

TMO Meeting – Fire Risk Assessments  
Kensington and Chelsea Town Hall, Room 140  
Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> August 2009  
@ 1500hrs

Attendees: Jean Daintith – Executive Director ( LB Kensington & Chelsea)  
Laura Johnson – Housing Dept ( LB Kensington & Chelsea)  
John Walsh – LFB ( Kensington & Chelsea Team)  
Collette O'Hara – LFB (Kensington & Chelsea Team)  
Brian Deans – LFB, Borough Commander (Kensington & Chelsea)  
Angus Sangster – LFB, Team Leader (Kensington & Chelsea Team)  
Keith Holloway – TMO Properties

Recorder: Jake Lawrence – LFB (Performance Management & Support Team)

**1. Opening Statement:**

Meeting began with all attendees being introduced and an understanding gained from Jean Daintith as to the ranking system within the brigade.

Jean Daintith expressed her concern the LFB were treating K&C Council differently to other boroughs. She also expressed a want to comply with current legislation.

Angus Sangster reassured her that K&C Council were not being treated any different to other housing providers or other borough councils. If any deficiencies are identified within properties then they are addressed with the managing agents.

Jean Daintith reaffirmed the Councils commitment to adhering to current legislation and making buildings safe. All parties agreed this was the main aim of the meeting.

**2. Enforcement Notice(s):**

Jean Daintith expressed her concern that the London Fire Brigade had considered serving an Enforcement Notice on the Council.

Angus Sangster (LFB) advised her that the decision to potentially do this had not been a simple one. The LFB have been in discussion with TMO since mid 2008, however the TMO offices in place lacked the competence to carry out adequate risk assessments.

**3. Risk Categories:**

Keith Holloway (TMO) stated that the TMO have risk categorised their high risk properties and found 50 that need looking at.

Collette O'Hara (LFB) questioned whether there were 50 or 110?

Keith Holloway (TMO) confirmed there are 110 individual properties and these would all be Risk Assessed with 12 months. He gave a copy of the high risk properties to Collette O'Hara.

Angus Sangster (LFB) asked Keith Holloway (TMO) about how TMO were going to base their risk categories of buildings. Keith Holloway (TMO) replied that it would be done via the consultants. Laura Johnson (Housing) asked about the cost implications that could arise out of the risk audits. Angus Sangster (LFB) replied that the RRO(Regulatory Reform Order) states, that buildings which fall within its remit, must come up to a required standard of fire safety. He stated that the LFB uses a sensible approach to work which is to be carried out. However, the LFB ultimately wants a 'safe building'. A point agreed by everyone present.

#### **4. Best Practice**

Angus Sangster (LFB) produced a possible example of best practice created by Croydon Council.

Keith Holloway (TMO) stated that TMO have started devising a plan for best practice for all the properties they have in K&C.

He agreed with the content of the letter and advised Angus Sangster that he would be happy to produce something similar. A copy of the letter was requested which Angus Sangster agreed to.

#### **5. Fire Risk Assessment(s):**

Angus Sangster (LFB) stated that the TMO risk assessments so far had not been up to a satisfactory standard. He explained that through conversations with the officers currently carrying out the Fire Risk Assessments he felt they did not have the level of understanding required.

Keith Holloway (TMO) explained that the fire risk assessments would be carried out by the consultant and that surveys had gone out to tender.

Angus Sangster (LFB) suggested the TMO show the LFB a copy of the proforma before risk assessments are carried out.

Keith Holloway (TMO) suggested it might be beneficial for LFB to meet with the chosen contractor before any risk assessments were completed.

Angus Sangster (LFB) confirmed he would be happy to do this.

Jean Daintith stated a desire that Kensington & Chelsea Council, TMO and LFB could reach a consensus on adequate risk assessments for TMO premises in the borough.

Laura Johnson (Housing) asked about what happens after the 30 most vulnerable TMO premises are risk assessed.

Keith Holloway (TMO) replied that once they have details of the necessary works they will prioritise this so that they can use their resources to address risk critical situations.

Angus Sangster (LFB) asked whether the Council and TMO felt that 3 years would be acceptable to carry out risk assessments of all the properties they are responsible for. Both Jean Daintith and Keith Holloway (TMO) agreed.

Angus Sangster (LFB) asked whether the Council and TMO felt that 5 years would be acceptable to carry out all the significant findings identified by the risk assessments for all the properties they are responsible for.

Both Jean Daintith and Keith Holloway (TMO) agreed.



Jean Daintith confirmed that she felt the time scales proposed were realistic for the work needed.

## **6. General Discussion:**

Keith Holloway (TMO) asked about where the 'problem areas' may arise in TMO premises.

Angus Sangster (LFB) mentioned about flats and the one hour compartmentation. He stressed that few of the TMO buildings have fire doors or some do not have dry risers. Collette O'Hara (LFB) said this was one of the key problem with the TMO Risk Assessments so far had been the low level of knowledge as to whether a door should/is a fire door up to the correct standard.

## **7. Risk Critical Issues/ Interim measures.**

Angus Sangster (LFB) used an example of Health and Safety at Work act to illustrate the point he was trying to make regarding employing appropriate interim measures to any risk critical issues that may arise from the Fire Risk Assessments.

Jean Daintith (Housing) was in agreement.

## **8. Review of Buildings by LFB:**

Angus Sangster (LFB) said that the LFB would look at the first 5 risk assessments carried out by TMO.

Both Jean Daintith and Keith Holloway (TMO) agreed.

Angus Sangster (LFB) also suggested a meet with TMO every 4 months for the first year to review how things were proceeding.

Both Jean Daintith and Keith Holloway (TMO) agreed.

## **9. Evacuation Strategies:**

Angus Sangster (LFB) stated that TMO tenants need to be given building specific information about their evacuation procedures. He acknowledged the potential impact this could have with residents particularly in relation to the 'defend in place' strategy.

He suggested an open approach with TMO tenants in order to try and make them feel more secure.

Laura Johnson (Housing) said general messages should be sent to tenants.

Collette O'Hara (LFB) agreed she felt this to be a good idea for if people were more aware of the importance of door closures for example they may be less likely to remove them.

Angus Sangster (LFB) stated he is in the process of speaking with all stations so that the crews will be able to relay people's fears in relation to the 'defend in place' strategy.

Angus Sangster (LFB) quoted Gilray House as an example. He said the premises had nine floors and no dry risers, no lobbies and the lifts were not working. He told Keith Holloway (TMO) to get the means of escape sorted out.

#### 9.1 Escape strategies/Assembly Points

Angus Sangster (LFB) mentioned that from conversations he has had with TMO officers he has been advised there may be situations when an escape routes in a TMO premises does not lead to a place of final safety i.e. the pavement/streets.

He advised those present that this was not classed as an acceptable evacuation strategy. He requested that if in the interim it used the TMO /Council should advise Brian Deans (LFB) so that he can organise an appropriate operational response.

### **10. General Discussion: (Timescales for Completion of Risk Assessments/Work(s) Completion)**

Laura Johnson (Housing) again questioned the LFB's consistency in approaching social housing providers.

Brian Deans and Angus Sangster (LFB) informed the meeting that this type of major works will take on a national imperative and will not be limited to TMO owned properties only.

Jean Dainith (Housing) said she felt confident that TMO would deliver the work(s).

Laura Johnson (Housing) told the meeting that she had written to all Residential Social Landlords (RSL's) in the borough. She said she was asking them about what they were doing in regards to maintaining fire safety standards on their premises.

Keith Holloway (TMO) reiterated that TMO would complete their procurement programme by September 2009. The risk assessments would be completed over the following 12 months.

Angus Sangster (LFB) replied that he feels TMO need to develop the level of competence amongst their staff.

He also suggested a member of staff from the council / TMO could be seconded into the LFB in order to gain experience of fire safety procedures.

Note: A copy of the Croydon letter was given to all attendees.

### **11. AOB:**

Angus Sangster (LFB) asked was there any other points that need raising?

Collette O'Hara (LFB) asked whether the TMO could categorise all of the properties they are responsible for into High Medium and Low risk soon this way they can be confident they are directing their resources at in the right direction from the beginning?

Keith Holloway (TMO) agreed.

Collette O'Hara (LFB) asked when did the Council / TMO feel the actual works could begin?

Keith Holloway (TMO) said it would have to be thrashed out prioritised accordingly so they are addressing the risk critical problems.

Collette O'Hara (LFB) re-affirmed that the Council / TMO would be submitting a proposal of future intention?

Both Jean Daintith and Keith Holloway (TMO) agreed.

Collette O'Hara (LFB) asked could this be done within six weeks from this meeting?

Keith Holloway (TMO) agreed they would definitely be able to provide this within that time frame and hopefully even sooner. He also suggested a further meeting to discuss further detail would be beneficial. Angus Sangster (LFB) agreed this would be sensible.

Meeting Closed.