

Meeting between the Deputy Leader of RBKC and Members of the Grenfell Leaseholders' Association and the Grenfell Action Group: 19 July 2013

Present: Tunde Awoderu (Grenfell Leaseholders' Association),
Cllr. Judith Blakeman (ward councillor), Edward Daffarn (Grenfell
Action Group), Cllr. Rock Feilding-Mellen (RBKC), Laura Johnson
(RBKC) and Peter Maddison (TMO)

Power Surges

Peter Maddison said that the TMO was investigating the causes of the power surges, whether they were linked to KALC, to the external grid or within the tower block. A monitoring system had been put in place. A problem of arcing at the incoming mains had been identified and this had been addressed. A trip had been installed so that if the problem recurred the whole system would trip. All affected properties had been inspected, tested and confirmed to be safe. All damage similarly had been inspected and logged and claims will go to the insurers for a swift decision. About 40 properties in total had been affected. Face to face contact had been made with residents and everyone had been offered help, including finance and emergency services. No one had taken up this offer. Detailed insurance claims had been received and the TMO was following up residents who had not yet submitted one.

Mr. Daffarn expressed concern that the first report had been made on 11 May but little notice had been taken until the major surge on 29 May which brought residents into the Estate Office for assistance. He stated that many appliances had blown up and smoke had been seen coming from them. Mr. Maddison said that the TMO had investigated the first report and they had received seven reports by 24 May. All residents reporting problems had been visited to see if the problems were property-specific or more general. A letter apologising for the problems had also been sent, seeking further details about the problems residents had experienced. The surge of 28th/29th May was a bigger issue. Mr. Daffarn asked why residents had been left for two weeks in a dangerous situation. Mr. Maddison said the TMO had been investigating through a process of elimination and the cause had been difficult to identify. These investigations had begun immediately after 11 May. Mr. Awoderu felt that the TMO had not been fast enough to respond to people's concerns and lives could have been put in danger. A petition had been signed by residents of 94 flats because of the catastrophic surge. He was advised that there had been an open session of the Council's Housing and Property scrutiny Committee on 16 June when Mr. Maddison had updated the Council and the reports had been accepted. Cllr. Feilding-Mellen confirmed that if any more problems were reported, they would be investigated immediately. Mr. Daffarn objected that the Council had refused to hold an open meeting of residents which he felt denied them the opportunity to speak as a community. Cllr. Feilding-Mellen said that in such situations meetings tended to be dominated by one or two people, which is why face to face contact was preferred and this was why the TMO had carried out a door knocking exercise. Mr. Maddison said that he had nevertheless also focussed on the power surge problems at the meeting arranged to discuss the Grenfell Tower Regeneration Programme. It was important to work collaboratively. Cllr. Feilding-Mellen said it was important to understand that the TMO has only limited resources and needed to focus on its day-to-day work.

Lancaster West Heating:

The TMO is looking at an asset management strategy across the whole of its social housing stock. However, improvements can only be funded from rental income.

Decant Policy

Although a full estate regeneration plan is set out in the RBKC Local Development Framework *Core Strategy*, this policy has changed. Cllr. Feilding-Mellen confirmed that there is now no plan to undertake a full regeneration of the Estate, so there is no need for a Lancaster West Decant Policy.

Ms. Johnson said that the Council was consulting on a borough-wide Decant Policy and Cllr. Blakeman confirmed that the Labour Group had sent a response to this consultation. The Labour Group did not endorse the policies set out in the consultation document.

Cllr. Feilding-Mellen said that a promise to rehouse someone on the same site or within the area did not constitute a specific promise to rehouse anyone on to a particular estate. He said that if Lancaster West were ever to be regenerated, the Council's aim would be to ensure so far as possible that everyone displaced would be housed on the same estate, but he could not give a 100% guarantee that this would happen in every case in the absence of any specific regeneration plan. The Council's intention is to preserve its existing social housing stock. Cllr. Blakeman pointed out residents had an underlying fear because the now abandoned Latimer Master Plan had been communicated to residents of Lancaster West.