the Thursday. That's my
 16 main reflection, actually, really, rather than whether
 17 or not we should have visited, as the months have
 18 gone by.
 19 And the other gap, I think, is that there was nobody
 20 as part of the BECC arrangements, the Gold arrangements
 21 in Kensington and Chelsea, and I think we offered for
 22 there to be a point of liaison, because liaison helps
 23 the local responders, because it helps them manage what
 24 can sometimes be quite a difficult set of requests from
 25 central government, and that, as I understand it, was

1 refused.
 2 So I think those two gaps were gaps in process and
 3 in aspects of the response that meant that we were
 4 over-reliant on what was coming up through the SCG via
 5 RED.
 6 Q. Did it occur to you at the time that, notwithstanding
 7 the structural gaps, as you've just described,
 8 nonetheless you or somebody reporting to you should have
 9 got a grip and just gone down there and inserted
 10 themselves into the BECC or the SCC at Lambeth, just in
 11 order to get primary information?
 12 A. Well, by the time it got to Thursday, particularly in
 13 the afternoon, when it was clear that things were going
 14 wrong, really clear that things were going wrong --
 15 I think it began to be clear on Thursday morning,
 16 overnight, really, as the information came in -- then we
 17 were thinking about that. And, of course, my own
 18 Secretary of State wanted to go on Wednesday and wanted
 19 to go again on Thursday, and was unable to do so for
 20 a number of reasons, mainly because the Prime Minister's
 21 visit was being arranged instead for Thursday, and
 22 I think had he gone, we would have gone -- somebody
 23 would have gone with him, probably Jo or Jillian Kay or
 24 somebody like that, and we would have got a better feel
 25 for what was going on more immediately.

1 But for us to have gone, particularly on the
 2 Wednesday, it would have been very difficult. You can't
 3 just walk into a room like that when there is a command
 4 structure in place, or at least one hopes there is,
 5 that's effective. You can't just show up from central
 6 government and expect, you know, to be able to
 7 effectively interfere and challenge.
 8 So, as I said, I think there are some bits of
 9 intelligence that we could have had, some that we would
 10 have liked to have had and weren't able to get, and
 11 I also think it's quite right that RED's role has been
 12 broadened to look for signs of stress now. Their role
 13 was quite narrow: it was to report what information
 14 there was on the ground, and they did that, and I think
 15 they discharged their duties correctly. But I think the
 16 role now needs to be slightly wider, and I think we've
 17 learnt from that through this experience, and I'm just
 18 sorry we had to learn it through this, frankly.
 19 Q. If you go back to the email {CLG00030466}, please, and
 20 look at the paragraph four lines up from the bottom,
 21 where Fiona Darby says:
 22 "In any event ..."
 23 Can you see that?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. She says:

1 "In any event the CE of K&C is likely to make
 2 contact with fellow CEs [chief executives] across London
 3 as they have emergency pan London protocols and
 4 agreements to support each other in these circumstances
 5 and might ask homelessness teams across London to assist
 6 with TA."
 7 That's temporary accommodation, I think.
 8 "The sub-region is very close knit and it could be
 9 that the sub-region rather than pan-London might be
 10 asked to assist with emergency accommodation."
 11 Now, you referred earlier to the tri-borough
 12 agreement and the partnership with Westminster Council,
 13 we looked at that, and here we see reference to the
 14 pan-London and sub-region being involved in the
 15 response.
 16 Was it your expectation at that point that
 17 pan-London and sub-regional arrangements would kick in,
 18 or had already kicked in?
 19 A. Yes. I don't recall explicitly asking myself the
 20 question: have they kicked in? As I said earlier, as
 21 Permanent Secretary, I was looking across the whole
 22 range of the issues that the department was dealing
 23 with, including building safety, and so I did not
 24 specifically ask myself that question, but had I done,
 25 I would have assumed that they would have kicked in.

73

1 And I wouldn't have assumed that central government
 2 needed to make that happen, or really to check, to be
 3 honest.
 4 Fiona Darby had joined us from a London borough, and
 5 so her description in that final two sentences is based
 6 on her direct experience of working in local government
 7 in London and, as such, you know, I think she's
 8 absolutely correct in what she would have assumed,
 9 having worked until local government, as well as what we
 10 were assuming from central government.
 11 Q. Right. So from your recollection at the time, does this
 12 email -- although you didn't receive it -- tell us that
 13 the department's expectation is that Nicholas Holgate
 14 would or would be likely to make contact and ask for
 15 pan-London or mutual aid -- or pan-London arrangements
 16 in dealing with a potential homelessness problem?
 17 A. Yes. This is Fiona's view, she's expressing it, but it
 18 would have been a shared view across the department, and
 19 Fiona's direct experience would have been quite
 20 authoritative in saying what she thought would have
 21 happened.
 22 Q. Did you have any reason at this point to think that
 23 Nicholas Holgate not only had not done that, but was not
 24 going to do that, but try to manage matters himself?
 25 A. No, I had no inkling of that at this stage.

74

1 Q. Now, let's turn to the Secretary of State.
 2 We looked at an email where we saw that the leader
 3 and chief executive's details were provided to your
 4 office, and a reference was made there, as you can see,
 5 to the fact that the Secretary of State had spoken with
 6 the leader of the council, Councillor Nicholas
 7 Paget-Brown. You saw that.
 8 Were you made aware of what was discussed between
 9 them?
 10 A. If there was a record of it, then I think I will have
 11 seen it, and I do recall some conversations. I recall
 12 the Secretary of State's conversation with the Mayor of
 13 London. I don't specifically recall this one with
 14 Nick Paget-Brown.
 15 Q. Do you remember whether the minister reinforced your
 16 message from just after 9 o'clock that morning that the
 17 department stood ready to provide assistance?
 18 A. I can't immediately recall that without seeing the note
 19 of that discussion, but I would have expected the
 20 Secretary of State to offer assistance. We were very
 21 much in that mode. We were already starting to mobilise
 22 on permanent rehousing issues, certainly by the
 23 afternoon of Wednesday.
 24 Q. Right. Was it your understanding that the Secretary of
 25 State had offered assistance specifically in relation to

75

1 housing?
 2 A. Well, I'm flying blind a bit here, because I'm not --
 3 I don't know if there's a record of the meeting, but
 4 what I recall is -- or, rather, not of the meeting, of
 5 the conversation. What I recall is that the council,
 6 via Nick Paget-Brown, did say that they were going to
 7 need help with the permanent rehousing. I believe they
 8 also said they needed help with communications. I can't
 9 remember whether that was just -- was that -- whether
 10 that was Wednesday or whether it came later, but it did
 11 definitely come later. And I think that that request on
 12 the permanent rehousing came quite early, because we
 13 responded to it, actually, and were on those issues
 14 pretty early on, the permanent rehousing issues, on
 15 Wednesday afternoon and on Thursday.
 16 Q. Let me just show you Sajid Javid's first witness
 17 statement, please. This is at {CLG10009728/10}, and
 18 I just want to show you paragraph 39. He says:
 19 "By 14:19 (and following the 12:15 briefing) I had
 20 spoken to Cllr Nicholas Paget-Brown. We discussed what
 21 support MHCLG could offer the Council. We were ready to
 22 offer anything that the Council requested, such as help
 23 with money or personnel to book emergency accommodation
 24 (i.e. hotels). I was clear throughout the first
 25 seven days that I didn't want money to become an issue,

76

1 and that day requested and received briefing on Bellwin
 2 funding.”
 3 Then he goes on at 40:
 4 “There was no request for help with emergency
 5 accommodation (i.e. rest centres and hotels).”
 6 Did you know that? Did you know that the council
 7 had not asked for help with emergency accommodation?
 8 A. No. But that’s — those two paragraphs are consistent
 9 with what I just said, I think, my understanding of what
 10 is likely to have been said between Nicholas Paget—Brown
 11 and Sajid Javid. In addition, I do recall that they
 12 asked for help on the permanent rehousing, and I think
 13 that that happened on the Wednesday. Perhaps it was the
 14 conversation with Alok Sharma later in the day, I don’t
 15 know, but I don’t think it was long before they were
 16 asking us for help on the permanent rehousing as well.
 17 But I don’t recall any requests for help on the
 18 emergency accommodation either in those early few hours
 19 and days, so this is consistent with my recollection.
 20 Q. Then let’s move to what was happening in or from
 21 Number 10 at this point, which is halfway through or
 22 lunchtime—ish on 14 June.
 23 Can we go, please, to {CLG00002946}. If we go to
 24 page 1 in this email run, bottom of the page, this is
 25 an email from Lorna Gratton, who was the

1 Prime Minister’s private secretary at the time, and this
 2 is an email timed at 13.54 to Louise Morgan, copied to
 3 Alastair Whitehead:
 4 “Louise,
 5 “We spoke about the incident at Grenfell Tower. You
 6 kindly agree to get us what you can on ...”
 7 Then there is a list of bullet points, starting with
 8 “Building Regulations” at the foot of the screen.
 9 Then over the page {CLG00002946/2}, please, if you
 10 look at the second set of three bullet points:
 11 “ ■ Re—housing efforts. I understand some of this
 12 will have already been dealt with by CCS. If that is
 13 the case please do feel free to reuse what was produced
 14 for that.
 15 “ ■ How is the council coping with rehousing
 16 requirement?
 17 “ ■ Does it need additional support from us?
 18 “ ■ If so, what kind of support are we able to
 19 offer.”
 20 If we go to the top of that email chain, back to
 21 page 1 {CLG00002946/1}, please, we can see that this
 22 email comes in to your office at 14.04, so ten minutes
 23 later or so, directly to Bob Ledsome and Richard Harral,
 24 for reasons to do with the other bullet points I haven’t
 25 shown you, but copied to Helen MacNamara and others, and

1 also to the offices of Alok Sharma, who was the Minister
 2 of State, and the Secretary of State, office of
 3 Sajid Javid:
 4 “Afternoon
 5 “Thanks for all your hard work on this.
 6 “To complement the questions from Sheridan at No10,
 7 which I know you’re working on, there are some questions
 8 from Lorna on the official side. I’d be grateful for
 9 answers as soon as you possibly can, and if necessary,
 10 we can send over in parts.”
 11 Were you made aware at the time yourself that
 12 Number 10 was asking these questions, particularly about
 13 rehousing efforts?
 14 A. I don’t recall seeing this specific email at the time,
 15 but by the time I came back to the department later in
 16 the afternoon, yes, I think I will have been made aware
 17 that Number 10 were asking questions.
 18 If I might add, I think this also shows a certain
 19 amount of duplication that was going on in the
 20 conversations across government, because here you have
 21 Number 10, on the political and the official side,
 22 asking questions of the department and of the
 23 Secretary of State’s office, while in parallel a COBR
 24 meeting is being called that doesn’t involve the
 25 principals from Number 10 or anybody at Cabinet level,

1 including the Secretary of State. So that’s one of the
 2 reasons why I think it would have helped to have had one
 3 meeting that involved Cabinet ministers on the Monday.
 4 I think it would have helped communication and made
 5 things a bit easier for everybody to handle.
 6 Q. You say on the Monday; do you mean the Wednesday?
 7 A. Sorry, I meant the Wednesday. Because it was the
 8 beginning, that’s why my brain went to Monday.
 9 Q. No, I understand.
 10 Now, do you remember what action, if any, you or the
 11 department took once you had come back to the department
 12 later that afternoon in response, if any response, to
 13 Number 10’s questions about rehousing?
 14 A. I don’t remember anything specifically in response to
 15 those questions, no, just a general sense of coming back
 16 and meeting with Helen MacNamara and Sally Randall to
 17 think about all of the issues on the housing side of the
 18 department, which included building safety, but also the
 19 issues in North Kensington.
 20 Q. Now, you mention the ministers’ meeting. It’s right,
 21 I think — and this is a matter of record, but just to
 22 get your confirmation of it — that the Cabinet Office,
 23 through the CCS, arranged a ministerial meeting,
 24 a cross—government ministerial meeting, at 1600 hours
 25 that afternoon, 14 June; yes?

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Yes. Now, you didn't attend that meeting, did you?
 3 A. No.
 4 Q. I think you had another engagement to go to; yes?
 5 A. No, I think I was back from that engagement at around
 6 3.30, so I could have gone, but others went instead. It
 7 was a meeting at junior minister level and so, you know,
 8 I would never pile in as the Permanent Secretary and get
 9 in the way of my colleagues unless I was needed.
 10 Q. Right. Was there any reason why you didn't clear your
 11 diary from the morning, not least because your
 12 department was or was going to be the lead government
 13 department on recovery in respect of this incident?
 14 A. I did clear my diary. Everything apart from that one
 15 meeting over lunchtime on Wednesday was stripped out.
 16 I think there may have been one meeting with an external
 17 stakeholder on the Friday that remained, but everything
 18 else was cleared out.
 19 I went ahead with the meeting at lunchtime on
 20 Wednesday. It was with all of the newly elected mayors
 21 in the combined authorities. It had originally been set
 22 up as a ministerial meeting. No ministers were able to
 23 attend, and that was partly because of the reshuffle and
 24 the general election, and I felt it was essential for me
 25 to go. It would have been extremely rude of me not to

81

1 go. So I went to that meeting, came back, but from that
 2 moment on, there was nothing else.
 3 Q. So you came back, so why didn't you go to the 4 o'clock
 4 meeting?
 5 A. Well, as is quite normal, those who were closest to the
 6 work would attend in support of ministers. So I can't
 7 remember exactly who went from the department. Did
 8 Helen MacNamara go? Or was it Katherine Richardson,
 9 I think, definitely went to represent RED in particular.
 10 And I believe somebody else went too. Perhaps it was
 11 Steve Quartermain, because of the Building Regulations
 12 issues, which he was at the time still responsible for.
 13 So I'm not sure, but my guess is that it was decided
 14 while I was out who would go, but I don't think there
 15 was any question that I would go as Permanent Secretary.
 16 Q. Right.
 17 Now, we know the housing minister did attend.
 18 A. Yes, and the local government minister.
 19 Q. Yes, that's Alok Sharma. Did he feed the relevant
 20 points back to you? Did he brief you afterwards?
 21 A. No, he didn't brief me afterwards, but I was informed of
 22 the meeting, I will have seen the actions at some point
 23 later that evening when they came round. I was in the
 24 office until about 11.00 pm, so I had many conversations
 25 through that evening about what was going on, and

82

1 I caught up on emails as they came in.
 2 Q. Right.
 3 Now, if we go to your first witness statement,
 4 please, at page 10 {CLG00030653/10}, paragraph 27 on
 5 that page, at the foot of the screen, it says this:
 6 "The cross-government ministerial meeting agreed the
 7 following actions for the Department: to liaise with
 8 RBKC regarding the urgent provision of temporary
 9 accommodation for those displaced from Grenfell Tower
 10 (although it was clarified in the minutes that RBKC were
 11 not seeking additional assistance at this time); and to
 12 discuss with the National Fire Chiefs Council and the
 13 Devolved Administrations how best to take forward the
 14 identification of at-risk buildings and associated
 15 safety advice across the UK."
 16 Were you made specifically aware of the need for
 17 urgent provision of temporary accommodation?
 18 A. I was certainly aware of the need to support the council
 19 on the housing effort, and, as I said, I think by
 20 Wednesday evening we were quite focused on that. And in
 21 my first witness statement, I sought to give the Inquiry
 22 as much information as I could about all of what the
 23 department was doing during these days, even when
 24 I wasn't involved in it myself. I think this is a good
 25 example of me just trying to be helpful by saying what

83

1 had happened, because it helps the narrative and flow of
 2 how I was then explaining what I recalled of those days.
 3 Q. Yes.
 4 Did you understand that the urgent provision of
 5 temporary accommodation for those displaced was
 6 emergency temporary accommodation in the very short term
 7 or the next stage in rehousing people affected by the
 8 fire?
 9 A. Yes, I thought it was both. It was going to need to be
 10 both.
 11 Q. How did the department resolve to act on the action
 12 taken away from the ministerial meeting of liaising with
 13 the council about temporary accommodation?
 14 A. I can't quite recall exactly what we did that evening,
 15 but, I mean, I know my colleagues' witness statements
 16 will have explained that. But we — you know, over the
 17 following days we, in particular, embedded support
 18 through Lizzie Clifford with the council to help them,
 19 but above all, in the end, the Gold Command structure
 20 came in and took over those efforts eventually to put
 21 them on to a more sustainable footing.
 22 Q. If we turn the page in your statement, please, to
 23 page 11 {CLG00030653/11} and go to paragraph 31, you say
 24 at the foot of the screen:
 25 "At 15:30 I met with Helen MacNamara and

84

1 Sally Randall to take stock of the implications of the
 2 Grenfell Tower fire for the housing side of the
 3 Department. At this meeting it was agreed that
 4 dedicated resource would be needed to coordinate
 5 activity across the housing and planning group, and
 6 Camilla Sheldon was appointed to lead this.”
 7 Now, this was half an hour before the start of the
 8 cross-government ministerial meeting. Was it agreed
 9 between you that a dedicated resource would be needed to
 10 co-ordinate activity across the housing and planning
 11 group?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. And did you discuss immediate need for emergency
 14 accommodation for those affected by the fire?
 15 A. Perhaps you could show me the next — the remainder of
 16 that paragraph, and then —
 17 Q. Yes, of course. It says:
 18 “We also discussed the building safety checks, the
 19 building regulations and the need to investigate any
 20 potential failures across the system.”
 21 A. Yes. So that’s the best of my recollection as to what
 22 we discussed at that meeting.
 23 Q. I mean, my question was: did you discuss the immediate
 24 emergency accommodation needs of those affected by the
 25 fire?

1 A. I think we must have done, and — you know, but whether
 2 we discussed the need for the department to take any
 3 action in relation to it, I don’t know. Probably not.
 4 Although I was writing this witness statement, you know,
 5 recalling — trying to recall what we had discussed in
 6 a meeting, you know, at a very, very busy time, when
 7 there were a lot of such conversations, so I can’t be
 8 absolutely clear that we did or didn’t discuss the need
 9 to —
 10 Q. Do you remember —
 11 A. — support on the temporary accommodation.
 12 Q. No, I understand, but doing the best you can with your
 13 recollection, do you remember whether there was
 14 an action that you decided to take forward as a result
 15 of your discussion at this meeting about immediate
 16 emergency accommodation needs?
 17 A. I don’t think I took forward any actions, and throughout
 18 this whole period, I was trying to give my own staff as
 19 much space as possible to make decisions without
 20 constantly having to refer back to me or for me to tell
 21 them what those answers were.
 22 The thing that we struggled with on Wednesday, and
 23 particularly once we got into Thursday and Friday and
 24 the weight of the situation became clearer and the
 25 number of actions we were dealing with became clearer,

1 was we had to set up some kind of co-ordination
 2 mechanism inside the department to manage that, and that
 3 was distinct from the co-ordination and information
 4 mechanisms that RED were in charge of in terms of
 5 feeding information from the ground, and it was that
 6 lack of a DCLG cell, response cell, and a structure
 7 around that with shift patterns and information flows
 8 and timings of meetings, that held us back, and
 9 I mention that in my first witness statement as one of
 10 the things that was difficult in those early days. We
 11 eventually sorted it, first with a significant
 12 improvement when Lise—Anne Boissiere came in on Friday
 13 to sort it out, but in the end we needed support from
 14 CCS, which is why I was so keen to get someone seconded,
 15 and eventually we had Ian Whitehouse join us in the
 16 following week.
 17 So that’s very much an internal departmental
 18 resourcing issue, but what I would have expected us to
 19 do and what we were definitely doing once we get into
 20 Thursday was logging all the actions that were coming
 21 from the ministerial group, any other actions that we
 22 were dealing with besides, and we were tracking those,
 23 we were communicating, and we were trying to not
 24 duplicate, so that people weren’t colliding with each
 25 other and doing the same thing. We were trying to be

1 clear about accountabilities.
 2 Q. Let’s then move on to {CLG00002995}. This is back on
 3 the topic of the interactions with RBKC, and here is
 4 an email from Joanna Beck at 16.37 to Fiona Darby and
 5 Sally Randall, subject, “Grenfell”:
 6 “Hello Fiona and Sally
 7 “I have managed to get hold of Altin [Smajli] who is
 8 the Housing Options Manager in K&C. He is not at work
 9 today but has been keeping in touch with colleagues and
 10 was about to go into work for the overnight shift. His
 11 information was
 12 “— TA need particularly demanding as 7–8 surrounding
 13 blocks have been evacuated and cordoned off until found
 14 to be safe.
 15 “— They are receiving a lot of offers of support.
 16 RPs offering voids for use as TA, other local
 17 authorities offering properties for TA etc.
 18 “— 3 rest centres have been set up for residents,
 19 and again a lot of offers of support from all over to
 20 help with staffing these.
 21 “I asked Altin to keep us informed, including if
 22 there is any way in which we can support them further.
 23 “Fiona — are you now doing the 5.30 meeting or am I?
 24 “Thanks very much.
 25 “Jo.”

1 Now, my question is a broad one. First, I don't
 2 know whether you saw this email at the time or a message
 3 like it, but was this an example of the general offers
 4 of assistance that DCLG were providing to the council on
 5 the afternoon of 14 June?
 6 A. Yes, it looks like a good example of that. I wasn't
 7 aware of this at the time.
 8 Q. Right. What would the department be able to do in
 9 practice by way of further support?
 10 A. When it comes to the temporary accommodation needs,
 11 I would have expected the main issue to have been one of
 12 finance, which I think we did provide on the temporary
 13 accommodation, as well as on the permanent accommodation
 14 side.
 15 Q. You can see from the very foot of your screen, at the
 16 end of the email, that Jo Beck is team leader in the
 17 Homelessness Reduction Act delivery support, preventing
 18 homelessness team. What was that team's capability in
 19 delivering immediate emergency accommodation?
 20 A. There was no capability for us to provide immediate
 21 emergency accommodation. That's not a function of
 22 central government and it wasn't a function of the
 23 department. This was a policy team overseeing a number
 24 of very specific projects to tackle homelessness,
 25 working in tandem with a number of London boroughs.

1 Q. I see.
 2 A. And other boroughs.
 3 Q. Now, then, let's look at the Mayor and the
 4 Secretary of State's role again.
 5 {CLG00003011}, please. Now, this is an email from
 6 the office of Sajid Javid at 18.56 on 14 June, to a wide
 7 range of recipients, including your own office and the
 8 office of Jo Farrar, and Alok Sharma and Sajid Javid, so
 9 it went right across the department, subject "[READOUT]
 10 SoS call to Sadiq Khan":
 11 "Hi all,
 12 "Please find a quick readout of the SoS's call with
 13 the Mayor of London below:
 14 " ■ Sadiq Khan dialled in to the ministerial meeting
 15 chaired by Nick Hurd this afternoon and he was impressed
 16 with the Government's response so far.
 17 " ■ The Mayor flagged two key points to the Sos:
 18 " ■ Rehousing – both the SoS and the Mayor are very
 19 keen to ensure that we are working closely with RBKC to
 20 ensure that everyone that has been displaced by this
 21 incident is permanently relocated to homes in central
 22 London where possible, and are definitely not housed
 23 outside of London. Camilla – please can you work out
 24 what support we can offer RBKC on this?"
 25 Was anything done, do you know, following that

1 request?
 2 A. Yes, I'm sure it was. I think that will have been
 3 followed up probably mainly on the Thursday, given that
 4 it was already approaching 7 o'clock in the evening, but
 5 I don't know exactly what was followed up. But that's
 6 very consistent with the general conversation at the
 7 time, of beginning increasingly to worry about
 8 supporting the council on rehousing.
 9 Q. Right.
 10 Now, there is no need to go to it, but at
 11 paragraph 24 of your statement at page 9
 12 {CLG00030653/9} -- I think we saw this -- you were made
 13 aware that the Minister for Housing and Planning,
 14 Alok Sharma, had spoken to Nicholas Paget-Brown on the
 15 evening of 14 June, and Mr Paget-Brown had reported
 16 progress on rest centres and accommodation and had
 17 flagged challenges that the council would face in
 18 providing permanent rehousing. That's what you say in
 19 paragraph 24. I've summarised it for you, but is
 20 that --
 21 A. I'm sorry, could I see that paragraph? It would be --
 22 Q. Of course. Of course. It's page 9 of your first
 23 statement {CLG00030653/9}, paragraph 24.
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Essentially --

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. -- I repeated it to you verbatim.
 3 A. No, that's fine. The sentence about providing permanent
 4 rehousing --
 5 Q. Yes.
 6 A. -- that sentence, plus the mention of permanent
 7 rehousing by the Mayor in conversation with the
 8 Secretary of State, are both consistent with what I was
 9 saying to you earlier, which is that I believe the
 10 department was getting pretty focused on the permanent
 11 rehousing challenge as early as Wednesday evening, and
 12 that's some of the work that we did later through the
 13 Homes and Communities Agency to try to find
 14 accommodation and so on. So that was I think the thing
 15 that we were, you know, really picking up the baton on
 16 once we got to this stage in the response.
 17 Q. So that's a longer-term recovery question.
 18 A. It is, and the word "permanent" is there in both those
 19 conversations, and that's my recollection, as I was
 20 saying earlier, that that was a main focus for us,
 21 rather than the temporary accommodation. It was the
 22 permanent accommodation that was going to be so
 23 difficult because, fundamentally, this is one of the
 24 most expensive housing markets in the country and there
 25 just wasn't very much social housing available, so it

1 was going to need a huge effort to try to find
 2 accommodation for the families.
 3 Q. Just focusing a little bit more on perhaps the first
 4 part of that answer, did you regard the emergency need
 5 for temporary accommodation as part of the recovery or
 6 part of the response?
 7 A. I don't know. I think -- I didn't think at the time
 8 about that distinction, but my personal view is that the
 9 distinction between recovery and response is -- does not
 10 help sometimes when you're actually faced with an actual
 11 emergency and need to think about the issues that you're
 12 facing. So, as I said to you earlier, nobody ever said
 13 to us, "You are responsible for recovery, please get on
 14 with it". We did it anyway. But neither do I think it
 15 was clear what the response issues were and what the
 16 recovery issues were. The lead government department,
 17 the Home Office, didn't really get involved in any of
 18 this, and I think that, in practice, issues like
 19 rehousing are on a continuum, and the recovery needs to
 20 start right from the beginning. And in a way, does it
 21 matter whether or not temporary accommodation is part of
 22 recovery and response? The important thing is that it's
 23 dealt with.
 24 So I think it was clear that it was for the local
 25 responder and the local authority, and I personally

1 think it's clear that they should always be in the lead,
 2 central government can't add a lot to the real emergency
 3 response, but I think the Cabinet Office, in particular,
 4 perhaps with my former department, needs to do some
 5 thinking about this, because this difference between
 6 response and recovery was not clear and I think it got
 7 in the way a bit.
 8 Q. Yes, and does that tell us that -- well, let me ask it
 9 differently: at the time, did you think or ask yourself
 10 or anybody else: what is the Home Office, as the lead
 11 government department for the response, doing about
 12 emergency temporary accommodation?
 13 A. I didn't ask myself that question, but, had I answered
 14 it, I would have said they weren't doing anything.
 15 I wouldn't really have expected them to do anything, to
 16 be honest, I would have expected them to look to us to
 17 talk to the council about what was going on, and that is
 18 what happened. I think it's a very good example of how
 19 their role as lead in response wasn't really one that
 20 I thought really made sense in the response to Grenfell,
 21 to be honest.
 22 Q. And did you think at the time that, notwithstanding that
 23 DCLG was not the lead government department for the
 24 response, nonetheless it should act as if it were so far
 25 as emergency temporary accommodation was concerned?

1 A. I think my demeanour and that of my Secretary of State
 2 and of all my colleagues was just to lean in to whatever
 3 needed doing. So we weren't thinking about response or
 4 recovery, and the planning hadn't been done on either
 5 response or recovery, really, in my opinion, and so
 6 there was nothing really for us to be drawing on, and
 7 the Home Office weren't really drawing on anything
 8 either. So what we did was simply try to manage and to
 9 listen, to deal with whatever information we had, and to
 10 do whatever we could to help. That was our overall
 11 approach and demeanour.
 12 But a bit more advanced planning and preparation
 13 would have helped us. There's no question in my mind
 14 about that.
 15 Q. Yes, and would you agree that advanced planning and
 16 preparation, the need for that would have been more
 17 obvious to each of the government departments if their
 18 roles in the response had been more clearly delineated?
 19 A. Yes. I think for me there are two dimensions to this.
 20 One is the dimension of response versus recovery,
 21 whereas I think -- where I think there is a natural
 22 assumption that response is what matters in the first
 23 few days and recovery kicks in later, which is why
 24 I think the recovery planning is not really expected of
 25 DCLG or any other department in the same way as it is

1 expected for a lead government department for response,
 2 because the recovery issues generally present themselves
 3 as the crisis unfolds, and so you have time to pick them
 4 up, and I think that's just not really very helpful.
 5 I think, in practice, the recovery thinking needs to be
 6 planned for and needs to be thought about explicitly and
 7 tasked by the Cabinet Office at the beginning. Now, it
 8 may be that at the start you say there isn't going to be
 9 a central government role in recovery, and it may be
 10 that, as the days go by, that judgement changes and you
 11 have to switch something on. But I believe there should
 12 be a more explicit consideration of recovery issues and
 13 a lot more preparation further in advance. That's one
 14 dimension.
 15 I think the other dimension is about the actual
 16 issues and the outcomes and the problems we were dealing
 17 with. The Home Office was the lead government
 18 department just because it was a fire, but the
 19 Home Office didn't really have anything to do and,
 20 indeed, they didn't really do very much. There were
 21 some extremely hardworking officials who came to every
 22 meeting, they were the people from fire and police, but
 23 it was the emergency services themselves who were doing
 24 all the -- who were answering all the questions in the
 25 COBR meetings and who were really the ones who were

1 feeding in to the cross—ministerial discussions.
 2 So I think it was just wrong to assume that the
 3 Home Office was going to be able to cover off all the
 4 response issues in relation to a crisis like this. We
 5 should have been much more involved, and perhaps prior
 6 to the moving of fire across to the Home Office in 2016,
 7 it would have been — the department would have been
 8 more joined up, although there was not a fire on the
 9 national risk register at that point.
 10 Q. Thank you.
 11 Now, let's then go to page 12 of your first
 12 statement {CLG00030653/12}, please, paragraph 34, "End
 13 of day 1". You say you remained in the office until
 14 around 23.00, and then you say this:
 15 "I spoke to Sir Jeremy Heywood (Cabinet Secretary
 16 and Head of the Civil Service) in the early evening to
 17 update him on the situation. I also spoke to
 18 Sir Philip Rutnam, Permanent Secretary at the
 19 Home Office. Much of my focus that evening was to
 20 ensure that there was a full inquiry into what had
 21 happened and why, including how the fire had spread and
 22 the links to building regulations."
 23 Then you go on there.
 24 Did you discuss the Building Regulations?
 25 A. With Jeremy Heywood or with Philip Rutnam?

1 Q. With Jeremy Heywood.
 2 A. Yes, I believe did. I can't remember exactly what
 3 aspect of it, but I think we must have discussed it,
 4 because it was such a bit issue, and indeed was a lot of
 5 what we were concerned about in thinking that an inquiry
 6 was needed.
 7 Q. Right, and did you discuss what then became the Building
 8 Safety Programme?
 9 A. Yes. We didn't know very much at that point, of course,
 10 but I will have discussed with Jeremy what I knew, and
 11 he, I'm sure, would have asked me a lot of very good
 12 questions, because that's what he always did.
 13 Q. Can we take it from these discussions late on the
 14 evening of 14 June that there was real concern within
 15 the department about the department's own actions in
 16 response to Lakanal?
 17 A. Yes, there was real concern, and most of us, as you
 18 know, certainly me and Helen MacNamara and my ministers,
 19 were new to these issues, had been unaware of them,
 20 and — as I explained in my previous evidence to
 21 the Inquiry, and we were grappling with this, trying to
 22 make sense of it, trying to gather the information, and
 23 we were deeply worried, even at this stage. We were to
 24 become even more worried as the days unfolded. But that
 25 was a lot of what I was worried about this evening, this

1 particular evening, and the need to have a full
 2 investigation of what had happened.
 3 Q. Were your concerns in relation to this topic something
 4 that perhaps diluted the attention that the department
 5 was giving to the immediate response or the immediate
 6 early stages of the recovery in the aftermath of the
 7 Grenfell Tower fire?
 8 A. No, I don't think it's fair to say that it was diluted.
 9 I think on that Wednesday evening, we didn't have the
 10 information that we had on Thursday morning and
 11 throughout that second day on the failure of the local
 12 authority's response, and, as I said earlier, I think,
 13 you know, there is a question for me as to why those
 14 issues weren't aired in the SCG meetings. We were
 15 finding out things by talking directly to the council
 16 when we were able to that weren't coming up through the
 17 SCG, so I think there's something about why that wasn't
 18 in the SCG conversation, but it wasn't, and therefore we
 19 weren't getting that through the normal RED channels.
 20 The council wouldn't really engage on that first day.
 21 I wish we had checked what London Resilience were up to
 22 and what they thought, because I think that would have
 23 been a very good conversation on the Wednesday, with
 24 John Barradell or Eleanor Kelly or others, but we didn't
 25 do that.

1 But I don't think it was about the building safety
 2 issues dominating.
 3 Q. Right.
 4 A. I was trying to manage effectively two crises, yes, and
 5 so was my Secretary of State, but I did have Jo Farrar
 6 on the local issues and Helen MacNamara on the housing
 7 issues, and the department, I believe, you know,
 8 mobilised pretty effectively in response to both those
 9 things.
 10 Q. Did you discuss what was done by Southwark in the
 11 immediate aftermath of the Lakanal House fire to see
 12 whether any good practices commended themselves to be
 13 adopted in the aftermath of this fire?
 14 A. I don't particularly recall that, no.
 15 Q. No.
 16 Let's then turn to the next day, 15 June, and let's
 17 start at {HOM00044761}, bearing in mind the conversation
 18 that you'd had in the late evening of the 14th that
 19 we've just been through.
 20 This is an email from Philip Rutnam to the
 21 Home Office Permanent Secretary and others in the
 22 Home Department, "Update", "NOT FOR ONWARD
 23 DISTRIBUTION", at 7.03 in the morning, and he says:
 24 "I think I'll leave speaking to Melanie, thanks.
 25 I am off to Manchester ..."

1 Then in the last paragraph he says:
 2 "I am worried for the sake of the Government as
 3 a whole about what will happen if CLG do start taking
 4 the lead. On the basis of yesterday there is a real
 5 risk they will comprehensively mess it up. Both SoS and
 6 Perm Sec seemed, frankly, to be at risk of panicking.
 7 I know that we think more of this issue is likely to
 8 shift to CLG in time given the building standards issue
 9 but I think No10 should consider the need for a single,
 10 calm lead across Govt."
 11 Do you know what might have given Sir Philip Rutnam
 12 cause to harbour those concerns he expresses there?
 13 A. I think it was the conversation I had with him on the
 14 Wednesday evening, which was referred to in the excerpt
 15 from my witness statement which you showed me a moment
 16 ago, and that conversation was about the public inquiry,
 17 and as I've said elsewhere in my statements, we believed
 18 that we needed a public inquiry, we believed it needed
 19 to be set up as quickly as possible. I had discussed
 20 that with Sue Gray at the Cabinet Office. It was part
 21 of my conversation with Jeremy Heywood. Philip was of
 22 the view that this would not be a good idea, and that's
 23 what I think he means by me and my Secretary of State
 24 panicking, that we were panicking by believing that
 25 a public inquiry was needed.

1 Q. Were you? Were you at risk of panicking?
 2 A. I don't think we were panicking, no, and I -- a week or
 3 so after the fire, I think everybody was looking at our
 4 leadership of this, which is I think what we did,
 5 alongside the Cabinet Office and Number 10, and was
 6 actually rather glad that we'd been in charge.
 7 Q. Was it you who came up with the idea of instituting this
 8 Inquiry?
 9 A. No, it wasn't me. I think it was Helen MacNamara
 10 mostly, alongside the Secretary of State. I was fully
 11 in support of them, as was Jeremy Heywood and Sue Gray,
 12 and the Prime Minister announced it the next morning.
 13 But we had sent an email that evening at about 10.30,
 14 I believe, via, I think, James Nation in the
 15 Secretary of State's office to Number 10 on some of the
 16 wider questions, and we had intended that email to be
 17 agreed with the Home Office, but they had gone by the
 18 time we were ready to send it, and we'd discussed
 19 earlier drafts with them. And I think it -- although,
 20 actually, it's quite nuanced about the need for
 21 an inquiry, because we knew their position, I think they
 22 were still pretty cross about it, because they had quite
 23 strong views.
 24 Q. Let's then go to a little bit later on the same morning,
 25 15 June, {CLG10009750}. It's from Sir Jeremy Heywood to

1 you on 15 June at 9.12, subject, "Fire":
 2 "Lots of concern here that the LA is not gripping
 3 the aftermath -- re--housing etc.
 4 "Is that fair?
 5 "Should CLG second in some people to help?
 6 "Which of your Ministers is now gripping this
 7 tightly?"
 8 Now, if you go to your first statement, please, at
 9 page 14 {CLG00030653/14}, if we can go to that, you can
 10 see what you say at paragraph 41 about this email. You
 11 say that you replied to him at the end of the day with
 12 an update:
 13 "... and I also made sure that Jo Farrar was aware
 14 of his email before her visit to Kensington and Chelsea
 15 the following day."
 16 Is that right?
 17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. Why did you wait until the end of the day, 15 June, to
 19 respond to Sir Jeremy?
 20 A. Well, there was a lot going on that day, and I --
 21 you know, I had a good working relationship with
 22 Jeremy Heywood, and I knew he didn't need me to go back
 23 straight away. What I believe happened is that his
 24 concerns were circulated around. I know I saw his email
 25 straight away; I would always have seen an email from

1 Jeremy and, if I'd missed it, my office would have
 2 brought it to my attention. So his concerns, alongside
 3 those of Nick Hurd and others, were definitely part of
 4 the thinking and the gathering concern that was,
 5 you know, beginning on Thursday, and then when the
 6 Prime Minister visited, I think those were even more
 7 acutely felt and seen and heard, because we were
 8 actually on the ground with quite large numbers of
 9 people from central government that afternoon.
 10 Q. When you received his email, did you share his concerns,
 11 did you recognise them, or did they come as a surprise
 12 to you?
 13 A. This was quite early for us to be hearing those
 14 concerns, and so I don't think -- I think his email was
 15 probably one of the first that I saw that began to
 16 express those concerns. And --
 17 Q. Did you -- sorry.
 18 A. Sorry, yes, that's fine, I'll finish there.
 19 Q. Why didn't you go back to him, either immediately or
 20 shortly afterwards, and ask him what he meant and what
 21 the problem was?
 22 A. Well, I thought the most important thing was to hear the
 23 concerns and to take them into the thinking, and we had
 24 a meeting with the Secretary of State at 9.30, and ...
 25 you know, that didn't conclude actions more broadly on

1 the response, but it did include getting confirmation on
 2 the housing situation in particular, which was one of
 3 the concerns that Jeremy had raised, and essentially
 4 what I think I did was to take Jeremy's concerns into
 5 that meeting and into subsequent meetings inside the
 6 department as one of several bits of information that we
 7 were getting that there was a problem, and then the
 8 cross-ministerial meeting later that afternoon was the
 9 place where that really crystallised.

10 Q. Yes, but my question is a bit more prior to that. Why
 11 didn't you get on to him by email in response and say,
 12 "What do you mean? What exactly is the problem?"

13 A. Well, I don't think I needed to. I think he was being
 14 quite clear, actually, that there were problems with
 15 rehousing, and we were hearing that from others as well.
 16 So, you know, I don't know, really. I, you know, had
 17 an immediate meeting to go to, but I felt the important
 18 thing was to pick up the worries and to try to deal with
 19 them and to try to validate the information. As I say,
 20 it was one amongst several emails and bits of
 21 intelligence that were coming in, because some ministers
 22 had been on the ground as well.

23 Q. Yes. Well, let's look at exactly that. This may be
 24 another example, or an example: {HOM00046090}. If we
 25 go, please, to the foot of the page, here is an email

105

1 from the fire minister's private secretary to
 2 Sajid Javid's office:
 3 "James,
 4 "Thanks so much for your time on the phone."
 5 Sorry, it was at 8.45 that morning, I should point
 6 out to you, 15 June:
 7 "As promised, here are the points we covered:
 8 " ■ If No 10 would like the parliamentary session to
 9 be a joint HO/DCLG event then we're planning for it to
 10 be at 13:30 ... "
 11 Second bullet point:
 12 "The Minister has been told that there is an urgent
 13 [underlined] issue with access to cash for former
 14 residents of Grenfell Tower. He's also been told via
 15 Margot James MP (BEIS Minister) that the Post Office —
 16 there is local one just around the corner from the
 17 tower, have offered to facilitate access to money for
 18 residents. He would be really grateful if your teams
 19 were able to facilitate a link between the Post Office
 20 and the local Council so that they can make people
 21 aware."
 22 Then this, third bullet point:
 23 "There have also been a couple of concerns raised
 24 with him about the quality of the sleeping materials
 25 that were available for people last night and asked if

106

1 there was anything HMG could do to help the Council
 2 upgrade?"

3 Were you made aware of any of these concerns being
 4 relayed by Nicholas Hurd's office on that morning?

5 A. I was aware that Nicholas Hurd had had some concerns
 6 when he'd visited. I can't remember when I became aware
 7 of that. It's possible that it was at the 9.30 meeting
 8 with the Secretary of State, because every time the
 9 Secretary of State picked up anything of concern, he was
 10 on it straight away and asking us to investigate it.

11 Q. Right.

12 A. I wouldn't have felt I needed to investigate it myself,
 13 but I was certainly confident that those dynamics were
 14 working through the department.

15 And then the other time I might have been made aware
 16 of this was at 1.30, when I chaired a stock-take across
 17 the department to try to pull together all the different
 18 issues we were grappling with, and where I was
 19 describing earlier, it was the first such stock-take
 20 meeting, really, and there again I suspect some of these
 21 questions were raised. I can't remember exactly what we
 22 did in response or who followed it up, but when
 23 a minister raises something like this, civil servants
 24 will act on it.

25 Q. Then let's go to {CAB00005941}. This is at 9.15 on the

107

1 same morning, so half an hour afterwards. Here comes
 2 an email from Alastair Whitehead to Lorna Gratton
 3 internally, and the second email down says:
 4 "Can you get a debrief from Peter [Hill, I think] on
 5 what needs to happen today — in short seems to be a mess
 6 in terms of rehousing and coordination for the families
 7 affected and we need to send DCLG teams down there to
 8 help."
 9 Were you aware that Number 10 had concerns about the
 10 response on the ground that morning?

11 A. I was aware on the basis of the email from
 12 Jeremy Heywood, and I was aware of the conversation
 13 between the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State.
 14 I mean, when Alastair Whitehead says, "in short
 15 seems to be a mess in terms of rehousing and
 16 coordination", that seems to me, with what I know now,
 17 to be accurate.

18 Q. Did you know it at the time?

19 A. No, I think that is put more strongly than we knew at
 20 the time, and we didn't see that email; at least
 21 I didn't see it. But I think — look, honestly, I think
 22 it took us, you know, quite a long time on Thursday to
 23 realise the scale of that problem. We were relying on
 24 the information that was coming up through the SCG,
 25 where these issues weren't being raised. We —

108

1 the council didn't want us coming to their meetings. We
 2 offered to have somebody in those meetings and that
 3 offer was refused, as I understand it. And, you know,
 4 that's the day when I think, in an ideal world,
 5 Jo Farrar or I would have perhaps called London
 6 Resilience, actually. If I had to think of one action
 7 that I think we could have done on that day that might
 8 have made a difference, that's the one, rather than
 9 visiting, which would also have been good, but I think
 10 would have been very difficult to arrange, in practice.
 11 Can I say one more thing, which is when you get lots
 12 and lots of bits of information like this coming in from
 13 lots of different places, it's quite hard to validate
 14 them quickly, because you do need to go and find out
 15 what's going on. But we had RED there, but the
 16 information sources RED had were not really confirming
 17 this, and we weren't able to get into the local
 18 authority, which is the place where I think we would
 19 have seen that there was a problem. That's why I go to
 20 London Resilience being the place that I think we could
 21 have and should have turned to, to go, "What's going on,
 22 you know, this is just so odd, why is it that the
 23 response seems to be going so badly?" And then maybe we
 24 would have got there a bit earlier in the day on
 25 Thursday, rather than on Friday morning.

109

1 So it's a question of, I don't know, 12 to 15 hours
 2 that we might have been able to have just got there
 3 a bit sooner, maybe a little bit longer, but probably
 4 not much more than that.
 5 Q. If we go to the top email on the page,
 6 Alastair Whitehead to Lorna Gratton in response
 7 two minutes later:
 8 "PM speaking to Sajid directly now – essentially
 9 making that point and asking what we can do to support
 10 RBKC."
 11 Now, you cover this at paragraph 40 of your first
 12 statement on page 14 {CLG00030653/14}, if we can go to
 13 it, and you refer to this email traffic and you provide
 14 a read-out there of the call, and you say a response was
 15 sent just before 15.00. Why is that? Why was it not
 16 sent before that?
 17 A. Well, I think it was quite a long request with quite
 18 a tight deadline on exactly what the department's role
 19 was, what was going on, and I think it took a while for
 20 that information to be collated.
 21 Q. Because I think it's right, isn't it, that the
 22 Secretary of State's APS, assistant private secretary,
 23 had actually asked for a response by 2.00 pm?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. Yes.

110

1 A. It strikes me when I look at that request that it was
 2 quite a big one for such a tight deadline, if I'm
 3 honest.
 4 Q. Let's look at what you sent back. {CLG00003194}.
 5 Here's the note. It's a one-page document confirming
 6 the function of RED and what RED had been doing, and I'm
 7 summarising very briefly, but that's right, isn't it?
 8 A. Well, towards the end it talks more about DCLG's support
 9 on funding, for example. I think we'd mobilised Bellwin
 10 by Thursday morning, or at least had agreed with
 11 the council that we were mobilising it.
 12 Q. Yes.
 13 A. And also that we were discussing the provision of
 14 emergency accommodation. But, yes, I think this is
 15 a rather RED-centred response, and I think that this
 16 document — this request was actioned to RED, and, to be
 17 honest, I would have expected a slightly broader
 18 response. I think it's a bit narrow and doesn't really
 19 relate to the breadth of the issues that the department
 20 was dealing with in terms of the emergency response.
 21 Q. Yes. I mean, at risk of pedantry, it also doesn't refer
 22 to the building correctly, does it?
 23 A. No, it doesn't, and I find that, as I see it throughout
 24 the documents, you know, very jarring, and I just — I'm
 25 sure that those directly involved in the fire must find

111

1 it potentially quite offensive and very difficult, and
 2 I'm very sorry about that. It just is an oversight
 3 which I can't really explain, because I know I was
 4 calling it Grenfell Tower right from the very beginning
 5 on Wednesday, so I don't know how it came to be that
 6 Grenfell House was used for so long.
 7 Q. Does it tell us anything about the degree of engagement
 8 of your officials?
 9 A. No, I don't think so, but — no, I don't think it does,
 10 but it perhaps speaks to a certain level of stretch that
 11 was going on in the teams. This doesn't look to me like
 12 it's a note that's had a very great deal of senior
 13 oversight or checking, and, you know, it goes to what
 14 I was saying earlier, that I think — and what's in my
 15 witness statement, that I think RED mobilised to do the
 16 job that RED was supposed to do, but what the department
 17 was not really ready for was the job that the department
 18 was supposed to do on the areas of our responsibility,
 19 including housing, but also a wider role in recovery.
 20 We were not prepared for that, and we did not have the
 21 structures within the department to be able to action
 22 and deal with requests properly, and I think this is
 23 a symptom of that.
 24 I would also say, though, that, you know, it isn't
 25 always helpful in situations like this when the centre

112

1 asks for a note on something, when you're actually
 2 trying to deal in real time with the issues. So it's
 3 a rather clunky way of asking for information, and
 4 I think what came back was a rather clunky and not
 5 particularly impressive response.
 6 Q. If we look at the fifth paragraph down under
 7 "Grenfell House Activity", which starts:
 8 "The whole local authority ..."
 9 Do you see the paragraph there, in the centre of the
 10 screen?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. It says:
 13 "The whole local authority is involved in the
 14 response alongside key partners, organised in line with
 15 their emergency response protocol. An offer was made
 16 for DCLG staff to attend RBKC offices; this was not felt
 17 to be useful."
 18 Do you know why that was the case?
 19 A. No. Just to be clear, my understanding is that this was
 20 an offer made by DCLG for our staff to attend and it was
 21 refused by the local authorities. When I first saw this
 22 document, I thought it was the other way round, but
 23 I think it is that we made the offer to them.
 24 Q. Yes.
 25 A. I don't know why they refused it. I think they were

113

1 very defensive, really almost from the very beginning,
 2 and were unable to see, really, quite how much help they
 3 needed, and I think that they were particularly
 4 defensive about central government coming along and
 5 telling them what to do and getting involved.
 6 Q. Now, can we go then to CAB000 --
 7 A. Could I just add, what's missing from this note is any
 8 mention of whether or not the London Resilience
 9 arrangements have been engaged, and for me, that is
 10 a gap in the way we were thinking about this, that we
 11 weren't looking to see whether that had happened. We
 12 were relying on it, but we weren't looking to see
 13 whether it had happened, and I think that's one of the
 14 big gaps that I feel Jo and I and others didn't fill in
 15 those early days, is checking that those arrangements
 16 were there, and you can see that in this note, it wasn't
 17 part of the conversation.
 18 Q. Right.
 19 A. And they weren't invited to the Wednesday afternoon
 20 meeting of ministers either.
 21 Q. Now, looking back on the conversation you had at 9.30
 22 that morning with the Secretary of State, and also on
 23 the email we saw earlier from Jo Beck about rehousing,
 24 did the subject of Nicholas Holgate potentially reaching
 25 out to the pan-London arrangements, at least so far as

114

1 rehousing was concerned, come up during that
 2 conversation?
 3 A. I don't think so, no.
 4 Q. Can you explain why that is?
 5 A. Well, as I said, I think it was a gap in our thinking
 6 that we should really have been thinking more, and
 7 I think RED should have thought about it, I think Jo and
 8 I should have thought about it, about whether or not
 9 London Gold were involved in the way that we would have
 10 expected was necessary given the scale of this
 11 emergency.
 12 Q. Now, can we go, then, to {CAB00014859}. We've already
 13 touched on the conversation between the Prime Minister
 14 and Sajid Javid on that morning. Here is a read-out of
 15 that at 9.29 from Lorna Gratton internally. You're not
 16 on it, but let me just show you parts of it. The timing
 17 is, I would assume, just before your meeting with the
 18 Secretary of State, which you said took place at 9.30 --
 19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. -- so one minute later:
 21 "The PM spoke to the Communities Secretary on the
 22 topic of the Grenfell Tower fire. The PM noted that
 23 commentary in the media this morning reported that the
 24 operation to look after the victims was less than well
 25 organised. The PM asked what Sajid knew about this and

115

1 what further we can do to support K&C (who are leading
 2 the effort).
 3 "Sajid said he had no reports for it being
 4 disorganised. CLG stood up emergency response within
 5 a couple of hours and had called K&C leader and the
 6 Mayor -- both indicated that they had what they needed.
 7 The Mayor had urged CLG to focus on rehousing -- and that
 8 it should be very local. Sajid agreed with that, and
 9 said that the Government would provide funding to
 10 facilitate this if necessary. They had agreed that when
 11 the emergency has settled down, they would further
 12 discuss the necessary recovery efforts. Sadiq and
 13 Nicholas (K&C leader) had both been told they should
 14 call Sajid directly if they need anything (i.e. not go
 15 through officials if that delayed things). CLG team are
 16 still on the ground at the site."
 17 Now, can you account for the Secretary of State,
 18 Sajid Javid, having no reports for it being
 19 disorganised, as he says, or as is said of him?
 20 A. I think that is the information that we had on the
 21 Wednesday night and at the start of Thursday morning.
 22 We didn't have reports of it being disorganised. We --
 23 he had spoken to the leader and the Mayor, Alok Sharma
 24 had also spoken to the leader, and we were not getting
 25 through those channels or through RED channels any of

116

1 the reports that began to emerge on Thursday morning.
 2 So I read this email -- and I've not -- this is
 3 Number 10's record of that conversation, I had not seen
 4 it before.
 5 Q. No, of course.
 6 A. But in what Sajid Javid is saying in that second
 7 paragraph, that seems to me to be a faithful description
 8 of what the department thought was going on on Wednesday
 9 night, and it was on Thursday morning that that began to
 10 change.
 11 Q. I mean, we've seen the email from Sir Jeremy Heywood to
 12 you about the reports coming to him that RBKC was not
 13 gripping this tightly .
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Are you able to explain why the Secretary of State did
 16 not know that when speaking to the Prime Minister
 17 a little bit later -- not much later, but a little bit
 18 later -- that morning?
 19 A. I don't know when the conversation was between the
 20 Secretary of State and the Prime Minister and whether it
 21 came after my email from Jeremy Heywood.
 22 Q. Before, 9.10, about 9.10, and then this is the read--out
 23 from it, just before your meeting with the
 24 Secretary of State. But we also saw the email from
 25 earlier that morning from Sir Jeremy to you, telling you

117

1 about RBKC not getting a grip.
 2 So would you accept that there appears to have been
 3 some kind of breakdown in the communication line between
 4 Number 10, the Cabinet Office and your department about
 5 what was actually happening on the ground?
 6 A. No, I don't think it was a breakdown of communication.
 7 I think that Number 10 -- and I'm not sure from quite
 8 which sources, but Number 10 were very clear, and I'm
 9 sure Jeremy Heywood will have been talking to the
 10 Prime Minister about this and probably part of the early
 11 morning meetings in Number 10 on that Thursday morning.
 12 They were very consistent in their concerns. Jeremy
 13 emailed me about them and the Prime Minister raised them
 14 directly with the Secretary of State. I didn't, as far
 15 as I recall, forward that email to the Secretary of
 16 State, but -- at least not before his meeting with the
 17 Prime Minister. But I don't think there was a breakdown
 18 of communication; I think they communicated very clearly
 19 to us something which we were not aware of at the time.
 20 But we were becoming aware of it quite quickly.
 21 Q. Yes. In fact, it's the case, isn't it, that at this
 22 point, the DCLG had not contributed anything to the
 23 response on the ground beyond offering help, which had
 24 been refused?
 25 A. I think the team that Sajid Javid is referring to there

118

1 is the RED team.
 2 Q. Right, I see.
 3 A. And that was there.
 4 Q. Right.
 5 Now, if we go, please, to {CAB00006264}, we move
 6 forward in time. I think you have already covered this
 7 to some extent, but here is an email from Lorna Gratton
 8 to Alastair Whitehead at 17.32 that day about further
 9 help:
 10 "We've asked them to look into further support (e.g.
 11 secondees) would be welcome from the LA."
 12 As you told us, that did happen, but not until some
 13 days later, I think: Lizzie Clifford to Westminster and
 14 Fiona Darby on 17 and 18 June respectively.
 15 A. In response to questions from the Inquiry, I provided
 16 a full list of all those seconded in my second witness
 17 statement. I believe that Lizzie Clifford and
 18 Fiona Darby started working with the council on the
 19 Thursday, but not actually in the council buildings .
 20 But they began to work with them, I believe, on the
 21 Thursday afternoon.
 22 Q. Now, coming back to the morning of that day, let's go to
 23 {CLG00003084}. This is an email from your office to
 24 Nicholas Holgate. "Call with Melanie Dawes at DCLG" is
 25 the subject, and the diary manager writes to

119

1 Nicholas Holgate and says:
 2 "Melanie has asked if you might be available later
 3 this morning to speak?
 4 "Melanie is currently in a meeting with the
 5 Secretary of State that is due to finish around 10:15."
 6 That's the meeting that started at 9.30, I think, is
 7 it?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Did you get a response to this?
 10 A. I don't think so, no.
 11 Q. Were you concerned that your office was unable to
 12 arrange this call?
 13 A. Yes, and Jo Farrar spoke to Nicholas a little bit later
 14 on that morning, finally. That was the first time that
 15 either of us had spoken to him.
 16 Q. Right. What had prompted your desire to speak to him?
 17 A. The concerns about what was going on on the ground.
 18 Q. That had come to --
 19 A. That must have been part of it, and also just a general
 20 feeling that it was appropriate for me to speak to the
 21 local authority lead, and he hadn't been in contact the
 22 previous day. So I think in any circumstances I would
 23 have wanted to have a chat with him that morning, but
 24 particularly given the concerns, I think it was
 25 essential .

120

1 Q. Then chronologically the next thing I think is at
 2 {CLG00003102}, 10.36 that morning, 15 June. This is
 3 a note to self, essentially, second email down, at
 4 10.36, "RBKC update from Jo". That's Jo Farrar, and
 5 there are four bullet points:
 6 " ■ There was a quick responses [sic] in terms of
 7 providing temporary accommodation last night.
 8 " ■ The task for today and tomorrow is finding more
 9 permanent homes.
 10 " ■ Our team is in contact with the Director of
 11 Housing who is holding a meeting and will report back
 12 after 11am.
 13 " ■ There is a strategic co-ordinating group at 11am
 14 where this will be discussed. Our staff are on this
 15 group."
 16 Now, in relation to the first three of those,
 17 temporary accommodation, more permanent homes, did that
 18 reflect the concerns that you had or had heard that
 19 morning?
 20 A. I don't quite know where Jo's update had come from or
 21 what she was particularly aiming to inform me of that
 22 I wasn't already aware of, but I think those first two
 23 bullets are consistent with where we were on the
 24 Wednesday night, which is that we hadn't been asked for
 25 help on temporary accommodation and, as far as we were

121

1 aware, there had been a quick response, and that the
 2 task that we were particularly helping them on was
 3 providing more permanent homes. I think that's very
 4 consistent with where the department was.
 5 Q. Did you manage to speak to Nicholas Holgate at all
 6 before the cross-ministerial meeting at 4 o'clock that
 7 day?
 8 A. No.
 9 Q. At 3.30 that day.
 10 A. No, I didn't.
 11 Q. You didn't.
 12 Now, we know that Jo Farrar did, I think. If we go,
 13 please, to CLG00 -- well, sorry, let me preface that.
 14 Can we look at her witness statement,
 15 {CLG00030653/16}, paragraph 50, first of all. This is
 16 where she deals with that call and she ... This is you,
 17 actually, your statement. You say there:
 18 " ... Jo Farrar spoke with him shortly after midday.
 19 Her office circulated a readout of that call."
 20 Yes?
 21 A. Yes.
 22 Q. Then let's look at that, {CLG00008140}, second email
 23 down at 16.26, from your office to MHCLG RED and also
 24 Sajid Javid's office, "Readout Jo's calls with LGA and
 25 [chief executive] K&C":

122

1 "For information, please see below readouts of Jo's
 2 calls today with Mark Lloyd (LGA) and Nick Holgate."
 3 You can see that there are read-outs of two calls,
 4 I think. The first is at 12.30, 15 June, where
 5 Jo Farrar has a call with Nick Holgate; do you see that?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. If you go to the top of page 2 {CLG00008140/2}, during
 8 the call Nicholas Holgate is reported as saying that
 9 RBKC was receiving "plenty of support from DCLG and
 10 others"; do you see that?
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. "Risks:
 13 " ■ If a lot of people come back who can't get into
 14 their homes.
 15 " ■ Getting people into permanent homes in an orderly
 16 and quick way.
 17 " ■ Post traumatic stress."
 18 Then if we go up to page 1 {CLG00008140/1} again,
 19 please, he says in the first bullet point there, or is
 20 noted as having said:
 21 "They have found hotel accommodation for anyone with
 22 need. He thinks that can roll over for as long as
 23 needed."
 24 Now, do you remember reading this email at the time?
 25 A. Yes.

123

1 Q. You do. What was the impression you were left with, do
 2 you remember?
 3 A. I can't quite remember when I read it, but if I only saw
 4 it after the time that's stated in this particular
 5 version of it, ie 16.26, then by then I would have been
 6 extremely worried about the council and have thought
 7 that this was really, I'm afraid, a sign that
 8 Nicholas Holgate was not gripping the situation and
 9 didn't really understand what was going on.
 10 Q. Why, because of the discrepancy between --
 11 A. Yes.
 12 Q. Right.
 13 A. And, in particular, the fact that there was plenty of
 14 help, on the second page there, from DCLG, when we knew
 15 that they hadn't really asked for any help.
 16 Q. Indeed, on the contrary, had resisted it.
 17 A. Yeah. What we didn't know at the time, I think, was
 18 quite how problematic the hotel accommodation was that
 19 had already been provided and how many issues there were
 20 with things like food, and also about the uncertainty
 21 about how long people were able to stay there. So he's
 22 saying that that can roll over for as long as needed;
 23 what we know now is that that wasn't necessarily the
 24 case. But at the time, there were still plenty of signs
 25 that this just felt complacent, and I think that was

124

1 Jo's view. My guess is that Jo and I talked about this
 2 before I even read the read-out and that she conveyed
 3 her concern.
 4 Q. Now, if you look about three-quarters of the way down
 5 that bullet point list, you can see there is a reference
 6 there to:
 7 "845 non-Grenfell Tower households are currently
 8 without access to their homes. Most are making their
 9 own arrangements. They are looking at when police and
 10 fire can reduce the size of the cordon."
 11 Did you read that as households or individuals, do
 12 you remember?
 13 A. I don't think I really thought about that difference.
 14 Q. No.
 15 Did the scale of the problem become apparent to you,
 16 reading that?
 17 A. Yes. I don't remember exactly when it was that the
 18 Lancaster West Estate issues really began to become
 19 evident to us, but they were clearly very serious, and
 20 the scale of the number of people who were homeless --
 21 temporarily homeless or in some cases it turned out to
 22 be permanently homeless -- I don't quite remember when
 23 that crystallised. This may have been one of the first
 24 indications of it. I don't remember.
 25 Q. Now, let's just look at the next two bullet points:

125

1 " ■ Grenfell Tower residents have been complaining
 2 for a long time about the council. They have a trail of
 3 letters written to the council.
 4 " ■ Nick said several people could make this worse
 5 than it is and the council is worried that they might
 6 need assistance from the police."
 7 What was your understanding of what that was about,
 8 those two bullet points, whether taken together or
 9 separately?
 10 A. I don't really know. I see it now as a sign of their
 11 defensiveness that, you know, obviously there had been
 12 a lot of complaints about the tower and about other
 13 housing, and that perhaps had led to a certain, perhaps,
 14 siege mentality, even, in the council, in how they
 15 responded to those residents. That's how I interpret
 16 it. I don't think I can say any more than that.
 17 I don't want to over-interpret what Nicholas Holgate was
 18 saying there.
 19 Q. Was it your perception at the time -- and I don't want
 20 to put words into your mouth, but you refer to "siege
 21 mentality" -- that the relationship between the
 22 residents and the council as recorded here might have
 23 had some kind of influence on the way in which
 24 Nicholas Holgate was approaching offers of help from
 25 outside?

126

1 A. Yes, possibly. I mean, I should say that although
 2 I don't know Nicholas Holgate very well, he is,
 3 you know, a man I believe of integrity, and actually
 4 a very kind man, and I don't in any way interpret his
 5 actions in these few days as somebody who didn't care or
 6 who wasn't trying to do the right thing. I think he was
 7 completely overwhelmed by the task, not perhaps with the
 8 operational background in local government that might
 9 have helped him, he was a policy official from
 10 the Treasury originally, and he in the moment didn't
 11 realise he needed to call for help.
 12 And, I mean, perhaps -- you know, I don't know if
 13 this is the right moment to raise this, but I think it
 14 is very difficult to know how you help somebody in that
 15 kind of situation, because the last thing you want to do
 16 is to stop people leading when they need to lead and get
 17 on with it. But when somebody is under stress and they
 18 don't realise they need help, they're usually the last
 19 person to see it. So I don't think you can rely on
 20 people under pressure to know when they have to be, as
 21 he was, removed from the situation because they're
 22 unable to discharge those responsibilities.
 23 So I think he was in a very difficult position, and
 24 all sorts of factors were making it very difficult for
 25 him to lead the council in the way that was needed.

127

1 MR MILLETT: Thank you.
 2 Mr Chairman, is that a convenient moment?
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, I think it is.
 4 I think it's time we stopped so we can all get some
 5 lunch, so we'll break there. We'll resume, please, at
 6 2.05, and as before, please don't talk to anyone about
 7 your evidence over the break. All right?
 8 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
 10 (Pause)
 11 Thank you very much, Mr Millett. 2.05, then,
 12 please.
 13 MR MILLETT: Thank you.
 14 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
 15 (1.05 pm)
 16 (The short adjournment)
 17 (2.05 pm)
 18 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Right, Dame Melanie, ready to carry
 19 on, yes?
 20 THE WITNESS: Yes.
 21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.
 22 Thank you, Mr Millett.
 23 MR MILLETT: Thank you, Mr Chairman.
 24 3.30, 15 June, ministerial cross-Whitehall meeting,
 25 second of its kind.

128

1 Now, you didn't attend, did you?
 2 A. No.
 3 Q. But your colleagues Helen MacNamara and
 4 Katherine Richardson did, I think.
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. Is it right that Helen MacNamara spoke to you after the
 7 meeting to relay the concerns that had emerged?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. Do you remember the conversation?
 10 A. Not particularly, but I do remember, in general terms,
 11 discussing with Helen that afternoon all of the various
 12 different worries that were beginning to come through
 13 and that had crystallised in the meeting, as I was
 14 saying earlier.
 15 Q. Right.
 16 Now, let's go to {CLG00030440/6}, which is
 17 Helen MacNamara's first witness statement, paragraph 28,
 18 and I just want to show you paragraphs 28 and 29 on
 19 page 6. She says:
 20 "28. Immediately following the meeting, whilst
 21 I remained in the meeting room, I spoke to
 22 Lorna Gratton, the Prime Minister's Private Secretary.
 23 She explained that there were Ministerial concerns about
 24 the organisation of the local relief effort, and that
 25 the Prime Minister herself was concerned.

129

1 "29. I discussed these concerns with Melanie Dawes
 2 and explained my view that the Department needed to put
 3 greater pressure on RBKC to accept offers of support.
 4 I understand that Katherine Richardson, who was present
 5 during my discussion with Lorna Gratton, discussed it
 6 with Jo Farrar. I also emailed Jo Farrar directly, in
 7 the knowledge that she was due to accompany Sajid Javid
 8 and Alok Sharma on a Ministerial visit on the Friday
 9 morning."
 10 Now, so far as that is an account of her
 11 conversation with you, does it accord with your
 12 recollection?
 13 A. Yes.
 14 Q. Now, if we look at Katherine Richardson's statement,
 15 that's at {CLG00030412}. I'll show you the first page
 16 to identify the document. This is her witness statement
 17 to the Inquiry of 15 March 2019.
 18 If we go, please, to page 21 {CLG00030412/21},
 19 paragraph 77, she says this:
 20 "I attended the cross-Ministerial meeting at 15:30
 21 on the Thursday. Nick Holgate, RBKC Chief Executive,
 22 was not able to answer detailed questions about the
 23 situation on the ground and appeared quite defensive,
 24 trying to assure Ministers that no additional help was
 25 required. In my opinion he was not reassuring, and my

130

1 sense was that others in the meeting agreed. It seemed
 2 strange to me given the scale and complexity of the
 3 incident that the Council were not asking for central
 4 government support."
 5 Did she -- that is Katherine Richardson -- relay
 6 that to you, her impression to you?
 7 A. No, not directly, as I recall. She might have done.
 8 I might have seen her when she came back to the
 9 department. But I remember the conversation with Helen
 10 specifically. But I think we were all basically having
 11 conversations about the same things at this point.
 12 Q. Did Helen MacNamara express to you her view that the
 13 department needed to put more pressure on RBKC to accept
 14 offers of support?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. And what did you do about that?
 17 A. Well, I thought that was right. I mean, I hadn't been
 18 at the meeting myself, but I was aware of the various
 19 concerns that had been raised during the day, and we
 20 were getting increasingly worried, and at some point
 21 I spoke to Jo Farrar that afternoon or early evening and
 22 we agreed that she should go with the Secretary of State
 23 and Alok Sharma the following day and see what was going
 24 on.
 25 Q. Can we go to {CLG00008227}, please. Now, this is

131

1 an email of the following morning, 16 June 2017, the
 2 Friday, and if you go to the top of the page, please,
 3 you can see there's an email on that morning at 8.23,
 4 from Helen MacNamara to Frances Kirwan within the DCLG,
 5 forwarding an email below from Katherine Richardson to
 6 Robert Mason and the ministers. It says:
 7 "I mentioned to Melanie yesterday. We need to
 8 really get on this. Actual PM is concerned and this
 9 will run away from us if we haven't done something
 10 concrete today.
 11 "Don't think politely waiting for Nick H to ask is
 12 right tactic -- we are basically being told to grip."
 13 Now, was it your approach to wait for
 14 Nicholas Holgate to ask for help, politely or otherwise?
 15 A. Well, no, we'd offered help many times, and by this
 16 stage we were getting pretty worried that they weren't
 17 responding to those offers, but actually also that the
 18 evidence was that the situation on the ground was
 19 deteriorating, or had already deteriorated, quite
 20 significantly. So by this point on Friday morning, in
 21 my mind, I was turning my thoughts to what we needed to
 22 do to intervene in the council, not necessarily in
 23 a formal sense, but how we needed to put people in
 24 alongside them to support the recovery efforts.
 25 Q. Now, looking at the conversation that she refers to

132

1 "yesterday", did Helen MacNamara make it clear to you
 2 that there was in any way some kind of implicit
 3 criticism from the Prime Minister that waiting for
 4 Nick Holgate to ask was the wrong tactic and that you
 5 should be getting more of a grip as a department?
 6 A. I didn't really take it as criticism. I mean, I think
 7 it's quite common in these situations for the centre of
 8 government to express a view quite forcefully, and
 9 I think if you're sensitive in the department you can
 10 see that as criticism, but sometimes you're just being
 11 told something very clearly and you just have to hear
 12 it. So, you know, they were right, we did need to
 13 change our approach as central government, and we did
 14 that that morning. And, as I was saying earlier,
 15 I think -- and as I said in my witness statement,
 16 I think the question is what we could have done sooner.
 17 But by this stage, I don't think there was any
 18 disagreement going on amongst us that we needed somehow
 19 to find a way to change what was going on on the ground.
 20 Q. Right.
 21 A. We didn't quite know what was going on or what needed to
 22 be changed, but Jo went there and I think immediately
 23 got on to the issues and began to come up with
 24 solutions.
 25 Q. Sticking with the morning of 16 June for the moment --

133

1 we have jumped ahead in the chronology and we will come
 2 back to the 15th very shortly, but just sticking with
 3 early morning on the 16th, the Friday -- can we go to
 4 {CLG00003272} and look at the second email on the page.
 5 It's an email from Lorna Gratton in Number 10 at 07.41
 6 on 16 June:
 7 "Hello,
 8 "I spoke to Helen Mac yesterday after the cross
 9 government meeting.
 10 "There are still concerns here about how well
 11 organised the response effort is for those in receipt of
 12 it on the ground.
 13 "Would it be helpful for them to have more support
 14 from CLG (e.g a small team of people seconded similar to
 15 the victim support unit)? Could you let me know what
 16 you think."
 17 If you go then up to the first email, in the first
 18 line on that page, you can see that Sajid Javid
 19 responds -- and I should have pointed out to you that
 20 Lorna Gratton's email was to his office. He responds to
 21 you or sends an email to you and Helen MacNamara:
 22 "Morning all
 23 "I just discussed briefly with Frances, and
 24 I believe that MD's view ..."
 25 And I think "MD" is you.

134

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. "... is that we can be more helpful in other ways. It
 3 would be able to get a couple of lines we could use to
 4 go back to No10 this morning on what we think the best
 5 way forward is. I know there's a lot on, so sorry to
 6 add another item to the pile!
 7 "Thanks,
 8 "Tom."
 9 And that came from Tom Hinchcliffe, who was
 10 Sajid Javid's private secretary.
 11 Do you know what that's referring to, that
 12 conversation, or the belief that you had?
 13 A. So I was of the view -- and Frances Kirwan was my
 14 private secretary and ran my office, so she will have
 15 accurately understood my views, and I was of the view
 16 that sending in teams of civil servants was not what
 17 the council needed. What the council needed was --
 18 well, I didn't know what they needed at that stage, to
 19 be honest, at any level of detail, but I didn't think
 20 that sending Whitehall officials in was likely to be the
 21 solution, simply because most civil servants have
 22 absolutely no experience of emergency responses like
 23 this and could have made the situation worse rather than
 24 better.
 25 So ministers throughout these days were quite keen

135

1 to send officials in, and I felt that it was quite
 2 important to push back on that. And I did think we
 3 could be helpful in other ways, I explain some of this,
 4 I think, in my second witness statement, but through --
 5 particularly through finance, which we did, through
 6 liaison, which we did, and in fact that was what
 7 John Barradell asked for later on, on the Friday, and
 8 also through the victim support unit, supporting access
 9 into central government services.
 10 Q. You told us about a discussion you had had with
 11 Sajid Javid on the morning of the 15th at 9.30, but was
 12 there a later discussion you had with him later that day
 13 at which you expressed the view attributed to you here?
 14 A. I don't know whether I expressed that view to
 15 Sajid Javid on the Thursday or the Friday, but I think
 16 Frances is conveying my view to Sajid's
 17 private secretary here, rather than me talking to Sajid
 18 directly. He was -- at this point must have been on his
 19 way to Kensington and Chelsea, so I don't think I saw
 20 him on the Friday morning.
 21 Q. Coming back, then, to the Thursday, 15 June, in the
 22 evening, it's right, I think, according to Jo Farrar's
 23 statement, that she sought contact with Nicholas Holgate
 24 that afternoon or evening at about 5.00 pm; yes? Are
 25 you aware of that?

136

1 A. She left him a message, I think, in the afternoon on the
2 Thursday.
3 Q. Indeed.
4 A. Yes.
5 Q. Exactly.
6 A. She sought to contact him, yes.
7 Q. She did, and I can show you the message. Let's have it
8 up, just for the sake of the evidence. {CLG00003203}.
9 It's an email confirming that she had left him
10 a message. The top email:
11 "I've left a message with the CEX. He will come
12 back if he needs to, but I have told him you are working
13 with his team."
14 Was this part of a strategy, perhaps, to apply a bit
15 of pressure to Nicholas Holgate to accept your support
16 at this point?
17 A. Well, yes, I think we were clear we needed to apply some
18 pressure, or else it wouldn't be accepted, the offer
19 that we were making, and so definitely we would have
20 been thinking at that point that we needed to be quite
21 forceful.
22 Q. Yes.
23 Now, on the afternoon of the 15th, I think you and
24 Jo Farrar came together to discuss the council's
25 response. We know that from the statements. But was

137

1 that before or after her attempt to contact him at
2 5 o'clock, do you know? Do you remember?
3 A. It was after the ministerial meeting, I think, so that
4 would date it to later in the afternoon, and I don't
5 know whether she contacted him after she and I had
6 spoken or whether it was just before. I just can't
7 remember.
8 Q. Right.
9 If we go to your first statement, please, at page 16
10 {CLG00030653/16}, paragraph 51, you say there that you
11 discussed the response with Jo Farrar:
12 "Some of the officers working in the Council's
13 housing teams were well-known to people in the
14 Department, and our general view at that stage was that,
15 in responding to the housing challenge, RBKC was capable
16 and had significant expertise and experience."
17 Did they express their views of the council staff's
18 expertise and experience to you?
19 A. Not directly, no, but Laura Johnson in particular was
20 known to, I believe, Fiona Darby and Lizzie Clifford,
21 because they had both worked in local government
22 housing, and they knew her to be an experienced housing
23 director, and I think that was what they meant.
24 Q. Right.
25 A. And I think, to be honest, we probably rather

138

1 over-relied on that sense that this was a person who was
2 capable because, in the end, that was just one person,
3 and I think we over-relied on that, rather than on any
4 broader sense of their capabilities or of the wider
5 leadership of the Gold effort in Kensington and Chelsea.
6 Q. Yes, thank you.
7 I think a decision was then made that Jo Farrar
8 should visit the council the next day with ministers to
9 assess the situation.
10 A. Yes.
11 Q. Yes. Why was it decided that Dr Farrar should be the
12 one to attend?
13 A. Well, Helen MacNamara had a rest day on the Friday, and
14 then worked over the weekend, and she wasn't available.
15 But, in any event, Jo was the right person, in my
16 opinion, because she had run two councils and led
17 emergency responses, so she had all the right experience
18 to, you know, really know what was going on and know
19 what might be needed.
20 Q. We'll come to that meeting with the housing minister
21 I think shortly.
22 Before we do, can we turn first to events on the
23 morning of 16 June, which we've covered a little bit
24 already, but coming back to that.
25 {CLG00008289}. This is, if you look at the first

139

1 email in the string, an email from Lorna Gratton to you,
2 or your office, and also the office of Sajid Javid,
3 copied to Alastair Whitehead at Number 10, at 11.06 in
4 the morning, following a discussion between the two of
5 you and Louise Morgan; yes?
6 A. Yes.
7 Q. "Thanks very much for the useful conversation just now.
8 To confirm, for the meeting below (and for the PM to
9 confirm publicly this afternoon), we would like CLG to
10 be able to commit to ..."
11 Then there is a long list of bullet points, and
12 I don't want to read them all out to you, but you can
13 see them there:
14 "▪ A date by which all residents will have been
15 re-housed, ideally this would be within 2 week[s] ...
16 "▪ Detail what checks are taking place on
17 buildings ...
18 "▪ We know where all buildings with similar cladding
19 are.
20 "▪ ... fire brigade inspections ...
21 "▪ Offer/(impose) further support for RBKC in the
22 form of additional coordination support ... seconded
23 staff ...
24 "▪ Immediate review of the relevant building
25 regulations ..."

140

1 Then you say:
 2 "You thought this all sounded do—able, please let me
 3 know if any of that changes. Louise, grateful for
 4 a heads up before the meeting (if you can) on exactly
 5 what the offer will be on each. A copy of Sajid's
 6 briefing if that's the easiest way to do would be fine."
 7 Then there's something about a victims of terrorism
 8 unit as well.
 9 Now, I show you that.
 10 If we go to your first statement, please, at page 17
 11 {CLG00030653/17}, my having shown you that
 12 contemporaneous email, paragraph 56, you say, under the
 13 heading "16 June 2017":
 14 "It had been increasingly clear overnight that there
 15 were problems with the response in North Kensington.
 16 Lorna Gratton (the Prime Minister's Private Secretary)
 17 had emailed the Secretary of State's office at 06:30
 18 expressing concerns about how well organised the
 19 response effort was and suggesting that more support
 20 from the Department was needed."
 21 I think we've seen that email.
 22 "I spoke to Lorna to discuss the situation and
 23 agreed that we would quickly provide more information to
 24 Number 10 on rehousing and the support that was being
 25 provided by Central Government as well as the latest on

141

1 building safety checks."
 2 Now, you refer to the conversation there. First, do
 3 you remember when, even roughly, during the morning that
 4 took place?
 5 A. I think it was quite early, and when I saw the various
 6 emails that you were displaying earlier, I thought it
 7 was sensible for me to just have a chat with Lorna.
 8 I knew her, and I can't remember who instigated it, but
 9 I was very glad to speak to her and just try to cut
 10 through a little bit what was going on, and I think it
 11 was probably at about 8.30. It may have been a little
 12 bit later, but of that sort of broad time.
 13 Q. Right, and was that, as recorded here, the full extent
 14 of your conversation or was anything else discussed?
 15 A. Well, I'm not sure I've seen Lorna's contemporaneous
 16 note recently — my apologies if I have referred to it
 17 in my statements before — but I think this is about
 18 right. I mean, clearly there's quite a lot on building
 19 safety checks that we were discussing. You can see that
 20 from her record. I won't go on about that.
 21 I do remember the rehousing target, as it became,
 22 being discussed, and you can see in Lorna's email that
 23 she says there were nuances, and I think I will have
 24 said: yes, there really were nuances. I think it was
 25 the first time that morning that a timescale was being

142

1 suggested. The previous day it had been just about
 2 a commitment to rehouse in the local area, and so
 3 putting a timescale on it was clearly going to be more
 4 difficult, and I think I will have — well, I know I did
 5 explain some of that. And the briefing that went in
 6 from the department into the meeting later that day, the
 7 cross—ministerial meeting, didn't include a timescale;
 8 it said "as early as possible", or something like that.
 9 So we had a discussion about that. But it was quite
 10 clear Number 10 wanted a time, and she put that in her
 11 email, which I think it was important that she did,
 12 because that was what ministers wanted.
 13 What's not in my witness statement is the reference
 14 to the emergency co—ordinator, that part, I don't know
 15 whether there's a reference to that over the page, but
 16 that was also part of the conversation, and I recall
 17 talking to her about whether or not a team of civil
 18 servants would be useful, and explaining to her, as
 19 I was just doing now, why I thought that that wasn't
 20 going to be the right answer.
 21 So her account is a bit more detailed than is in my
 22 witness statement, but it is consistent, yes. We
 23 discussed the full range of issues.
 24 Q. If we then go to {CLG00003345}, we can see, in the last
 25 email on the page, an email at 11.05 entitled, "MD Lorna

143

1 Chat".
 2 A. Yes.
 3 Q. And it says:
 4 "Melanie has just spoken to Lorna and has agreed by
 5 1pm."
 6 Then it goes over the page {CLG00003345/2}:
 7 "We would provide lines for the PM on rehousing
 8 people in the local area. We will look to do this with
 9 in two weeks and we would need to define what we mean by
 10 [permanent] and local area and ensure both speed and
 11 quality (which may need to be a bit longer) — Jo to work
 12 with the LA to set out what is possible."
 13 Then there are other things as well, and you can see
 14 what they are. It says at the end:
 15 "We understand that the PM will chair a meeting at
 16 1:30 and will be visiting the site today again. Plus
 17 will be making an announcement in the early afternoon."
 18 First, why was it deemed necessary for this
 19 information to be provided to the PM by 1.00 pm that
 20 day?
 21 A. Erm ...
 22 Q. This particular information about rehousing and within
 23 two weeks.
 24 A. Well, clearly ministers wanted to make a commitment
 25 about rehousing, and when I spoke to Lorna, I don't know

144

1 whether she said the Prime Minister's going to chair
 2 a meeting later on, she might not have known that by
 3 then, but clearly they wanted to make an announcement.
 4 There was a very big challenge in the media about
 5 rehousing, and lots of allegations that actually weren't
 6 true about people being placed in cities far away from
 7 London. But I think ministers felt they needed to get
 8 something out there quite quickly to supplement what
 9 they'd said the day before, and so that's why the
 10 urgency.

11 In the end, I don't know whether we provided
 12 information for the Prime Minister prior to the meeting
 13 or whether we all just went along to the meeting and
 14 discussed it then.

15 Q. Did you look into how realistic it was to rehouse
 16 everyone in the local area within two weeks?

17 A. I didn't look into it, but I didn't think it was going
 18 to be deliverable, and when it says here in this
 19 account, "We will look to do this within two weeks",
 20 I don't think that was us volunteering that from DCLG or
 21 me volunteering that; I think it is more, as Lorna
 22 actually says in her account of the discussion, that the
 23 Prime Minister or ministers wanted to do it in two weeks
 24 and she understood that there were nuances, and I will
 25 have explained those.

145

1 Q. One of the nuances being it wasn't possible.
 2 A. It just wasn't going to be possible. I mean, to be
 3 fair, I don't think we knew quite how impossible it
 4 would be, because I don't think we had the experience of
 5 quite how difficult it is to take, you know, bereaved
 6 and traumatised families through the decision-making and
 7 the -- that they need to make when they're thinking
 8 about longer-term housing options, and I don't think my
 9 ministers had that in their minds that morning, really,
 10 that was the missing thing.
 11 Q. Now, moving forward into the morning, {CLG00030638}. We
 12 have already referred to the visit by Jo Farrar that
 13 day, and here is a text at 10.30, "Great".

14 Now, hold on, the timing is not quite right for
 15 this. This I think is 13.21, actually, and it says:
 16 "Great. Will report pack. Personally worried that
 17 Council are out of their depth. Have said we will give
 18 some housing officers. Will also sort out [comms]
 19 support with LGA."

20 Then I think your response:
 21 "Feel free to make big judgment call if we need to
 22 make massive Whitehall offer or demand lga one. Part of
 23 what we need to do is keep leaping ahead of the
 24 immediate situation."

25 What did you mean there by a "massive Whitehall

146

1 offer"?

2 A. I think, by the way, that this exchange was earlier in
 3 the morning because, as I think you're hinting, by 13.21
 4 John Barradell was already in place and the meeting was
 5 about to start in the COBR meeting rooms.

6 I didn't precisely know. I was leaving it to Jo's
 7 judgement, and I trusted her judgement. But the sort of
 8 things I was thinking about were previous situations I'd
 9 been involved in when a significant injection of local
 10 government expertise had been provided to councils that
 11 were failing or were struggling to deliver core parts of
 12 their duties, and obviously sometimes that had been done
 13 through interventions and formal interventions and
 14 commissioners, but sometimes it had been done through
 15 voluntary panels or taskforces, and those things had
 16 been organised and orchestrated by the Local Government
 17 Association. So I just wanted Jo to feel free to offer
 18 whatever she thought was needed.

19 Q. I think you then spoke to her and agreed it would be
 20 beneficial for John Barradell, who was already on site,
 21 to take over as Gold Command.

22 A. Yes.

23 Q. Do you know what else was discussed in that call, do you
 24 remember?

25 A. No, I'm sure Jo will have told me about how worried she

147

1 was. I doubt we spoke for very long, because there was
 2 a lot going on, but she will have -- I think she was the
 3 person who told me that John Barradell had been
 4 mobilised in.

5 Q. Right.

6 Now, if we go to {CLG00008313}. Let me show you
 7 page 1 at the start to show that you're at the top of
 8 this email chain. It comes through to you, do you see
 9 that, or at least your office?

10 A. My office, yes.

11 Q. If we go, then, to the bottom of page 2 {CLG00008313/2},
 12 the start of the email I want to show you is at 00.25,
 13 so after midnight on 16 June, and it's from
 14 Charlie Parker at Westminster to a number of others, so
 15 it filters its way through to you the next morning.

16 But if you go to the final paragraph on page 3
 17 {CLG00008313/3}, let's look at that together, he says
 18 there:

19 "I have offered NH [Nicholas Holgate] total WCC
 20 support however, I don't believe he quite understands
 21 the magnitude of the problem and the implications of
 22 a Government led inquiry. I will be also offering him
 23 a lot of personal support and will see him tomorrow.
 24 However, I fear a lot of turmoil/uncertainty as to his
 25 and leading members future may be on the horizon. This

148

1 will be exacerbated by the constant updating of
 2 fatalities [numbers]."
 3 Now, when you got that email, you could see -- is
 4 this right? -- that at least the chief executive of
 5 Westminster Council thought that the chief executive of
 6 RBKC did not understand the magnitude of the problem;
 7 yes?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. What was your reaction to learning of that in the email
 10 when you saw it the next day?
 11 A. By the time I saw this email, I think John Barradell was
 12 already in his new role, or at least it had been agreed
 13 that he would be in the new role, and I remember
 14 thinking that this -- we were in exactly the same place
 15 as Charlie Parker had been, and I remember thinking:
 16 I wish he'd sent that email to me as well last night,
 17 that might have been helpful.
 18 Q. Right, I see. And when you saw this at 11.47, was this
 19 before or after Jo Farrar had had a conversation with
 20 Nicholas Holgate about him stepping back?
 21 A. I'm not quite sure, but I am pretty confident that I did
 22 not see this email, and neither did Jo, until after she
 23 had spoken to John Barradell. I don't think this email
 24 influenced the decision-making. I think it corroborated
 25 the decision that we'd made or that Jo had agreed with

1 John and John O'Brien, rather than actually being part
 2 of what made them decide it.
 3 Q. So did it corroborate the concerns that had been raised
 4 with you --
 5 A. Yes.
 6 Q. -- by Jo Farrar from her visit?
 7 A. Yes, and also what we knew from Thursday about how we
 8 were finding the council to deal with.
 9 Q. Then let's go to {CLG00003399}. This takes us into the
 10 mid-afternoon of that day. Email from Robert Mason of
 11 RED to Sajid Javid, copied to you, and to the office of
 12 Jo Farrar. So this comes up to you at 14.47, as you can
 13 see, and what is important about this is the email below
 14 it which is in the string. It starts at the bottom of
 15 your screen, but if we can scroll up, please, we can see
 16 the whole of it.
 17 It comes from Philip James, who is a resilience
 18 adviser in RED, and he says:
 19 "Katherine, Rob,
 20 "Ahead of the SCG, I spoke to the Police Gold --
 21 Commander Neil Jerome.
 22 "In a confidential conversation he raised his
 23 concern regarding RBKC Local Authority.
 24 "The main points he made are --
 25 " ■ The LA are way out of their depth.

1 " ■ Nick Holgate did not come across well yesterday
 2 at the cross government ministerial meeting.
 3 " ■ There is a lot of anger from the residents
 4 directed to towards the LA.
 5 " ■ He said it is not acceptable that people have now
 6 spent 2 nights in a rest centre.
 7 " ■ Police are happy for there to be a meeting with
 8 the residents which includes all of the appropriate key
 9 agencies from the multi-agency SCG to talk to residents
 10 and address some of their concerns where possible. LA
 11 are not keen on this idea."
 12 And it goes on a little bit further.
 13 Now, do you remember, did you do anything on receipt
 14 of that email at 14.47?
 15 A. At that time, I was in the ministerial meeting, so
 16 I can't say exactly when I saw this email, but it's very
 17 consistent with everything that was being discussed by
 18 that point. So all of those issues are -- we were well
 19 aware of, and indeed quite worried about.
 20 Q. Right.
 21 A. But by that point, John Barradell had taken over.
 22 Q. Yes, I see.
 23 Now, then moving further into the day on the 16th,
 24 Friday, {CAB00005727}. Email from Lorna Gratton, 19.37,
 25 to you and Louise Morgan, "Further support to RBKC":

1 "Louise, Melanie,
 2 "As you know, the PM met local residents from
 3 Grenfell this afternoon and left with the overwhelming
 4 message that the council don't have a grip.
 5 "I know you know this, and that's why you've set up
 6 Gold Command, but in particular, she's keen that we make
 7 a further offer to RBKC/Gold Command (of the kind that
 8 they find very hard to refuse)
 9 "In particular :
 10 -- pull together what additional resource you
 11 quickly put in to the Council and have it ready to go.
 12 -- make contact with Gold Command in order to go
 13 round K&C and identify where we could immediately and
 14 helpfully place people.
 15 "I understand you're kindly pulling together a short
 16 email for us on what CLG will be offering, so we can put
 17 it in front of the PM."
 18 Now, I don't know whether there's a response to that
 19 email that you sent to Lorna Gratton. Can you help?
 20 A. No, I'm afraid I don't recall. I mean, at about the
 21 same time, I emailed in to Mark Sedwill giving my
 22 assessment of where things were following the meeting,
 23 but I don't recall that, and it looks as though it came
 24 directly into my own personal email box, so I will have
 25 seen it. I didn't leave the office until quite late

1 that night. I just don't remember if I responded.
 2 Q. I mean, did you know what was involved in making
 3 a Corleone—esque offer of this nature?
 4 A. Well, look, from this point on, once John Barradell had
 5 been put in place, as I said in my email to Mark Sedwill
 6 later that afternoon, which we may come on to, although
 7 the underlying problems clearly weren't solved, I felt
 8 that finally we had leadership in place that had
 9 identified the right issues, he was drawing people
 10 around him to be able to get things done with the right
 11 expertise, and there was just a sense of palpable grip
 12 and determination.
 13 Now, I think it took Gold Command several days to
 14 recover the problems created by those early days and the
 15 mistakes, but my view from this point on was that we had
 16 to put what effort we had in central government into
 17 supporting Gold Command.
 18 So what I read this email as saying now is that
 19 ministers were still quite uncomfortable and wanted us
 20 to do more directly from central government, but there
 21 was another meeting the following morning, which
 22 I believe the Prime Minister chaired, and so I think
 23 that was another conversation that we went round the
 24 same questions of, "Should we do more?", but ultimately
 25 concluded we should support Gold Command, but we did

1 also — we had already agreed by this evening, actually,
 2 to put together the victims unit.
 3 Q. Yes, and we may touch on that shortly.
 4 Let me just show you an email sent a little bit
 5 later the same evening, {CLG00005219}. At 19.54 on
 6 16 June, Alastair Whitehead, second email down, to
 7 Peter Hill at Number 10 and others, and it looks as if
 8 this is an internal Number 10 communication:
 9 "All,
 10 "The Prime Minister called the Leader of Kensington
 11 and Chelsea Council this evening — herewith a readout."
 12 And there are six bullet points:
 13 " ■ The PM reported that, from her visit, the
 14 overwhelming message from those affected was that there
 15 had been no communication from the Council, and people
 16 didn't feel that the Council was coordinating things
 17 properly.
 18 " ■ Leader reported there had been a big response
 19 from the voluntary sector, and that Council officers
 20 were engaged — but there had been some confusion and the
 21 Council is not held in the highest regard.
 22 " ■ The PM emphasised the issues that had been raised
 23 with her, and that the financial aid must get through —
 24 DCLG will be in contact with RBKC and ensure that proper
 25 processes are in place."

1 Then it continues:
 2 " ■ Leader committed to having all people rendered
 3 homeless in housing by the end of the day — but noted
 4 a few times the difficulty of getting permanent
 5 rehousing in K&C. The PM said it was important to have
 6 the numbers involved so we can monitor progress on the
 7 commitment, and to be sure of where all the people are.
 8 " ■ Leader said that RBKC needed help to free up
 9 housing — the PM said that DCLG will be able to help
 10 identify housing in other boroughs.
 11 " ■ The PM sought an assurance that someone from the
 12 Council will be in touch this evening with every one of
 13 the support centres — the Leader agreed this."
 14 Now, that's a read—out from a discussion they had.
 15 Were you aware of the detail of that discussion or
 16 the particulars of this email on that evening?
 17 A. I don't think so, no.
 18 Q. You say in your first witness statement at paragraph 10
 19 {CLG00030653/4} — there is no need to go to it — that
 20 one of the DCLG's longstanding functions is to provide
 21 what you call a link between central government and
 22 local responders when it comes to responding to
 23 emergencies. Do you know why it took the Prime Minister
 24 personally visiting the scene for those issues to be
 25 fully aired and then action taken?

1 A. Well, I think all these issues were already on the
 2 table. You know, we'd had a meeting earlier that day,
 3 chaired by the Prime Minister, with John Barradell and
 4 Nicholas Holgate on the line, and many of these issues
 5 had been discussed, including the need to sort out
 6 housing, and I think when the Prime Minister says that
 7 DCLG, for example — I'm talking about the penultimate
 8 bullet — will be able to help identify housing in other
 9 boroughs, that wasn't new; I mean, she was saying what
 10 we'd already discussed and aired in ministerial meetings
 11 not just on Friday, but I think in previous days. The
 12 permanent rehousing work had started some days before.
 13 So I think the issues around financial aid getting
 14 through, I don't know whether that was discussed on the
 15 Friday afternoon. That may have been a new issue that
 16 emerged in the evening. But I see this as
 17 a continuation of a conversation. And I'm not surprised
 18 that every time anyone visited, there was a slightly new
 19 issue that needed to be sent back, but the point was
 20 that it should be sent back, and I presume that at some
 21 level Number 10 did communicate some of this back into
 22 DCLG. I don't know, but I assume they did. I would
 23 have expected them to have done.
 24 Q. Yes. My question really is: is there anything in this
 25 email and this conversation which this email reflects

1 which hadn't been discussed and brought to light in the
 2 earlier meeting that day at 13.30?
 3 A. I don't think so, no. Except possibly the financial aid
 4 issue being very difficult operationally, that may have
 5 come through slightly later.
 6 Q. I follow.
 7 Now, let's go to {CAB00012015}. This takes us
 8 a little bit earlier in the afternoon. This is an email
 9 on the Friday afternoon from Mark Sedwill to
 10 Katharine Hammond:
 11 "Katherine
 12 "Well done with today's meeting."
 13 And I think that's the 13.30 meeting, which we're
 14 going to come to, perhaps backwards, but never mind:
 15 "It was clear that K&C are completely out of their
 16 depth, so we should probably have prompted a DCLG
 17 intervention earlier, but all that can come out via
 18 lessons learned idc [in due course]. Shall I follow up
 19 with Melanie on London/HMG support for K&C or do you
 20 think all that is in hand?"
 21 First, do you agree with Mark Sedwill's assessment
 22 that "we [as in central government, or the CCS] should
 23 probably have prompted a DCLG intervention earlier?"
 24 A. I think, as I was saying to you this morning, that Jo
 25 and I should have thought on Wednesday and Thursday

157

1 about whether or not London Resilience was being
 2 mobilised in support of the council, and that that would
 3 have been the right intervention, and indeed turned out
 4 to be the right intervention, although it was a bigger
 5 one than usual, and so yes, I think central government
 6 collectively should have thought about that more on
 7 Wednesday and Thursday. I've always believed and still
 8 do believe that it's about the London Gold support being
 9 provided earlier, rather than a team of civil servants
 10 going on the ground to somehow take over or support.
 11 Q. Was it your view, though, that the incident should also
 12 perhaps have prompted an earlier intervention or
 13 co-ordination by the Cabinet Office, the CCS?
 14 A. Well, I would have hoped that we would have got there
 15 before them, but there were two meetings on Wednesday
 16 and Thursday when certainly it's true that there was no
 17 challenge from the centre that we should be intervening,
 18 and, in fact, almost no mention, including in this
 19 email, about the importance of the London Gold
 20 arrangements and the London Resilience arrangements, and
 21 this is where I think the Cabinet Office, perhaps,
 22 you know, and everybody at the centre, was thinking in
 23 terms of what central government should do, rather than
 24 about activating the existing resilience arrangement
 25 adequately for the task in hand. So I think they were

158

1 slightly on the wrong place on some of this.
 2 I also think that the fact that there was nobody
 3 there from the local area apart from from the
 4 Mayor's Office at the Wednesday meeting didn't help,
 5 because one of the big factors that alerted us to the
 6 problems on Thursday was just the way that Nick Holgate
 7 wasn't able to handle the questions he was asked, and he
 8 wasn't there on Wednesday. I know that was an
 9 administrative oversight, I believe, but it just seems
 10 quite odd to me that nobody was there and somehow nobody
 11 scabbled about when they realised that in the meeting
 12 and went and found somebody. So, again, that was a gap
 13 in the intelligence that was brought to bear in the CCS
 14 meetings.
 15 Q. Now, last thing on this: he asks, "Shall I follow up
 16 with Melanie on London/HMG support for K&C"; did he?
 17 Did Mark Sedwill?
 18 A. No, I don't think so.
 19 Q. Right.
 20 Now, we know that the taskforce meeting took place
 21 at 13.30 on 16 June, chaired by the Prime Minister, and
 22 we've covered that and the documents with other
 23 witnesses.
 24 You attended that meeting, didn't you, with
 25 Alok Sharma and others?

159

1 A. On Friday?
 2 Q. On the Friday.
 3 A. Yes, I did. I'm not recorded as having attended in the
 4 minutes, but I was there.
 5 Q. Yes, according to your statement at paragraph 65
 6 {CLG00030653/20}, I think, but also John Barradell was
 7 there, wasn't he?
 8 A. He was on the phone.
 9 Q. Yes, he'd dialled in.
 10 A. Yeah.
 11 Q. Do you remember, did John Barradell say anything at the
 12 meeting?
 13 A. Yes, he said a lot.
 14 Q. Did he articulate any difficulties that he had
 15 encountered?
 16 A. I think you'd have to go back to the minutes, but what
 17 I recall is that he gave a sense of the challenge he
 18 thought he was facing, the things that needed to be
 19 done. I had spoken to him before the meeting. I'd
 20 never met him before, but we spoke briefly before the
 21 meeting, and he had told me to expect that it might be
 22 a bit odd because -- as to who would speak, compared to
 23 him or Nicholas Holgate, but in the end he took over,
 24 pretty much, and I don't think Nicholas Holgate really
 25 said very much at all, is my recollection.

160

1 Q. Was it your clear understanding at the time that
 2 John Barradell had taken over --
 3 A. Yes.
 4 Q. -- as opposed to standing alongside supporting
 5 Nicholas Holgate?
 6 A. Yes.
 7 Q. Did you have any understanding of what the basis for
 8 that takeover was?
 9 A. No, not at a level of detail, but I understood that he
 10 was now the Gold Commander for the recovery effort, was
 11 I think what it was called, they were the recovery
 12 taskforce, but we were clearly in response mode as well
 13 at that point.
 14 Q. Now, having got to the end of 16 June 2017 and discussed
 15 your concerns, am I right in thinking that it was clear
 16 to you at the end of that day that the situation in RBKC
 17 was still very challenging --
 18 A. Yes.
 19 Q. -- notwithstanding that John Barradell had been in
 20 charge since earlier that day?
 21 A. Yes, it was still very challenging.
 22 Q. And can we enumerate those challenges in particular,
 23 including protests, challenges faced by some of the
 24 families, the situation at the rest centres, reports of
 25 unrest, chaos on the streets; yes?

161

1 A. Yes.
 2 Q. Were you aware that John Barradell had had a call with
 3 the Secretary of State that evening at about 7.00 pm?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. You were?
 6 A. I think I probably suggested it.
 7 Q. Were you on that call?
 8 A. No.
 9 Q. No. Were you aware that John Barradell had told the
 10 Secretary of State that he had made significant progress
 11 such that he, the Secretary of State, could be assured
 12 that the situation was coming under proper control?
 13 A. I can't recall exactly how I became aware of what they
 14 discussed, but that sounds perfectly plausible to me,
 15 that that would have been what he said.
 16 Q. Let's then move into the evening of the 16th,
 17 {CLG10009767}. Now, what we see here, second email
 18 down, is an email from you to Mark Sedwill, 20.26, and
 19 if you look at the third line down, you say:
 20 "As I said in the margins of COBR, John Barradell
 21 took over at lunch time as gold command for the whole
 22 recovery and he has just rung me with an update. He has
 23 clearly made very significant progress this afternoon
 24 and I think we can now be assured that the situation is
 25 coming under proper control.

162

1 "The key points ..."
 2 Then you set them all out.
 3 Could I just ask you whether it was your impression
 4 that he had made significant progress or something that
 5 he'd told you?
 6 A. Well, it was mainly what he'd told me. I hadn't been
 7 there myself on the ground, but I had heard him
 8 describing what he was doing in the meeting earlier on,
 9 and I had no reason to doubt that the things he was
 10 telling me were true. I was particularly assured by the
 11 way that he was bringing in leadership around him, and
 12 that we had, at that point, three serving
 13 chief executives. I think by the end of the weekend it
 14 was another two.
 15 Q. Yes.
 16 A. And it was really his overall understanding of what
 17 needed to be done that I found persuasive. I knew it
 18 was going to take a long time to get those things done.
 19 Q. Now, we've seen the bullet points with others in their
 20 evidence, particularly Katharine Hammond. I don't need
 21 to re-read them to you, particularly since they're your
 22 own record, but can we take it that that is an accurate
 23 record of the gist of the points in the call?
 24 A. Yes, I stand by this record completely. This is what
 25 John said, but it's also how I expressed it to

163

1 Mark Sedwill, was what I believed to be true at the
 2 time.
 3 Q. Indeed.
 4 Now, you go on to say, after the list of bullet
 5 points:
 6 "On K&C itself, John is clear that they are in a bad
 7 way. At official level the gold structure manages this
 8 risk for the time being -- it has basically taken over.
 9 At political level other London Councils are coming in
 10 with support. After the immediate crisis is over we
 11 will clearly need to consider a long term solution."
 12 Now, what did you mean by, "At political level", or
 13 what did you think he meant by, "At political level
 14 other ... Councils are coming in with support"?
 15 A. I don't particularly remember the political element of
 16 this at the time, but what I think I must have been
 17 referring to is that other councillors, ie elected
 18 politicians, so at a political level, were coming in to
 19 support the elected leadership of the council as well.
 20 I can't quite remember with this distance what that
 21 support was, because I was mainly concerned with the
 22 official arrangements, but I think that must -- there
 23 must have been something going on to support
 24 Nick Paget-Brown, and that must have been what I was
 25 referring to, is my best guess.

164

1 Q. Now, the statement, "K&C itself, John is clear that they
 2 are in a bad way", what did you understand him -- well,
 3 sorry, let me rephrase the question: was that your
 4 impression of what he was telling you or did he say to
 5 you, "They are in a bad way"?
 6 A. I can't remember exactly what the language was that he
 7 used, but I could easily have used that language myself.
 8 So I think he was probably telling me that
 9 Nicholas Holgate and his team were really struggling,
 10 hadn't had any sleep, hadn't had any rest, must have
 11 been feeling terrible that their jobs had been taken
 12 over and that essentially they had failed to manage the
 13 immediate response. So I could easily have used that
 14 language myself, and it may be my interpretation of what
 15 he said, but we were in the same place when we had that
 16 conversation.
 17 Q. Now, you go on in the next paragraph to say:
 18 "We have embedded RED response and housing liaison
 19 into the local effort this afternoon -- as well as
 20 helping on the ground this will also ensure we start to
 21 get the information we need on rehousing etc."
 22 Is that right?
 23 A. Yes.
 24 Q. You had done that?
 25 A. Yes, we had.

165

1 Q. So is it right that by the time you sent that email to
 2 Mark Sedwill, you were of the view that the response had
 3 significantly improved?
 4 A. Well, I was aware that the leadership and the
 5 capabilities had significantly improved.
 6 Q. Now, we have --
 7 A. Yeah.
 8 Q. I'm sorry.
 9 A. But I wasn't, I think, really passing any judgement on
 10 the situation on the ground.
 11 Q. I see. So your impression was that things had be done
 12 by John immediately, but the results had not yet started
 13 to filter through?
 14 A. Yes, I don't think I was saying they hadn't filtered
 15 through yet, but I wasn't assuming they had, and I don't
 16 think there's anything in there in my email that says
 17 that it was, you know, significantly improved for the
 18 survivors and those who had lost loved ones or those
 19 affected by the fire, but I was clear that their
 20 leadership and capability was significantly better than
 21 it had been in the morning.
 22 Q. Now, this email goes to Mark Sedwill at 20.26. If we go
 23 to {CAB00004653}, we can see that he responds the same
 24 evening at 22.27, or at least he comes to you at that
 25 time. It is a response.

166

1 Jeremy Heywood asks:
 2 "What is the actual position on displaced tenants?
 3 Are they still being housed locally in hotels?
 4 "I assume none are literally having to sleep on the
 5 streets?!"
 6 You respond three minutes later at 22.30 that
 7 evening:
 8 "None on the streets. All in hotels or in some
 9 cases still in rest centre if that's their preference.
 10 "They are tricky families to rehouse especially in
 11 these terrible circumstances but it's happening -- this
 12 will be a key set of stats being reported into cobr
 13 [regularly].
 14 "Alok is all over this and the tower block checks."
 15 Now, my question is: where did you get the
 16 information to answer Jeremy Heywood's question that
 17 none were on the streets, all were in hotels or in some
 18 cases still in the rest centre?
 19 A. I must have known that that was the case, particularly
 20 given that I responded so quickly, or at least I must
 21 have been told that that was the case. You know, he was
 22 saying, "Are they literally having to sleep on the
 23 streets?", which implies a level of being forced to
 24 sleep on the streets because there was no alternative,
 25 and I replied, "Well, no, they have hotels, or in some

167

1 cases they're in the rest centres". And I think by this
 2 hour I had already spoken to the Secretary of State
 3 about the family he was particularly concerned about,
 4 for whom efforts had been made during that day to find
 5 a solution but they just hadn't worked and that family
 6 had decided to stay in the rest centre, so I knew that
 7 there were some people in the rest centre.
 8 Q. Right.
 9 {CLG00009897/2}, please. There is an email from
 10 Sally Randall, second email down there, to Ellen Reaich,
 11 copied to Fiona Darby, Lizzie Clifford and Rory McBride,
 12 "rough sleeping":
 13 "Ellen,
 14 "I passed on your feedback that outreach teams had
 15 found no Grenfell victims sleeping rough. However, SoS
 16 said that Eleanor Kelly had reported that there were
 17 Grenfell victims sleeping in cars and parks, and asked
 18 us if we could reconcile the two bits of information.
 19 "It's not super urgent -- I don't need an answer
 20 today."
 21 The date of that email is 22 June 2017, so that
 22 would be the Thursday week after the fire. But is it
 23 the case that, in fact, even by then there had been or
 24 by then there were findings that some Grenfell victims
 25 had been sleeping in cars and parks?

168

1 A. I don't know. I've not seen these emails before, so
 2 I wasn't aware of this.
 3 Q. If we go, then, to {CLG00008779/2}, please, at the
 4 bottom of the page, first, to establish the date, this
 5 is now the Saturday, 17 June 2017, at 11.47, from
 6 Mark Sedwill to you, copied to people at the
 7 Cabinet Office, including Katharine Hammond:
 8 Over the page, please, page 3 {CLG00008779/3}:
 9 "Hi Melanie
 10 "Thanks. I was on the phone at today's COBR. A few
 11 points struck me ..."
 12 Then halfway down the email:
 13 "— John B's sense of grip was palpable so I hope
 14 that the situation on the ground will now gain and
 15 demonstrate some momentum, but
 16 "— do we need a Gold for Whitehall on all the wider
 17 issues, or maybe a Gold plus Gold Minister eg
 18 Jo F[ar]rar plus Greg Hands? They would have to drop
 19 everything else. I fear this will become our
 20 New Orleans otherwise.
 21 "Mark."
 22 First, what did you understand Mark Sedwill's
 23 reference to New Orleans to mean here?
 24 A. To be honest, I didn't really know. He and I discussed
 25 this the following day, but I was guessing, you know,

169

1 a humanitarian crisis on a very large scale.
 2 Q. Did you consider the suggestion that there be a Gold for
 3 Whitehall or a Gold plus Gold minister?
 4 A. Yes, we discussed it at some length on Sunday morning,
 5 and it was a very constructive conversation, actually,
 6 and Mark and I were trying to work through what the
 7 various different elements of the work were. He knew
 8 I only had three directors general to lead on this.
 9 I had already agreed with Jeremy Heywood that I would
 10 have a fourth to lead on building safety. We were —
 11 I spent much of Sunday trying to find that person,
 12 talking to different people. But we were trying to work
 13 out what Helen's role could be, what Jo's role could be,
 14 what my role could be, and the outcome of our
 15 conversation was summarised in my email to him, which
 16 maps what we had discussed, and in the end he agreed
 17 with me that my ministers, Sajid Javid and Alok Sharma,
 18 should remain the overall lead, but also that Nick Hurd
 19 should play the role of specific support for the
 20 community, which he did for a very long time. So we
 21 sort of agreed it then.
 22 This was really, I think, the moment where we were
 23 thinking about the recovery phase, and this was probably
 24 the turning point when we shifted a bit more into that
 25 mode and thought about the structures and

170

1 accountabilities that were going to be needed.
 2 Q. Let's then turn into 17 June a bit more closely, the
 3 Saturday.
 4 I think you recall there was a Grenfell recovery
 5 taskforce meeting at 11 o'clock that meeting.
 6 A. Yes, there was.
 7 Q. You attended that with Alok Sharma and
 8 Katherine Richardson, I think.
 9 A. Yes, and the Secretary of State.
 10 Q. And the Secretary of State, indeed. How would you
 11 describe the mood of that meeting?
 12 A. It was very sober — all those meetings were very sober,
 13 because of the nature of the events — but it was
 14 constructive. I thought it was a good meeting.
 15 Q. I think it's right, isn't it, summarising your statement
 16 at paragraph 78 {CLG00030653/25}, there were a number of
 17 key actions identified for your department, including
 18 more visible presence at Grenfell to facilitate access
 19 to support services; yes?
 20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. Providing additional financial help for the victims.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. And monitoring progress on what I think had by then
 24 become the three-week announced target for rehousing.
 25 A. Yes.

171

1 Q. Yes. Then after that meeting, you went — is this
 2 right? — to Portland House with the Secretary of State.
 3 A. Yes, I did.
 4 Q. Yes. Why did you do that?
 5 A. Well, at this point I hadn't actually been to the local
 6 area, and I thought it was quite important that I get
 7 an understanding of what was going on, but we weren't
 8 able to do that because of the public order issues. We
 9 went instead to the Gold Command headquarters at
 10 Portland House. And actually later that day we were
 11 asked by John Barradell that there be no further
 12 Whitehall visits, and so we respected that.
 13 Q. I think when you got there you saw several London
 14 chief executives working full-time in Gold Command; is
 15 that right?
 16 A. Yes. Well, they'd just arrived, I think, but they were,
 17 I think, to be deployed full-time, at least for
 18 a few weeks.
 19 Q. I think they included, is this right, Eleanor Kelly from
 20 Southwark?
 21 A. Carolyn Downs and Paul Najsarek as well, I remember.
 22 Q. Yes. Did you gain the impression that they were well
 23 enough resourced?
 24 A. They were starting, and certainly when I saw those
 25 individuals, I was very impressed. These were some of

172

1 the really heavyweight London chief executives.
 2 Q. Now, if we go to your first statement, you say at
 3 paragraph 80 on page 26 {CLG00030653/26}, of this
 4 meeting, in the second half of the paragraph:
 5 "I asked John what more we could do to help. He
 6 said there was a significant obstacle, in that housing
 7 was not fully under the Gold Command structure and this
 8 was needed to manage the relief effort fully. He asked
 9 me to persuade Nicholas Holgate to pass the
 10 responsibility for rehousing from RBKC to Gold Command.
 11 I had a long conversation with Nicholas. He agreed to
 12 my request, and John later told me the transfer of
 13 responsibility had taken place."
 14 Now, why had the element of the response or perhaps
 15 recovery relating to housing remained with
 16 Nicholas Holgate and not been brought under the Gold
 17 arrangements?
 18 A. Well, on the Friday evening I thought it had moved
 19 across. That was in my email to Mark Sedwill, that it
 20 had moved across.
 21 Q. Yes.
 22 A. And so I was a bit surprised to hear that this was still
 23 a sticking point on the Saturday. My understanding is
 24 that, in the end, these were very unusual arrangements,
 25 for John effectively to take over in the role of

1 chief executive of the council in his Gold role, and it
 2 was one that was done by mutual agreement with
 3 Nicholas Holgate, and I assume that Nicholas Holgate
 4 hadn't wanted to move the housing work across, and that
 5 was the impression I got from John on Saturday.
 6 Q. So, to be clear, your impression from John Barradell was
 7 that Nicholas Holgate had been reluctant to surrender
 8 control of the housing or rehousing effort?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Did he give you a sense of why, why Nicholas Holgate was
 11 so reluctant?
 12 A. No, not really. All I remember is that without them
 13 having that responsibility, they really weren't
 14 effectively able to communicate with the residents or do
 15 most of the things that were needed for the recovery.
 16 Q. Did John Barradell ask for any further help from the
 17 department at that time?
 18 A. Yes, he asked me to go and persuade Nicholas to move the
 19 housing element across to Gold, and that's what I did.
 20 Q. Other than that?
 21 A. No. I mean, he'd already asked for liaison, which was
 22 provided by Gill McManus. He asked for a few things
 23 over that weekend, I can't remember exactly what when,
 24 but this is the one I remember from Saturday afternoon.
 25 Q. I think there was also communications assistance, with

1 Simon Wren moving from the Home Office to the DCLG to
 2 help or act as the new director of communications; is
 3 that --
 4 A. Yes, that was a decision that I made and was seeking
 5 support on. It wasn't anything to do with the
 6 Gold Command. So that was entirely a government
 7 decision. We did place Farooq Mulla with Gold as
 8 a communications specialist. I think that had happened
 9 by Saturday morning, though. I think that was probably
 10 agreed the day before.
 11 Q. Was that organised by DCLG or by the Home Office or --
 12 A. By DCLG. Farooq was one of our staff.
 13 Q. Did that resolve the concerns that you had had reported
 14 to you in the early hours of 16 June, which we've seen,
 15 which was that the department wasn't completely on top
 16 of the communications?
 17 A. Yes, I mean, the communications from the department's
 18 perspective -- so now we're -- we've come back to
 19 2 Marsham Street, away from Portland House, I think.
 20 The conversation -- the concern I had on Thursday
 21 afternoon and Friday was that, as I explain in my
 22 witness statement, we had a very small communications
 23 team, it had been quite significantly cut, and our
 24 deputy director was also very new, and this was
 25 an absolutely massive national media story, and I needed

1 somebody with the expertise to be able to answer calls
 2 from the Daily Mail and all the broadcasters and so on,
 3 and that was what I asked Alex Aiken for help in
 4 securing, and Simon Wren came across on Saturday morning
 5 to help, and, yes, it did resolve things, because he was
 6 just able to manage that kind of media story, and also
 7 to liaise very effectively with Number 10 and other
 8 government departments, which was important.
 9 Q. Now, continuing on the theme of resources, I think you
 10 spoke to the Cabinet Office a number of times to secure
 11 additional people with experience of managing and
 12 co-ordinating internal departmental responses to
 13 a crisis.
 14 A. Yes.
 15 Q. Why did you make those requests?
 16 A. Because we didn't really have the expertise. I mean,
 17 overall, there was definitely an issue with numbers in
 18 the department; we were about 50% of the size that we'd
 19 been in 2010 at this point in 2017. But the problem
 20 that worried me most was that we had a few gaps in
 21 capability, and one of them was as I was describing this
 22 morning, was just the ability to actually set up and run
 23 a response cell inside the department to co-ordinate all
 24 the work that we were doing in the crisis, and that
 25 needed to sit alongside RED in the role that they had in

1 feeding the CCS machinery and liaising directly with the
 2 local area.
 3 So we had a go at setting that up on Friday, but it
 4 was a bit too like what RED do, so it was a bit too much
 5 just about information flows. I think there's an email
 6 from Rob Mason where he describes being very pleased
 7 that we'd called on their expertise, and we were calling
 8 on their expertise, but it wasn't quite enough because
 9 it wasn't really about decision-making. So I was
 10 desperately keen to get somebody from CCS to help us
 11 with that, and eventually Ian Whitehouse came across and
 12 did that for us. But it wasn't until the following
 13 week, and it was a bit late, to be honest.

14 Q. Yes.
 15 Just picking this up on at {CLG10009757/2}. This is
 16 part of an email which starts on page 1 {CLG10009757/1},
 17 just to pick up the timing of this email, please, and
 18 who it was from. It's from you to Jeremy Heywood; yes?

19 A. Yes.
 20 Q. And at the very top of the chain, it filters its way --
 21 well, there is a response, I think, to you from
 22 Sue Gray:
 23 "Thank you so much.
 24 "As you know, Jeremy doesn't have a clue what I get
 25 up to so really appreciate you sending this email ..."

1 Did you have a discussion with Sue Gray before you
 2 sent this email?
 3 A. The conversation with Sue Gray will have been about the
 4 public inquiry, because that's what she was doing
 5 through these days. I don't recall when I spoke to her,
 6 but we will have spoken frequently, I think.
 7 Q. Right.
 8 Now, the email itself says:
 9 "Jeremy
 10 "Just to let you know the main things we've done
 11 today."
 12 Then if we go, please, to page 2 {CLG10009757/2},
 13 you say in the last paragraph under "Finally" -- it's
 14 not really the last paragraph, but it's the last big
 15 one:
 16 "... you should also know that we are doing a lot to
 17 talk to and comfort DCLG staff involved in this policy
 18 area, and in the regulator, some of whom are very upset.
 19 We also have at least one member of staff -- a new
 20 apprentice -- with a close friend in hospital and the
 21 father missing. Our part of the 2MS building will be
 22 surrounded by a protest tomorrow evening, so we are
 23 going to be advising our staff to go home at 5pm. As
 24 I said to you on the phone last night, at some point we
 25 may need to reflect on the impact of cuts to the civil

1 service (DCLG will be less than 50% of its 2010 size by
 2 2020) on some of our deep expert policy functions. The
 3 expertise is still there (and it's excellent) but it is
 4 sparse and overloaded."

5 Now, I put that to you.
 6 Was there a wider problem here regarding resourcing
 7 at DCLG and RED, or perhaps or RED, which was
 8 manifesting itself in the response at government level
 9 by this point?

10 A. I don't think it was manifesting itself at government
 11 level, no. I think we -- you know, I'm very proud of
 12 what we did in these days. It was immensely
 13 challenging, and it wasn't perfect and we didn't get
 14 everything right, but given the completely unprecedented
 15 nature of what we were dealing with, we achieved
 16 an enormous amount. But there's no question that we
 17 were doing it on very sparse resources, and in some
 18 cases the capability just wasn't there, in the way that
 19 I was just describing for the co-ordination, and in some
 20 cases, as on the communications, it just -- there just
 21 weren't enough of it and it wasn't senior enough. So,
 22 you know, it was harder because we didn't have very many
 23 people.

24 But morale was strong and people were extremely
 25 collaborative, and they worked, you know, very

1 effectively, and I think that spoke to a very positive
 2 culture in the department, actually. But the resourcing
 3 questions were, you know, very difficult to manage
 4 through this period.

5 And I had a lot of support from my fellow Permanent
 6 Secretaries, but I had to spend quite a lot of my time
 7 getting it and asking for it. It was quite a lot of
 8 what I did in these early days.

9 Q. Now, moving into 18 June, I think we can just continue
 10 that theme.

11 I think on that day, the Sunday, there was,
 12 of course, we know, the further taskforce meeting, but
 13 is it right that you made some decisions allocating
 14 responsibilities, among those of which was to decide
 15 that Helen MacNamara and you would continue to lead the
 16 overall co-ordination.

17 A. Yes.
 18 Q. And that Jo Farrar would play a significant role in
 19 supporting Gold Command --

20 A. Yes.
 21 Q. -- and lead on possible intervention in RBKC, I think.
 22 A. Yes.
 23 Q. Now, on that day also, which was 18 June, Sunday, is it
 24 right John Barradell appointed Paul Najsarek -- is that
 25 how you pronounce it?

1 A. I'm not quite sure, but I think that's pretty close.
 2 Q. Right -- to co-ordinate the humanitarian assistance
 3 under Gold Command, I think; yes?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Yes, and Eleanor Kelly to lead on engagement with the
 6 community.
 7 A. Yes.
 8 Q. Yes. Was that your idea or was that something that came
 9 from John Barradell?
 10 A. It came from John Barradell.
 11 Q. Okay. And he knew Eleanor Kelly from Southwark.
 12 A. Yes, I think she was there on Saturday, but she was
 13 appointed to that role on the Sunday.
 14 Q. Did things improve as a result of those decisions you
 15 made?
 16 A. I didn't make the decisions in Gold Command, or are you
 17 referring to the decisions I made in the department?
 18 Q. In the department.
 19 A. Yes, I think it clarified things as we went into the
 20 following week, and it was quite important for me to be
 21 clear with the whole department who was doing what as
 22 well, so I sent a wider email explaining some of that,
 23 but it did make a difference.
 24 Q. Now, I think central government didn't provide further
 25 communications support at that time. Why is that?

181

1 A. Well, I think on Saturday and Sunday, there was quite
 2 a lot of concern in central government that there needed
 3 to be a stronger face of the response in Kensington and
 4 Chelsea, that the council weren't providing that, and
 5 I recall that John Barradell himself was very reluctant
 6 to be that person or face. I think he wanted to be the
 7 person who was orchestrating behind the scenes, and
 8 that's why he appointed Eleanor to be that person.
 9 That's my recollection. I think that was a good
 10 decision, actually. And so we were teetering on maybe
 11 finding somebody who could go and represent the victims
 12 and be their advocate on the ground, but in the end,
 13 when Eleanor was appointed, I think there was a sense
 14 that certainly the recovery was being properly
 15 represented on the ground.
 16 Ministers did, though, still go themselves a lot to
 17 the area to speak to people and to speak to families.
 18 They themselves were also quite present in those
 19 following days.
 20 Q. I want to turn next briefly to the TMO. You have been
 21 asked about RBKC and the pan-London arrangements, but
 22 looking at the TMO.
 23 Do you remember that on 20 June, which was the
 24 Tuesday after the fire, John Barradell raised with you
 25 concerns about the TMO?

182

1 A. Yes. I recall that they were raised on the Monday,
 2 actually.
 3 Q. On the Monday?
 4 A. Mm.
 5 Q. Do you remember that the concerns included problems with
 6 heating and hot water in the finger blocks, the walkways
 7 and other buildings around Grenfell Tower, and problems
 8 with leadership as well?
 9 A. Yes.
 10 Q. Do you remember that?
 11 Can we go to {CLG00005813} and look at the second
 12 email down on that page, please, 20 June at 19.10, from
 13 Camilla Sheldon to a cast of recipients, including you
 14 and Helen MacNamara:
 15 "A quick read out from COBRA. Main actions for us
 16 in bold. (Melanie/Jillian - [please] shout if I've
 17 missed anything)."
 18 Then if you look at the second main heading down,
 19 "Met Police", and then there is a third main heading,
 20 "Support for those affected/Gold command", number 7
 21 says:
 22 "TMO is not reliable (issues around hot water in
 23 particular) ... "
 24 Then in bold, which is for you:
 25 "... solution is to get the right people in place --

183

1 [DCLG] will provide update on next steps at PM COBRA
 2 (Kerry)."
 3 Yes?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. Now, Kerry, I think, is a reference to Kerry MacHale --
 6 A. Kerry MacHale.
 7 Q. -- not David Kerry, just to be clear.
 8 A. That's correct.
 9 Q. The reference to "TMO is not reliable", what did you
 10 understand that was a reference to?
 11 A. So my understanding is that the leadership of the TMO
 12 just wasn't working and somehow wasn't managing to
 13 communicate with residents, wasn't present on the
 14 ground, and that underlying that problem was the fact
 15 that they still reported in to the council and reported,
 16 therefore, in through Nicholas Holgate, and that this
 17 was becoming a real blockage on Monday, because we had
 18 various -- we had teams of people that we thought, via
 19 the Homes and Communities Agency and the housing
 20 regulator, that we could send in to support, but -- from
 21 other areas, but that offer wasn't going to be received
 22 until the leadership changed.
 23 So I recall John Barradell I think ringing me up
 24 about this. He said, "This needs resolving, you have to
 25 resolve it, this is about the council not being prepared

184

1 to take the steps they need to take". He was quite
 2 forthright. And in parallel, I think, you know,
 3 discussions were going on about Nicholas Holgate's
 4 position, and so in the end what happened was that the
 5 leader asked Nicholas Holgate to resign, and he stepped
 6 aside from his role, and Barry Quirk, who came and took
 7 over, acted on the TMO issues as some of the first steps
 8 he took on the Wednesday when he arrived. I think it
 9 took a while for him to properly resolve them because he
 10 wasn't fully in the role until a couple of weeks later.
 11 But these issues were all being worked on together, and
 12 they were quite sensitive, and that's why this
 13 particular reference in this email — there was quite
 14 a lot more going on behind the scenes.

15 Q. Was consideration given within the department to taking
 16 over the TMO in the same way that John Barradell had
 17 taken over RBKC?

18 A. I don't think we would ever have taken it over from the
 19 department, but we were certainly giving consideration
 20 as to how we could, you know, orchestrate a change of
 21 leadership in the TMO, which we understood to be quite
 22 a problem at that point.

23 But, more generally, we were thinking about
 24 the council and about whether or not a formal
 25 intervention was necessary, whether that could be done

1 in time, whether it was appropriate. Jo and I had a lot
 2 of conversations about that over the weekend. I was
 3 more in the camp of: surely we're going to have to
 4 intervene, and Jo was, I think quite rightly, saying,
 5 "Well, no, actually, Gold Command is dealing with the
 6 immediate problem". And in the end, I don't think we
 7 did need to intervene. I think Jo was right. We did
 8 put in the taskforce a bit later down the line.
 9 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, can I just finish this topic off?
 10 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, that's all right. Yes.
 11 MR MILLETT: It's a short document. {CLG00003544}. This is
 12 an email string of 19 June, so the Monday, and it is
 13 from Alex Powell at DCLG to a number of people within
 14 the department, copied to you and to the office of the
 15 Secretary of State, and Helen MacNamara:
 16 "Kerry — thanks for the quick chat just now. As we
 17 agreed, it feels right that your note [focuses] on the
 18 KCTMO and the powers of the regulator rather than
 19 expanding the note to include our Best Value powers to
 20 inspect and the wider approach to K&C. Let me know ..."
 21 As we see, it comes to you.
 22 Below that is an email at the foot of the screen, if
 23 you go down to the bottom of the page, page 1, from
 24 Kerry MacHale the same day, 19 June, at 16.40:
 25 "Alec Taylor can hold the ring on ... this advice.

1 He's already looked at the Social Housing Regulator's
 2 powers relating to LAs. Given the timing this will be
 3 really high level options that we will be able to
 4 explore further."

5 What this is really about emerges on page 2
 6 {CLG00003544/2}, the first main paragraph:

7 "At today's SoS meeting, Sally picked up an action
 8 to explore options for taking over the management of the
 9 Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation."

10 Then the rest of it is about advice and creative
 11 options, things like that.

12 Did you get to the bottom of whether it was actually
 13 possible to take over the TMO or take over management of
 14 the TMO, so far at least as this crisis was concerned?

15 A. I'm not sure whether we got to the bottom of that. My
 16 understanding is that the powers of the regulator are
 17 quite limited now. They were changed some years before
 18 Grenfell, so that it's now very hard for the regulator
 19 to act in anticipation of a problem, rather than once
 20 it's already happened. So I think there were issues
 21 with the threshold that wouldn't have been reached or
 22 would have been difficult to prove. And so, in the end,
 23 as Lise—Anne's email, which I think is entirely correct,
 24 says, the big difficulty was that the council would
 25 normally intervene, and they were under a lot of

1 pressure, so solving that problem was, in the end, the
 2 right answer, which is what happened on the Tuesday.
 3 And the council took that decision themselves, but it
 4 was what was needed to unlock the particular issue with
 5 the TMO.

6 Q. Right. Did anybody in the department — did you — make
 7 any steps to speak to the TMO, Robert Black, the chief
 8 executive, or —

9 A. I didn't, but I don't know whether others did.

10 MR MILLETT: Right.

11 Mr Chairman, is that a convenient moment?

12 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, I would just like your help on
 13 this: what exactly was it that the TMO should have been
 14 doing that it wasn't doing?

15 A. Well, my understanding from my conversations with
 16 John Barradell was that people had left the finger
 17 blocks, but they were beginning to return, and so that
 18 was, you know, revealing a problem, that they weren't
 19 fit to be habited(sic). Part of that was because the
 20 boiler was underneath the tower itself, I think, but
 21 part of it was that they had been damaged, and so there
 22 were other issues, and there was just no sense that the
 23 TMO was present on the ground or actually gripping those
 24 issues.

25 Now, that was the impression that I was getting from

1 John Barradell. It was also coming in through multiple
 2 other sources by this point. But it was really
 3 a leadership vacuum.
 4 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: I ask the question because we know,
 5 as you say, that the boilers weren't working because
 6 they were in the basement of the tower, and we know that
 7 the gas for the whole area had been cut off, so we know
 8 that the walkways didn't have gas or hot water, but
 9 that's not a problem that you can simply solve
 10 overnight, is it?
 11 A. No, but I guess —
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: So what is it the TMO were failing
 13 to do?
 14 A. There was, as I understand it — and I'm recalling this
 15 now after five years — as I understand it, there just
 16 wasn't any leadership from the TMO as perceived by those
 17 who would have expected them to be on the end of the
 18 phone, coming forward with a plan, knowing where their
 19 tenants were, communicating with those tenants and
 20 explaining what the situation was, and, as a result,
 21 people just didn't know what was going on and it was
 22 leading to quite a lot of concern and, you know,
 23 complaint, and a lot of distress, I'm sure, as well.
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.
 25 MR MILLETT: What was the source of your information about

189

1 those matters?
 2 A. It was John Barradell, but — was part of it, he rang me
 3 to, you know, ask us to do something about it. And —
 4 but it wasn't just John Barradell. We were picking this
 5 up — I can't remember exactly where from, it may have
 6 been coming in through RED channels, but there was
 7 definitely an issue about people from those blocks
 8 feeling let down and becoming quite vocal about that
 9 and, you know, clearly not feeling that they were being
 10 communicated with adequately.
 11 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: And did John Barradell give you any
 12 indication whether he'd spoken to Robert Black or anyone
 13 else at the TMO?
 14 A. I don't recall whether he did or not. I mean, I would
 15 have expected him to have spoken to them, but I don't
 16 know.
 17 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Thank you.
 18 MR MILLETT: Is that a convenient moment now?
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes, it is.
 20 Right, well, we'll take the break for the afternoon
 21 at that point. We'll stop there, we'll come back at
 22 3.40, and as before, please don't discuss your evidence
 23 with anyone. All right?
 24 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 25 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.

190

1 (Pause)
 2 Thank you, Mr Millett. 3.40 pm, please.
 3 (3.23 pm)
 4 (A short break)
 5 (3.40 pm)
 6 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right, on we go. Yes,
 7 thank you.
 8 Yes, Mr Millett.
 9 MR MILLETT: Yes. Can we please next go to {CLG00008750}.
 10 This is an email, and if you look, please, at the top,
 11 it's an email sent from Louise Morgan to Sajid Javid's
 12 office, and the important point is the attachment, "PPS
 13 GT letter", "In case you want to pick".
 14 If we look at the letter, it is at {CLG00005363},
 15 and it's a letter addressed to "Robert and John". The
 16 John is Barradell, and it comes from Kenny Bowie, who is
 17 PPS to the Home Secretary, and it refers to an official
 18 visit to the Westway conducted by the Home Secretary and
 19 Nick Hurd MP.
 20 Now, just looking at the front page, it's dated
 21 17 June 2017, so the Saturday. Were you aware of this
 22 letter? Did you see it at the time?
 23 A. No, I've not seen it before.
 24 Q. You have never seen it before now?
 25 A. No.

191

1 Q. Right. In which case I think there's nothing I think
 2 I need to ask you about it. But were you aware at the
 3 time of problems at the Westway?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And can you tell us what kind of problems you were aware
 6 of?
 7 A. So what I was hearing was — it's a little bit
 8 difficult, to be honest, having read so much about it
 9 since, to know what I knew then and what I know now, but
 10 what I was hearing at the time was that it was badly
 11 organised; that it wasn't clear who was from
 12 the council; that it just wasn't well set up, and didn't
 13 provide the kind of private spaces that you would have
 14 expected for people to have quite difficult and
 15 traumatic conversations about what they needed; that
 16 people didn't feel they had access to local services
 17 that was clear or, indeed, to central government
 18 services. So just that it wasn't set up properly and
 19 wasn't proving to be supportive to people.
 20 Q. Did you hear that there had been a feeling that people
 21 in hotels were out of sight, out of mind, and had been
 22 ignored by the council having been put in hotels? Was
 23 that something that came through to you?
 24 A. I certainly remember, particularly as we went into the
 25 following week, that people in hotels felt that they

192

1 hadn't had any contact from the council, and that they
 2 weren't quite sure who to go to for support.
 3 Q. Did that improve at any point?
 4 A. I remember it being a problem for quite some time, and
 5 I also remember, some weeks after the fire, there being
 6 an issue with people's --- with the deal that had been
 7 struck with the hotel for them to stay in those rooms
 8 suddenly coming to an end and there being uncertainty
 9 about whether they were able to stay. So the question
 10 of the hotels and whether they were really working for
 11 the families and the fact that they weren't working for
 12 many of the families was an issue for some time.
 13 Q. Now, let's turn to a different topic, perhaps scrolling
 14 back in time a little bit to Friday, 16 June, and that's
 15 the victim support unit.
 16 Can we start with your first statement, please,
 17 paragraph 66 at page 21 {CLG00030653/21}. If we look at
 18 the penultimate bullet point on that page, it says:
 19 "To form a new integrated support service for the
 20 Grenfell victims ..."
 21 And that was what had been agreed at the
 22 Grenfell Tower recovery taskforce meeting at 1.30 on
 23 that day; yes?
 24 A. Yes.
 25 Q. So let's read it together:

193

1 "To form a new integrated support service for the
 2 Grenfell victims, providing a single point of access
 3 into Central Government services for those who needed
 4 it. This action was assigned to Jillian Kay following
 5 a discussion with the Home Office about which department
 6 should take charge. By the end of the day a 20-strong
 7 team of operational staff from HMRC had been identified
 8 to form the new Victims Unit, led by Suzanne
 9 Kochanowski, and arrangements had been made for them to
 10 start their work on Saturday morning."
 11 Now, is it right that Jillian Kay and
 12 Suzanne Kochanowski in the event did lead on that
 13 initiative?
 14 A. Yes, and indeed they led the victims unit for several
 15 years between them.
 16 Q. Right.
 17 Now, Jillian Kay in her statement, at page 9
 18 {CLG00030430/9}, paragraph 38, says that they had
 19 a meeting with the civil contingencies secretariat to
 20 discuss that initiative at 5 o'clock in the evening of
 21 16 June. Is that something you know about?
 22 A. Yes, I'm aware that that took place.
 23 Q. Right. You weren't there?
 24 A. No.
 25 Q. Right.

194

1 Now, did you know that at the meeting it was agreed
 2 that the victims unit would be a single integrated
 3 service, modelled on the victims of terrorism unit?
 4 A. Yes.
 5 Q. And would provide a single point of contact to enable
 6 those affected by a major incident to access government
 7 services directly?
 8 A. Yes.
 9 Q. And is it right also that there were representatives
 10 from the victims of terrorism unit on the call or at the
 11 meeting to explain how it worked?
 12 A. Yes.
 13 Q. Then I think HMRC provided 20 members of staff as part
 14 of their surge team.
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. I think that's how it was staffed, was it?
 17 A. That's right, initially. On Saturday morning they
 18 arrived.
 19 Q. Why HMRC?
 20 A. Well, some years earlier, surge arrangements had been
 21 put in place in the civil service in order to support
 22 departments who had a sudden need for administrative
 23 staff that they couldn't cater for, and HMRC have a lot
 24 of administrative staff and the sort of flexibility that
 25 could allow them to support events for, you know, weeks

195

1 or days, and this was felt to be something that they
 2 could help with. So this was a cross-civil service
 3 resource that was being mobilised by HMRC.
 4 Q. I see.
 5 Now, can we go to {CLG00030529}. This is a paper
 6 drafted, I think, by Jillian Kay, as she says in her
 7 statement, about the scope and the purpose of the
 8 victims support unit, or "Victims Unit: Grenfell Tower",
 9 and it says that the unit would be, as it says, quoting
 10 from paragraph 1:
 11 "... a single integrated support service (following
 12 the model of the Victims of Terrorism Unit) to
 13 coordinate cross-government activity and provide those
 14 affected by the Grenfell Tower fire with a single point
 15 of access into central government."
 16 Then it goes on with some details.
 17 Did you have any input into this paper?
 18 A. No.
 19 Q. Did you see it at the time?
 20 A. I don't think so, no.
 21 Q. If we go to paragraph 5, you can see the objectives
 22 under the heading, "Terms of reference", and there are
 23 three of them:
 24 "▪ Ensure effective, comprehensive and co-ordinated
 25 HMG support to victims of the Grenfell Tower fire.

196

1 " ■ Engender public confidence, including key
 2 interested parties , in HMG's support for victims.
 3 " ■ Ensure effective working alongside local
 4 authority and third sector response."
 5 Then under "Key Deliverables", it says:
 6 " ■ A single point of access to HMG support through
 7 a dedicated phone line.
 8 " ■ Victim centred caseworking team, with access to
 9 expertise from key Government Departments: DWP,
 10 Home Office, DFE, MoJ, HMRC, DH."
 11 Was this as you understood it, in other words the
 12 objectives and the key deliverables?
 13 A. Yes. I think on the Friday afternoon there wasn't
 14 complete clarity about exactly how it would work, and,
 15 in the end, the — there were layers of support that
 16 were provided, is the way I would describe it. There
 17 was a decision taken by Gold Command, I think on the
 18 Sunday, that they needed caseworkers as part of Gold for
 19 all of the families and those affected, and so at that
 20 point I think it became clearer that the central
 21 government victim support should be via those
 22 caseworkers, rather than direct to families , is my
 23 understanding, and that seems to me quite sensible, but
 24 everybody was piecing together the different pieces of
 25 the jigsaw on the Saturday and Sunday.

1 The other layer that was put in was that departments
 2 were also asked by the Cabinet Office, I understand, to
 3 send people directly to the Westway, which they did,
 4 I believe, from Monday.
 5 Q. Yes.
 6 A. So, actually, they were able to field quite a lot of the
 7 enquiries directly themselves. I'm not sure that worked
 8 terribly well for the first few days, but they did
 9 actually, you know, field quite a few enquiries. So
 10 there was less need, in the end, for the victim support
 11 unit with the HMRC volunteers.
 12 Q. Well, I think you have cut, perhaps, to the chase with
 13 that. I was leading up more gently to it. But in the
 14 end, I think it's right, isn't it, that there wasn't,
 15 first of all, a specific practised emergency plan in
 16 setting up a victim support unit; you had to borrow from
 17 the terrorist experience?
 18 A. Yes, that's right.
 19 Q. Yes. I think it's also right that the usefulness of the
 20 unit became eroded into something of a sweeper function,
 21 according to some of the later emails; yes? Is that how
 22 you understood it?
 23 A. I'm not sure I'd describe it as a sweeper function, but
 24 it was for — I think they were able to field some
 25 enquiries, particularly where they couldn't be resolved

1 easily on the ground and somebody needed to go back into
 2 the department and liaise. But I agree with you,
 3 I don't think there was a clear plan, and it's not clear
 4 to me which department should have been responsible for
 5 holding that preparation either, because this was, in
 6 the end, a Home Office unit, from which, as you say, we
 7 borrowed, and I think, to be honest, that was very
 8 effective, that that meeting was called so quickly on
 9 Friday afternoon so that the learning could be had and
 10 they could discuss what worked. But, in an ideal world
 11 you would have a bit more of a menu of options that was
 12 pre-prepared and then you could think about what was
 13 going to be useful in the circumstances.
 14 Q. Yes.
 15 Do you also recall that there was a confusion among
 16 departments and agencies about what the victim support
 17 unit would do and what the Red Cross phone line would
 18 do? Do you remember that?
 19 A. I don't particularly remember the confusion with the
 20 Red Cross, no. I remember the confusion between the
 21 victims unit and the people at the Westway.
 22 Q. Right.
 23 Well, let's go then to {CLG00020610}, just to pick
 24 up on that point. This is an internal DCLG email of
 25 18 June at 15.11, 3.11, from — it's impossible to find

1 it, but it is from the office of Sajid Javid to his own
 2 office, copied to lots of people, including
 3 Alok Sharma's office, your office, RED and others, and
 4 it says in the first bold, in yellow:
 5 "First and foremost — SofS said a huge thank you to
 6 all those involved in this effort. He is incredibly
 7 grateful for all the work being done in the Department."
 8 Then if you go to page 2 {CLG00020610/2}, please,
 9 the particular point to pick up at page 2 is in the
 10 third paragraph down:
 11 "On the ground support
 12 " ■ [Secretary of State] wants there to be better
 13 coordination — e.g. one number for people on the ground
 14 to phone for support. Katherine M advised that
 15 Red Cross is providing this service. Gold command will
 16 be announcing this today.
 17 " ■ ACTION: please can SofS get an update on this."
 18 The question I have is this: was the Red Cross,
 19 first of all, providing that service, a phone line
 20 service?
 21 A. I believe they were, but that was a decision that was
 22 for Gold Command, and I believe they were, yes. I think
 23 there was some confusion about the phone number as well,
 24 but —
 25 Q. Right.

1 A. But this was evolving. And if I can just comment on
 2 this, I think you can see here that I think the
 3 Secretary of State and the Prime Minister and others
 4 were very keen for there to be civil service visible
 5 support on the ground, with tabards and lanyards and so
 6 on, and those who were experienced in emergency
 7 response, including John Barradell and others, and also
 8 Jo Farrar, were very clear that that would not be a very
 9 good idea, that civil servants don't really have the
 10 expertise to engage directly with people in these sorts
 11 of circumstances, that they could easily get things
 12 wrong, and they simply weren't trained to do it, and
 13 that instead, making sure the administrative support was
 14 there behind the scenes to respond to events, ideally
 15 through a caseworker system, which wasn't in place until
 16 early in the following week, that that was the right
 17 solution.
 18 But we were muddling through a bit during these
 19 days, I think, with some difference in what ministers
 20 wanted to happen and what I think in the end turned out
 21 to be exactly the right thing to happen. So you can see
 22 that -- I can see that in this email, that tension, that
 23 we eventually worked through. But I think, you know,
 24 more advanced preparation would have made it easier for
 25 ministers to make chooses and understand exactly what it

1 was that they were choosing.
 2 Q. Yes. Yes, thank you.
 3 Finally on the question of the victim support unit,
 4 I think you would agree that, in the end, the unit
 5 provided very little benefit to the overall response.
 6 A. I don't know. I'm not sure what it did in the rest of
 7 that following week, because I haven't looked at any of
 8 the documents beyond the Tuesday on this -- that's
 9 Tuesday the 20th -- but, in the end, it seems to me that
 10 quite a lot of the enquiries that people had were
 11 resolved relatively straightforwardly. They were things
 12 like driving licences and so on. Some of the issues
 13 around benefits and immigration status and so on took
 14 longer, but, again, needed more specialist support that
 15 a more generic victims unit wasn't really able to help
 16 with anyway.
 17 So, yes, I'm not sure it turned out to be quite
 18 the right fit, but I -- you know, I would say, in
 19 a crisis like this, better to start and to try and to
 20 have a go and then adapt it as you go along than to
 21 spend a really long time working out a perfect solution
 22 that then isn't implemented. So, you know, Suzanne and
 23 Jillian had a go, put something in place, and then it
 24 needed to be adapted.
 25 Q. Can I then turn to changes since the fire, and pick this

1 up at page 37 of your first statement {CLG00030653/37},
 2 paragraph 122. You say there:
 3 "Since the fire, improvements have been made to
 4 London Local Government Resilience arrangements,
 5 following a peer challenge which reported in early 2018.
 6 This recommended that London Councils strengthen the
 7 Gold Command resolution to 'make triggers and the
 8 escalation process clearer, so that there is a clear
 9 mandated process in the extreme circumstances that
 10 demand it'. This greater transparency of process and
 11 expectation seems to me to be a key conclusion in the
 12 light of Grenfell. An important role for Central
 13 Government is to work with and support all local areas
 14 to ensure that these arrangements are in place."
 15 What were the improvements made to the London local
 16 government resilience arrangements that are referred to
 17 here by you following the Grenfell Tower fire?
 18 A. They are the ones that were set out in the report by
 19 Tom Riordan and Mary Ney, and my understanding is that
 20 the key thing was to improve the trigger through which
 21 wider resilience support is provided to an individual
 22 council and to reduce the reliance on the council
 23 themselves asking for help. But I'll be honest with
 24 you, I looked back at that report as part of my
 25 preparations for this hearing, and I couldn't quite

1 myself see the clarity of recommendation. But that's my
 2 understanding of what's been done.
 3 Q. Indeed.
 4 What I wanted just to ask you about with a little
 5 bit more focus is this: when you say, "This greater
 6 transparency of process and expectation seems to me to
 7 be a key conclusion in the light of Grenfell", what did
 8 you mean by that?
 9 A. Well, I think the key problem on the Wednesday morning
 10 is that the council didn't seek to mobilise the support
 11 it could have had from other boroughs across London
 12 through the London Resilience arrangements, and so that,
 13 for me, raises questions of process and expectation and
 14 trigger points and decision points, and I don't quite
 15 know what the right answer is here. I think it's very
 16 difficult, because of what I say in the end of the
 17 previous paragraph, actually, that you don't want
 18 central government or indeed really anyone else to cut
 19 across local command structures, but when those
 20 structures are not working, you have to know who acts,
 21 the basis on which they act, the information they gather
 22 in order to act, and whose responsibility it is to
 23 check. So that's the piece that was missing. And
 24 I think it was left to the council alone, we were all
 25 relying on that, it didn't happen, and we were all --

1 not just central government or DCLG, by the way, I think
 2 also London Resilience need to understand, you know,
 3 what they could have done more. They didn't ring us
 4 either on that Wednesday and Thursday.
 5 So I feel that there is a collective sense in which
 6 somehow the system needs to mobilise to act in
 7 a situation like that that didn't happen after Grenfell.
 8 But I don't think this is straightforward, because you
 9 could go in and be too overbearing of a council that was
 10 actually doing a good job, and that could create
 11 problems itself.
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Well, I was going to ask you: is it
 13 your understanding that the improvements to which you
 14 refer in paragraph 122 do give someone some overriding
 15 power to act without the consent of the local authority?
 16 A. I'm not sure they do go that far, not to act without the
 17 consent, and indeed there was consent by the local
 18 authority for the arrangements that were put in place
 19 after Grenfell. No.
 20 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Thank you.
 21 A. But whether you need something without their consent or
 22 whether, in the end, enough pressure can be put to bear,
 23 you know, amongst officers and elected councillors
 24 together for them to realise they need to do something
 25 differently — that was — in the end, it was enough

205

1 here. But I — you know, will it always be enough?
 2 MR MILLETT: In that last answer but one you referred to
 3 London Resilience needing to understand that they could
 4 have done more. To whom are you referring when you say
 5 London Resilience?
 6 A. Well, I mean the London Gold arrangements. So, I'm
 7 sorry, my recollection of this is a bit rusty anyway,
 8 but, you know, what could have happened on the day is
 9 that a rotating Gold structure could have been put in
 10 place, and the individuals, ironically, were actually
 11 there supporting Nicholas Holgate, it's just that they
 12 weren't operating in that way, and that system of
 13 a rotating set of chief executives actually leading
 14 Gold — the system was there and, indeed, some of the
 15 capabilities, such as humanitarian support, were there
 16 and quite well rehearsed, and they weren't called upon.
 17 Q. So you mean the duty Golds?
 18 A. The duty Golds, yes.
 19 Q. I follow.
 20 A. That's what I mean.
 21 MR MILLETT: Thank you.
 22 Dame Melanie, you will be pleased to know that
 23 I have come to the end of my questions that I wanted to
 24 ask you, but there may be others that I haven't which
 25 are in my note and there may be others which others

206

1 think I should ask you.
 2 So what I'm going to do is ask the Chairman to take
 3 the usual break at this stage and see if there are such
 4 questions.
 5 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Yes.
 6 Well, as you know from your previous experience with
 7 us, we have a break at this stage to see whether there
 8 are more questions we ought to ask you. So we'll stop
 9 now.
 10 Do you think ten minutes is enough, Mr Millett?
 11 MR MILLETT: I do.
 12 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: If I say 4.10, then you can always
 13 tell us if you need more time.
 14 MR MILLETT: That'd be helpful, thank you.
 15 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: We'll say 4.10. It might be a bit
 16 longer, but we'll try and get you back as soon as we
 17 can. All right?
 18 THE WITNESS: Thank you.
 19 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.
 20 (Pause)
 21 Thank you, Mr Millett. 4.10, unless you tell us
 22 that you need more time.
 23 MR MILLETT: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman.
 24 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: Thank you very much.
 25 (4.03 pm)

207

1 (A short break)
 2 (4.10 pm)
 3 SIR MARTIN MOORE—BICK: All right. Well, we'll see if there
 4 are any more questions.
 5 Yes, Mr Millett.
 6 MR MILLETT: Yes, Mr Chairman. Just one or two.
 7 Now, you told us this morning that you I think had
 8 had past experience that local authorities had, as you
 9 say, been pretty good at dealing with temporary crises.
 10 That was your experience.
 11 Now, can I show you a document, {HOM00042998},
 12 please. Now, this is a document entitled "Civil
 13 contingencies: role of the local tier". Do you see
 14 that?
 15 A. Yes.
 16 Q. Is it a document you've ever seen before?
 17 A. I don't believe so, no, but I can see that it's dated
 18 January 2015.
 19 Q. Yes.
 20 A. So just before I came to DCLG, so I may not have seen it
 21 when I arrived.
 22 Q. It is. It is.
 23 If you go to page 2 {HOM00042998/2}, and look at C
 24 on page 2, it says:
 25 "Changes to service models, whether through budget

208

1 pressures or policy decisions, may also lead to reduced
2 resilience of specific services, which may become
3 a burden for government. For example provision of
4 home-based social care through private providers ..."

5 Then D:
6 "A reduction in local authority and responder
7 organisation resilience and emergency capacity may
8 create significant additional financial cost for the
9 government. For example, local emergencies are likely
10 to trigger the 'overwhelm' subsidiarity criteria
11 prompting central government intervention sooner,
12 causing a greater proportion of the costs of responding
13 to local emergencies to be transferred to central
14 government."

15 Is that something that you were aware of when you
16 came in to the department?

17 A. I was certainly aware of the reduction in local
18 authority resourcing. I think it was about 25% in real
19 terms over the preceding five years before I arrived,
20 and that had had an impact, no question. I wasn't aware
21 of this particular document pointing to the risks that
22 that could create for resilience and emergency capacity.

23 Q. If you go, please, to page 4 {HOM00042998/4}, there's
24 a question at the top:
25 "Is the current model fit-for-purpose out to 2020?"

1 Beneath that is a spider's web, perhaps
2 unsurprisingly, of what it's supposed to look like, and
3 it's a figure illustrating the decline, it is said, in
4 local tier emergency planning and response that will
5 take place if the model is not adapted.

6 It goes on to say:
7 "Out to 2020, the current model may not be
8 fit-for-purpose and a failure to adapt to the 2020
9 context may degrade the ability of the local tier to
10 conduct emergency planning and response. This model can
11 continue to be relied upon to deliver outputs, but the
12 additional risk that will be accepted as a result must
13 be articulated and understood."

14 Is that a problem or a question or topic which you
15 were aware of at any time after January 2015, and
16 particularly when you joined the department in 2016?

17 A. No, I wasn't, and I wasn't aware of this document.
18 I think it's a very interesting document. Of course, we
19 didn't have any role in DCLG in overseeing whether or
20 not that local resilience and emergencies planning was
21 actually adequate, we didn't have an assurance role, and
22 I think that's changed. I think it was a gap in the
23 system. But, you know, I can see here being identified
24 quite a lot of potential risks.

25 Q. When you say, "We didn't have an assurance role", do you

1 mean DCLG?

2 A. DCLG didn't, no, through RED is what I mean.

3 Q. I see. But central government did through the
4 Cabinet Office or the CCS, or is that not right?

5 A. I don't believe that they had a role or that anyone had
6 a role from central government in assuring individual
7 plans and making sure that they were adequate. That's
8 what I meant when I said assurance.

9 Q. But did anyone in central government have some kind of
10 assurance role or oversight role about the structure and
11 fitness for purpose of the contingency framework, the
12 national contingency framework?

13 A. Oh, the national contingency framework, that would have
14 been the Cabinet Office.

15 Q. Yes, thank you. Well, thank you very much for that.

16 So that leads me to one final question, which is
17 a question I know you have been asked before in
18 a different context in a different module, but it's
19 this: looking back on the events of the period
20 immediately following the Grenfell Tower fire on and
21 from 14 June 2017, and looking in particular at all the
22 material, the disparate range of material, we have
23 covered during the course of your evidence today and
24 your own particular role, is there anything, looking
25 back on it, that you would have done differently?

1 A. Well, I'd just like to say I -- you know, I just deeply
2 regret the fact that, you know, families, residents and
3 a local community who had experienced such a devastating
4 fire and the impact of that then did not get the support
5 that they needed and should have deserved, did deserve,
6 straight after the fire, and I think the mistakes that
7 were made in the way that the response was organised,
8 and particularly the way the humanitarian response was
9 available in the first hours after the fire, took too
10 long for us all to realise, and then, once we had
11 realised that the problems were there, it inevitably,
12 I think, took quite a long time to sort and correct
13 through the Gold Command structures.

14 So when I look back and think about what we could
15 have done differently, as I've said a number of times
16 today, I wish that Jo Farrar and I in particular had
17 thought to check that the London Gold arrangements were
18 there and that they were operating in the way that
19 I think it was obvious was going to be needed at the
20 beginning, and that we just assumed were there, and
21 I wish we'd checked that, because that might have had
22 an impact in accelerating the improvement that came
23 later, but too late. So that's my first reflection.

24 But I would like to say that I do believe it's
25 incredibly important that the principle of a locally-led

1 response is preserved here. When I read all the witness
 2 statements, and particularly those from Rugby Portobello
 3 and the Clement James Centre, I was just struck once
 4 again about how local relationships and understanding of
 5 the community need to be very, very central, and it was
 6 the failure to brigade those that is such a shame,
 7 because it was there and actually was effective, but
 8 just was never quite harnessed and led and used by the
 9 council in the way that it could have been. So I do
 10 believe locally—led responses are right, and I think
 11 central government should be very, very careful about
 12 stepping in to things it doesn't have the experience of
 13 or really know how to sort out.

14 My second reflection is one we touched on this
 15 morning. I don't think that the distinction between
 16 response and recovery and the planning in particular for
 17 recovery helped us in the response to Grenfell Tower.
 18 The Home Office was the lead government department, but
 19 I think we assumed that mantle very quickly from DCLG
 20 for response and recovery. I think the distinction
 21 between the response and recovery issues wasn't really
 22 there, it was just a question of time, and I feel that,
 23 you know, if we had done more preparation as
 24 a department, but actually also if it had been clearer
 25 in the way that the central government systems and

213

1 decisions operated that we would have been put in that
 2 place more obviously, more quickly, I think we could
 3 have improved the way that we gripped all this.

4 In addition, I still stand by the comment I made in
 5 my first witness statement that I think a Cabinet-level
 6 meeting on that first day would also have accelerated
 7 the sense of urgency and grip and everybody coming
 8 together that was achieved later in the week.

9 So I think there are a number of reflections there
 10 really for the overall resilience and emergency planning
 11 structures and the way that they're organised and the
 12 roles of departments that I think we were sort of
 13 working around to the best of our ability, but slightly
 14 with one arm behind our back.

15 Then my final reflection is that I think — and
 16 again, I think this is something for the Cabinet Office
 17 to lead — I think it would help central government to
 18 be clearer about the offers that it makes in scenarios
 19 like this, to be clearer about the types of victim
 20 support that can be useful in different scenarios, to
 21 map more comprehensively the sorts of things that
 22 central government departments might or might not be
 23 asked to do, so that there is a clearer sense of what is
 24 available to ministers, which I think would speed up
 25 their decisions. As I was saying just before the last

214

1 break, I think there was some confusion about what the
 2 victims unit was, what ministers had asked for, what
 3 ultimately was appropriate to deliver, and, again,
 4 I think those things slowed us down and were confusing.
 5 I think it was irritating and confusing for ministers,
 6 and I think it was quite hard for officials to act on
 7 things in that slight vacuum of understanding of what is
 8 there to be done.

9 So I think the Cabinet Office has actually done
 10 quite a lot of work on this, they did a big review in
 11 the autumn of 2017, but I'm not clear myself exactly
 12 what was actioned, and those are the two things that
 13 I would particularly flag that I think could be
 14 deserving of further investigation.

15 MR MILLETT: Well, Dame Melanie, thank you very much for
 16 that answer, and indeed for all of your evidence. We
 17 are extremely grateful to you for coming here to
 18 the Inquiry for the second time and assisting us with
 19 our investigations, so it only remains for me to say
 20 thank you very much. Thank you.

21 THE WITNESS: Thank you very much.

22 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: It also remains, of course, for me
 23 to thank you very much on behalf of the panel. There
 24 aren't all that many people who've come more than once
 25 to give evidence to the Inquiry, and we are particularly

215

1 grateful to you for giving up the time to come for
 2 a second time. I need hardly say that we have learned
 3 a lot from hearing your evidence, and we're very
 4 grateful to you for being here. So thank you very much.
 5 And, of course, you're now free to go.

6 THE WITNESS: Thank you.

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

8 (The witness withdrew)

9 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes, Mr Millett. Now ...

10 MR MILLETT: That concludes the oral evidence for this
 11 module.

12 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.

13 MR MILLETT: There are further witness statements which we
 14 need to read into the Inquiry's record.

15 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Yes.

16 MR MILLETT: Those are to be found in two parts. There are,
 17 first, {IDX0933}, which is a reference under which the
 18 witness statements from government and other like
 19 organisations will be found, including RBKC.

20 There is a second and separate Module 4 list, which
 21 is the BSR statements, and those are to be found
 22 compendiously under {IDX0932}. There are large numbers
 23 of statements in both groups, and each of them has their
 24 own IWS number, or CAB or RBK, as the case may be, and
 25 they can be read there.

216

1 So they are to be taken now as in the record and
2 publicly available.

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

4 MR MILLETT: Mr Chairman, that brings us, then, formally to
5 the end of the factual evidence -- indeed, all the
6 evidence -- for Module 4.

7 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you.

8 Well, at that point we shall break off the hearings.

9 We are not going to sit next week. There will be no
10 hearings next week. But on 6 June, we shall embark on
11 Module 7, and Module 7 will involve hearing expert
12 evidence from a variety of witnesses relating to matters
13 that have already been touched on in the course of
14 the Inquiry, but on which we have not had the benefit of
15 their views yet.

16 MR MILLETT: That's right.

17 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: So we adjourn now, and we resume at
18 10 o'clock on 6 June.

19 MR MILLETT: Yes. Thank you, Mr Chairman. Thank you,
20 members of the panel.

21 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Thank you very much.
22 (4.24 pm)

23 (The hearing adjourned until 10 am
24 on Monday, 6 June 2022)

25

217

1	INDEX	
2		PAGE
3	DAME MELANIE DAWES (affirmed)	1
4		
5	Questions from COUNSEL TO THE INQUIRY	1
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

218

219

Table with 5 columns containing legal terms and their corresponding page numbers. The first column is headed 'A' and the last column is headed 'B'. The table lists terms such as 'ability', 'able', 'abolished', 'absence', etc., with their respective page references.

105 (1) 128:15
 10s (2) 80:13 117:3
 11 (5) 18:25 19:1,13 84:23
 171:5
 1100 (1) 82:24
 1105 (1) 143:25
 1106 (1) 140:3
 1121 (1) 63:6
 1122 (1) 65:16
 1135 (2) 62:22 63:5
 1140 (1) 63:8
 1147 (2) 149:18 169:5
 11am (2) 121:12,13
 12 (3) 19:20 97:11 110:1
 120 (1) 6:22
 1215 (1) 76:19
 1216 (1) 66:21
 122 (2) 203:2 205:14
 1230 (3) 50:9,10 123:4
 13 (3) 6:1 35:24 38:20
 130 (3) 107:16 144:16
 193:22
 1321 (2) 146:15 147:3
 1330 (4) 106:10 157:2,13
 159:21
 1343 (1) 53:13
 1354 (1) 78:2
 14 (23) 6:11 25:9 38:20 43:6
 50:1,3 51:2,7 53:14 58:12
 63:23 65:17 66:4,21 77:22
 80:25 89:5 90:6 91:15
 98:14 103:9 110:12 211:21
 1404 (1) 78:22
 1405 (2) 53:7,23
 1419 (2) 56:19 76:19
 141949 (1) 58:19
 1420 (1) 53:9
 1447 (2) 150:12 151:14
 14th (2) 67:2 100:18
 15 (16) 3:12 21:21 50:10
 51:4 52:10 100:16 102:25
 103:1,18 106:6 110:1
 121:2 123:4 128:24 130:17
 136:21
 1500 (1) 110:15
 1511 (1) 199:25
 1530 (2) 84:25 130:20
 15th (3) 134:2 136:11 137:23
 16 (13) 132:1 133:25 134:6
 138:9 139:23 141:13
 148:13 154:6 159:21
 161:14 175:14 193:14
 194:21
 1600 (1) 80:24
 1626 (2) 122:23 124:5
 1637 (1) 88:4
 1640 (1) 186:24
 16th (3) 134:3 151:23 162:16
 17 (5) 119:14 141:10 169:5
 171:2 191:21
 1732 (1) 119:8
 18 (4) 119:14 180:9,23
 199:25
 1856 (1) 90:6
 19 (2) 186:12,24
 1910 (1) 183:12
 1937 (1) 151:24
 1954 (1) 154:5
 1pm (1) 144:5

2

2 (12) 58:1 123:7 140:15
 148:11 151:6 175:19
 178:12 187:5 200:8,9
 208:23,24
 20 (5) 3:2 48:5 182:23
 183:12 195:13
 200 (1) 110:23
 2009 (4) 18:6,9 24:4 31:17
 2010 (2) 176:19 179:1
 2013 (1) 57:12
 2015 (5) 4:8 21:15 52:1
 208:18 210:15
 20152016 (3) 11:19 15:3
 24:12

2016 (6) 6:11 21:25 25:1
 32:18 97:6 210:16
 20162017 (3) 12:4 23:19
 42:11
 2017 (16) 4:3 6:1,14 9:11
 18:11 24:3,25 132:1
 141:13 161:14 168:21
 169:5 176:19 191:21
 211:21 215:11
 2018 (2) 57:15 203:5
 2019 (2) 3:2 130:17
 2020 (6) 3:8 4:10 179:2
 209:25 210:7,8
 2022 (2) 1:1 217:24
 2026 (2) 162:18 166:22
 205 (3) 128:6,11,17
 20strong (1) 194:6
 20th (1) 202:9
 21 (2) 130:18 193:17
 22 (1) 168:21
 2227 (1) 166:24
 2230 (1) 167:6
 23 (9) 49:24 50:15 54:16
 55:11,19 59:20 60:18
 61:7,22
 2300 (1) 97:14
 24 (6) 22:5,14 23:22
 91:11,19,23
 25 (1) 209:18
 26 (2) 1:1 173:3
 27 (1) 83:4
 28 (3) 129:17,18,20
 29 (2) 129:18 130:1
 2ms (1) 178:21

3

3 (6) 3:8 58:23 59:5 88:18
 148:16 169:8
 31 (1) 84:23
 311 (1) 199:25
 323 (1) 191:3
 330 (3) 81:6 122:9 128:24
 34 (1) 97:12
 340 (3) 190:22 191:2,5
 36 (1) 6:22
 37 (1) 203:1
 38 (1) 194:18
 39 (2) 3:4 76:18

4

4 (6) 2:17 82:3 122:6 209:23
 216:20 217:6
 40 (2) 77:3 110:11
 403 (1) 207:25
 41 (1) 103:10
 410 (4) 207:12,15,21 208:2
 424 (1) 217:22
 45 (1) 52:7

5

5 (6) 18:20 25:9 35:23 138:2
 194:20 196:21
 50 (3) 122:15 176:18 179:1
 500 (1) 136:24
 51 (1) 138:10
 530 (1) 88:23
 56 (1) 141:12
 5pm (1) 178:23

6

6 (7) 2:18,20 4:22 129:19
 217:10,18,24
 65 (1) 160:5
 66 (1) 193:17

7

7 (5) 21:21 91:4 183:20
 217:11,11
 700 (2) 47:23 162:3
 703 (1) 100:23
 730 (1) 47:23
 745 (2) 54:19 55:24
 745am (1) 48:6
 77 (1) 130:19
 78 (2) 88:12 171:16

8

8 (1) 6:16
 80 (1) 173:3
 823 (1) 132:3
 830 (1) 142:11
 845 (2) 106:5 125:7

9

9 (11) 18:24 19:1 22:4 44:18
 49:24 55:19 60:19 75:16
 91:11,22 194:17
 907 (3) 43:9 44:22 66:3
 909 (1) 49:4
 910 (2) 117:22,22
 912 (1) 103:1
 915 (1) 107:25
 929 (1) 115:15
 930 (6) 104:24 107:7 114:21
 115:18 120:6 136:11