

<p>1 Thursday, 14 September 2017</p> <p>2 (10.30 am)</p> <p>3 Formal Opening of the Inquiry</p> <p>4 SIR MARTIN MOORE-BICK: Good morning, everyone. Welcome to</p> <p>5 the opening session of the inquiry.</p> <p>6 If you are here to translate for someone else,</p> <p>7 please don't worry about talking in a low voice while</p> <p>8 I am making my opening statement.</p> <p>9 This is the formal opening of the Public Inquiry</p> <p>10 into the fire at Grenfell Tower in June this year. On</p> <p>11 that dreadful occasion, exactly three months ago, at</p> <p>12 least 80 people died when the building was engulfed by</p> <p>13 flames in a tragedy unprecedented in modern times.</p> <p>14 It is fitting that we should remember with humility</p> <p>15 and compassion those who died in the fire, their</p> <p>16 families and friends and all who grieve for them.</p> <p>17 I therefore invite you to stand and join me in</p> <p>18 observing a minute's silence as a mark of respect for</p> <p>19 those who died and for those whose lives have been</p> <p>20 changed forever by the loss of those whom they loved.</p> <p>21 (A minute's silence was observed)</p> <p>22 Thank you very much.</p> <p>23 It is right that at the very outset of the inquiry</p> <p>24 I should express on my own behalf and on behalf of all</p> <p>25 members of the inquiry team the dismay and sadness we</p> <p>Page 1</p>	<p>1 weeks.</p> <p>2 I was astonished to learn recently that some</p> <p>3 children who had escaped from the tower had gone into</p> <p>4 school the next day to take their exams, and by all</p> <p>5 accounts had managed to do very well in them. It would</p> <p>6 be difficult to find a better example of the fortitude</p> <p>7 and resilience of this community.</p> <p>8 In response to that terrible event on 28 June, the</p> <p>9 Prime Minister appointed me to chair a Public Inquiry</p> <p>10 into the disaster. The purpose of the inquiry was to</p> <p>11 find out what had happened and why it had happened, with</p> <p>12 a view to ensuring that a similar catastrophe could</p> <p>13 never occur again.</p> <p>14 On 5 July, a public consultation was launched about</p> <p>15 the inquiry's terms of reference. That consultation</p> <p>16 continued until 4 August, by which time over 550</p> <p>17 responses had been received, including many from among</p> <p>18 those who had been residents of Grenfell Tower and other</p> <p>19 parts of the Lancaster West Estate.</p> <p>20 In light of the responses to the consultation,</p> <p>21 I wrote to the Prime Minister on 10 August recommending</p> <p>22 terms of reference which she subsequently accepted.</p> <p>23 A copy of my letter and of the Prime Minister's reply</p> <p>24 can be found on the inquiry website. Following that</p> <p>25 exchange of correspondence, the inquiry was formally set</p> <p>Page 3</p>
<p>1 feel at the loss of life, devastation and injury caused</p> <p>2 by the fire.</p> <p>3 We are acutely aware not only that so many people</p> <p>4 died or were injured in the fire, but that many of those</p> <p>5 who survived have been severely affected by their</p> <p>6 experiences. We are also conscious that many have lost</p> <p>7 everything and, even now, are dependent on others for</p> <p>8 many of their daily needs.</p> <p>9 The inquiry cannot undo any of that, but it can and</p> <p>10 will provide answers to the pressing questions of how</p> <p>11 a disaster of this kind could occur in 21st century</p> <p>12 London, and thereby, I hope, provide a small measure of</p> <p>13 solace.</p> <p>14 It is also right to recall that a disaster of this</p> <p>15 magnitude provided an unprecedented challenge to the</p> <p>16 emergency services, in particular the London Fire</p> <p>17 Brigade. There are many aspects of the response to the</p> <p>18 fire that the inquiry will wish to examine, but it is</p> <p>19 right that I should pay tribute to the members of the</p> <p>20 fire and rescue service, many of whom risked their own</p> <p>21 lives in an attempt to save others.</p> <p>22 And last but by no means least, I should like to pay</p> <p>23 tribute to the members of the local community who,</p> <p>24 together with volunteers from outside, have done so much</p> <p>25 to help and support each other in these very difficult</p> <p>Page 2</p>	<p>1 up on 15 August.</p> <p>2 In my letter I also said that I was giving active</p> <p>3 thought to appointing assessors to provide me with</p> <p>4 advice. Since then, I have had discussions with</p> <p>5 a number of people who seem to me to be likely to be</p> <p>6 able to bring to the inquiry expertise and perspectives</p> <p>7 which I do not myself possess.</p> <p>8 I know that many of the survivors would like me to</p> <p>9 appoint someone from among their own number or perhaps</p> <p>10 another local resident as one of my assessors. Many of</p> <p>11 them can of course provide valuable evidence and I shall</p> <p>12 ensure that all their evidence is heard and carefully</p> <p>13 considered. But to appoint as an assessor someone who</p> <p>14 had direct involvement in the fire would risk</p> <p>15 undermining my impartiality in the eyes of others who</p> <p>16 are also deeply involved in the inquiry. I have</p> <p>17 therefore come to the conclusion that I cannot take the</p> <p>18 course they would wish me to adopt.</p> <p>19 As a result, I have approached a number of people,</p> <p>20 all completely independent of those whose conduct may</p> <p>21 have to be investigated, who have expertise of a social</p> <p>22 and administrative nature that enables them to provide</p> <p>23 me with the assistance I need to carry out my task.</p> <p>24 I shall also need the assistance of people who can</p> <p>25 give me expert advice in more technical areas; in</p> <p>Page 4</p>

<p>1 particular, the development of fires in high-rise 2 residential buildings, and the intricacies of the 3 building regulations, with particular reference to 4 protection against fire.</p> <p>5 I am currently in discussions with several people 6 who, in my view, have the expertise necessary to fulfil 7 those roles, and I am pleased to say that those 8 discussions are making good progress. I hope to be able 9 to announce the appointment of the first group of 10 assessors within the next week or so.</p> <p>11 My assessors will provide me with advice as may be 12 appropriate throughout the inquiry. In general, they 13 will attend those hearings at which evidence is taken 14 that falls within their particular areas of expertise. 15 But they will also keep themselves abreast of the 16 proceedings by familiarising themselves with the 17 transcripts of the hearings they do not attend. When 18 the time comes to draft a report, I shall look to them 19 for their comments and advice, but ultimately the 20 responsibility for the inquiry's findings and 21 recommendations rests with me.</p> <p>22 The inquiry's terms of reference have been widely 23 published and can be found on its website, but it may be 24 useful if I read them out for the benefit of anyone who 25 has not seen them.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 5</p>	<p>1 (f) the fire prevention and fire safety measures in 2 place at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017; 3 (g) the response of the London Fire Brigade to the 4 fire; and 5 (h) the response of central and local government in 6 the days immediately following the fire.</p> <p>7 2. To report its findings to the Prime Minister as 8 soon as possible and to make recommendations.</p> <p>9 The terms of reference are deliberately cast in 10 broad terms in order to give me scope to pursue whatever 11 lines of inquiry seem likely to be fruitful. I think it 12 worth emphasising that the specific areas of 13 investigation to which they refer are intended to 14 identify the main subjects of the inquiry, but they are 15 not intended to be exhaustive. It is for me to 16 interpret the terms of reference, and I shall not be 17 deflected from pursuing lines of inquiry which may lead 18 to information of value.</p> <p>19 I shall have more to say about that in a moment, but 20 it is important to understand the size of the task 21 ahead. It will require much hard work in obtaining and 22 analysing documents, and in the preparation of 23 statements from those who may be able to give valuable 24 evidence. With the help of my team, I intend to make 25 sure that the work proceeds as quickly as possible.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 7</p>
<p>1 They are as follows:</p> <p>2 1. To examine the circumstances surrounding the 3 fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017, including:</p> <p>4 (a) the immediate cause or causes of the fire and 5 the means by which it spread to the whole of the 6 building;</p> <p>7 (b) the design and construction of the building and 8 the decisions relating to its modification, 9 refurbishment and management;</p> <p>10 (c) the scope and adequacy of building regulations, 11 fire regulations and other legislation, guidance and 12 industry practice relating to the design, construction, 13 equipping and management of high-rise residential 14 buildings;</p> <p>15 (d) whether such regulations, legislation, guidance 16 and industry practice were complied with in the case of 17 Grenfell Tower, and the fire safety measures adopted in 18 relation to it;</p> <p>19 (e) the arrangements made by the Local Authority or 20 other responsible bodies for receiving and acting upon 21 information, either obtained from local residents or 22 available from other sources, including information 23 derived from fires in other buildings, relating to the 24 risk of fire at Grenfell Tower and the action taken in 25 response to such information;</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 6</p>	<p>1 I have mentioned the inquiry team and this may be 2 a good moment to introduce them. The secretary to the 3 inquiry is Mark Fisher. He is an experienced civil 4 servant, who was previously director of the Office for 5 Civil Society at the Department for Culture, media and 6 sport. Mark is the head of an administrative team which 7 is made up of a number of civil servants chosen from 8 many hundreds who expressed interest in working for the 9 inquiry.</p> <p>10 His deputy is Amanda Jeffery, who acted as secretary 11 to the Hillsborough inquest and, before that, as deputy 12 secretary to the Leveson Inquiry. The team handles the 13 whole range of administrative tasks and is currently 14 based at the Royal Courts of Justice.</p> <p>15 The solicitor to the inquiry is Caroline 16 Featherstone. Caroline was previously a senior 17 solicitor in the Government Legal Department. As 18 a deputy director, she led a large team dealing with 19 many different kinds of litigation. She leads the 20 inquiry's team of three solicitors which includes Cathy 21 Kennedy and Shafi Nasser, both of whom also come from 22 the Government Legal Department.</p> <p>23 I also have the benefit of a team of leading and 24 junior counsel. Richard Millett Queen's Counsel was 25 called to the bar in 1985 and was appointed Queen's</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 8</p>

<p>1 Counsel in 2003. He has extensive experience of 2 handling complex civil disputes of many kinds and sits 3 as a deputy High Court judge. He leads a team of five 4 other barristers, each chosen for his or her particular 5 expertise.</p> <p>6 Bernard Richmond Queen's Counsel was called to the 7 bar in 1988 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2006. 8 He is a criminal defence specialist with substantial 9 experience of cases involving vulnerable witnesses. He 10 also sits as an assistant coroner.</p> <p>11 Kate Grange Queen's Counsel was called to the bar in 12 1998 and was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2017. She has 13 particular expertise in relation to commercial, 14 construction, public and inquiry law.</p> <p>15 Andrew Kinnier and Rose Grogan are both junior 16 counsel. They are familiar with the complex web of 17 legislation and guidance which relates to fire safety in 18 buildings. Andrew also has experience of acting in 19 large public inquiries, including the Ladbroke Grove 20 Inquiry.</p> <p>21 Zeenat Islam is another criminal defence specialist 22 who will work in conjunction with Bernard Richmond.</p> <p>23 It is important to understand that the inquiry 24 process is not adversarial. My task is not to decide 25 which of two or more competing parties has the better</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 9</p>	<p>1 inquiry is to get to the truth of what happened, it must 2 seek out all the relevant evidence and examine it calmly 3 and rationally.</p> <p>4 The solicitors and counsel acting for the inquiry 5 will approach their task in that way, as I hope will the 6 legal representatives of the various core participants. 7 In that way, they will help us all discover where the 8 truth really lies.</p> <p>9 I should also remind everyone that section 2 of the 10 Inquiries Act 2005 prohibits me from ruling on or 11 determining anyone's civil or criminal liability. 12 However, the same section also expressly provides that 13 I am not to be inhibited by the likelihood of liability 14 being inferred from any findings or recommendations that 15 I may make. I shall therefore not shrink from making 16 any findings or recommendations that are justified by 17 the evidence simply because someone else may at a later 18 date consider that they form the basis of civil or 19 criminal liability. The police are of course conducting 20 their own investigation into possible criminal offences.</p> <p>21 This room was chosen for today's formal opening 22 because it was necessary to find a space large enough to 23 accommodate the number of people it was thought might 24 wish to attend. I intend, if possible, to find a room 25 of sufficient size in a convenient location for future</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 11</p>
<p>1 case, nor is it to punish anyone or to award anyone 2 compensation. It is simply to get at the truth with the 3 help of all those who have relevant evidence to give. 4 The process should therefore be seen as essentially 5 co-operative.</p> <p>6 Accordingly, the role of solicitors and counsel to 7 the inquiry is not to promote any particular conclusion 8 or result, still less to favour any particular witness 9 or class of witnesses; rather, it is to place before me 10 and before the public evidence that will enable me to 11 make findings about what occurred and put forward 12 recommendations for the future.</p> <p>13 They will do that by presenting the evidence in 14 public hearings and by questioning those witnesses whom 15 I decide should be called to give oral evidence. When 16 required, they will also provide me with impartial 17 advice on matters of law and procedure.</p> <p>18 All hearings will be conducted in public, unless the 19 particular nature of the evidence or arguments requires 20 otherwise.</p> <p>21 I am well aware that the past few months have turned 22 the world of those who live in North Kensington upside 23 down, and that former residents of the tower and other 24 local people feel a great sense of anger and betrayal. 25 That is entirely natural and understandable, but if the</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 10</p>	<p>1 hearings at which evidence will be taken. Information 2 about the time and place of future hearings will be 3 posted on the inquiry's website.</p> <p>4 Information about how to make contact with the 5 inquiry team in the meantime can be obtained from those 6 members of the team who are here this morning and from 7 the inquiry's website. In due course, a transcript of 8 today's proceedings and any rulings and directions which 9 I may give from time to time will be posted on the 10 website.</p> <p>11 Unless there is a good reason not to do so in any 12 particular case, the hearings themselves will be 13 streamed live to other locations if there is 14 a sufficient demand for that and through the inquiry 15 website so that the public as a whole can follow the 16 proceedings. Transcripts of the hearings will be posted 17 on the website as soon as possible after the conclusion 18 of each day's proceedings.</p> <p>19 The evidence given by witnesses at the hearings 20 will, however, be only part of the material which the 21 inquiry will have to consider. Much of that material 22 will be in the form of documents. I therefore intend to 23 ensure that all relevant documents that can properly be 24 made public are scanned onto an electronic database, 25 which will allow them to be called up and displayed on</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 12</p>

<p>1 screens at the hearing and made available for inspection</p> <p>2 through a link on the inquiry website after they have</p> <p>3 been put in evidence.</p> <p>4 Although the hearings will be streamed to places</p> <p>5 where they can be viewed contemporaneously, I think it</p> <p>6 important that members of the public should be able to</p> <p>7 attend the hearings in person so far as reasonably</p> <p>8 practicable. I shall therefore take steps to ensure</p> <p>9 that hearings at which evidence is to be taken are held</p> <p>10 in rooms large enough to accommodate a substantial</p> <p>11 number of members of the public, as well as</p> <p>12 representatives of the press and media organisations.</p> <p>13 I propose to conduct the inquiry in two phases. In</p> <p>14 the first phase I shall investigate the development of</p> <p>15 the fire itself, where and how it started, how it spread</p> <p>16 from its original seat to other parts of the building</p> <p>17 and the chain of events that unfolded during the course</p> <p>18 of the hours before it was finally extinguished.</p> <p>19 I shall also be looking into the response of the</p> <p>20 emergency services and the evacuation of residents.</p> <p>21 It is necessary to address these questions first for</p> <p>22 two reasons. The first is because there is an urgent</p> <p>23 need to find out what aspects of the building's design</p> <p>24 and construction played a significant role in enabling</p> <p>25 the disaster to occur. That is important, because if</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 13</p>	<p>1 those who can provide evidence relating to the first</p> <p>2 phase of the inquiry should have the opportunity at the</p> <p>3 same time to provide any evidence they may have about</p> <p>4 matters that I shall be considering in the second phase,</p> <p>5 such as concerns which they may have expressed before</p> <p>6 the fire about the safety of the building or their</p> <p>7 experiences in the days immediately following the fire.</p> <p>8 For some of those who escaped from the tower,</p> <p>9 however, the stress of giving evidence is likely to be</p> <p>10 greatly magnified by the continuing effects of what can</p> <p>11 only have been a most traumatic experience. I am</p> <p>12 acutely aware of the challenge that presents. I intend</p> <p>13 to do everything possible to ensure that the process of</p> <p>14 assisting the inquiry does not result in further</p> <p>15 unnecessary suffering. To that end, I shall be looking</p> <p>16 for particular help and cooperation from those who</p> <p>17 represent victims, families and the emergency services.</p> <p>18 I am open to suggestions about how I can obtain evidence</p> <p>19 from those witnesses in a sensitive and appropriate way.</p> <p>20 The work of the inquiry is urgent and there is</p> <p>21 an obvious need to begin hearings as soon as possible.</p> <p>22 But I recognise that it is necessary to act with</p> <p>23 sensitivity and compassion and I shall take whatever</p> <p>24 steps are appropriate in line with current practice to</p> <p>25 ensure that witnesses are able to give the best evidence</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 15</p>
<p>1 there are similar defects in other high-rise buildings,</p> <p>2 steps must be taken quickly to ensure that those who</p> <p>3 live in them are kept safe.</p> <p>4 The second is because until we understand the chain</p> <p>5 of events in some detail, it will not be possible to</p> <p>6 pinpoint the critical decisions that had a bearing on</p> <p>7 the exposure of the building to the risk of</p> <p>8 an uncontrollable fire.</p> <p>9 My intention is that as part of this first phase of</p> <p>10 the inquiry, I should obtain written and oral evidence</p> <p>11 from those who can give direct accounts of what occurred</p> <p>12 on the night in question. They will include, in</p> <p>13 particular, former residents of the tower who escaped</p> <p>14 from the fire, people living in the surrounding area and</p> <p>15 firefighters. Their evidence is likely to be of great</p> <p>16 value and I hope that many will come forward to tell us</p> <p>17 about their personal experiences. I shall also have</p> <p>18 access to photographs and video footage of the fire and</p> <p>19 recordings of the calls made to the emergency services.</p> <p>20 I know that giving evidence, whether in the form of</p> <p>21 a statement or in person, can be a stressful experience</p> <p>22 for anyone, so I intend to ensure as far as possible</p> <p>23 that any former residents of the tower, and indeed other</p> <p>24 residents of the Lancaster West Estate, should be asked</p> <p>25 to give evidence once only. I therefore intend that</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 14</p>	<p>1 they can.</p> <p>2 The second phase of the inquiry will examine on</p> <p>3 a broad front how the building came to be so seriously</p> <p>4 exposed to the risk of a disastrous fire. That will</p> <p>5 involve an investigation into the design of the</p> <p>6 building, its modification from time to time over</p> <p>7 previous years, the decisions relating to design and</p> <p>8 construction that were made in connection with each of</p> <p>9 those modifications and the reasons for those decisions.</p> <p>10 I shall also be asking whether at each stage of its</p> <p>11 development the building complied with regulations then</p> <p>12 in force, and whether the regulations themselves were</p> <p>13 adequate.</p> <p>14 The extent to which the fire risk assessments were</p> <p>15 carried out and what steps were taken in response to</p> <p>16 them will also come under scrutiny. Those and similar</p> <p>17 questions will assume particular importance in relation</p> <p>18 to the most recent refurbishment of the building and the</p> <p>19 fitting of external cladding.</p> <p>20 One important part of my investigations will be to</p> <p>21 examine the communications between residents and the</p> <p>22 tenant management organisation, TMO, and the council in</p> <p>23 relation to the safety of Grenfell Tower and the</p> <p>24 responses to those communications.</p> <p>25 As part of the second phase, I shall also examine</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 16</p>

<p>1 the response to the disaster and the steps taken in the</p> <p>2 days immediately following the fire to provide food,</p> <p>3 shelter and other basic amenities to those whose homes</p> <p>4 had been destroyed and who had lost everything.</p> <p>5 This part of the inquiry is likely to take rather</p> <p>6 longer than the first phase because it will require the</p> <p>7 examination of many documents obtained from the council,</p> <p>8 the TMO and other bodies involved in the most recent</p> <p>9 refurbishment of the building, as well as evidence from</p> <p>10 many of those who were personally involved in the</p> <p>11 decision-making process.</p> <p>12 Although I have referred to two phases of the</p> <p>13 inquiry, I want to make it clear that I intend that, as</p> <p>14 far as possible, work on both phases should proceed in</p> <p>15 parallel. The solicitor to the inquiry has already</p> <p>16 written to several of the companies and other bodies</p> <p>17 that were involved in the most recent refurbishment</p> <p>18 asking them to produce documents relating to their</p> <p>19 particular areas of involvement. Those bodies include</p> <p>20 of course the council and the TMO.</p> <p>21 I have every reason to expect that we shall receive</p> <p>22 a very large number of documents which will have to be</p> <p>23 read and analysed. That will take a considerable amount</p> <p>24 of time. But many of those documents may not be of</p> <p>25 direct relevance to the first phase of the inquiry, so</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 17</p>	<p>1 look closely at the ways in which decisions relating to</p> <p>2 modifications to the building were reached, including</p> <p>3 the considerations which motivated them. That will be</p> <p>4 an integral part of understanding how and why this fire</p> <p>5 occurred and of learning lessons for the future.</p> <p>6 The Inquiry Rules 2006 place certain duties upon me</p> <p>7 in relation to the designation of core participants and</p> <p>8 of lawyers as recognised legal representatives.</p> <p>9 Procedures for applying for core participant status were</p> <p>10 published on the inquiry's website in mid-August, and</p> <p>11 those who wish to become core participants were asked to</p> <p>12 make their applications by 8 September.</p> <p>13 We have received around 300 such applications, most</p> <p>14 of them at the end of last week. Through the solicitor</p> <p>15 to the inquiry, I have already informed some applicants</p> <p>16 that they will be given core participant status, but</p> <p>17 inevitably many applications remain to be determined and</p> <p>18 are currently under consideration. The process of</p> <p>19 dealing with them may take some time and in some cases</p> <p>20 I may need to hear oral submissions to enable me to</p> <p>21 reach a decision. If so, arrangements will be made for</p> <p>22 hearings to be held for that purpose.</p> <p>23 Core participants are of course entitled to be</p> <p>24 legally represented, but where several of them have the</p> <p>25 same interest, it would not be sensible for their</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 19</p>
<p>1 there is no reason why that work should hold up the</p> <p>2 first phase, which is likely to turn on evidence of</p> <p>3 a different kind.</p> <p>4 As part of its preparation for the investigation, my</p> <p>5 team has produced a list of issues which is intended to</p> <p>6 set out in greater detail the questions that I shall</p> <p>7 seek to answer. It will be published on the inquiry</p> <p>8 website later today so that anyone who wishes to do so</p> <p>9 can see what the inquiry is aiming to do.</p> <p>10 But I need to sound one small note of caution: the</p> <p>11 list of issues is not intended to be an exhaustive</p> <p>12 summary of what the inquiry will investigate. It is in</p> <p>13 the very nature of a process of this kind that I shall</p> <p>14 want to follow up leads and new lines of inquiry as they</p> <p>15 emerge, so the list of issues should be viewed more as</p> <p>16 a statement of current thinking than a definitive</p> <p>17 programme of work.</p> <p>18 As will be evident from the list of issues, the</p> <p>19 terms of reference encourage a wide range of questions,</p> <p>20 and indeed the specific matters to which they refer are</p> <p>21 not themselves intended to be restrictive. It is for me</p> <p>22 to interpret the terms of reference, and I wish to</p> <p>23 emphasise that the inquiry is not limited to factual</p> <p>24 questions surrounding the development of the fire, as</p> <p>25 I hope I have already made clear. It is my intention to</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 18</p>	<p>1 lawyers to make the same points on behalf of each of</p> <p>2 them separately. To do so would simply be a waste of</p> <p>3 time and resources.</p> <p>4 Rule 7 of the Inquiry Rules seeks to avoid that</p> <p>5 situation by imposing on the chairman a duty to direct</p> <p>6 that core participants whose interests in the outcome of</p> <p>7 the inquiry are similar, and who rely on similar facts,</p> <p>8 are to be represented by a single recognised legal</p> <p>9 representative, if he thinks it fair and proper for them</p> <p>10 to be jointly represented. Even in cases where there</p> <p>11 are different lawyers representing people with different</p> <p>12 interests, it may make sense for one of them to lead on</p> <p>13 matters in which those whom they represent have broadly</p> <p>14 similar interests.</p> <p>15 It would be in everyone's interests, therefore, for</p> <p>16 discussions to take place between core participants with</p> <p>17 the same or similar interests, with a view to reaching</p> <p>18 agreement on sensible arrangements which reduce the</p> <p>19 number of separate legal representatives appearing</p> <p>20 before the inquiry, without sacrificing the essential</p> <p>21 requirements of fairness and justice.</p> <p>22 I hope that some agreement can be reached but, if it</p> <p>23 cannot, I may have to act in accordance with rule 7 and</p> <p>24 determine arrangements for legal representation myself.</p> <p>25 Before doing so, however, I shall seek submissions in</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Page 20</p>

<p>1 writing from those who will be affected and may wish to</p> <p>2 hear oral submissions at a hearing especially arranged</p> <p>3 for that purpose.</p> <p>4 As far as possible, I intend to seek voluntary</p> <p>5 cooperation in the production of documents and other</p> <p>6 evidence, such as witness statements, that the inquiry</p> <p>7 will need to carry out its work. I expect everyone to</p> <p>8 whom a request of that kind is addressed to provide all</p> <p>9 relevant material without the need for me to exercise my</p> <p>10 statutory powers. But I have the power under section 21</p> <p>11 of the 2005 Act to require the attendance of witnesses</p> <p>12 and the production of documents and, if necessary,</p> <p>13 I shall not hesitate to make use of it.</p> <p>14 The inquiry team has already made a number of</p> <p>15 requests for the production of relevant evidence and</p> <p>16 documents which are in the course of being provided.</p> <p>17 This will be a continuing process and further requests</p> <p>18 will be made as the inquiry progresses.</p> <p>19 Moreover, I wish to take this opportunity to ask</p> <p>20 anyone who is or thinks he or she may be in possession</p> <p>21 of any information, evidence or documents relevant to</p> <p>22 the matters I am looking into to do whatever they can to</p> <p>23 preserve the material and to inform the inquiry team at</p> <p>24 once. Details of the way in which the inquiry proposes</p> <p>25 to deal with documents can be found in the protocol for</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 21</p>	<p>1 discuss the issues with a view to identifying areas of</p> <p>2 agreement and disagreement. That should ensure that the</p> <p>3 oral evidence can be directed to any remaining areas of</p> <p>4 disagreement.</p> <p>5 I should like at this stage to say a little more</p> <p>6 about the procedure I intend to adopt in carrying out</p> <p>7 the terms of reference. It is likely that it will be</p> <p>8 necessary to hold one or more directions hearings, at</p> <p>9 which I shall hear submissions and give directions on</p> <p>10 matters of a procedural nature. It will not be</p> <p>11 necessary for core participants to attend those hearings</p> <p>12 unless they are directly concerned in the matters under</p> <p>13 consideration. Similar hearings will be arranged as</p> <p>14 necessary to deal with issues that arise in the course</p> <p>15 of the inquiry. The times and places will be</p> <p>16 communicated to those involved by e-mail and posted on</p> <p>17 the inquiry's website.</p> <p>18 Parties who wish to make submissions at a directions</p> <p>19 hearing will be expected to send the solicitor to the</p> <p>20 inquiry a skeleton argument, together with any</p> <p>21 supporting material, not later than five working days in</p> <p>22 advance of the hearing. Skeleton arguments must not</p> <p>23 exceed 15 pages in length, must be printed on A4 paper,</p> <p>24 one side only, 12-point font, 1.5 line spacing, and must</p> <p>25 not contain footnotes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 23</p>
<p>1 the receipt and handling of documents, which can be</p> <p>2 found on the inquiry website.</p> <p>3 It is obvious that many of the questions that have</p> <p>4 to be investigated, particularly in the first phase of</p> <p>5 the inquiry, are of a highly technical nature. They</p> <p>6 require expert knowledge of a kind that I do not</p> <p>7 currently possess. I have therefore instructed or am in</p> <p>8 the course of instructing some of the most eminent</p> <p>9 people in the fields of forensic fire analysis and fire</p> <p>10 engineering to examine the evidence and give me the</p> <p>11 benefit of their opinions.</p> <p>12 The experts will produce reports for my</p> <p>13 consideration, and those who are core participants will</p> <p>14 have an opportunity to read those reports and comment on</p> <p>15 them before the evidence is given. The experts may be</p> <p>16 called to give oral evidence to explain their reports</p> <p>17 and to answer questions on them submitted by other</p> <p>18 parties.</p> <p>19 Experience has shown that in many fields of</p> <p>20 expertise different people can legitimately hold</p> <p>21 different opinions, and I am certainly willing to accept</p> <p>22 evidence from suitably qualified experts who have been</p> <p>23 instructed by other parties. If it becomes clear that</p> <p>24 there is a range of expert views on any particular</p> <p>25 subject, I am likely to direct that the witnesses</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 22</p>	<p>1 At the beginning of any hearing at which the inquiry</p> <p>2 intends to take evidence, counsel for the inquiry will</p> <p>3 make an opening statement outlining the nature of the</p> <p>4 evidence to be called in the course of that hearing. At</p> <p>5 the beginning of the first such hearing, the recognised</p> <p>6 legal representative of each core participant will be</p> <p>7 invited to make an opening statement in accordance with</p> <p>8 rule 11 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. I shall give further</p> <p>9 directions about those opening statements at a later</p> <p>10 date.</p> <p>11 All witnesses who are called to give oral evidence</p> <p>12 will be the inquiry's witnesses. They will therefore be</p> <p>13 called and examined by counsel to the inquiry. Although</p> <p>14 the inquiry will seek the assistance of legal</p> <p>15 representatives, where they have been appointed, in the</p> <p>16 preparation of witness statements, I shall decide which</p> <p>17 statements are to form part of the record of documentary</p> <p>18 evidence and which witnesses are to be called to give</p> <p>19 oral evidence in addition to their written statements.</p> <p>20 The solicitor to the inquiry and those working under</p> <p>21 her direction will be closely involved in the process of</p> <p>22 obtaining statements from potential witnesses. Where</p> <p>23 appropriate, she will send out check-lists and agendas</p> <p>24 which explain the topics which should be covered in</p> <p>25 witness statements, and any procedures which should be</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 24</p>

<p>1 followed, for example when dealing with vulnerable 2 witnesses.</p> <p>3 Core participants who wish to have specific 4 questions put to witnesses must provide them in writing 5 to counsel to the inquiry not later than five days 6 before the witness is called to give evidence. The 7 inquiry will publish on its website as far as possible 8 in advance a programme of dates and times when it is 9 intended that witnesses will attend to give oral 10 evidence and will ensure that the programme is kept 11 up-to-date.</p> <p>12 Whether to allow questioning of a witness by other 13 parties is a matter entirely within my discretion and 14 will be allowed, if at all, only on application in 15 accordance with rule 10 of the Inquiry Rules.</p> <p>16 I shall not permit the same topic to be canvassed by 17 more than one party, and where that requires prior 18 consultation and cooperation between parties, I shall 19 expect it to have been carried out.</p> <p>20 I am currently minded to invite final submissions in 21 writing after the conclusion of all the evidence, and to 22 give core participants an opportunity to make brief oral 23 submissions. I shall give further directions about that 24 in due course.</p> <p>25 At this point I should like to say something about</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 25</p>	<p>1 and, in order to manage them, we have had detailed 2 negotiations for the provision of an electronic document 3 management system which will enable us to analyse them, 4 present them effectively at hearings and make them 5 available to the public through the inquiry's website.</p> <p>6 As I have mentioned, we have also had discussions 7 with and have now instructed a number of experts who 8 will give me the benefit of their skill and knowledge in 9 relation to various aspects of the investigations.</p> <p>10 The process of gathering evidence has therefore 11 already begun in earnest, but there is much more to do. 12 It has become clear that there are many potential 13 witnesses still to be interviewed and many thousands of 14 documents to be reviewed. The scale of the task is 15 enormous.</p> <p>16 I should like to begin taking evidence in relation 17 to the first phase of the inquiry before the end of this 18 year, but whether that will be possible will depend in 19 a large measure on how long it takes to obtain 20 statements from those who were directly involved in the 21 fire and to obtain and digest the documents relating to 22 their evidence. For the reasons I have indicated, 23 taking statements from those important witnesses will 24 require care and sensitivity and may take longer than 25 first thought.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 27</p>
<p>1 the timetable to which I am hoping to work. Three 2 months have passed since the fire and to some it may 3 seem that not much progress has been made. But that is 4 not the case, and it may be helpful for me to summarise 5 what has been happening in relation to the inquiry since 6 14 June.</p> <p>7 As I have said, I was appointed to chair the inquiry 8 on 28 June, but the period of consultation to which 9 I referred meant that the inquiry was not in fact set up 10 until 15 August. Although the intervening period was 11 used to put together the inquiry team, set up our office 12 and make preparations for starting work, we could not 13 take active steps to start collecting evidence until 14 I had received my terms of reference and the inquiry had 15 been formally set up. Once that had happened, we could 16 get started.</p> <p>17 Within a few days the solicitor to the inquiry had 18 written to the organisations most closely involved with 19 the management of the tower and its most recent 20 refurbishment asking them to produce any documents in 21 their possession relevant to matters under 22 investigation. Letters of that kind have been sent not 23 only to the council and the TMO, but to the contractors 24 and suppliers concerned in the refurbishment.</p> <p>25 We expect to receive many thousands of documents</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 26</p>	<p>1 The time and place of the first hearing at which 2 evidence will be taken will therefore be announced when 3 our work is further advanced. I shall decide on 4 detailed arrangements for hearings, such as sitting days 5 and times, after hearing submissions from core 6 participants.</p> <p>7 Similarly, it is too early to say when I shall hold 8 directions hearings because that will depend in part on 9 what needs to be determined. However, I hope that core 10 participants will inform my team as soon as possible of 11 any matters which they think I need to deal with.</p> <p>12 In my letter to the Prime Minister of 10 August, 13 I said that I hoped to be able to produce a first report 14 by Easter 2018. Such a report will have to be limited 15 to what I have described as the first phase of the 16 inquiry, but even so, that presents a challenging goal. 17 To achieve it will require much hard work, as well as 18 the active cooperation of all concerned. But I hope 19 I can count on that cooperation to ensure that the 20 inquiry proceeds as quickly and smoothly as possible. 21 It is in the public interest that findings which may 22 affect the safety of people who live or work in other 23 high-rise buildings will be made as soon as possible.</p> <p>24 I am aware that there have already been informal 25 meetings between the lawyers serving the inquiry and</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Page 28</p>

1 those representing some prospective core participants
2 with a view to identifying areas of common ground and
3 possible differences of approach in relation to
4 procedural or administrative matters. I fully encourage
5 cooperation of that kind and I am grateful for the fact
6 that it has proved beneficial to everyone involved.

7 I hope that it will continue because we share
8 a common goal. We are all searching after the truth
9 about the cause of the fire and the massive loss of life
10 that it caused. And we owe it to those who died and to
11 those whose homes have been destroyed to work together
12 to achieve that goal.

13 Thank you all very much for coming. I look forward
14 to seeing many of you again at subsequent hearings.

15 (11.20 am)

16 (The hearing concluded)

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