

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA****HOUSING AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE****11 MAY 2016****GRENFELL TOWER REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Housing Property and Scrutiny Committee with information and recommendations from the Board Member review of the Grenfell Tower regeneration project.

**FOR INFORMATION****1. BACKGROUND**

1.1 In association with the development of the Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre projects, which completed in summer 2015, it was decided that money should be invested into Grenfell Tower. Stock condition information highlighted that Grenfell Tower was in poor condition and therefore it was agreed to invest £10.3m on improvements. The money invested came from the sale of basements at Elm Park Gardens and was not part of the HRA capital programme. The works commenced on site in June 2014 and are due to be completed at the end of March 2016. Final landscaping works will then be undertaken during April and May typically the planting season.

1.2 The scope of works included the following:

- New heating and hot water
- New double glazed windows
- Thermal cladding of the building
- Smoke/safety and ventilation works
- Improved foyer and door entry
- Associated environmental works
- 9x new hidden homes
- New nursery
- New boxing club
- Landscaping improvements

1.3 The contractor Rydon was selected to undertake the work supported by consultants Artelia for contract administration and Max Fordham as specialist mechanical and electrical consultants. Rydon were responsible for design, construction and resident liaison work. The

TMO worked with all partners and were responsible for the overall project management.

1.4 Resident consultation indicated their preferred approaches to resident engagement were: letters & newsletters, informal “drop-in” sessions and one to one consultation. These approaches were adopted throughout the project.

1.5 A group of residents living in Grenfell Tower formed a resident compact halfway through the project in June 2015. The TMO worked with the compact to address issues that were raised relating to the regeneration project. At full council on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 a petition signed by 51 residents was tabled at the meeting. The matter was referred to the Housing and Property Scrutiny committee and a speech from one of the compact members was presented to the meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> January 2016. At the Board meeting of the 5<sup>th</sup> January the KCTMO Board members were made aware of the petition and agreed that a delegated group of board members would review the issues raised. The Scrutiny committee was then informed that the Board would review the project and respond to the matters raised in the speech by the compact. The Board has previously been emailed a full copy of this speech.

1.6 All members of the Board were invited on the 19<sup>th</sup> January to express an interest in joining the review group. The following members put themselves forward:

Paula Fance – Chair  
Kush Kanodia  
Mary Benjamin  
Councillor Condon-Simmonds  
Deborah Price  
Anne Duru

1.7 An initial scoping meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> February for the Group to define the scope of the review. It was agreed that the review would be undertaken over one full day and would cover the following areas:

- Resident consultation and engagement
- The position of the HIU in the hallways
- Allegations of threats, lies and intimidation
- Response to complaints
- Quality of work and site management
- Compensation

1.8 The review day held on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> March commenced with a presentation covering background information to the project and detailed information on each area of the review as set out in 2.7 above. The Group was then taken on a tour of Grenfell Tower to view; the construction works, the show flat, the boxing club and the hidden homes. Each member was provided with a full pack for the day which included the detailed information covering each area of the scope. The group discussed each point mentioned above in detail and the recommendations were noted for future projects of this nature.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The following recommendations were the outcome of the discussion held by the Group:

- The names and addresses of all those attending public meetings should be recorded and minutes taken of each meeting for future reference should this be required.
- Where projects span over 12 months in duration the initial resident profile survey information is repeated on a six monthly basis. This would help to ensure that any additional needs that have not been identified at the beginning of the project are identified.
- Where residents have language requirements and have chosen to use family members to help translate then this information should be recorded and signed off in order to help ensure that if the family member is not available then translation services can be provided.
- A procedure is drafted to outline the different stages involved in gaining access on future projects this procedure could then be sent to only those residents that were not cooperating to avoid any misunderstanding and to ensure that due processes are always followed.
- The Group agreed that this report be shared with RBKC (attached as Part B Report B2)

## **3. CONCLUSIONS**

3.1 The Group recognised that there were significant challenges with the project and acknowledged that residents would have experienced inconvenience due to the nature of this type of construction work and the constraints of the particular design of Grenfell Tower. This disruption included:

- Noisy work: Demolition and drilling
- Access: Use of lifts by contractors to transport materials

- Pipework: Retrofit of pipes
  - Additional floors for lifts
  - Wet Trades (e.g. plastering)
  - Sub-contractors that went into administration during the project
  - Maintaining services (heating and hot water) whilst residents are in situ
- 3.2 The Group were satisfied with the following mitigating actions that were undertaken to limit the disruption caused by the above:
- Limiting noisy work hours: 9am to 3pm
  - Lifts: one for passengers and only one used for materials.
  - Two flats were made available for respite facilities for residents to use
  - Rydons RLO was based on site to deal with all specific issues on a day to day basis
- 3.3 It was further acknowledged that residents had experienced disruption from both the KALC project and the Grenfell Tower works over an extended period of time since December 2012.
- 3.4 The Group commended the contractor Rydon on their performance and ability to deliver a complex construction project. They considered that a number of high quality hidden homes had been delivered together with excellent new facilities for the boxing club and community room. A door knocking exercise was undertaken in December 2015 to ask residents if they were satisfied with the works. 77 of the 120 households responded and of these 90% of residents confirmed that the improvements to heating and hot water were working effectively. 83% of residents were happy with their new windows.
- 3.5 Rydons are an experienced contractor that has a good reputation for delivering this type of construction work where residents are in occupation. The combination of all partners involved in this project has contributed to very successful improvements to the building and residents homes. The regeneration works have provided individual control over their own utility usage and residents will benefit from increased thermal insulation.
- 3.6 The Group commended the excellent work of the Director of Assets and Regeneration and the KCTMO team involved in high quality management of the project over 22 months.
- 3.7 The Group noted that a full project review and resident satisfaction survey would be undertaken six months after the project is

completed. The results of this review will be presented to a future Board meeting.

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**Background Papers used in the Preparation of this Report:**

None

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