

Witness statement of: Robert Davies
No. of statement: 1
Exhibits: 2
Date of statement: 12 February 2019

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF ROBERT DAVIES

I ROBERT DAVIES say as follows:

Preliminaries

1. I, Robert Davies, am employed by the London Fire Commissioner as Staff Officer to the Director of Operations in London Fire Brigade (LFB). I took the position of LFB's Kensington & Chelsea Borough Commander as a result of being promoted from Station Manager to Group Manager, I was posted to Hounslow Borough, but took the day to day running of Kensington & Chelsea from 3rd August 2015 to 31st March 2017 before moving into my current role.
2. I have never received any form of formal training for the role of Borough Commander, all of my development for the role has been from peers, line management and from Borough Commander Communication days, led by the Director of Operations. This is a quarterly meeting for all Borough Commanders where key performance indicators and best practice is shared and discussed.

Relationship with RMK&C/KCTMO

3. I had a good working relationship with Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC), my key regular contact being Stuart Priestley (Chief Community Safety Officer) Councillor

Gardner (Cabinet member for Community Safety, IT and Corporate Safety, now retired)
Councillor Hargreaves (Councillor Gardner's replacement). I also reported to the Scrutiny
Committee chaired by Councillor Pat Mason. I attended regular meetings within the Council,
Community Safety partnership, Self neglect and hoarding panel, safeguarding panel.

4. I had limited involvement with the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management
Organisation, I believe that I attended 2 meetings with the Chief executive Robert Black.
One as an introduction and one to discuss a fire that occurred in Adair Tower 31/10/2015.
Fire safety regulation had served an enforcement notice on both Adair Tower and Hazelwood
Tower (its sister block) which I exhibit as **RD/1** (). We discussed the
contents of the enforcement notice and the practicality in term of timescales, particularly the
self closing mechanisms, fire proofing of the front doors and the problems that they could
foresee. Some residents owned their flats, some were sub leased out and for them they were
encountering resistance from some of the owners, (the owners view was that they could do
what they wanted to their own front door). The updates that I received about issues related
with the Tenant Management Organisation were through my Station Managers Daniel
Hallissey (retired) and Nicholas Davis. They managed the day to day interaction with the
Tenant Management Organisation and attended all meetings. I have had no involvement
with building regulation consultations or any planning departments within the council.

Involvement with Grenfell Tower

5. The only interaction that I have had with Grenfell Tower was back in October 2015 when my
Station Manager Daniel Hallissey informed me of being consulted about the numbering of
flats post refurbishment. SM Hallissey advised that, from the perspective of the LFB's
operational crews, the overriding issue is to ensure that there is signage at ground floor
where the LFB enter the block which clearly highlights which flat numbers are located on
which floor levels. He also recommended that signs be placed at each lift lobby to clarify
which level this is and what flat numbers are located on that specific floor. Providing signage
is adequately addressed the LFB should be able to accommodate whichever floor numbering
sequence is adopted. If crews from outside the local area are required to respond to an
emergency at this block it is likely that the more obvious and straightforward floor

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numbering sequence (ground, 1st, 2nd, ...) would facilitate the most speedy and effective response.

6. Another Grenfell related issue was during the refurb where works would be ongoing to the dry riser. SM Davis informed me of this after he attended one of the meetings with the Tenant Management Organisation, we discussed additional control measures that we would put in place to mitigate the effect of having a dry riser partially or wholly out of commission. We took advice from Fire Safety, the Bulk media cadre (a specialist group of officers that specialise in water supplies) and control placed a "timed activity" on all fire calls to the address, (effectively extra resources are mobilised in the event of a fire being reported at the address, while the work was being carried out).
7. Members of the public would at times contact me via E mail as on our external website my contact details were published as the BC. To my knowledge I have never been contacted by a resident of Lancaster West Estate.
8. I met with the team leader from LFB's Kensington & Chelsea fire safety team Rebecca Burton quarterly when she would inform me of the work that she and her team was carrying out and we would discuss any priorities that I had. At the time Borough Commanders were being measured on unwanted fire signals (false alarms), I would usually inform her of me wanting to drive this figure down from some of the properties that were giving me high numbers of unwanted fire signals. I had never visited Grenfell Tower before 14th June 2017 and therefore have never been involved with any 7(2) (d)'s as this is not in the role of the Borough Commander.
9. I am aware of the crews training in the Borough on high rise residential properties, I can particularly remember a 6 pump exercise that was carried out in Trellick Tower during my 18 months as the Borough Commander, they were practising on arrival tactics and high rise procedures.
10. I have no recollection of discussing any issues on Lancaster West Estate with members of RBKC or the Tenant Management organisation. Lancaster West does sit within a priority postcode (P1) for the borough (London Fire Brigade uses many information data gathering and analysis tools to identify and target those most at risk from fire) and therefore I tasked

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station crews and the Station Manager with actively targeting HFSV's in these P1 areas. It is my understanding that a group risk visit has been carried out at Grenfell Tower on the 10/06/17 where 25 Home Fire Safety Visits were completed, *Source: HFSV database*. This is part of the Watch Managers targets, they have to complete a number of HFSV's every year and a percentage of these have to be in a P1 area, I exhibit as **RD/2** () the recording and aide memoire for carrying out an HFSV. The duty watch that carried out these visits was white watch North Kensington. HFSV's are the Brigade's primary preventative measure taken to reduce accidental fire deaths and injuries in peoples homes.

Statement of truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true. I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and be published on the Inquiry's web site

(witness signature)



Robert Davies

Dated: 12TH FEBRUARY 2019

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