

Bi-monthly meeting – LFB Fire Safety & KCTMO H&S

18th January 2017 at 9.30am at Network Hub, Kensal Road.

Present:

LFB – Rebecca Burton – LFB Fire Safety Team Leader

LFB – Nick Davis – LFB Station Manager – North Kensington

KCTMO – Janice Wray – Health, Safety & Facilities Manager

KCTMO – Jo Jacques – Sheltered Housing Team Leader

KCTMO RD – Shannon MacInnes – HSEQ Manager

Notes of meeting

1. Introductions & Attendance

Shannon was welcomed to the group and Janice advised that this was likely to be the constitution of the group for the foreseeable future. However, members were welcome to invite other colleagues if they considered that this would be of value.

2. Adair Tower

2.1 Post-Notice audit documentation

Rebecca confirmed that both Adair and Hazlewood Towers had been audited and all items raised by the Enforcement Notices had been “re-scored” and found to be “broadly compliant”. She confirmed that LFB procedures were that Janice would, therefore, be receiving a letter in relation to each block confirming their “broadly compliant” status and that these letters would also confirm that the Enforcement Notices had been satisfactorily complied with. Janice requested confirmation of the timescale for this documentation as our Chief Executive, RBKC and the TMO Board are anxious to receive this confirmation. Rebecca explained that the paperwork could not be drafted until the Hazlewood Tower audit had been successfully concluded in mid-November. Additionally, LFB administration teams are required to give priority to Enforcement and Deficiency Notices as opposed to broadly complaint letters – even those that relate to Enforcement Notices. Rebecca agreed to chase this up and, if possible, provide Janice with an indicative timescale for receipt of this documentation.

2.2 Update on ongoing investigation

Janice sought an update on the LFB's ongoing investigation on the Adair fire. Rebecca confirmed that the LFB had held a further case conference to discuss this issue in the first week of January and the conclusion had been that there was enough evidence to prove offences but also a lot of mitigating circumstances. Rebecca commented that the evidence the LFB have is currently weighted 50:50. However, the question of whether this would be

in the public interest is still to be addressed. Janice sought clarification of how this investigation will now proceed. Rebecca confirmed that no further witness statements were to be taken and no further documentation was required from the TMO at present. Rebecca advised that the LFB's legal team have requested that her team review all information and produce a summary file for their consideration by the end of January. This is to factual and will include a brief summary of liaison meetings between the TMO and Rebecca's predecessors, mention the Deficiency Notice issued in Oct 2015 and then provide details of the fire, the Enforcement Notice etc. It is possible that at this stage additional information will be requested from the TMO. Rebecca was unable to comment on the legal team's timescales.

4. Community Safety Bids

Nick advised that, unfortunately, the TMO's bids for mobility scooter storage and charging areas at three of our sheltered housing schemes had been unsuccessful. He was unable to confirm if the bid for the telecare overlay for the Dartrey Sheltered Clubroom had been approved but agreed to investigate with the Borough Commander and advise. Janice expressed disappointment and queried the type of bids that had been successful. Rebecca advised that a number of sprinkler, misting and mobile suppression systems had been funded. Additionally, she knew of one large bid for retrofitting of suppression systems in a tower block in another part of London.

5. Fires in KCTMO Properties since previous meeting

Janice advised that the following fires had been reported since the previous meeting in mid-October -

- On 26th October there had been a fire on the external private balcony of a flat at Pickwick House. LFB had attended and advised as follows - "The occupier hangs washing out to dry on the balcony, I found remnants tea light candles in the debris, neighbours stated that she burns candles on the balcony. No other means of ignition present. Off the ground making deliberate ignition difficult".
- On 24th November LFB were called to 25 Mulberry Close by a neighbour as a smoke alarm was sounding. LFB forced entry and found [REDACTED] tenant in bedroom but unharmed. LFB advised cause was "misuse of cooking in a microwave oven". Concern raised about [REDACTED] the resident and this is being taken up by the Neighbourhood Team.
- On the 12th January the LFB had been called to an automatic fire detection activation in flat 20 of the sheltered scheme at 70 Tavistock Road. The resident had lit a candle and placed it 30cms of the floor and unfortunately her clothing had caught fire whilst passing the candle. The tenant [REDACTED] was released later the same day. (There had been very minor damage to a kitchen cupboard.)

In relation to the last fire, Jo confirmed that the LFB will be attending this scheme in early February to address a meeting of the residents about fire safety.

6. AFD False Alarms & Lift Shut-ins

Rebecca agreed to circulate the LFB attendances at false afd activations to the group. Additionally, Nick will circulate the breakdown of LFB attendances at KCTMO lifts to release shut-in passengers. However, in relation to a recent letter from the Adair Tower Residents Association which had been sent to the TMO and copied to the LFB, Nick advised that his colleagues had raised concern about a “spike” in attendances at this lift in recent months and this requires further investigation. Once the current breakdown has been distributed Nick suggested that it may be helpful to meet with Janice and the TMO Lift Contract Manager to clarify what action is being taken to address this issue. Nick to advise of convenient dates and Janice to set up meeting.

7. Enforcement Action / Deficiency Notices & Correspondence with LFB

Janice confirmed receipt of the following correspondence –

- a Deficiency Notice had been received on Lonsdale House
- a Deficiency Notice had been received in relation to 9 Colville Square
- a Deficiency Notice had been received in relation to Barandon Walk, Lancaster west Estate, W11
- a Deficiency Notice had been received in relation to Grenfell Tower, W11
- several e-mails in relation to Trelick Tower forwarding complaints from residents in relation to fire doors and refuse within bin rooms. Rebecca had confirmed her team were not currently proposing to follow up with an inspection and Janice advised that all necessary repairs are either completed or imminently due to be completed.
- request received for the FRAs for sheltered blocks and sheltered clubroom at Cremorne following audit there on 17th January 17.

Janice had queried with Rebecca why 9 Colville Sq had received a Deficiency Notice when two years earlier it had been audited and found to be “broadly compliant” and in the intervening period there had been no material alterations, no fires and no changes to the vulnerability of the residents etc. Rebecca had clarified that the previous broadly compliant had come with LFB concerns which did not appear to have been addressed and so this and the Inspecting officers additional concerns about emergency lighting had resulted in the Deficiency Notice on this occasion. Rebecca advised that her Officer had had concerns that our assessor had based his assessment of the compartmentation at this block on some presumptions and she was not confident that he had demonstrated that this block could support a “stay put” strategy – further evidence required for converted blocks. With regard to broadly compliant letters Rebecca confirmed that , as per Janice’s request, in future these would document any concerns the Inspecting Officer needed to highlight.

With regard to Barandon Walk the Deficiency Notice had raised the issue of some flat entrance doors being potentially non-fire rated but had, unfortunately, not identified which specific doors were of concern. Janice clarified that this block had not originally been enclosed and so when the glazed roof etc, were constructed smoke detection was fitted into the atria and linked to automatic openable vents. All works received Building Control / Regulations approval and the LFB would have been consulted as part of this process.

Therefore, the current situation is that doors and windows, which historically opened onto an external area, now open onto an internal one. Rebecca advised that the LFB's position is that all doors opening onto the area should be suitably fire-rated and ideally all glazing should be fire rated and windows fixed closed. She appreciated that this was not achievable as these windows tended to be for kitchen and bathroom areas, however, she advised that this is something we should discuss in detail with our Fire Risk Assessor in order to identify a longer term strategy for addressing this potential risk area.

Mention was made of the mobility scooter in the communal area at Grenfell Tower and the measures being taken to address this.

Finally, Janice advised that the sheltered housing blocks and separate sheltered clubroom at Cremorne Estate had been audited this week and previously in February 2016 which was only an 11-month gap. Rebecca confirmed that recently the LFB had been auditing each sheltered block annually, however, going forward audits would be less frequent - likely to be 2-yearly but with the actual frequency for each block determined by risk.

8. Stable Way – Travellers Site

Nick confirmed that Firefighter North, who has been acting as unofficial liaison officer with the travellers, will be retiring at the end of this year and so he had instructed "A Watch" to shadow FF North and start to build up relationships with the travellers so they are able to assume his role and ensure a smooth handover when the retirement comes around. Janice encouraged A Watch to make contact with the TMO Manager who is based at Stable Way (Daniel Mason) who can assist with introductions etc. Nick agreed to keep the group apprised of progress with this.

9. LFB Fire Safety / Familiarisation exercises

Nick advised that familiarisation exercises currently scheduled are to be run in-house and do not involve any blocks. However, he confirmed that our blocks will be considered if an external exercise should be planned.

10. Fire Safety in "Specialised Housing"

Janice confirmed that she and Jo had attended the briefing at LFB HQ on the 16th January where Colin Todd had presented the main points of his draft guide. It is understood that this is soon to be released for public consultation and so it is likely that the final document will not be available for some time. Janice queried the Inspecting Team's timescale for implementing this guide and auditing all specialised housing against these enhanced standards. Rebecca confirmed that the LFB had already issued officers with their finalised procedures in relation to specialised housing (ahead of the Guide commissioned by the Chief Fire Officers being produced by Colin Todd) and staff had been instructed to implement these new standards. However, as her Inspecting Officers had received no training since March 16 and the draft guidance had changed since then Rebecca confirmed that her team are not yet assessing against the proposed new standards. Rebecca agreed to advise on timescale for when her team adopt these new requirements.

11. Memorandum of Understanding / Primary Authority Partnerships

Janice advised that she had agenda-ed this item following discussion with peers at other housing providers and requested that Rebecca advise on the advantages of signing one of these. Rebecca confirmed that the **Primary Authority Partnerships** are currently only available to organisations with stock in locations served by more than one Fire & Rescue Service. However, this will be changing in September and would potentially be open to more providers.

Contrary to the impression that Janice had been given by peers elsewhere, where a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed this does not mean that the LFB cease auditing the stock. Rebecca advised that these agreements set out the standards in relation to providers with whom there is no regular ongoing liaison. It was agreed by all that our liaison meetings are really helpful and preferable to a written agreement.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 Dartrey Sheltered Housing Scheme – location of fire documents

Janice explained that this sheltered scheme consisted of a number of purpose-built self-contained dwellings located on several floors of **Dartrey Walk** on the Worlds End Estate, SW10. There is a separate and self-contained sheltered clubroom on **Dartrey Walk** but this is generally only open during working hours and so the question had arisen of where the fire document box which attending operational crews would need to access. The LFB's views were sought and following discussion it was agreed that the most appropriate location would be in the ground floor lift lobby of Ashburnham Tower as this was close to where the LFB access the estate (on Blantyre Street) and provides ready access to **Dartrey Walk**.

Action: Janice advised to seek confirmation with the Station Manager for Chelsea.

12.2 Detection equipment for disabled resident

Janice advised of a deaf sheltered resident who had previously been provided with a strobe light and under pillow vibrating pad by the LFB. Janice asked if this device needed to be renewed would the LFB be able to assist. Nick suggested a Home Fire Safety Visit initially to assess. Janice will provide more detail if this is required.

12.3 Date of next meeting

Next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 22nd March 17 at 9.30am in Network Hub.

Distribution:

Those Attending