

Part B minutes
Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee
11 MAY 2016

B1. MINUTES FROM 9 MARCH 2016

These were accepted as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

B2. GRENFELL TOWER BOARD REVIEW

It was noted that Cllr Blakeman sat in the Public Gallery for this item and did not participate in discussions.

Ms A Johnson introduced the report and said that following the petition received in relation to Grenfell Tower the decision had been made to refer the issues raised to the TMO Board to investigate. She said that it was accepted that the major works would have caused disruption and there were lessons to be learned but overall the project was considered a success.

Mr Black was asked why the report was considered to be private and he said that the Board had a right to decide on the circulation of their report but he would ask if it could be released to the public. He added that a list of all the issues looked at and addressed could be found on page 3 of the summary report that was available to the public. Cllr Press added that not publicising the report could be building up conspiracy around the issues and the TMO should consider releasing the report before the Housing Ombudsman stage. Mr Black agreed to speak to the Chair of the Board about making the report publically available.

Action: Mr Black

Cllr Feilding-Mellen reported that he had been on a tour of Grenfell Tower with the Leader and they had been very impressed with the new entrance, heat exchange and the overall improvement to the building. He encouraged the TMO Board to make their report public. Cllr Press said that she had also been impressed on her tour but queried the independence of the review panel and the extent to which residents had been involved. Mr Black explained the make-up of the review panel and that the Chair had been an independent chair appointed by RBKC. He said that she would have been at the meeting that night but sadly was away.

Responding to Cllr Press's concerns about the involvement of residents in the review, Ms Jevans said that part of the information used by the review

panel was the result of door-knocking 77 out of 120 residents in mid-December.

The Chairman commented that one of the features of the evidence that had been presented to the Committee by the residents was that of wide and sweeping allegations and he asked if through their investigations the Board had satisfied themselves that these allegations could not be substantiated and any specific allegations had been properly processed and addressed. Ms Jevans said that many of the allegations had not been specific but one in relation to the access to residents' properties had been investigated and the process around how access is gained was reviewed. Mr Black added that the TMO complaints procedure could now pick up and deal with group complaints. He also said that Rhydon's had removed a worker from the site after an allegation from an individual who said he had looked at that individual in a certain way. He explained that although Rhydon would be expected to take the initial action, if the TMO was not happy with the outcome then they could review the action taken.

Cllr Allison commented that she was surprised there was such acrimony considering the amount of money spent on the project and the improvements made. The Chairman said that what had been achieved at Grenfell Tower was an immeasurable improvement which would inevitably have caused some disruption. Cllr Mackover added that the good forward steps and further reviews coming out of the report were important and useful.

B4. KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA COLLEGE, WORNINGTON ROAD

The Chairman said that he had changed the Diamond rating of the KD to three diamonds and that is why it was before the Committee. Cllr Allison stated that the college was in Golborne Ward and not St Charles.

Action: Mr Egan to amend

Cllr Allison asked what would happen to the staff and students at the College and added that she had attended the college which offered a good standard of education. Cllr Feilding-Mellen explained that the college had approached the Council in this instance and the Council was not forcing the college out. He confirmed that the decision was taken at Cabinet in April. Cllr Blakeman queried if the requisite time for a Key Decision had been followed. Action: Clerk to check

Cllr Allison excused herself from the Committee meeting.

The Chairman said that it had been an attractive and sensible transaction for the Council.

In response to a question from Cllr Press, Cllr Feilding-Mellen confirmed that the recommendations as set out in paragraph 2.1 were approved at Cabinet. Cllr Press asked if the Council could use the Coco to build a new D1 use facility and then all affordable housing units. Cllr Feilding-Mellen said that no options had been ruled out but he was not committing to looking into that option. He said that there were restrictions on the Coco in terms of developing social housing which had to be held by the HRA which has a debt cap. He said intermediate housing could be delivered but that would not be a solution to the TA problem. Cllr Press added that a number of options for funding had been looked at by the Financial Viability Working Group and she noted that the Council could access loans at public sector interest rates which could be match funded by the Council.

Mr Egan confirmed in response to questions from Cllr Blakeman that options would be provided for a temporary decant and the timetable of completion for February 2019 was indicative but it would take at least two years.

B5. 65-69 Lots Road and 71-73 Lots Road, SW10

Cllr Feilding-Mellen confirmed that the report had not yet gone to Cabinet. Responding to Cllr Mackover, Mr Rose said that the Council would be working on a collaborative approach with land owners but Cllr Feilding-Mellen confirmed that 71-73 Lots Road would be useful to acquire for the larger scale development but was not crucial to the project.

The Chairman asked about the borough's boundary and if the project would fall into Hammersmith and Fulham. Mr Rose confirmed that elements may fall into H&F but the main site was squarely in RBKC.

Responding to Cllr Berrill-Cox, Cllr Feilding-Mellen agreed that the primary objective of the scheme would be to deliver affordable extra care housing through the most efficient means possible, for example through cross-subsidy. He confirmed a paper would be going to Cabinet on 26 May.

B6. Other private matters which the Chairman considers urgent (if any)

There were none.