

**Rt Hon John Healey MP**



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

**LONDON SW1A 0AA**

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP  
Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government  
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20 June 2017

Documents obtained by the BBC Panorama programme and published last night allege that four former Government Ministers in your Department – Eric Pickles, Stephen Williams, James Wharton and Gavin Barwell – over the last four years ignored specific warnings that fire safety regulations were inadequate for high-rise residential buildings like Grenfell Tower.

The letters were sent by the All-Party Parliamentary Fire Safety and Rescue Group, the Secretary of which is a former chief fire officer, Ronnie King OBE.

One Minister is quoted as saying in response "I have neither seen nor heard anything that would suggest that consideration of these specific potential changes is urgent and I am not willing to disrupt the work of this department by asking that these matters are brought forward."

You will be aware that the context for these letters is that following inquests into high-rise fires at Shirley Towers and Lakanal House, two formal Coroners' 'rule 43' letters were sent to your Department in 2013 containing specific criticisms and recommendations for the fire safety rules for tower blocks, vital parts of which were ignored or rejected by your Department.

Notably, in his response to the Lakanal House rule 43 letter in May 2013, Eric Pickles promised a review of building regulations, but in October 2016 Gavin Barwell suggested this had yet to begin.

I am writing to allow you to formally respond to these allegations, either in writing, or to Parliament:

- Will you release in full the correspondence between your Department and the All-Party Group?
- Will you set out the reasons for not acting upon their concerns?
- For each recommendation made in the rule 43 reports on the Shirley Towers and Lakanal House fires, will you set out your Departments' progress in implementing the recommendations?
- Will you place in the Library of the House a copy of the research your Department said has been undertaken on fire regulation and safety in a response to the BBC on these allegations?

I look forward to your prompt reply.

John Healey MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Housing