
From: David Collins <david@future-conversations.com>
Sent: 06 January 2016 08:11
To: Judith Blakeman
Cc: victoria.borwick.mp@parliament.uk; Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk;
john.sweeney@parliament.uk; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
cllr.atkinson@rbkc.gov.uk; Cllr.Lasharie@rbkc.gov.uk
Subject: Re: Report Back from TMO Board Meeting

How arrogant that reads to me: we have a process and if it isn't working for resident's then it must be the resident's problem. There was no questioning of whether the approach could be improved? Or questioning of the attitude of "It must be the resident's problem"?

Thanks for raising the issues Judith.

David

Sent from my iPhone

On 5 Jan 2016, at 10:18, Judith Blakeman <[REDACTED]> wrote:

The Board did not think it was appropriate for me to read Ed's speech in advance of its being delivered to the Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday.

To sum up the rest of the discussion, they believe that the TMO and Rydon have all the necessary mechanisms in place – including regular liaison with the Grenfell Compact – and if these mechanisms are not working, it is because the residents are not using them. They said, with regard to the language issues, that Rydon are aware of the specific language needs of every household and they will always ask the TMO to provide interpreters whenever residents ask for them.

I think one problem is that the TMO just do not understand the dis-connection between the arrangements formally in place, the arrangements as they are communicated to residents and how they are implemented. On the special needs of the babies, for example, they said that the parents should have contacted the TMO in advance of the births and they would have made special respite arrangements. Cllr Lasharie and I will follow this up with the parents concerned to see if they did mention it to the TMO or Rydon.

The TMO did agree to three of the suggested learning points in my document. I am awaiting formal confirmation and will then send them to you.

Kind regards.
Judith

From: David Collins [<mailto:david@future-conversations.com>]
Sent: 04 January 2016 10:12
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Meeting

Yes, please do share the email as appropriate.

Sent from my iPhone

On 4 Jan 2016, at 09:39, J BLAKEMAN <[\[REDACTED\]](mailto:[REDACTED])> wrote:

Dear David

This is excellent and very helpful.

The TMO Board, of which I am a member, is having a discussion at its meeting this evening about Grenfell Tower, sadly under the confidential part of the agenda. A confidential briefing note has been sent to all Board members which at the moment I am forbidden to copy to you. I suspect I shall this evening probably be a lone voice supporting the residents and I am sending all Board members a document that I am preparing for the Scrutiny Committee on Wednesday, which I will share with you separately. I am also going to send the Board my notes of the meeting with Victoria.

It would be really helpful if you can give me permission also to forward this e-mail to the Board.

Kind regards.

Judith

---Original message---

From : david@future-conversations.com

Date : 03/01/2016 - 20:38 (UTC)

To : victoria.borwick.mp@parliament.uk

Cc : Cllr.Blakeman@rbkc.gov.uk, john.sweeney@parliament.uk,
[REDACTED]

Subject : Re: Meeting

Dear Victoria,

Thank you for visiting Grenfell Tower on Monday 14th December 2015, and for listening to the stories and experiences of some of the Tower's residents.

As you heard, there are many problems here. There are many individual cases, problems and issues. As a resident's association ("Grenfell Tower Compact" in the language of TMO) we are overwhelmed by individual cases, many of us having our own. We have found the best chance an individual has of getting a successful resolution to a problem is to communicate with the TMO through our local Councillors. As a resident's association we receive no response from the TMO to the problems of individual residents; and it occurs like there are too many individual issues for us to keep abreast of too. It is the problem as seen from the level of community we wish to see addressed, which is why we asked you to come and visit us, and why I am writing this letter.

You heard but a small number of the individual issues people have faced, and continue to face, on a daily basis. It is shocking, but no surprise to me, that when we carried out our survey at the end of November, 68% of residents (two out of every three) said they experienced being lied to, threatened, harassed or pressured by the TMO in the last 12 months. I know we need to stick to the facts of what is happening, rather than inflaming things, which is why we surveyed residents to get a handle on what is actually happening. Part of our problem as a Compact is how do we communicate the facts, when the majority of people have stories to tell like the ones you heard when you visited us? How do we let those with power and influence know what is happening, in a way in which they can hear and respond appropriately? It is because of the commonplace and widespread stories you hear that people use words like, "Ongoing abuse", when talking about the cumulative experience of the community here over time. We not only need a response to each of the serious individual issues; we need a response which will alter the whole community's experience, and this I believe can only happen at an organisation level.

I believe it would be foolish to imagine the problems we and you hear about are simply a result of the construction project. Yes, the construction project has increased their frequency, but listening to people instances of neglect, poor service, incompetence, poor communication, and even malice have been happening for years. It is the force and the number of issues which have come to the surface during the refurbishment project which have led to the residents association being formed, and residents demanding something must be done to change the long-term treatment of our community.

Thank you for directing the TMO to carry out their door knocking exercise over the last few working days before Christmas. I know they asked residents whether their heating and hot water was working, and if the windows were working. As a number of residents suggested when we met, many are fearful or distrustful of the TMO and may not divulge more information about their issues – but it is a step in the right direction, and I know some useful conversations have taken place which would not have happened otherwise. It was also good to find out if everyone had heating and hot water before Christmas. We would like you to continue to

intervene until the TMO are providing the kind of service that we and they themselves aspire to.

In setting up our Compact we discussed at length why we wanted to have one, and since that time what we want to prioritise as our key objective. As you are aware, 90% of residents have signed a petition asking for an independent investigation in to the TMO and how it carried out the refurbishment project. The number one priority for our Compact is to see such an independent investigation take place. This is because we think it offers the possibility of changing how the TMO operates at every level, and because it could force the TMO to fundamentally change how it executes its role in our community. It only offers the possibility, as it would require a structure of accountability to be imposed on the TMO in general, and around the findings of any independent investigation and their implementation. The mission of the TMO is, "Delivering excellent housing services through resident led management" <http://www.kctmo.org.uk/sub/about-us/38/our-mission>. We would like the TMO to be held to account to this by those to whom it is answerable. There are many other fantastic values and objectives the TMO aspires to, as laid out on the webpage above. As residents in Grenfell Tower, the vast majority do not feel like the TMO are resident led, honest, accountable, keeping customers at the heart of everything they do, delivering quality and accessible services, etc. We are calling on you and our Council to hold them to account for failing to deliver on their mission, as evidenced by the failings you have begun to hear about.

Specifically, we would like you to support in writing our call for an independent investigation, one carried out within a structure of change which would ensure the findings are implemented so the experiences of residents never have to be as they are again. We believe this independent investigation is the only way to bring about meaningful change within the existing and proper channels. This is our number 1 priority as a community organisation, and we would like you to reconfirm in writing you will support this (as we were grateful to hear you do vocally during the meeting on the 14th December).


Furthermore, given we have a slot with the RBKC Scrutiny Committee this coming Wednesday at 6.30pm, it would be most beneficial if you could find a moment to speak to individual members of that committee and to ask to take seriously the issues we will be raising.

Thank you again for all that you have done so far in raising awareness about the Grenfell Tower project, and the terrible treatment and conditions many here have had to endure. Whilst this email is still about raising awareness of the problem (which I think we still need to do as I suspect there are many who do not yet perceive that there is a problem) I look forward to the next steps in getting things to a better place.

If it is acceptable, I will be writing to you in a couple of days to raise three other issues which we did not have time to raise during our meeting on the 14th December.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Best Wishes,

David Collins


On 15/12/2015, 13:10, "BORWICK, Victoria" <victoria.borwick.mp@parliament.uk> wrote:

Dear David,

Thank you for bringing everyone together this morning. I think it is very useful for TMO to hear from people directly how unhappy they are and what slow progress is being made.

I appreciate there is a breakdown of trust and respect here but I do think it is vital to get everyone on the heating system by Christmas. You may need to help with this now you are a "compact". Residents groups are also self-help organisations!

It would be very helpful if you could get a clear starting place of where we are. No emotion for now. Just the facts. We then produce a typed up list of each flat, who is living there and what the state of heating/hot water/windows/plumbing and so forth. It would be handy if photographs could be taken of particularly serious problems. We will then have an "inventory" of where we are starting from and can then make some progress with the TMO.

I would like to talk to you again shortly. Can you let me have your telephone number and a suitable time to call?

Victoria Borwick