

- 5.8. I can see from review of documents that, over the period 7-10 March 2020, there were multiple email chains running in relation to what became the SBGF. I have tried below to organise the various emails into a narrative that is relatively easy to follow. I have sometimes needed to include the timing of emails to explain the chronology and because events were so fast moving.

7 March 2020

- 5.9. There was an email chain on 7-8 March 2020 between HMT and MHCLG [JD/018 – INQ000543050]. Initially neither the Department nor CLGU officials were part of the correspondence.
- 5.10. On 7 March 2020, [Name Redacted] (MHCLG) identified some issues associated with using local authorities to administer money [JD/018 – INQ000543050]. I was not copied into that email.
- 5.11. HMT replied to [Name Redacted] on 7 March 2020 [JD/018 – INQ000543050]. Again, I was not copied in. The email stated that HMT did not yet have a specific proposal, but the Chancellor was believed to be contemplating overall funding of around £1 billion. HMT also wrote:

“My initial thinking was also that this would be easier if we gave LAs more discretion. But perhaps with some guidelines about what kind of criteria we think they should use.

Any thoughts about how we could be more specific about what we think LAs might be able to do/ achieve? Whether they would welcome the funding, or criticise us for expecting them to do the impossible? Do you know if we did anything like this in the past (at a large/ national scale, rather than flooding type scale)? Anything around 2008 financial crisis?...”

- 5.12. [Name Redacted] replied on 7 March 2020 [JD/018 – INQ000543050]. I was not copied. She explained that BEIS distributed money under the Flood Recovery Framework to support businesses. She also wrote, *“I think it’s hard to call how they [local authorities] would react. I think the more cumbersome you make it and the more pressure you put on LAs to do it quickly the harder it will be. New burdens funding might grease the wheels”* [sic]. In further emails that day she suggested making contact with BEIS and also provided Tony Bray’s contact details.