



10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

12 October 2020

THE PRIME MINISTER

Dear Sir/Martin,

Section 7 of the Inquiries Act 2005 (the Act) states that the power to appoint additional members to the Inquiry panel is exercisable only with the consent of the Inquiry Chair. I am therefore writing to seek your consent to the appointment of Ali Akbor OBE, CEO of Unity Housing Association, to the Inquiry panel.

In addition to his role of CEO at Unity, a leading housing association supporting the BAME community in Leeds, Mr Akbor has extensive experience of the housing sector, having served at board level or in non-executive roles in a number of other housing associations, as well as a background in local government. In December 2019, Ali was awarded an OBE for services to the community in Leeds.

Section 8 of the Act is clear that in deciding to exercise my power to appoint additional panel members to the Inquiry, I must have regard to:

- 1) the need to ensure that the Inquiry panel (considered as a whole) has the necessary expertise to undertake the Inquiry; and
- 2) In the case of an Inquiry panel consisting of a chair and one or more other members, to the need for balance (considered against the background of the terms of reference) in the composition of the panel.

Ali has a range of skills and experience directly relevant to the issues that the Inquiry will be investigating in Phase 2 of its work, and not currently available to the Inquiry. His curriculum vitae has been shared with you as part of the consultation process. I am confident that Ali will be an excellent addition to the Inquiry panel.

The Act is also clear that I must not appoint a person to the panel who has a direct interest in the matters to which the Inquiry relates or a person who has a close association with an interested party, unless those links could not reasonably be regarded as affecting the impartiality of the Inquiry panel.

Ali has confirmed that he is not aware of any conflict of interest. The media intelligence company M.Int has undertaken thorough due diligence which has found no issues of potential or perceived conflict. This due diligence has also been shared with you as part of the consultation process.

I would like Ali to join the panel as soon as he is able to step back from his current responsibilities at Unity and I hope that this appointment will provide additional reassurance that the Inquiry has the breadth of skills and experience necessary to conduct a thorough investigation of the Phase 2 issues.

I look forward to receiving your consent to the appointment of Ali Akbor, which along with my letter to you, will be published on gov.uk when an announcement of the appointment is made.

Yours sincerely
Boris Johnson