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Mr Kevin Hollinrake MP
Member, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

18 February 2019

Dear Mr Hollinrake

As part of your ongoing scrutiny of the Government's efforts to reform the UK's building sector after the Grenfell Tower tragedy, I wanted to draw your attention to the recent revelations that a number of studies and reports were available to key organisations as early as 2015. These documents were produced as part of long overdue attempts to update building regulations.

According to the Guardian ([original story](#)) experts warned Government in 2015 that not enough was being done to tackle the risk of fire spreading through buildings such as Grenfell Tower. One of the studies stated that barriers intended to stop fires spreading were "often found to be missing or incomplete or incorrectly positioned"

Even more concerning is the revelation that the reports were overseen by a steering group of 23 organisations which included the Chief Fire Officers Association and LABC, yet it is unclear whether Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Fire Brigade were unaware of the issues or more worryingly were aware but did not act on the numerous warnings contained within reports. Approved Inspectors were not directly involved in this steering group. It is also worth noting that LABC were, at the time, issuing Registered Details certificates for Celotex RS5000 PIR insulation board which stated it was safe to use above 18 metres.

LABC currently sit on the Joint Regulators Group (JRG) despite serving no regulatory function within the UK's building control sector. Rather it is a lobbying group funded by local authorities to influence government policy to the benefit of its members. This is while groups such as the Construction Industry Council's Approved Inspectors Register (CICAIR), which serves an important regulatory function, are excluded from the JRG.

If, as Dame Judith claims, there will be a continued and potentially greater volume of work for AIs then it is highly concerning that CICAIR have been excluded from the JRG which MHCLG has described as being "made up of our key regulatory partners".

I appreciate that Dame Judith Hackitt has been dismissive of the stance the ACAI has taken but even she has accepted, at the 28 January Committee hearing, that AIs are highly competent, stating: "They [AIs] do have a point when they say that their levels of competence are higher than those of local authority building control."

It is inappropriate and short-sighted to exclude the most competent part of the UK's building control sector from the JRG, while allowing a lobbying organisation (LABC) with no formal role in the building control process to shape the future of the sector. This is especially true given the higher standards that AIs are held to compared to local authority building control and the regulatory function that CICAIR provides.

I hope that you will appreciate the importance of this issue and I would be happy to discuss it further with you and the wider Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Wilkins



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