

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

**5<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 10am at Network Hub, Kensal Road.**

### **Present:**

LFB – Nick Davis – LFB Station Manager – Kensington & North Kensington

LFB – Rebecca Burton – LFB Fire Safety Team Leader

LFB – Ben Dewis – LFB Fire Safety Inspecting Officer

KCTMO – Claire Williams – Project Manager

KCTMO – Janice Wray – Health, Safety & Facilities Manager

### **Notes of meeting**

#### **1. Attendance & apologies for absence**

Nick had recently taken over from Dan as Station Manager for Kensington & North Kensington and was welcomed to his first meeting.

Janice sought clarification from Rebecca on who would be attending from the LFB Fire Safety Team in future. Rebecca confirmed that she would be attending.

#### **2. Matters Arising from previous minutes**

- **Information Plates on high-rise buildings** – Rebecca confirmed that these are now being referred to within the LFB as “virtual plates” as the information that they would hold for a block has been uploaded onto the computer systems and is available to operational crews when they require it. Therefore, it is considered extremely unlikely that landlords will be required to have a hard copy of this on a physical plate installed on their buildings.
- **Fire at 23 Balfour House on 29<sup>th</sup> September** – This was the leasehold property being let on a room by room basis that was effectively a house in multiple occupation. Janice asked if LFB could provide any update on action being taken against the leaseholder? This is now with RBKC’s Environmental Health and LFB had received no further update.

#### **3. Adair Tower – Enforcement Notice**

Janice confirmed receipt of Rebecca’s e-mail attaching this Enforcement Notice. She expressed concern that the timescale the Notice gives for completing the necessary steps is the 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2016. Janice requested that this deadline be extended to reflect the fact that the TMO only just received the electronic copy of the Notice on 4<sup>th</sup> January and that as yet no hard copy has been received. Rebecca confirmed that the paper copy of the Notice had been posted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December and as per LFB procedures the 6 month period to undertake the necessary work starts from the date the Notice is posted. Therefore the 23<sup>rd</sup> June deadline will stand. However, she did advise that a request for an extension of time could be submitted and would be likely to be looked upon favourably

providing the TMO could clearly demonstrate sufficient progress with meeting the requirements of the Schedule.

Janice asked what arrangements the LFB required for monitoring progress. Rebecca confirmed that progress could be monitored at these regular (2-monthly) liaison meetings.

Janice asked for confirmation that this Notice refers exclusively to this block and that the TMO is not required to apply this to the rest of the blocks. Rebecca agreed that this does relate directly to Adair Tower, however, the LFB could expect that standards required in one block are also required in other block.

Janice sought clarification on some of items on the Schedule –

- Article 17(1) of the Schedule refers to “fitting of doors that do not provide 30 mins fire protection to the access route..”. In discussion to date the issue raised by the LFB has been about the need for existing flat entrance doors to be fitted with self-closing devices whereas this wording implies that the doors are not sufficiently fire-rated and need to be replaced with new self-closing fire doors. Rebecca confirmed that the Notice is concerned with the fitting of self-closers to existing doors as these have been assessed by the assessor as nominally fire-rated.
- Article 11 & Article 14 refer to “failure to effectively control the opening of windows in the protected staircase”. Janice sought confirmation that this is requiring these windows to be fixed closed. Further, if this is the case how should the staircase be ventilated – introduction of mechanical ventilation? Rebecca advised that fixing these windows closed would comply with the LFB requirement. The possibility of ensuring that the lowest and the highest windows on the staircase can be opened by the LFB when they attend could be investigated as this may well provide sufficient ventilation in the staircase.
- Article 9(1) & Article 15(1) – requirement for Fire Action Notices. Janice advised that the TMO have not installed these notices previously as the buildings are not complex, they are subject to frequent use, there is a stay put fire strategy etc. Further to earlier discussion are the TMO now expected to place a notice in every block? Rebecca did not consider this to be priority. Janice queried whether there was a specific wording that the LFB wanted us to use for this notice.

Rebecca advised that the TMO would also be receiving an Enforcement Notice in relation to Hazlewood Tower which has the same design and layout as Adair Tower. However, currently this Notice is still in draft.

#### **4. Fires in KCTMO Properties**

With the exception of the fire at Adair Tower Janice had not been made aware of any other fires in TMO premises since the previous meeting.

#### **5. AFD False Alarms & Lift Shut-ins**

Rebecca had circulated information on LFB attendance at false automatic fire alarm activations (AFAs) at our sheltered housing schemes and temporary accommodation



blocks since the previous meeting. There had been a total of 12 attendances – 7 of these were to 70 Tavistock Road (various flats). Janice has circulated this info to the local managers for further information on the cause of the activations and will report back to the next meeting. Janice had 2 additional blocks that should be added to this list and she agreed to advise Rebecca of the addresses by e-mail.

Janice advised Nick that Dan usually provided a summary of LFB attendance at lift shut-ins for the previous 2 months and Nick agreed to provide this info going forward.

Janice advised that we had prepared an article on lift shut-in procedure confirming that our lift contractors are available to attend these on a 24/7 basis and encouraging residents to call the TMO and not the LFB in the first instance if they do become shut in a lift. This will be included in the next edition of our quarterly residents magazine.

## **6. Enforcement Action / Deficiency Notices & Correspondence with LFB**

Janice confirmed that she had now received 3 Deficiency Notices – all in relation to Balfour House, Balfour Burleigh Estate, W10 – one per staircase. Janice queried the need to have multiple notices on one block (with one postcode) but Rebecca advised that this relates to how the property is set up on the LFB system. Janice expressed concern that one of the issues these notices were raising was in relation to storage in communal areas. In the majority of our blocks we have adopted a “managed use” (as opposed to a “zero tolerance”) policy and so we would tend to allow door mats, plants, a mirror or framed picture and possibly a bike or a pushchair providing these are not excessive and are not causing an obstruction or increasing fire loading. Janice sought clarification on the standards used by and the guidance given to Inspecting Officers.

## **7. Flat entrance doors**

Rebecca advised that the LFB requirement is for all flat entrance doors to be self-closing. Specifically, landlords must ensure that self-closing devices are fitted AND also that effective procedures are introduced to ensure that these devices remain operational and are not disconnected or removed by the resident. Further, Rebecca advised that carrying out checks on self-closers when properties became void would not in itself be considered by the LFB to be a sufficient level of checking. In relation to leaseholder doors the LFB also expect the TMO to carry out regular checks.

Ben raised the issue of letter boxes on flat entrance doors and sought reassurance that these are included in the current risk assessments. Janice confirmed that they are included and defective / substandard ones are highlighted in the Significant Findings and Action Plan.

## **8. Risk Assessments**

Rebecca raised her concern that our Fire Risk Assessor sometimes makes statements which are not justified or supported and that FRA reports need to include justification for statements made. In particular, reference to discussion with senior LFB officers must provide names, dates and confirmation of outcome of discussions etc. Also, in relation to Balfour the FRA needs to be reviewed to clearly demonstrate that the impact of the

missing doors in front of the hopper head area in the event of a fire has been assessed and documented. Janice agreed to raise these issues with our assessor but did comment that we have frequently provided copies of FRAs to the LFB in recent years and until now these have been well received, considered to be comprehensive and no criticism had been fed back.

## **9. Stable Way**

No issues currently.

Janice advised Nick that we are keen to keep this as a standing item on the agenda. Until now Rob North from White Watch at North Kensington has been acting as the unofficial liaison with the residents on this site and this had worked well and been welcomed by the residents. Dan had advised that Rob is likely to be retiring in 18 months time and so Nick agreed to identify someone who could shadow Rob and then take over this liaison role once Rob retires.

## **10. LFB fire safety familiarisation exercises across the stock**

Janice thanked Nick's crews for their continued regular familiarisation visit to Grenfell Tower during the course of the major works. These were greatly appreciated by the TMO and Rydons, the Principal Contractor. Additionally, Nick had kindly met on site with Janice and Dave Hughes, the Rydons Site Agent, for a pre-Christmas shutdown inspection at Grenfell Tower. This had enabled us confirm dry riser access arrangements, plant room security etc.

Nick advised that this year's programme of familiarisation visits is being drafted.

## **11. Any Other Business**

### **Fire Brigade Contacts**

Nick had circulated a structure chart with contact details for the Borough Commander, himself and their colleague Terry Chaplin, the Chelsea Station Manager.

Rebecca had provided contact details for the LFB Inspection Teams based at the Paddington Hub – the K&C, H&F and the Westminster Teams.

### **Temporary Accommodation – provision of extinguishers & fire blankets**

Janice advised that the TMO were reviewing the provision of these items within our temporary accommodation units. The Fire Assessor had advised that where units were completely self-contained with no shared facilities (communal access corridor only) - and were effectively the same as a general needs housing unit - an extinguisher was not required and the fire blanket could be removed at the end of the existing rental when the unit is void. However, in locations where residents have access to a communal lounge (but kitchens are individual and not shared) fire blankets should be retained within the kitchens (but not extinguishers). However, he had recommended that we consult the LFB for their views. Rebecca advised that this type of accommodation was covered by the LACORS guidance and she agreed to check and advise on the LFB position on this.



## **Signage at Grenfell Tower**

Claire requested feedback on some proof copies of the signage for the lift lobbies at Grenfell Tower. Nick confirmed that the version which incorporated arrows to the specific flat numbers would be most beneficial for his operational crews.

## **Date of next meeting**

Suggested date of next meeting - Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March at 9.30am in Network Hub. Janice will send out invitations

## **Distribution:**

Those Attending