

Dame Judith Hackitt
Chair, Industry Safety Steering Group

Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1 4DF

13th March 2019

Dear Ann,

I am writing to thank you for your attendance at the Industry Safety Steering Group on 4th February. The meeting generated robust and challenging discussions about the progress that industry is making in implementing the recommendations of my review and the need for the Construction Leadership Council to have a clear and visible role in that process.

The Industry Safety Steering Group was formed to scrutinise industry proposals and progress towards culture change on behalf of the Secretary of State. The role of the Industry Safety Steering Group is to provide appropriate constructive challenge to industry, recommend actions and make proposals to overcome blockages and accelerate industry culture change. We are committed to this role and supporting industry to ensure adequate progress is being made. As Chair of the Industry Safety Steering Group, I will be reporting to the Secretary of State on the progress that industry is making to implement the changes that are needed to improve building safety and to rebuild public confidence.

The CLC have an important role to play in bridging the gap between the construction industry and Government. I was encouraged to hear about the work you have undertaken to assess how the digital agenda will impact the construction sector alongside the CLC's work exploring manufacturing and the performance of assets across the lifecycle of a building. I also welcome the commitment to deliver an industry toolkit to provide guidance and support on the critical issues across the construction industry.

In recognising the progress being made to raise competence standards, there is a need for further work to fill some of the major gaps in the current landscape. It is reassuring to see the commitment by the CLC to work alongside Build UK to utilise their expertise of competence standards. Industry must work in collaboration rapidly to create these proposals and move forward by consensus as far as possible. This is a crucial opportunity for the industry to demonstrate that it has learned some very hard lessons from the Grenfell Tower tragedy and is ready and willing to change for the better.

The importance of Change

It became clear during our conversation that the CLC have not yet embraced their potential role in driving crucial reform following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire, subsequent concerns about many other high-rise buildings and the publication of my

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review. There is scope for greater co-operation between the CLC and the ISSG, to ensure that there is a consistent emphasis on the importance of building safety across all initiatives that aim to improve the construction sector. The CLC's interests in productivity, skills and quality are strongly aligned with the ISSG's safety agenda. It is, however, important to ensure that the focus on productivity does not happen at the expense of safety. Better attention to design, building quality and safety is entirely consistent with improving productivity and reducing waste, and I am particularly concerned that we take steps to exploit this alignment.

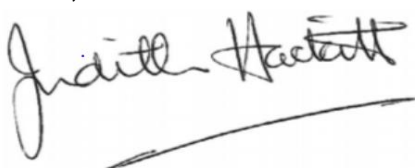
The CLC's leadership has a critical role to play in delivering behavioural and cultural change. Simply acknowledging the subsequent shortcomings uncovered by industry over the past two years does not go far enough and the ISSG believes all those in leadership positions in the industry must lead by example and change their ways of working to respond to the tragedy of Grenfell Tower. I would therefore encourage the CLC to play an active role as leaders by seeking to address the crucial need to rebuild confidence in the residential built environment in addition to your work on high end infrastructure projects. We would be eager to explore the potential for working together to do more, and to drive home the message of alignment of our goals to the wider sector. If there are others who we should draw in to play a role in this leadership, I would welcome your thoughts on how to do so.

The CLC holds a unique position in driving improvement across the construction industry, and can play a visible leadership role, providing guidance and strategic direction to wider industry in order to drive forward the much needed behavioural and cultural changes towards safety. It is disappointing that this has not yet happened. I would ask the CLC to demonstrate its leadership on these issues, by providing industry with a clear statement of intent and a robust, comprehensive and coherent message to industry on the need to change.

I would therefore like to meet with the CLC before the 3rd June meeting of the ISSG to discuss the matters raised above and how we can work together to deliver these objectives. Members of the Industry Safety Steering Group would additionally be keen to collaborate with the CLC to consider how experiences of similar challenges outside of the construction industry might support the CLC's thinking.

I look forward to hearing more and discussing the progress you are all making.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Hackitt', with a long horizontal line underneath it.

Dame Judith Hackitt

Copied to Andy Mitchell, Council Co-Chair, The Construction Leadership Council