

3 August 2012

My reference: RBKC/02350

Your reference:

Please ask for: Nicholas Holgate

Dear Mr Daffarn

Re: Stage 2 Complaint

I am writing in response to your emails dated 30 May and 15 July 2012 in which you set out a complaint in relation to a meeting on Tuesday 29 May 2012 between a Council officer, representatives from Max Fordham, Maria Tomalova from Planning Aid and you.

The meeting was arranged at your request to give you the opportunity to hear about the work that Max Fordham have undertaken on noise and the impact of the new facilities being built as part of the Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre (KALC) project.

Having considered your emails, I understand that your primary complaint is that the Council has abused its position of power and attempted to undermine any democratic process by:

1. Failing to notify you in advance of the meeting that a Council officer would attend; and
2. Controlling the meeting's agenda and not allowing you to participate.

In the latter email you also raise concerns specifically about:

3. The delay in responding to your complaint; and
4. Ms Johnson's reference to the Grenfell Action Group as Grenfell Tower Action.

.../cont

Having considered the information available to me, I do not believe that the Council has abused its position or attempted in any way to undermine any democratic process on the following grounds:

1. The meeting was arranged by the Council as the lead agency on the KALC project and it is quite normal for a Council officer to attend; this ensures that the Council's views are represented and that a record of the meeting is made for wider distribution.
2. The attendance of a Council officer was neither a deliberate attempt to control the agenda nor intended to stop you from posing questions. I understand that the Council officer suggested that structure be brought to the meeting by allowing the Max Fordham representatives to give a summary of their findings with initial questions coming from the Planning Aid representative as a professional expert. I do not believe that there is any evidence to suggest that you were not allowed to pose questions and I understand that you questioned the Acoustician directly when they completed their presentation.

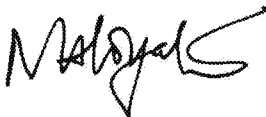
With regard to the other aspects of your complaint, Ms Johnson confirmed to you by email on 20 July that she had spoken to you in person about your initial complaint and believed that this had been a sufficient response. I note that Ms Johnson also responded to your complaint in writing on 9 July.

I do not believe that there is any evidence to suggest that Ms Johnson meant to cause disrespect in referring to Grenfell Tower Action as opposed to the Grenfell Action Group. Ms Johnson has acknowledged that this was a mistake on her part.

The Council values the views of local residents and wants to ensure that they are involved in the KALC and Grenfell Tower projects constructively. We recognise that such projects can cause concerns and Council officers acted with the best of interests in arranging for the meeting to take place with the Max Fordham representatives. It is a shame that you believe it to be otherwise. I can assure you that staff from across the Council will continue to work with local residents to ensure that they are appropriately consulted.

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you can write stating the reasons why and request that the matter is referred to Stage 3 of the complaints procedure. This will require that the Joint Chief Executive, Derek Myers, carry out a review of your complaint and provide you with a full written response.

Yours sincerely



Nicholas Holgate
Town Clerk and Executive Director of Finance

cc: Ms Laura Johnson - Director for Housing