

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

Grenfell Tower Recovery Taskforce (O)(17)(02) Minutes

GRENFELL TOWER RECOVERY TASKFORCE

Minutes of Officials Meeting on Grenfell Tower Fire

Conference Room F, 70WH

At 1530 Tuesday 20 June

PRESENT

CHAIR:

Paddy MCGUINNESS
Deputy National Security Advisor

Katharine HAMMOND
Civil Contingencies Secretariat

XXXX
No10

Melanie DAWES
Department for Communities
and Local Government

Camilla SHELDON
Department for Communities
and Local Government

Chris WEST
HM Treasury

Emma HADDAD
Department for Work and Pensions

Sharon CARTER
Cabinet Office

David LAMBERTI
Home Office

Clair BAYNTON
Department of Health

Sir David CARTER
Department for Education

Stuart BREWER
Department for Transport

Chris BURTON
Department for Business, Energy and
Industrial Strategy

Tim HENRY
Ministry of Defence

Catherine HINWOOD
Ministry of Justice

David BELLAMNY
Mayor's Office

Judith BERNSTEIN
Ministry of Justice

Roy WILSHER
National Fire Chiefs' Council

Commander Neil JEROME
Met Police

Chloe DUNNETT

Andy SHEILDS

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

Home Office

Cabinet Office (EDS)

Dialling in:

Clair LONSDALE – HSE

Mike CROSS – HSE

John BARRADELL – Local Authority GOLD

Secretariat

Bhavan JANDU

Michael HAFSKOLD

1. THE CHAIR outlined that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss (i) actions arising from the Ministerial meeting the previous day (ii) accommodation issues (iii) planned Inquiry and associated communications (iv) managing uncertainties (v) GOLD

ITEM 1: Retrieval and identification of the dead

2. THE CHAIR asked the Met Police to give an update on retrieval and identification. The MET POLICE explained that the recovery process was continuing and involved specially trained police officers, recovery dogs and anthropologists. It was anticipated that the process of recovering identifiable bodies would be done by the end of the week. The MET POLICE provided an updated on the latest casualty figures and those in critical care.
3. The MET POLICE then gave an update on the risk of public disorder, which they considered to be low. The State opening of Parliament would take place the next day and an organised 'day of rage'.

ITEM 2: Support for those affected

Housing

4. THE CHAIR asked John BARRADELL to provide an update on the housing situation. JOHN BARRADELL updated that 249 households were in emergency accommodation, 109 of which were within the cordon area. 33 households had been offered properties, but none had accepted. Media reports suggesting that families were being rehoused outside of Kensington and Chelsea Borough were untrue. 18 offers of temporary accommodation had been made, but none had been accepted. There remained one family in the rest centre, who had declined offers of accommodation four times. JOHN BARRADELL said he believed that the three week target to move everyone to temporary accommodation was still achievable.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

5. THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT stated that they agreed with this. The numbers of households still in emergency accommodation appeared high due to families not accepting offers. One of the key issues was the lack of hot water in some of the properties which were evacuated, meaning the residents could not return. The Department was working up options of how to restore the hot water access and would present these to ministers tomorrow.
6. THE CHAIR asked what was needed in order for the hot water to be restored. JOHN BARRADELL replied that an engineering solution was required.
7. The MINISTRY OF DEFENCE stated that it was possible for them to send an engineering assessment team to the site.
8. THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT raised the issue of some individuals being reluctant to co-operate due to concerns that their immigration status may be used against them. More specificity was needed from the Home Office on using discretion.

Money

9. THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS confirmed that 63 (out of approximately 125) payments of £5000 had been paid to households.
10. JOHN BARRADELL added that 76 individuals had received £500 cash.
11. THE DEPARTMENT FOR WORK AND PENSIONS stated that they collated figures at 12pm and 5pm.
12. It was reiterated that the £500 cash payment was made to every individual over 16, whereas the £5000 payment was to every household.

Coordination (local and central government)

13. JOHN BARRADELL requested that departments/agencies should contact him via DCLG RED only.
14. There was a general discussion about handling queries from Ministers and backbenchers.
15. JOHN BARRADELL outlined the purpose of Westway Community Centre. JOHN BARRADELL raised concerns that the management was not adequate enough. The new centre which was set to be opened would specifically be for people who has lost loved ones and who would need to have contact with the coroner. De Vere hotels were willing to provide a site for this new centre.

ITEM 3: What went wrong

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

Inquiry Update

16. CABINET OFFICE PROPIERTY AND ETHICS team confirmed that Cabinet Office would be sponsoring the inquiry. This will be held under the Inquiry Act 2005 and led by a judge. It was important that the Inquiry did not impede any criminal investigation. The inquiry may publish an interim report. CABINET OFFICE PROPIERTY AND ETHICS said that they were currently working on staffing for the Inquiry. Families would get access to legal aid and will be consulted on the terms of reference. There were likely to be two stages in the Inquiry. The first stage would focus more on systemic processes, whereas the second stage would focus more on specific issues.

ITEM 4: Steps to protect and reassure residents of tower blocks

17. Tamara FINKLESTEIN will be leading on the Grenfell Tower recovery for THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Identification of at risk buildings

18. THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT stated that after the fire at Grenfell Tower, social landlords (local authority and housing association) were contacted on Friday 16 June to perform fire safety checks on their high rise buildings.
19. As of 1200 today (Tuesday, 20 June), there have been 860 returns. Approximately half of those returns so far have identified tower blocks within their housing stock, with 72 towers being cladded, however, this is a dynamic figure that is expected to increase considerably over the coming days. Those housing providers who have identified cladding on their buildings need to have this tested for combustibility by BRE Ltd.
20. THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT confirmed that they expect all returns to be completed by the end of the day.

Reassurance and fire safety activities

21. ROY WILSHIRE stated that while the combustibility tests are being conducted, there are other measures that can be implemented to ensure fire safety, such as fire wardens and supplying extinguishers.
22. The CHAIR highlighted the importance of clarifying the policy options to ensure fire safety measures and reassurance to residents.

Other

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

23. THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT informed that they have been in contact with the Devolved Administrations; the SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT are undertaking similar questionnaires and requests to social landlords.
24. The importance of alignment between the Devolved Administrations on the issue of buildings fire safety testing was noted.

ITEM 5: Communications

25. CABINET OFFICE COMMS stated that the questions being asked by the media are getting more substantive, that's to say the shift is moving from "what happened?" to "why did it happen?"
26. CAROL MCCALL explained that COMMS GOLD have established Twitter and Facebook pages to better communicate developments to those affected, however, it was reiterated that Gov.uk remains the main source of information.
27. Work is also currently under way with search engines to ensure that the Gov.uk Grenfell support page appears at the top of the list when searched are made for Grenfell Tower.
28. JOHN BARRADELL stated that there had not been any ministerial visits recently, which had been helpful in focusing his full attention on the recovery efforts.
29. CAROL MCCALL informed that COMMS GOLD hold two comms briefings per day, and that there were no major comms event in the immediate future.

ITEM 6 – NEXT STEPS

30. THE DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT said that the London Borough of Croydon has already made the decision to retro-fit sprinklers on LA tower blocks of 10 storeys and above.
31. THE CHAIR asked whether there was provision for affected foreign nationals to receive support.
32. THE FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE stated that they were there to answer queries from foreign missions in London by offering advice to procedural issues, such as recovering remains of the deceased, directing and messaging. They were also working to distribute a note to missions explaining the coronial process in the UK is of a high standard, and as a result, could take some time to complete.

OFFICIAL SENSITIVE

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT

33. THE CHAIR also asked if there was a mechanism between the FCO and the METROPOLITAN POLICE to communicate, and it was agreed that this would be improved.
34. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE updated the group that there was no capability for defence to supply hot water to affected properties within the outer cordon.
35. DAVID BELLAMY suggested that there were private contractors that could potentially consult on providing hot water to affected properties. THE MAYOR'S OFFICE would liaise with the MINISTRY OF DEFENCE on this issue.
36. JOHN BARRADELL requested a senior ranking officer with engineering expertise to offer advice to LA GOLD.
37. THE CHAIR drew the meeting to a close.

Cabinet Office
20 June 2017