

27 August 2013

Dear Tunde

I note your request that I pursue your case vigorously to give back their dignity to the residents of Grenfell Tower and I hope that I expressed their concerns and anguish adequately in my notes of the recent meeting.

I need to make a couple of things clear. I have no power and I cannot either require or force the Council or the TMO to do anything they do not want to do or are unwilling to do. Indeed, the TMO itself has little influence on the overall picture, as it is constrained by its contract with the Council and the shortcomings of the Housing Revenue Account. As local councillors, all we can do on behalf of Grenfell Tower residents is to act as their advocate and try to persuade the Council and the TMO to act fairly and respectfully towards them.

However, I suspect that my involvement is becoming detrimental to your residents' best interests. Everything that I do attracts abuse on a number of websites and blogs that are widely read at the Council and the TMO. This says to them that residents have no confidence in me - and this is not helpful to your cause. Indeed, even my presence at meetings seems to provoke and detract from what we are trying to achieve, which is justice for the people of Grenfell Tower.

I appreciate that both you and Shah have been very gracious in your responses to my attempts to help, but I believe that Grenfell Tower will be better assisted now if I either pass this work on to one of my ward colleagues or find out whether the Council or the TMO will commission some independent advocacy for you and your colleagues. Can you please let me know how you would like to proceed?

I think it would also be helpful if one or more of the Grenfell Tower residents who have lost out from the power surges seeks advice, either from the Citizens' Advice Bureau or some other form of legal guidance. My colleagues and I are not competent to offer that sort of advice and it may well produce some positive suggestions.

Finally, I don't think you should send your e-mails to such a wide audience. Those whom you wish to influence find this irritating and makes them less well-disposed towards you. One Conservative councillor has told me of his annoyance at continually receiving e-mails on matters that do not affect his own ward. Can I respectfully suggest that in future you copy your e-mails to the Notting Barns ward councillors, my colleague Cllr. Dent Coad (who is likely take over from me as Leader of the Labour Group next year and is our de facto housing spokesperson), Cllr. Paget-Brown the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Feilding-Mellen the Cabinet member for Housing and Property, Ms. Johnson the Director of Housing and Messrs. Black and Maddison of the TMO? If you wish to involve the local press, I think it might be better if you just send Ms. Horrox blind copies of the correspondence.

I hope you don't find this response too negative, but I do feel that my continued involvement is beginning to be harmful rather than helpful.

Kind regards.

Judith