



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP
*Secretary of State for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities and
Minister for Intergovernmental Relations*

**Department for Levelling Up,
Housing and Communities**

4th Floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Tel: 0303 444 3450

Email: GrenfellTowerSite@communities.gov.uk

Via email

20 December 2021

Dear Grenfell Tower Memorial Commissioners,

Thank you again for the invitation to meet with you and hear directly about your vital work. I appreciate your frankness about what you need from government to continue this work. I understand the importance of providing you with the confidence and clarity you need to resume your engagement with your communities, and want to ensure you have this in writing.

I want to be clear that I and the government are unequivocally committed to supporting the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission in the creation of a fitting and lasting memorial, determined by the community, to honour those who lost their lives in the tragedy. I recognise your important role in leading this community-led process, and I want to ensure this is honoured by public authorities who will support you in your decision-making about the future memorial. As such, it is right that all views on the memorial should be directed to the Memorial Commission for you to consider along with your communities and I will do all I can to support this.

I recognise the significance of the tower and the immense sensitivity of discussions around this, especially for the bereaved families. As I made clear both in our meeting and in my letter to *The Sunday Times* earlier this month, I am determined to hear from bereaved families, survivors and other closely affected members of the local community before any decision about the tower is taken.

As we discussed in the meeting, I would like to reaffirm the principles signed in 2018 which set out the government's commitment to putting the community at the heart of determining a fitting memorial at the site, alongside the commitments the government made regarding how future decisions about Grenfell Tower would be approached and taken. This included that decisions on site management, and any decision to bring the tower down, would prioritise the safety and security of the site and would not jeopardise either the criminal justice process or inquiry. I realise that several ministers have occupied my position since those commitments were made and it is important that I reconfirm that government stands by them. I understand that you will rightly hold me to them.

Conversations around this important issue should be sensitive and fully respect the importance of Grenfell Tower to the bereaved families, survivors and local community. I have no hesitation in reaffirming this position as a valid and accurate guide for government's actions now, as they were in 2018. As you made clear, the tower is important to you as the final resting place of your

loved ones and so a decision about its future has a particular significance to those most intimately affected.

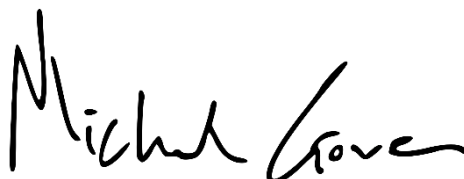
With this in mind, I am clear that these commitments will guide both my and my department's approach. I wish to be transparent and, as agreed in our meeting, I am happy for you to make this letter public.

I heard how justice is a critical part of your journey. I can assure you that the government is committed to getting to the truth about what happened at Grenfell Tower and why. I want to ensure that decisions about the site do not interfere with the important work of the Metropolitan Police, Grenfell Tower Inquiry and HM Coroner. I was asked in the meeting with bereaved families and survivors on 13 October whether a guarantee can be given that any possible deconstruction of the tower prior to the completion of the inquiry or police investigations will not jeopardise the criminal investigation. When we met, you repeated that you need assurance on this point to have confidence in future decisions about the tower. I take this matter seriously. As part of my next steps, I will continue to work with the justice agencies to give you every possible assurance on this.

Finally, you asked for an independent review of the engineering advice about the condition of the tower. I entirely accept the need for openness and transparency so that you, and other members of the bereaved and survivor community, can have a complete picture of the structural situation of the tower. It is important that families have access to the information that will inform a decision before it is taken. The department has published engineering reports about the condition of the tower and an independent peer review earlier this year. As these show, the tower is a damaged structure and its condition will continue to worsen over time due to weather and seasonal changes. However, all of the works that we have completed to date – and those that are ongoing – mean that those living, working or studying nearby can continue to do so without fear. I would like to support an additional independent assessment of the condition of the tower in which members of the bereaved and survivor community can have full confidence. I have asked my officials to work with bereaved and survivors, to enable this to happen.

Thank you again for the opportunity to meet with you, and for allowing me to hear and understand more about the lives and experiences behind the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission. I regard your work as vital and want to do everything in my power to support you in completing it. I look forward to meeting you again in future to continue these important conversations.

With every good wish,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Gove". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

RT HON MICHAEL GOVE MP
Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
and Minister for Intergovernmental Relations