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THE PRIME MINISTER

10 May 2018

Dear Sir Martin

I read, with interest, details of the Inquiry's procedural hearing on 21 March. I was assured by the progress the Inquiry is making and by your sensitive handling of the investigation.

The Inquiry has rightly embraced the opportunity for families and friends of the deceased to memorialise those who lost their lives in the tragedy. There can be no greater reminder of the importance of your work and why it matters so much, to so many, than to publicly commemorate them in this way. This will help to place each of them as individuals at the heart of the Inquiry. I am pleased to hear that the commemoration hearings will take place in Kensington.

The fire in Grenfell Tower was an unimaginable tragedy and we should not be surprised by the scale and range of concerning issues that are emerging from the Inquiry's early investigations.

I am reassured by the work undertaken by you and your team to date. I am particularly pleased that the evidence sessions for Phase 1 of the Inquiry's work will soon begin, and I would encourage you to maintain the momentum of Phase 1, while you make the necessary early preparations for Phase 2. I am also mindful of my continuing duty to ensure that the Inquiry always has the skills and expertise it requires for the challenges that lie ahead, particularly in view of the scope and breadth of Phase 2.

I note that you have recognised the need to instruct additional experts to examine the gas supply to the Tower and the water pressure available to firefighters on the night. This week also saw the announcement of an expert in electrical engineering joining your team. I know that you are committed to continuing to consider the requirement for further additional or supplemental expertise as the evidence picture continues to develop.

For my part, you will recall that I wrote to you on 21 December 2017, confirming that I did not consider it necessary to appoint additional panel members to the Inquiry panel at that time. You are also aware that the Inquiries Act 2005 affords me the power to appoint panel members at any time during the Inquiry and I have iterated my intention to keep the matter under review.

To ensure that the Inquiry panel itself also has the necessary breadth of skills and diversity of expertise relevant to the broad range of issues to be considered in Phase 2, and to best serve the increasing scale and complexity of the work going forwards, I have decided to appoint an additional two panel members to support your chairmanship for Phase 2 of the Inquiry's work.

I hope this decision will provide reassurance to victims and survivors of the fire, the local community, and members of Grenfell United, who have been clear with me and the Minister for Grenfell Victims, Nick Hurd, that you are the right person to lead this Inquiry but who also believe that, in Phase 2, it would be beneficial to have additional panel members recognising the scale and breadth of issues to be considered.

I know that you agree with me that we must ensure no stone is left unturned if we are to fully understand what happened on 14 June 2017. Once suitable panel members have been identified, I will write to you again to seek your consent to their appointment, in accordance with section 7(2)(b) of the Inquiries Act 2005.

Your sincerely  
D. J.