

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA  
HOUSING AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**16 JULY 2013**

**AN UPDATE ON GRENFELL TOWER IMPROVEMENT WORKS  
AND THE RECENT POWER SURGES**

The purpose of this report is to inform members of the Grenfell Tower improvement works and the recent power surges.

**FOR INFORMATION**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report provides Members of the Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee with an update on the Grenfell Tower improvement works and the recent power surges.
- 1.2 There have been a number of communications from a small number of residents in the form of blogs and open "round robin" e-mails on these two separate topics. This report sets out to clarify the current situation in regard to both the planned improvement works to Grenfell Tower and the recent power surges.

**Grenfell Tower Improvement Works**

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Grenfell Tower is located on Lancaster West Estate, adjacent to the site of the KALC project which is currently on site. On 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2012, RBKC Cabinet approved a budget of £6m to deliver major improvements to the fabric of Grenfell Tower, including new homes and improved accessible office space. These improvements were to be funded from income generated from the sale of basement spaces in Elm Park Gardens.
- 2.2 Subsequently, the TMO Board proposed that the budget for the scheme be increased to enable additional investment. This additional investment will deliver the renewal of key

mechanical and electrical elements such as the communal heating system, which will complement the proposed investment in the building fabric. As part of the quarterly monitoring process, Cabinet will be asked at its meeting in July to increase the budget for the scheme to 9.7m. This can be met from the HRA working balance

### **3. Scope of the Improvement Works**

- 3.1 A summary of the current, proposed scope of works includes:
- Window renewal
  - Roof renewal
  - Thermal external cladding of the building
  - New entrance lobby
  - Communal redecoration
  - New communal heating system (with individual control)
  - Hidden Homes – seven new flats
  - Relocate the boxing club
  - Relocate the nursery to the ground floor
  - Relocate and improve office space within the block
  - Improvements to the public realm.
- 3.2 These works will significantly improve the physical appearance of the building as well as renewing key building elements that are now at the end of their useful life. Residents will have improved control of the heating and hot water supply to their homes and will benefit from significant improvements in the thermal performance of the building. Additional housing will be located in the underused lower levels of the building and improved office accommodation provided.

### **4. Planning Issues**

- 4.1 In August 2012, a planning application was submitted for the refurbishment proposals to Grenfell Tower. Planners considered this application in November 2012 and have asked for a resubmission including the following amendments:
- Removal of the canopy at 1<sup>st</sup> floor level
  - Give further definition to the roof detailing
  - Consider alternative colour schemes.
- 4.2 The Grenfell Design Team has been developing a revised and updated design ahead of a revised planning submission.

### **5. Procurement**

- 5.1 To date, KCTMO have progressed the procurement of the proposed works through the IESI<sup>1</sup> Framework. This is the procurement route used for KALC.
- 5.2 Since January, the design team has been working with Leadbitter (the proposed contractor) to bring the scheme within budget and to ensure that the project will deliver value for money. Progress has been slow and Leadbitter currently estimate the cost of works to be £11.278m (inclusive of fees), which is £1.6m above the current, proposed budget.
- 5.3 A range of options have been considered to bring the scheme within budget. It is now proposed to market test the works through an open OJEU tender to ensure that the best contractor is selected and value for money achieved. Subject to planning and procurement risks, this process will result in a start on site in Quarter 4 of 2013-14. By comparison, the IESI procurement process with Leadbitter would have resulted in a start on site at the end of Quarter 3; however, that route also had a significant risk of delay if a negotiated agreement could not be achieved with the contractor.
- 5.4 In tandem with this procurement process, the design team will undertake a "Value Engineering" process to maximise the delivery of key project outputs within the proposed budget.

The following is the current indicative timeline for the delivery of the works:

- Prepare tender documents: August 2013
- Planning Approval: September 2013
- Tenders issued: November 2013
- Tender return: December 2013
- Evaluation: January 2014
- Contract Award: February 2014
- Start on site: March 2014
- Completion of work: March 2015

## **6. Resident Engagement**

- 6.1 Resident engagement in the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower has been reviewed and actions agreed to ensure that all residents have clear information about the current status of

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<sup>1</sup> "Improvement and Efficiency South East"

the scheme and are clear about how they can influence the proposals.

6.2 Recent engagement includes:

- **Grenfell Tower Newsletter:** A newsletter was sent to all residents on 14<sup>th</sup> May giving an update on progress and inviting them to a public meeting.
- **Public Meeting:** A public meeting was held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June. 25 residents attended and commented on the scheme design proposals.

6.3 Next Steps involve a further newsletter which will be sent to Grenfell Tower residents giving feedback and responding to the issues raised at the public meeting. A series of further meetings is planned.

6.4 Further engagement is planned over the summer period to ensure that all residents have an opportunity to engage in finalising the scope of works; be consulted on the designs submitted to planning and be involved in the selection of the contractor for the works. Particular focus will be given to face to face contact with residents to ensure the widest possible engagement.

## **7. Conclusions**

7.1 The refurbishment of Grenfell Tower is a large and complex project and time and careful planning has been required to ensure that the proposals and design of the scheme meet the requirements of residents, RBKC and Planners. Particular focus has been required to ensure that the project representing value for money and can be successfully delivered to the satisfaction of residents.

### **Grenfell Tower Power Surges**

8.1 A series of surges were reported in Grenfell Tower in May 2013 and KCTMO has been actively investigating the cause.

8.2 Residents have been informed in writing and face to face contact has been made with all 45 residents affected to identify and resolve any issues arising.

A summary of the current situation is as follows:

- A fault has been identified on the incoming mains supply and a repair has been carried out to a faulty cable. There have been no further surges since this repair was completed and further tests have been carried out on the mains.
- Ongoing monitoring of the incoming electrical supply and we are investigating whether there are other factors that have contributed to the surges.
- Full renewal of the rising electricity main is planned to commence on 7<sup>th</sup> July. This work will include the installation of surge protection to give additional protection to the block.
- An electrical contractor has carried out electrical testing to all individual properties in the block to ensure that domestic supplies are safe.
- Arrangements have been made for a contractor to inspect any damaged electrical appliances reported by residents
- Details of residents' damaged equipment are being collected to deal with any compensation claims.

8.3 In summary, KCTMO has carried out some repairs and continue to monitor the situation. It is too early to say whether the problem has been fully resolved and where responsibility lies for the cause. It is possible that the fault that has been rectified is not the primary cause.

8.4 KCTMO has worked hard to keep residents informed throughout by letter and face to face contact. They have also discussed the matter at the residents' meeting on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> June and have responded to residents who have made direct contact with the TMO in relation to the surges.

8.5 There has been a considerable volume of communication from a small number of residents in the form of blogs and open "round robin" e-mails, some of which is from people who are not residents of the block. This communication contains a lot of speculation about the cause of the problem. KCTMO has not responded directly to this communication and has focused on keeping residents informed of the facts through direct communication.

8.6 Residents have been advised to inform their insurers of any loss or damage for which they may wish to claim. KCTMO has also stated that they will collect information and pass the details to their insurers. To date 25 residents have submitted

claims for damaged electrical goods. These claims are now with RBKC insurers. KCTMO is also making further contact with the 20 residents who have not claimed to ensure there are full details of any loss.

- 8.7 Financial help has also been offered to residents who may have lost fridge or cooking facilities at the time of the incidents, however, to date no residents took up the offer.

## **FOR INFORMATION**

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