22nd January 2021: Kingspan statement on misunderstanding arising from Inquiry evidence on 9th December 2020

Kingspan would like to explain and correct a misunderstanding that arose at Inquiry on 9th December 2020 when it was stated that “Kingspan was engaged in a wholesale attempt to mislead Clive Betts and the Select Committee”.

Kingspan has written to the Inquiry and to MHCLG to correct this misunderstanding. The letter to MHCLG can be viewed here.

In its questioning, the Inquiry referred to emails relating to a different test (conducted in May 2018) to the one which was shared with the Select Committee (conducted in July 2018).

The July 2018 test illustrated the very important public safety points that Kingspan was making to the Select Committee, namely that large-scale testing of the whole cladding system is the best way to determine the fire safety of the system, and that the current regulatory regime permits the construction of cladding systems which would fail a large-scale fire safety test despite their using only non-combustible and limited combustibility insulation and cladding materials.

Regardless of the fact that the May 2018 test was not shared with the Select Committee, Kingspan also rejects any suggestion that the May 2018 test was “gamed” or “manipulated”.

The intention was to test a system which might realistically be specified to be used on a building in the UK in accordance with the linear route to compliance, but which nevertheless contained design “imperfections”, which might be seen in practice and lead to a less robust fire performance than an optimally designed system.

The tested system passed (i.e., it met the BR 135 criteria) and was not shared with the Select Committee, because it was not relevant as it did not illustrate the public safety point that Kingspan was seeking to explain.

It is not in doubt that some systems comprising only A1/A2 cladding and insulation materials will meet BR 135 requirements when tested to BS 8414. The point is that not all such systems will meet those requirements.

END