



BIRMINGHAM INQUESTS (1974)

Jurisdiction: Birmingham & Solihull Areas

Coroner for the Birmingham Inquests (1974): HH Sir Peter Thornton QC

Press Notice

The Coroner has considered carefully the High Court judgment handed down last week on the scope of the inquests. The judgment concerns the extent to which these inquests, which are not criminal proceedings, can investigate and seek to identify those individuals who were responsible for the tragic events in Birmingham 43 years ago. This is a complex matter about the purpose of an inquest and the approach of a coroner to setting the boundaries of his, or her, investigation.

The questions raised by the judgment are vital to the inquests into the deaths of the 21 people who died as a result of the bombings and are also of general public importance. The Coroner considers that clarity and certainty are required on these matters in order that the work of the inquests can continue to proceed effectively. In the circumstances, the Coroner considers that legal issues raised in the High Court judgment require reconsideration and clarification and he now intends to seek permission to appeal the judgment to the Court of Appeal.

The Coroner regrets that this application for permission to appeal will mean that the inquests cannot proceed to public hearings at this time. The pre-inquest review hearing listed for 22 February 2018 will therefore be vacated. However, he considers that it is essential to ensure that the correct path is established at this stage, so as to avoid further delay and uncertainty later in the process.

Work will continue on matters that are not related to the issues considered in the High Court judgment. The Coroner will continue to work with the families, the other Interested Persons at the inquests, and potential witnesses. He is grateful for all of the assistance that he has received to date.

All of the Interested Persons in the inquests, including the families, have been informed of the Coroner's decision to seek permission to appeal.

31 January 2018