

Mr Awoderu  
The Vice Chairman  
Grenfell Tower Leaseholder Association

Complaints Manager  
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9<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Dear Mr Awoderu

Thank you for the recent correspondence received from you and the Grenfell Leaseholder Association. This matter is being considered at Stage One of the KCTMO Complaints Procedure.

I have summarised the key issues raised in each piece of correspondence you have sent and would respond as follows. KCTMO's complaints procedure states that we will not consider anything that happened over a year ago, unless you have only recently become aware of the situation. Therefore historic correspondence that you have forwarded cannot be considered as part of this complaint.

#### **E-mail dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 2013**

##### **1. Lancaster West Estate Management Board is expensive to run.**

- In support of this claim, you state that £57,272 was spent in 2010-11 relating to "concierge / security / CCTV". You then state that £43,946 of this sum was allocated to Grenfell Tower which equates to 82% of the cost. You consider that this cost has been incorrectly proportioned and should have been apportioned across the whole estate.

Daniel Wood, Head of Home Ownership has reviewed this matter and does not agree with your interpretation of how the concierge charges are apportioned. At present 10% is apportioned to the reception, 55% to Grenfell Tower and 35% to all other properties on

Lancaster West 1 and Lancaster West 3. I therefore do not uphold this part of your complaint.

However, given that it has been a number of years since the apportionment was last reviewed and we therefore undertake to review this matter and circulate our findings early in 2014. Please note that any revisions to the apportionment will be reflected in the 2014/15 service charge estimates.

## **2. Relationship between Lancaster West Estate Management Board and KCTMO**

- You have asked for clarification about which staff work for the Estate Management Board (EMB) and who they report to?

The staff who work in the Lancaster West EMB area are employees of KCTMO. The EMB does not employ any officers directly. Siobhan Rumble is the Area Manager for the Lancaster West Area and currently reports to Kiran Singh, Head of Neighbourhoods. Siobhan manages the staff delivering the service in the area including two officers who deal with estate management issues, two Estate Inspectors and one Handyman. We also have reception staff in the Estate Office.

Siobhan also currently manages the KCTMO Rent Income Team, so she has an Assistant Manager, Anthea Durand who can assist in any issues when Siobhan is not present.

## **3. Heating and Hot Water System**

- You complain that £194,503 was spent on the Heating and Hot Water system in 2006 with little effect.
- You state that the system is not efficient and that residents are paying unnecessarily high heating and hot water costs.
- You feel that the replacement of the heating and hot water system to Grenfell Tower is an emergency.
- You suggest that the renewal of the communal heating should be completed under the contract with Colfley District Energy Limited.
- You also state that there is no gas meter at Grenfell Tower.

I do not uphold your complaint in this area for the following reasons:

Under the KCTMO complaints procedure, we will not consider anything that happened over a year ago, unless you have only recently become aware of the situation. Therefore we are unable to respond to the matter of the works undertaken in 2006 as part of your complaint. However, to put this matter into context, these works were to the central plant that serves Lancaster West 3, and no work was undertaken to the central plant that serves Grenfell Tower and no charges were levied against the lessees' of Grenfell Tower.

We agree that the heating and hot water system in Grenfell Tower is not efficient and that is the reason that we propose to renew the system. This matter is being pursued as a matter of urgency and RBKC Cabinet has now agreed the funding required to carry out this work.

However, time is needed to properly design, plan and procure this work. We also need to consult residents in relation to the design issues, the operation of the system and any changes in the approach to the service charges. We are advised that with some on going maintenance, the current system will continue to be functional until the system is renewed.

We are currently working on proposals for the detail of the new heating and hot water system and will discuss this with residents over the coming months.

The Colfley District Energy Ltd contract is for the repair and maintenance of the borough wide boiler stock. The renewal of the Grenfell Tower heating system is outside of the scope of that contract and irrespective of the procurement route, time is needed to properly design and plan the works and properly consult residents on the proposals.

I would confirm that there is a gas meter at Grenfell Tower.

#### **4. Refurbishment of Grenfell Tower**

- You complain that the proposed refurbishment of Grenfell Tower has been subject to delay and think that the works should commence now, not in 2014.

The refurbishment of Grenfell Tower is a large and complex project and it is important that the works are properly planned to ensure that we meet statutory requirements, consult residents properly and that contractors are selected who will offer the best quality of work

for the most economic price. It is not possible to achieve this in the current calendar year. However, we will continue to progress these works as soon as possible.

It is not possible to give definite dates, because things are liable to change. However, we currently anticipate that the works will commence early in 2014. This assumes that we receive planning permission in September 2013 and that the procurement of a contractor progresses according to plan. We will keep residents informed of progress and of any changes in the likely timescales.

### **Furthermore in your e-mail dated 11<sup>th</sup> August**

#### **5. In relation to the power surges experienced in May 2013**

- You allege that the power surges were the result of negligence and disrepair by KCTMO
- You also state that the KCTMO gave misleading information relating to the number of residents effected
- You ask for a full report to the Grenfell Leaseholder Association on the Power Surges

I do not uphold this part of your complaint for the following reasons:

There is no evidence to support the allegation that the power surges at Grenfell Tower were the result of negligence on behalf of KCTMO. Our insurers, [REDACTED] have reviewed the situation and conclude that the event could not have been foreseen, given that appropriate tests and servicing had been carried out to the electrical supply in the block. [REDACTED] also concluded that KCTMO had taken appropriate action in response to the surges.

You state that KCTMO gave misleading information relating to the power surges by stating that only seven residents had been affected. Your reference is to our Director of Asset and Regeneration, Peter Maddison's e-mail to Councillor Blakeman on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2013 when the initial report of a problem was received on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2013.

KCTMO received an initial report of a suspected power surge on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> May. An electrician attended site that day and carried out tests and confirmed that the electrics in the flat were safe. Further investigations took place in the following days including discussions with UK Power Networks and Leadbitters to clarify whether external factors were causing a problem. In Peter's e-mail to Councillor Blakeman on 24<sup>th</sup> May it stated

that, *to that date*, seven residents had reported specific problems, apparently caused by power surges. As part of that communication Peter went on to state that the contractor, RGE were setting up monitoring arrangements to help understand the nature and timing of any power surges, in order to use this information to diagnose the cause of the problem. The email also states that KCTMO would be writing to all residents on the matter on that day.

The information provided to Councillor Blakeman gave an accurate summary of the situation at that time. The activities that were in place to monitor the situation and investigate the cause indicate that KCTMO took the matter seriously and the communication that went to all residents in the block indicates that we recognised that the issue was likely to be effecting more residents that had actually contacted us to report a problem. I therefore do not uphold this part of your complaint.

Residents of Grenfell Tower have received a significant amount of detailed correspondence in relation to the power surges. Peter has responded to numerous e-mails from you and your colleagues on the subject. I understand you have also met with Peter to discuss the issue in detail and answer your questions. I am not clear what further information you want to receive. However, for the sake of completeness, I attach a copy of the the information recently requested by one of your neighbours, namely:

- Email correspondence between RBKC Insurance Department and the TMO. The email requests copies of electrical reports from the TMO which have also been attached.
- List of repairs reported to the TMO from February 2013 to June 2013 as requested in the email correspondence in Appendix 1 (Please note, some repair reference numbers have been censored as they relate to specific tenants and are subject to Data Protection)
- Electrical Installation Certificate following works carried out by RGE Services on 09/07/2013
- Periodic Inspection Report dated 04/05/2010
- Follow up Periodic inspection reported dated 05/09/2013



I do not uphold this part of your complaint for the following reasons.

Our insurers advise that KCTMO is not liable for this damage as the surges could not be anticipated and appropriate testing and servicing arrangements were in place. We recognise that some residents may have suffered significant damage to electrical equipment as a result of the power surges. The offer of a £200 goodwill payment is not intended to compensate residents for damage to electrical equipment. It is a payment in recognition of the significant disruption that they suffered over the duration of the surges.

Residents who have home contents insurance have been advised that they should refer any loss or damage to their insurers. Residents who do not have insurance and who may be suffering hardship as a result of the surges have been advised to contact their Housing Officer and we will assess whether we can offer any further assistance.

Ward Councillors are invited to resident consultation meetings and events.

I do not agree with your contention that residents are not attending public meetings to hear about the refurbishment and that the design of the scheme should be left to the architect. It is very important that residents are informed, consulted and involved in the design and implementation of the regeneration works to their homes. Residents understand the issues affecting their homes and our design team rely on feedback from residents to help ensure that the works meet residents' needs.

Based on the information available, I am unable to uphold your stage one complaint.

As this concludes my assessment of the case, we will move to close your complaint on our system. If you are not satisfied with the outcome of this complaint, you have the option of taking it to stage two of the complaints procedure. If you do wish to progress to stage two, please outline why you feel my response is not acceptable and what you think we can do to put it right. You have 20 working days in which to tell me that you wish to proceed to the next stage. If you do not contact me by 7<sup>th</sup> October 2013, your complaint will be closed.

Yours sincerely

Joanne Burke

Complaints Manager