

**Science Advisory Group (SAG) for the review of potential environmental
contamination in Grenfell and North Kensington**

Advice to Grenfell Tower Fire Ministerial Recovery Group

Minutes of Meeting #7 – 4th September 2019

Overview

At its seventh meeting, SAG discussed: (i) the Analysis and Interpretation Methodology and AECOM's technical documents, (ii) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) plans regarding communication of Tier 1 results to the public and (iii) Tier 2 proposals.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. SAG agreed that further work was needed on the Analysis Methodology paper to make it suitable for publication. SAG recommended that the Multi Agency Partnership (MAP):
 - create standalone documents from the introductory section and risk assessment annexes and redraft in the past tense. The document should make clear that the Part 2A statutory guidance establishes a legal framework for dealing with contaminated land in England, and the AECOM technical notes set out the detailed approach taken for this investigation.
 - take account of any final comments from the Suitably Qualified Person (SQP) on factual inaccuracies.
 - draft a 1-page lay summary of the main document to accompany the methodology documents.
 - redraft Appendix B as a statement on what the Tier 1 results mean for public health.
 - develop a forward-looking plan for how public health advice would be provided for Tier 2.

2. Following a review of the AECOM technical documents by SAG and the SQP, SAG agreed that the approach taken was scientifically rigorous and met the agreed specification. SAG has confidence in the results from Tier 1, which will inform the Tier 2 investigation.

3. SAG discussed AECOM's most recent versions of Technical Notes 16, 17, 18, and the overarching report. SAG recommended:
 - AECOM update the literature used regarding chloromethane in Technical Note 17 (containing evidence published in 2005) with more recent material, though this is unlikely to affect the conclusions.
 - SQP should review Technical Notes 16, 17 and 18 in detail (and the overarching report). SAG agreed final versions of the technical notes would be circulated to SAG once available, but SAG would not be expected to review them again.
 - Alex Freeman and James Rubin agreed to review Technical Notes 16, 17 and 18, and the overarching report from a communications perspective, to improve clarity where possible.

4. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) outlined its plans for communication of the results to the public, highlighting that the public will have full access to data from the investigation. SAG advised that:
 - The top line message should be about the general comparison with levels of contaminants found in Tier 1 results compared to other urban areas in London.
 - Language used on gov.uk should be Part 2A compliant and consistent with previous documents (e.g. Technical Notes).
 - Maximum transparency is essential. The public should be able to examine the data themselves.
 - Illustrations, such as bar charts, need to be clear and readily understandable.
 - All communications must accurately reflect the science and the evidence.James Rubin and Alex Freeman agreed to advise MHCLG on the communication plans.
5. SAG discussed a position paper from MAP on indoor testing and testing of fruit and vegetables in Tier 2. SAG discussed initial advice from the Health and Safety (HSE) on how indoor testing is undertaken in the workplace and agreed that a further SAG discussion is required on this matter. SAG members Len Levy, John Warner and Jose Torero agreed to draft short notes on the scientific benefits (or otherwise) and possible approaches to undertaking indoor sampling in Tier 2, for further consideration by SAG.
6. SAG discussed PHE's proposed approach to undertaking a detailed literature review on fire chemistry ahead of Tier 2 to strengthen the findings of AECOM's Technical Note 4. SAG member Jose Torero agreed to review the paper and provide feedback.
7. SAG agreed with the proposal that following the review by SAG of Technical Note 18 containing the proposals for Tier 2, MHCLG's incoming Chief Scientific Adviser (CSA), Alan Penn, should be the main day-to day-contact for science assurance and advice during Tier 2 for MHCLG and that Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and MHCLG CSAs should work together on this. SAG agreed to reconvene if needed.
8. SAG was informed that the call for research by National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) is live. The SAG chair agreed to respond to the United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) CEO's letter and request a named senior official to work with the incoming Chief Scientific Adviser in MHCLG to more clearly define potential future projects.

List of actions

ACTION 7.1: Analysis Methodology. SAG Secretariat to recommend MAP:

- a) create standalone documents from the introductory section and risk assessment annexes and redraft in the past tense. The status of the document relative to Part 2A statutory guidance and the AECOM technical notes should be clear.
- b) take account of any final comments from SQP on factual inaccuracies – SQP to provide by 6 September.
- c) draft a 1-page lay summary of the main document to accompany the methodology documents.
- d) redraft appendix B as a statement on what the results mean for public health.

- e) produce a plan for how public health advice will be provided for Tier 2, depending on different results scenarios.

ACTION 7.2: Technical Notes 16, 17 and 18, and overarching report. SQP to review and send comments to MAP by 5 September. Alex Freeman and James Rubin to send comments on the same, from a communications perspective to improve clarity where possible, to SAG secretariat by 6 September.

ACTION 7.3: SAG recommend AECOM update literature references to chloromethane in TN 17 from 2005 to more recent information.

ACTION 7.4: James Rubin and Alex Freeman to advise Suzanne Kochanowski on MHCLG's communication plans.

ACTION 7.5: SAG Secretariat to circulate HSE information note on indoor testing to SAG members.

ACTION 7.6: John Warner, Jose Torero and Len Levy to write short notes on their views on the usefulness (or otherwise) and possible approach to indoor testing by 10th September. SAG secretariat to circulate to SAG.

ACTION 7.7: SAG secretariat to check views of expert plant scientists on the MAP position on fruit/veg testing in Tier 2 and circulate to SAG.

ACTION 7.8: SAG secretariat to set up a phone call for SAG in the next week on key Tier 2 scope questions including indoor testing.

ACTION 7.9: SAG and SQP to provide any further comments on the scope/approach to Tier 2 as set out in TN18 by 11th September.

ACTION 7.10: Jose Torero to review Paper 8 and comment on the suitability of the search strategy for the fire chemistry literature review set out by PHE.

ACTION 7.11: SAG Chair to convene a meeting of the Defra and MHCLG Chief Scientific Advisers with MHCLG policy leads to discuss next steps for science assurance in Tier 2.

ACTION 7.12: SAG chair to reply to UKRI CEO on next steps on research.

In attendance

Sir Patrick Vallance, chair
Prof John Warner
Dr James Rubin
Prof Jose Torero
Suzanne Kochanowski, MHCLG
MHCLG Communications Lead
Government Office for Science secretariat

Dialling in:

Prof Sir Munir Pirmohamed
Dr Lindsay Bramwell
Prof Len Levy
Dr Alexandra Freeman
Dr Paul Nathanail (Suitably Qualified Person)

Apologies

Prof Ragnar Löfstedt

Prof Chris Whitty (in his capacity as Deputy Chief Medical Officer)

Prof Robert Mokaya

Prof Sir Anthony Newman Taylor

Prof Andrew Curran, Health and Safety Executive (in his capacity as Chief Scientific Adviser)