

Report title

## Lakanal House – Monitoring Report and Action Plan

Meeting

CMB

Strategy

Date

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12 November 2013

Report by

Assistant Commissioner, Operational Assurance

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### Summary

On 20 June 2013 the Authority were presented with a paper that discussed the outcomes from the Coroners Inquest into the fire at Lakanal House on 3 July 2009 at which six members of the public tragically lost their lives. That paper also described the actions that the London Fire Brigade (LFB) would take in response to the Coroner's recommendations. At the Authority meeting it was agreed that implementation of the actions would be monitored at both officer level, via the Operational Directorates Coordination Board (ODCB) and via monitoring reports presented to meetings of the Strategy Committee. This report responds to the latter requirement for providing a regular update to members of the Strategy Committee.

### Recommendation(s)

To note this report including the action plan attached at Appendix 1.

### Introduction/Background

1. On 3 July 2009 the LFB were called to a fire in a high rise residential block, Lakanal House, Camberwell, London. 6 people, including three children, lost their lives as a result of the incident. Additionally, 15 people were taken to hospital suffering from smoke inhalation and one firefighter was admitted to hospital for two nights to receive treatment for heat exhaustion. 38 people were assisted out of the building or rescued by the Brigade.

2. Following the fire the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) initiated an investigation, which involved the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and LFB, looking at possible manslaughter charges. However, in May 2012 the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) announced that they would not prosecute as they were satisfied there was no realistic prospect of conviction for an offence of manslaughter by gross negligence or corporate manslaughter against any body or persons.
3. Following the CPS's decision not to prosecute, the Coroner, Her Honour Judge Francis Kirkham, set a date for the inquests. The inquests commenced at Lambeth Town Hall on 14 January 2013 and continued until 28 March 2013. The Coroner summed up the evidence to the jury on 20 and 21 March 2013 and the jury provided their narrative verdicts on 28 March 2013.
4. The outcomes of the Inquest were reported to the Authority by the Commissioner on 20 June 2013 (FEP 2072; Coroner's Inquests following the fire at Lakanal House on 3 July 2009). The Coroner made a number of recommendations for the Brigade to which the Brigade prepared a written response detailing the actions proposed to address those recommendations. In developing these responses officers have focussed upon the key activities that will provide the most effective and sustainable improvements.
5. It was agreed at the Authority meeting that implementation of the proposed actions would be monitored through the Operational Directorates Coordination Board (ODCB) and through the presentation of regular monitoring reports to meetings of the Strategy Committee.

#### **Progress made against the action plan**

6. To assist in the monitoring of the implementation of those tasks and activities identified to address the Coroner's recommendations officers have prepared an action plan (Appendix 1). This action plan details the progress against each action and reflects the position at the end of September.
7. As members will see the action plan has been broken down into a number of sub-tasks that are aimed at delivering the underlying improvements intended by the Coroner's recommendations. In developing these sub-tasks officers have been minded to ensure that all of the outcomes are measurable and sustainable.
8. So that members can easily see where the progress of the plan deviates from the timescale commitments included in the Commissioner's response to the Coroner (letter dated 23 May 2013 refers), I have colour coded the information. Only one activity failed to be delivered by the target date, which relates to the establishment of the high rise forum. Officers had intended to establish this new forum by the end of August, but due to the availability of the key stakeholders the inaugural meeting was actually held on the 8 October.
9. All other tasks are progressing in accordance with the agreed timescales or have been completed.

#### **Lakanal House Member Working Group**

10. At the June Authority meeting members also agreed to the establishment of a Lakanal House Working Group (LHWG) with the terms of reference – 'to undertake a review of the Brigade's response to the fire at Lakanal House and feed recommendations back to the Strategy Committee'. This group has already initiated a number of additional activities that compliment and enhance the Rule 43 action plan. It was also agreed, between that Chair of this committee and LHWG the themes that will be taken forward through the Resources Committee.

**Head of Legal and Democratic Services comments**

11. Comments to follow.

**Director of Finance and Contractual Services comments**

12. Comments to follow.

**Sustainable Development Implications**

13. There are no environmental implications.

**Staff Side Consultations Undertaken**

14. No specific consultation has been undertaken with staff side in relation to the action plan appended to this report. The Commissioner's written response to the Coroner (letter dated 23 May 2013), in which actions were detailed, was published on Hotwire and has been discussed within the Brigade Joint Committee for Health, Safety and Welfare (BJCHSW). The management side Joint Secretary of the BJCHSW has committed to keep staff side apprised of progress against the actions taken to address the Coroner's recommendations.

**Equalities Implications**

15. There are no equalities implications.

**List of Appendices to this report:**

- 1. Lakanal House Working Group Action Plan Monitoring Report

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985	
<b>List of background documents</b> 1. FEP 2072 - Coroner's Inquests following the fire at Lakanal House on 3 July 2009	
Proper officer	Assistant Commissioner, Operational Assurance
Contact officer	AC Dany Cotton
Telephone	020 8555 1200 Ext. [REDACTED]
Email	[REDACTED]@london-fire.gov.uk



APPENDIX 1

LAKANAL HOUSE WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN MONITORING REPORT

R.A.G. Progress Codes:

Red = Target date overdue, Amber = Action being taken to address, Green = On target, Blue = Completed

CORONER'S RULE 43 RECOMMENDATIONS

Action No.	Coroners recommendation	LFB action	Target date	R. A. G.	Action Update - September 2013
1	<b>The Brigade should consider how to improve dissemination of fire safety information to achieve effective communications with residents of buildings like Lakanal House.</b>  <b>NB: The full wording of this recommendation did make it clear that this is a matter that primarily concerns housing providers.</b>	Explore how communications with partners may be improved through the following:			
		a) Establishing a Fire Safety High Rise forum	August 2013		The Inaugural Forum meeting was held on 4 October. This was well attended by 22 delegates representing both public and private sector landlords including London Councils, the National Social Housing Fire Strategy Group, the Association of Residential Letting Agents, and a number of other umbrella associations. The forum covered a range of topics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the purpose of the forum</li><li>issues raised by the Coroner in her Rule 43 letters</li><li>a discussion on the RRO and the experiences of each organisation regarding its effectiveness and how it could be improved</li><li>expectations and outcomes of the Forum and</li></ul>

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Action No.	Coroners recommendation	LFB action	Target date	R. A. G.	Action Update - September 2013
					other topics for consideration
		b) Review existing information provided to residential high rise dwellers	August 2013		<p>All Home Fire Safety guidance has been reviewed and specific guidance for high rise dwellers prepared.</p> <p>25,000 leaflets on Compartment Fires with revised messages for residents are now available for use by station staff and Community Safety teams.</p> <p>The LFEPA Web site has been updated to reflect the revised guidance. The Fire Safety (Regulatory) Department is now working with London Councils and a number of housing providers to determine how this information will be effectively communicated to residents.</p> <p>The information has also been sent to DCLG for consideration as national guidance.</p> <p>Over and above this requested work, (a) the Communications Department are also now working on a wider communications strategy; and (b) BRE have agreed to work with LFB to provide their presentation to a wider audience.</p>

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Action No.	Coroners recommendation	LFB action	Target date	R. A. G.	Action Update - September 2013
2	<b>The Brigade review procedures for sharing information gained as a result of section 7(2)(d) visits, familiarisation and home fire safety visits with crews from both within the station in question and at other local stations.</b>	a) Review existing policy related to information gathering and contingency plans	December 2013		A review of PN 800: ' <i>Information Gathering / Contingency Plans</i> ' has been completed and officers are currently developing the additional 7(2)(d) guidance that will be included in the revised note.
		b) Create an inspection regime targeted at high priority buildings	December 2013		<p>Officers are collecting details from Fire Safety visits and visual audits in order to identify premises that may require inclusion on the Operational Risk Database.</p> <p>Work is also being undertaken within the Station Diary rebuild to allow more effective management of outside duties, including recording those premises that have been scored, but the result means there is no requirement to enter the premises on the Operational Risk Database.</p> <p>In addition to the above details of existing 7(2)(d)s and AFA/ Non domestic building fires over the past three years have been collated. The data is currently being cross referenced to ensure the 7(2)(d) visit and Operational Risk Databases include known risks and high priority buildings.</p> <p>When the above processes have been completed staff will have access to a comprehensive database of premise related information, which will be used to inform and support the Brigade's inspection activities.</p>

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Action No.	Coroners recommendation	LFB action	Target date	R. A. G.	Action Update - September 2013
		c) Develop new policy/guidance to address known outstanding risks identified through home fire safety visits	December 2013		<p>Research has been undertaken with operational staff to establish how serious outstanding risks are currently identified, reported and dealt with and what improvements are required to ensure consistency of approach and availability of information.</p> <p>A flow chart is now being developed to support station based staff, which will be accompanied by policy guidance. This guidance will elaborate on the means available to lower fire risks, including new advice on issues such as dementia and mental illness, where an individual's capacity to respond to a smoke alarm may be impaired.</p> <p>Discussion is on-going with the Information Management Team (IMT) to determine the most appropriate data capture process ensuring that where there are risks that may have an impact upon tactical decision-making, these are shared with attending crews via Control or the Mobile Data Terminal. This approach is identical to the one introduced as part of the new hoarding policy.</p>
		d) Set corporate targets for 7 (2) (d) activities	December 2013		<p>Once the data collation exercises described in point (b) above has been completed, work will be finalised to create a suitable indicator that ensures each station has a performance target for visiting the correct number of premises.</p>

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Action No.	Coroners recommendation	LFB action	Target date	R. A. G.	Action Update - September 2013
3	<b>The Brigade review its policies and procedures concerning incident command, having regard to whether it is effective for the choice of the IC to be tied closely to the number or types of appliances attending an incident, and training be given to ICs to enhance their training in relation to the following:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of the Dynamic Risk Management model and other management tools to enable ICs to analyse a situation, and to recognise and react quickly to changing circumstances.</li> <li>2. To recognise when to escalate attendance by more experienced ICs.</li> <li>3. To anticipate that a fire might behave in a manner inconsistent with the compartmentation</li> </ol>	a) Implement recommendations from the report 'Review of incident command and support levels'.	December 2013		<p>Officers are preparing to commission training for the revised Incident Command thresholds for Group Managers and Deputy Assistant Commissioners.</p> <p>Consultation relating to this policy change is on-going with staff side.</p>
		b) Review incident command training to ensure the 7 points are adequately covered	September 2013		<p>Babcock have recently completed a full review of incident command training and a draft Course Review report was received by officers on 2nd August 2013. This is now being considered and will inform revisions and improvements to the suite of incident command training solutions.</p> <p>Officers also instructed Babcock to confirm that all 7 incident command related recommendations are sufficiently and comprehensively covered within the existing suite of training courses. Babcock has confirmed that all 7 issues are covered in the existing suite of command training albeit, there may be opportunities to emphasise the Lakanal event during some inputs.</p> <p>The Babcock Incident Management Training interventions (specifically relevant to Lakanal House) are continuously monitored by the Operational Assurance Department through direct observation and assessed by the Operations Review Team at training events.</p>



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	<p>principle.</p> <p>4. To be aware of the risks to those above and adjacent to the fire flat.</p> <p>5. Handover from one IC to the next and effective deployment of outgoing ICs</p> <p>6. The collection of information from all possible sources</p> <p>7. Use of methodical search patterns</p>				<p>On 05/09/2013, this issue was tabled and discussed between LFB and Babcock at the Incident Command Training Forum meeting.</p> <p>As an on going quality assurance initiative, this will form a standing Agenda item at future quarterly Forum meetings.</p> <p>As additional safeguard, the requirements are being further monitored at the weekly Babcock /LFB Incident Management training liaison meetings .</p> <p>The Lakanal House training package, that specifically address the recommendations is formally managed by the Learning &amp; Development Team directly with Babcock.</p>
		c) Introduce a case study training package, to incorporate learning outcomes from the inquest	December 2013		<p>In addition to the wider course review, detailed specifications for a number of new 'case study' training packages are currently being developed, which will also cover the key Lakanal incident command themes.</p> <p>One of these packages covering methodical search patterns will be launched as part of Operational News 25. This was published at the beginning of October.</p> <p>A further 'case study' training package detailing the specific issue arising at the Lakanal incident has also been commissioned. This package will</p>

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					<p>highlight other highrise incidents where similar issues/challenges were experienced, e.g. the Shirley Towers fire in Hampshire.</p> <p>In addition to the above officers have recently commissioned a further training package that will cover role identification, briefings and command structures. This will be included within Operational News Issue 26 that is due to be published by the end of January 2014.</p>
4	<b>The Brigade considers whether training be given to operational crews about Brigade Control practices and procedures</b>	a) Staff to be reminded of revised FSG practices	March 2014		<p>An Operational News publication covering Fire Survival Guidance (FSG) protocols was issued to all operational staff in March 2013. A pilot for a joint Brigade Control and Command Unit training exercise was successfully completed in late 2012/13 and six exercises have now been planned in quarter 3 of 2013/14.</p> <p>A new online system which enables operational staff to be assessed, in the workplace, on their knowledge of Brigade policies and procedures was launched in June 2013.</p> <p>Two boroughs have arranged specific FSG exercises at station level and the remaining borough commanders have included this in their annual training plan. All these exercises will include station based staff and senior officers.</p>

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		b) Develop specification for a new training solution covering Brigade Control practices and procedures	February 2014		<p>A specification requiring changes to the initial training packages for trainee firefighters has been drafted. These changes will be introduced as part of the revised trainee firefighter programme once recruitment recommences.</p> <p>A commissioning document is also being drafted by officers, which will require Babcock to develop a new training solution aimed at raising awareness of Brigade Control practices and procedures. Once completed this training package will be made available to all staff via the Training Icon available on the Brigade's desktop computers. Development of the training package is scheduled to commence in mid October.</p>
		c) Arrange for training, solution, detailed in b) above, to be undertaken by all operational staff.	March 2014		Dependent on the above.
5	<b>The Brigade considers whether it would be beneficial to use additional breathing apparatus radio communications channels and personal radio channels at major incidents to reduce the</b>	a) Engage with the training contractor to ensure that issues relating to incident communications are embedded	December 2013		Two training packages have been commissioned for Babcock to provide training to all operational personnel on the available communications equipment and its effective use at operational incidents. The incidents chosen within these packages include both high-rise and sub-surface, with scenarios that demonstrate how certain

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	amount of traffic on each channel	within current operational training.			communication issues can be resolved using LFB equipment currently carried on Command Units. The target date for roll-out of these training packages is November 2013.