

Press release: Expert panel recommends further tests on cladding and insulation

The independent expert panel on safety has advised further testing as the next step to be conducted in helping landlords to ensure the safety of their buildings.

These large scale tests will help establish how different types of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) panels in combination with different types of insulation behave in a fire.

The results of these tests will help landlords make decisions on any further measures that may need to be put in place to make their buildings safe following the Grenfell Tower fire. These tests will be undertaken by the BRE and will not require any new samples from buildings.

Earlier this week the panel brought together a group of technical experts from a wide range of professions and organisations. The group [discussed the processes](#) that had been followed to identify whether buildings had ACM panels and the advice provided to building owners on [interim measures](#) and agreed that these were the right first steps.

The further tests – which will look at 3 different types of ACM cladding combined with different types of insulation – will be in accordance with British Standard 8414 in line with the panel's advice. This involves building a 9 metres tall demonstration wall with a complete cladding system – including panels and insulation – fixed to it, and then subjecting it to a fire that replicates a severe fire in a flat breaking out of a window and whether it then spread up the outside wall.

In addition, the Expert Advisory Panel recommended issuing further practical advice on immediate steps landlords can take to identify their wall materials including insulation, which will be published shortly.

The government has now commissioned the Building Research Establishment to undertake these tests as a matter of urgency. The results will be made publically available. Landlords will be expected to take their own professional advice on what is required for their buildings in the usual way.

The expert panel has concluded that 6 combinations of cladding systems should be subjected to the BS8414 test procedure. The detailed design of each of the 6, will be reviewed by the panel to ensure that it is representative of the systems that are in common use including the way it is fixed.

The 6 systems will incorporate each of the 3 common types of aluminium composite material panels, with core filler materials of unmodified polyethylene, fire retardant polyethylene, and non-combustible mineral. The 2

insulation materials used in the testing will be rigid polyisocyanurate foam or non-combustible mineral wool.

[This is stock footage of large scale testing](#)

Further practical advice on immediate steps landlords can take to identify their wall materials including insulation will be published on www.gov.uk/dclg.

The appointment of the [Expert Panel](#) was announced on 27 June 2017. The initial meeting of the Expert Advisory Panel took place on Friday 29 June. Following that meeting the Panel called together experts on Monday 3 July 2017.

Read the [Explanatory note on safety checks and testing](#) published on 30 June and the [advice provided to building owners on interim measures](#) published on 22 June.

[Press release: Brokenshire provides further details of political donations policy to MPs](#)

The Secretary of State has written to MPs to provide further details regarding the move to full transparency of donations and loans to NI political parties.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, has written to MPs to provide further details regarding the move to full transparency of donations and loans to Northern Ireland political parties. The letter, which was addressed to the shadow Secretary of State, Owen Smith MP, and placed in the libraries of both Houses, can be found [here](#).

In January, the Secretary of State wrote to the Northern Ireland parties to propose moving to full transparency and to seek views on the date from which transparency should take effect. The Secretary of State's letter and the responses of the parties, Electoral Commission and the Committee on Standards in Public Life can be found [here](#).

The change, which will be made by secondary legislation, would apply to all donations and loans received on or after 1 July 2017 and enable publication of donor information from the autumn. The proposed legislation is currently the subject of statutory consultation with the Electoral Commission.

Press release: \$600 million support secures major UAE infrastructure contracts

International Trade Secretary, Liam Fox, has announced that the UK's export credit agency, UK Export Finance (UKEF), will provide support to construction companies Carillion and Kier who have won contracts in the UAE worth hundreds of millions.

The announcement comes as the government has launched a [new initiative](#) bringing together the UK's leading firms from the infrastructure industry with government in a new partnership to help UK companies secure major international contracts.

Infrastructure projects

UK construction firms Carillion and Kier will deliver new housing, a major stadium complex and one of the Emirates' biggest office developments. Specifically, Kier has won contracts for the construction of the Dubai Arena, a 17,000-seater entertainment and sports venue, and two staff accommodation buildings. UKEF will be guaranteeing \$455 million for Kier to carry out the projects.

Carillion, which is also a Queen's Award winner, will design and build the latest phase of 'One Central', Dubai World Trade Centre's new mixed-use development in Dubai's central business district. Carillion has already delivered the first and second phases of the development, and this new contract that will see them construct 2 new office towers thanks to UKEF support of \$180 million.

International Trade Secretary Liam Fox said:

With these flagship infrastructure projects, Kier and Carillion are helping to directly shape Dubai's economy by boosting tourism and business infrastructure.

This is yet another example of the UK's global leadership in the infrastructure sector, and the Department for International Trade, as an international economic department, is proud to be helping these 2 outstanding firms succeed abroad with the backing of UK Export Finance.

Sean Fenner, Managing Director of Kier International, said:

The Dubai Arena and Nshama residential developments are remarkable projects that will transform Dubai's entertainment and accommodation sectors respectively.

The support of UK Export Finance has been instrumental in helping us win this business as we look to build on the substantial growth we've seen in international demand.

Zafar Khan, Group Finance Director at Carillion, added:

Our continuing involvement in the development of the Dubai Trade Centre District is evidence of our capabilities and reputation for high-quality construction. Winning high-quality contracts with the support of UK Export Finance is central to our strategy in the Middle East.

Further details

The Dubai Arena is a state-of-the-art multipurpose arena with a capacity of 17,000 persons which, when operational in 2019, will host major concerts and sports events. UK Export Finance has provided Meraas, the project sponsors, with \$220 million in finance to support Kier's contract to design and build the venue.

Kier has also won contracts to deliver 2 staff accommodation projects for Nshama, which UKEF will support with financing worth \$235 million. The buildings will create high-quality accommodation at a competitive price for employees of Emaar Properties.

This latest phase of the Dubai World Trade Centre is part of an 182,600 square metre development and includes 2 high-specification office buildings of 15 and 11 storeys. UKEF will provide \$180 million in finance to support Carillion's contract, and has already provided \$285 million in finance for the first and the second phases of the project which Carillion has completed.

The financing on all 3 projects has been provided in partnership with HSBC's Export and Specialised Finance team.

Richard Hodder, Global Head Export and Specialised Finance at HSBC, said:

The support required to deliver these major infrastructure contract wins reiterate the growing trend of developers in the UAE seeking export credit agency financing for complex projects. Each financing solution has a bespoke structure using innovative concepts that ensure it is aligned with the aspirations of all parties involved.

HSBC will continue to support UK contractors and further develop its strong relationship with UK Export Finance in the MENA region, following several collaborative successes in the UAE.

Speech: Speech by the Lord Chancellor: Dinner for HM Judges 2017

My Lord Mayor, Lord Chief Justice, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Can I start by joining the Lord Chief Justice in thanking you Lord Mayor for your hospitality and generosity as hosts this evening.

And it's with great pleasure that I speak to you tonight as Lord Chancellor. With great pleasure, but I confess also with a measure of trepidation. I looked through the catalogue of my illustrious predecessors and at first I was assured in realising that no fewer than three previous Lord Chancellors had subsequently been canonised as saints, though my enthusiasm was somewhat tempered by finding out that two of them had had to suffer martyrdom before they achieved that status.

While another Lord Chancellor, Archbishop Sudbury, had suffered the fate of being lynched and beheaded by a mob on Tower Hill which puts even Twitter in a certain context today.

If we think back, Lord Mayor, to the time of this dinner a year ago, we were as a nation in the immediate raw and somewhat shocked aftermath of the EU referendum result.

The mood of the country was febrile.

Feelings were running high.

Nobody knew quite what was going to happen next.

And indeed the political aftershocks came both hard and fast.

And against it, this background – unpredictable, charged and challenging – the Lord Chief Justice stood here in this room and stated calmly,

The business of the judiciary is not politics. It is the business of upholding the rule of law.

And that business, that steadfast conviction to uphold the principle of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, which goes integrally with it, forms part of the bedrock for trying to build certainty and clarity in an unpredictable and rapidly changing world.

For it is the rule of law which underpins our justice and legal system. Which gives us both certainty and clarity. In my six years as a minister at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, I saw too many countries, both in our own

continent and more widely around the world, where the battle to establish flourishing democratic institutions and to embed the values of a free society, were held back by corruption or partiality in the judicial system. And I saw too how the lack of confidence in the integrity of the judicial and legal system held back investment, trade and hopes of prosperity in countries that desperately needed that investment and trade.

So it's important to say tonight that for me the rule of law and the independence of the courts sit at the very heart of our society and our democracy and I would like to thank every member of the judiciary for what they do – day in and day out – to uphold the rule of law.

I know, even as a non-lawyer, that it is not always a straightforward or easy task.

Often cases are complex and challenging and judges are called upon to make decisions on some of our most difficult moral challenges, as we've seen illustrated in the tragic case of Charlie Gard most recently. They're decisions that very few of us would feel comfortable making.

But it is the judges with their wisdom derived from long experience, intellect and knowledge of the law to shoulder that grave responsibility and take those difficult decisions in order to further the principle that justice should be done.

And I'm happy to repeat tonight what I said at my swearing-in ceremony as Lord Chancellor last month, that I intend to be 'resolute and unflinching' in protecting the rule of law and in defending the independence of you, the judiciary.

So, here we are now a year on from the referendum and from last year's dinner.

And while different people had different and strongly held views on our membership of the EU, myself included, I think that now that the country has taken its decision our duty is to honour the choice that the electorate has made.

That is why the government has triggered Article 50 after a vote in Parliament and following the judgements of the High Court and the Supreme Court.

Now I will confess Lord Mayor, that perhaps for those of us in government, that particular moment was not always the most comfortable and I think perhaps that it was one of those occasions when government ministers had to take refuge in the wisdom of Sir Michael Jagger that 'you can't always get what you want'.

But when I look back at that case, regardless of my own views on the question being judged, it seems to me that what it actually does illustrate is a very profound constitutional principle in which all of us should be able to take pride. Namely, that an aggrieved citizen can go to an independent court and challenge anyone, including their elected government, and be confident that

in our United Kingdom the government will abide by the court's ruling. Because we live in a country that is governed by the rule of law, not one governed by the rule of men and women even if those men and women enjoy an electoral mandate.

Now, since then, we have prepared the way for a smooth and orderly exit from the EU in the Queen's Speech and we are now underway with negotiations in Brussels.

The Bill to repeal the European Communities Act and establish the *acquis* on a United Kingdom legal basis will be introduced to Parliament shortly.

Now the negotiations that lie ahead clearly cover a very wide range of issues and stretch right across ministerial departments.

And amongst them are important issues, as the Lord Chief Justice has said, relating to civil justice.

As we leave the European Union and forge a new deep and special partnership with our friends and allies in Europe, we need to create an effective system of civil judicial cooperation that will provide certainty and protection for citizens and businesses in a United Kingdom that will operate outside the jurisdiction of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

That also gives us an opportunity to affirm the status of the United Kingdom Supreme Court, in which this country does – and should – take enormous pride because of the high standards which it sets.

But more broadly, we have an opportunity to look at the way the law governing legal obligations works.

To that end, the government is now exploring the existing framework for choice of court and for the recognition and enforcement of judgments across borders....

....we are examining the current European Union Regulations and the wider international agreements, most notably from the Hague Conference on Private International Law.

And as we do that, and as we move forward with the negotiations, we will have in mind particularly the value of reciprocity in civil and commercial matters.

On questions about what law applies, in both the law of contract and non-contractual obligations, we are considering the position of the Rome I and Rome II Regulations which of course can be used without any reciprocal agreement.

And those are important matters which are currently under active consideration by ministers and will help to ensure certainty and continuity in civil justice.

And ensure too, as you rightly reminded us Lord Mayor, that English law and

the UK courts should continue to be available for the resolution of a wide range of commercial and business disputes.

I'm in no doubt about the continuing importance of legal services for the City of London, yes, but also for many other cities in other parts of the United Kingdom.

Now, I believe we do have the means and opportunity to maintain the pre-eminence of our civil justice system after we leave the European Union. And indeed, as Lord Neuberger made clear this week, there is an opportunity for Brexit to have a positive impact on London's standing as the world's legal centre and as a destination for dispute resolution, with judges able to respond more quickly and freely to world-wide developments.

It is true that some EU countries do appear to see the United Kingdom's departure as an opportunity to compete with us for a greater share of the international commercial contractual dispute resolution market...in particular by planning to operate English-speaking Common Law courts in their jurisdictions.

Well, my first response to that is to say that: "imitation continues to be the sincerest form of flattery".

And putting aside the fact that these English speaking courts do present a platform for English lawyers and judges to enhance their reputation and make English courts and English law more attractive, why should a discerning litigant or practitioner accept an imitation when the original masterwork is still available to them?

For English Common Law is already the global law of choice. It has clarity, predictability, certainty and crucially commercial adaptability. The Common Law after all underpins law in over a quarter of the world's jurisdictions.

And this country has a worldwide reputation for its justice system and legal services.

Central to that reputation is the quality and integrity of our judiciary and our exceptional courts.

The independence, impartiality and incorruptibility of our judiciary is a beacon to litigants and to legal service providers in every continent in this world.

Our courts are recognised throughout the world for their quality and also for their openness to innovation.

And that too is why I am looking forward to working with the judiciary to use the latest technology to resolve disputes not only judiciously but also with greater efficiency.

So we look forward to continuing with the important and necessary court reforms, including through the Courts Bill, announced in the Queen's Speech.

Only yesterday, we saw the opening of the new Business and Property Court here in London.

A great example of those world-class court facilities on which the judiciary has led the way and which the government is proud to support.

With the modernisation programme, courts right across the country benefit from new technology and swifter justice.

Now I want us to seize this opportunity to project English law, our courts, our judges and our legal services to the world and to new markets.

And to see the government, our justice system and our legal services unite in a common effort to harness and project to the world a strong and clear message about just how exceptional this country is when it comes to our justice system and our legal services.

Through this campaign, which I intend to launch later this year, we will tell the world why people should choose English law if they want clear and flexible contracts....

...why they should choose United Kingdom courts if they want fair and efficient dispute resolution....

....why they should choose our legal firms if they want unrivalled legal expertise....

...and why they should choose London if they want a truly global system for dispute resolution.

The message will be: 'choose the UK and you get a global guarantee of judicial excellence and integrity'.

I want to thank the judges and others here who work in our legal services sector for the work you do in countries and institutions both here and around the world in sealing that global guarantee of justice and promoting our justice system here in the UK.

I want to give you a very clear commitment that in the time that I hold this office I intend to support that effort with all the energy and commitment that I can bring to that task.

Now, there's one person in this room tonight who has done more than his fair share of leading and promoting our justice system.

I spoke earlier about the certainty provided by the rule of law.

And I want to conclude by pointing to an equal, if sadder, certainty.

This will be my first but also my last Judges' Dinner with Lord Thomas as Lord Chief Justice.

I felt when I took my seat at the table and I saw the dragons on the table in

front of us that there was a message there. The presence of Welsh gold on the table to mark Lord Thomas' final speech tonight to this event as Lord Chief Justice.

I feel honoured that my path has crossed, albeit briefly, with such a great leader of our judiciary and stalwart defender of the wider justice system.

Lord Thomas, you have served with great distinction in the office of Lord Chief Justice.

You have been throughout your term a strong advocate for the rule of law and for the judiciary's continued independence.

You have also overseen and led the courts and tribunals system through the introduction of the most radical and ambitious programme of courts and tribunal reform anywhere in the world – a programme of reform which is still ongoing.

And all of us can see the change that digital technology has made in the criminal courts and in the now Business and Property Court in London.

But I'd like to thank Lord Thomas too for the work you have done to promote a more diverse judiciary, which has seen our judiciary better reflect the full society which it serves.

Your leadership has included some difficult times, but has seen the judiciary grow stronger in its independence...

...more modern in its administration...

...more diverse in its make-up...

...and your leadership has brought greater clarity about the proper constitutional relationship between the judiciary and the other two branches of the state.

A good example of this is Lord Thomas' thoughtful and plain-speaking speech last month about the judiciary's place within the state and the relationship between the three branches of the state.

As I said at my swearing-in, all three branches are separate, but they must have mutual respect for the others. They are independent, but also inter-dependent.

In the interests of continuing to safeguard the rule of law and the position of the judiciary, I look forward to discussing these issues further with the Lord Chief Justice during his final months in office, as well as engaging on our continuing court reforms.

And in paying tribute to Lord Thomas this evening, I should also recognise Lord Neuberger, whom I know will also be retiring soon and whose leadership as only the second President of the United Kingdom's Supreme Court has rightly drawn plaudits.

He's led the Supreme Court with care and dedication, presiding over many important and complex cases, not least the Article 50 case.

So my Lord Mayor, I'd like to thank you and the City of London for your hospitality this evening and for the opportunity for me to reflect on the journey we have been on since last year's dinner.

It's been a momentous and challenging year, but I believe that while we face some real challenges in the negotiations that lie ahead we can also look forward with confidence to an exciting future for our legal services and for the judiciary here in the United Kingdom.

A future where our excellent legal services in London and right across the UK seize the opportunities presented by globalisation, in established markets and in the emerging economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America, confident that our judiciary will continue to be an exemplar of independence and expertise both here at home and right across the world.

So Ladies and Gentlemen, can I invite you to rise for a toast to the health of our kind and generous hosts this evening....to the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress.

Press release: Asda has complied with its commitment to clear pricing

After completing a review of Asda's improved approach to clearer pricing on offers, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) welcomes the steps taken by the supermarket to make promotions clearer.

Last summer the CMA, working in partnership with Trading Standards Services, identified that some promotional pricing used by supermarkets could mislead shoppers. The CMA followed up these issues with a number of supermarkets and their trading standards partners. The CMA raised specific issues with Asda, and Asda subsequently agreed to make changes to the way offers were advertised.

A year on, having reviewed and independently verified the data around these changes, the CMA is content that Asda has stuck to its commitments to clearly label offers and discounts.

Asda's changes mean that the supermarket does not display the 'now' price for longer than it displayed the original ('was') price.

There have also been changes to multibuy offers, to ensure that these always offer a saving when compared with a single product before the offer.

The CMA welcomes the positive changes made by Asda and is satisfied that Asda's pricing is clearer for shoppers. This means that the CMA has formally closed its case.

Further details about the CMA's investigation can be found on the [case page](#).

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
2. The CMA's work with supermarkets follows [its response](#) to a [super-complaint](#) made by [Which?](#) on 21 April 2015 regarding pricing practices in the groceries market.
3. The CMA has not made a finding on whether supermarkets' pricing and promotional practices have breached consumer law. The CMA or other enforcers may take enforcement action if there is evidence that pricing and promotional practices breach consumer law. Only a court can conclude whether a particular practice infringes the law.
4. The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) came into force on 26 May 2008 and implemented the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive 2005/29/EC into UK law. The CPRs contain a general prohibition against unfair commercial practices, and specific prohibitions against misleading actions, misleading omissions and aggressive commercial practices. The CPRs are enforceable through the civil and criminal courts.
5. Trading Standards Services partners carry out responsibilities in relation to a particular business. Businesses can choose to form a partnership with a local Trading Standards Services (known as a primary authority). The primary authority scheme is a statutory scheme, administered by the Better Regulation Delivery Office within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). One forum in which primary authority officers meet is the [Primary Authority Supermarkets Group](#).
6. BEIS [welcomed](#) the CMA's response to the super-complaint and set out some proposals relating to improving unit pricing for groceries, in line with the CMA's recommendations.
7. The CMA also made a [submission](#) to the Chartered Trading Standards

Institute's consultation on the Pricing Practices Guide (PPG). CTSI published revised [Guidance for Traders on Pricing Practices](#) in December 2016.

8. Enquiries should be directed to Rebecca Cassar (Rebecca.Cassar@cma.gsi.gov.uk, 020 3738 6633).
9. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798.