

Dear Cllr Blakeman

I am writing in response to your message dated 29.5.15 relating to the issues raised at your councillors surgery relating to the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower.

As you are aware, KCTMO and Rydon have been trying very hard to engage with residents about the proposed works to their homes. We have offered appointments to visit all residents in their homes. We have also held informal drop-in sessions and coffee mornings in the show flat to meet and discuss the proposals.

Your message did not provide me with the names or addresses of the residents who attended your surgery, so I have not been able to assess whether they are people who have engaged with us, or whether they are from the households that have to date refused to engage with us to discuss the proposed works. Following our discussion earlier today, you have agreed to provide me with names and addresses.

### **Unanswered Correspondence**

I am not aware of any correspondence from residents that has not been responded to. If you, or any of the residents can pass me specific details, I can investigate. Alternatively, if residents do not feel that correspondence has been answered, then they can raise this matter with our complaints team who will track the correspondence to ensure it is responded to.

### **Preferred Approach to Consultation**

In Dec 2013/Jan 2014 we held a large consultation on site with residents, including newsletters, a survey and a drop-in session at the Grenfell Tower show flat. 65 households attended in total - which is more than half. There was a consultation form about the heating, and we asked residents to give feedback on 'how we consult'. We received 55 responses to our forms. The outcome of the "how we consult" survey was:

- 1 individual letter put through my door, or posted to me - 21 preferred
- 2 update newsletter - 10 preferred
- 3 letter or newsletter emails to me - 10 preferred
- 4 informal drop in sessions - 8 preferred
- 5 formal meeting held 6-7pm - 1 preferred
- 6 notices in the noticeboard and lift - 5 preferred

The results of this survey was communicated to residents in our newsletter issued in January 2014.

I discussed this approach with you before the resident survey and after it was complete and I had understood that you supported our approach to future consultation.

### **Location of the HIU ("Boiler")**

You state that the residents raised four specific points relating to the location of the HIU:

1. **the heat interface unit will partially block the hallway and impede exit if there is a fire or similar problem in the flat.**

This is not an accurate statement. The narrowest point of access and egress to the hallway is the width of the front entrance door. The HIU is narrower than the width of the cupboard / shelving unit that is located in most hallways. There is no question that this location would impede exit in the result of a fire.

2. **the heat interface unit will have dangerous sharp corners at approximately the eye level of a 10 year old child**

We have listened to residents' concerns about the aesthetics of the boiler and that a child may bump into it. Our revised, proposed design is to fully enclose the HIU, pipework and overflow in a cupboard with louvre door. We have proposed this approach to residents in a newsletter sent this week (copy attached). We hope that this proposal addresses this concern. I would be happy to meet with you at the show flat to view the proposed installation.

3. **the safety implications of siting water pipes above the electrical fuse box is a matter of concern**

The installation of the HIU meets current regulations and each installation will be signed off by a suitably qualified electrician. The overflow pipe below the HIU is plumbed directly into the bath waste and is not located directly above the electrical unit. The location of the HIU is therefore quite appropriate and does not pose a health and safety risk.

4. **If the associated pipework is run at floor level, it will not be boxed in. The argument that the pipes will be no hotter than the radiators served is not accepted and all pipes should be boxed in once the new system has been tested. This is also matter of the aesthetics of the completed work.**

Surface mounted pipework is a standard approach when retrofitting a heating system into a concrete-framed building. It is true that the pipework will be no hotter than the radiator. We have offered tenants the option of having the pipes painted, or for a decorations allowance to be paid for residents to decorate the pipes themselves. We do not have a budget provision to enclose the pipework. However, if any budget is available at the end of the project, then we will consider this as an option for residents, however, I would not want to make a firm commitment at this stage.

#### **“General Quality of Work”**

You say that concerns have been raised about the general quality of work. Work is still in progress and no part of the scheme has yet been handed over as complete. We will work with residents and Rydon to ensure that all works meet the standard detailed in the specification. If residents have any specific concerns or issues, then I suggest that they contact Rydon in the first instance on their

FREEPHONE number. All reports will be logged and one of Rydon's site managers will visit to investigate, make an assessment and take any action necessary to resolve the matter.

If residents are not happy with Rydon's response, then they should contact Claire Williams, KCTMO's Project Manager and she will investigate.

### **Location of the HIU in the kitchen cupboard**

It was initially considered that the HIU could be located in the kitchen. The original consultant design indicated this as the proposed location and residents were informed of this proposal. However, on detailed examination, there are a number of significant practical implications of this location:

- Full access would be required to the cupboard before and after the works. In many instances this would mean having to create a new opening and the temporary, or permanent relocation of adjacent kitchen units. This would be very disruptive and costly.
- The kitchen cupboard contains all of the hot water storage, hot and cold water pipework for the stack (i.e. all of the flats above and below). To install the HIU in this location, it would be necessary to isolate the hot and cold water supply to each individual flat. Given the age and condition of the pipework, this will not always be possible and it would be necessary to turn off the stack to carry out the works - which will affect all flats above and below.
- It would not be possible to complete the installation works in a single day, so residents would be left without hot and cold water supplies over the duration of the works.
- Location of the HIU in the kitchen would require further pipework and ducting at high level in the bathroom and toilet, causing further disruption to residents' homes.

The current proposed location for the HIU is the only practical position in the flats. However, we have listened to residents' concerns and have amended the design in response.

### **Residents Being "Forced" to have the HIU placed in the hallway against their will**

No residents have been forced into having any works carried out in their homes.

### **Problems with the Entryphone System**

There was a fault on the door entry system between over a period of 3 weeks. This fault has now been repaired and the system is back in operation. The system has been relocated from the ground floor to the walkway on a temporary basis pending the installation of a new system that will be installed as part of the refurbishment works. The current system is beyond the end of its useful life and it is proving very difficult to keep it in operation. However, we will continue to try to keep it working up to the switchover to the new system.

### **Other Security Issues**

You make reference to an incident relating to an alleged burglary that was not followed up by KCTMO. If you would please provide some specific details, I am sure that Siobhan Rumble will be able to investigate and clarify what happened and whether officers took appropriate action.



## **Water Supply to Resident's Home**

I would be happy to investigate the matter of the resident who experienced a disruption in her cold water supply on return from her holiday - I would be grateful if you would provide the address.

There is clearly some mis-information here as Rydon have not yet switched any homes onto the new communal cold water supply.

There have been some recent responsive repair issues that have resulted in airlocks affecting some homes in Grenfell Tower. We have used the "text-shower" system to keep residents informed of this problem and to explain who to contact in the event of a problem.

We have also briefed the Out of Hours call centre on the current activities on Grenfell Tower. However, we will give them a refresher to ensure they understand the current position.

## **Proposal to constructively take forward these concerns**

I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you and these residents to discuss the issues you have raised and agree a way forward.

While I would be happy to attend your surgery to meet these residents, I think that a meeting at the Grenfell Tower show flat would be the best way of ensuring that the residents have had a chance to view the proposed works and to understand the constraints that we are working with. I would be happy to attend this meeting either on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July, or on an evening before then.

## **Finally**

The benefits of the work to Grenfell will be significant including:

- Hot water on demand
- Heating that is controllable and available on demand
- Improved thermal performance and reduced energy required to heat homes
- Double glazed windows that will eliminate draughts and improve sound insulation
- New door entry system
- Improved entrance area and communal areas

I think that it is important that we keep the benefit of these improvements in context for residents.

Refurbishment works are challenging for residents, particularly with the constraints of an existing building, and some degree of compromise is always required. I think it is important that, where residents have a concern that they should come and discuss the matter with KCTMO. I would ask that local ward councillors support us by asking residents to contact us direct to discuss their concerns and give us a chance to resolve these matters.

Yours sincerely

Peter Maddison

Director of Assets and Regeneration