

Letter from Sir David Calvert Smith QC to the Chief Minister, 29 July 2022

Dear Chief Minister

This letter follows a helpful meeting with you and [your Assistant Private Secretary] this afternoon.

As we discussed, the process of drafting my report, sending out “Maxwellization” letters, receiving replies and then considering the need to amend the report in the light of any of them, took longer than anticipated and it was not until near or at the end of the tenure of your predecessor as Chief Minister that the substantive report took on its final shape.

One important matter remained for discussion from my ToR – namely the desirability or otherwise of instituting a full-blown inquiry into the events which resulted in the withdrawal of the RNLI’s ALB service from St Helier on two occasions in 2017. I hoped that following such a discussion I could finally indicate my own view of the desirability of such an inquiry.

First of all I should say that my comparative ignorance of the realities of life on the island and of course of its economy etc means that my view either way should carry little weight when the ultimate decision-maker – yourself – is so much better qualified to make the decision.

With that limitation in mind I would respectfully suggest that enough is now known about those events and their aftermath. I would hope that the conclusions I reached as to the lack of accountability of certain parties in my report would mean that the lessons drawn from them could be learned and acted upon without the need for what would no doubt be a long drawn out and expensive inquiry. It might be that with witnesses being compelled to give evidence about their actions or inactions during the period it would be possible to come to firm(er) conclusions concerning individual faults or the lack of them during the period 2016-8, but I doubt whether such a process or result would assist the island to move forward.

Additionally, while the conclusions of such an inquiry would no doubt be considered by the RNLI, the principal “player” in the events of 2017, the RNLI would be under no obligation to execute any recommendation made by it.

And so, while of course the decision on this issue is yours, I would respectfully suggest that enough has been revealed by my inquiry and the many responses I received from witnesses to make the way forward clearer in terms of significantly increasing public accountability without the need for a another more formal inquiry.

I hope this is helpful.

Please let me know if you like further input from me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored background. The signature is written in a cursive style and reads "J. Calvert-Smith". The first letter 'J' is large and loops down. The name 'Calvert-Smith' follows in a fluid, connected script.

Sir David Calvert-Smith