

Fire Risk Assessments in high risk blocks

Progress meeting 23rd February 2010

Present:

Janice Wray (JW)	TMO Health & Safety Advisor
Andrew Furness (AF)	Salvus Consulting – Managing Director
Russell Thompson (RT)	TMO Interim Director of Asset & Engineering
Adrian Bowman (AB)	TMO Safety Advisor
Robin Cahalarn (RC)	TMO Lift Engineer (part of meeting)

1. Apologies

Valerie Sharples	TMO Project Manager
Ann Muchmore (AM)	RBKC Client-side Officer
Abigail Accosta (AA)	TMO Project Manager

2. Lifts – Requirements of fire fighting lifts etc.

- 2.1 Robin Cahalarn, TMO Lift Engineer, attended for this item. Janice advised that a number of the FRA Action Plans had raised specific queries in relation to lifts and these had been referred to Robin who was seeking confirmation from Salvus that his interpretation of what constitutes a “fire fighting lift” is the same as theirs. The specific points from the action plans were as follows -

1.) It is recommended that TMO confirms if any of the lifts installed in the building are either fire fighter or evacuation lifts, as required by Building Regulations as the building is over 18 metres high.
2.) Confirmation should be sought that where the lifts installed in the building are either fire fighter or evacuation lifts that they have been subject to maintenance and testing in line with current guidance and British Standards.
3.) Should any installed fire fighter or evacuation lifts not be subject to testing in accord with current British Standards and guidance, it is recommended that competent engineers be engaged to undertake such testing.

RC then outlined the 3 different classifications of lifts in terms of fire – Firemans Lift, Firefighting Lift and Evacuation Lift. After some discussion the group concluded that most of the Borough’s lifts meet the majority (but not all) of the criteria which define a firefighting lift. It was agreed that, for the purposes of the Action Plans, JW and RC would document the criteria that TMO lifts do meet. RC clarified that the requirements for lifts below a certain size are less onerous and so these lifts are less likely to comply with a significant number of these criteria.

Action: RC & JW to document the criteria that the TMO’s fire fighting lifts meet and advise Salvus so that this can be included in future Action Plans

The importance of advising the Borough Fire Commander of the TMO's approach to fire fighting lifts was acknowledged and RT asked JW to draft a letter for the Borough Commander to clarify specifically what we have got and how we are using this.

Action: JW & RC to draft information for Borough Fire Commander

3. Programme

- 3.1 JW confirmed that the programme still appeared to be on track to finish by the end of March as per our requirement. AF advised that assessments at all of the remaining blocks had now been programmed and it was anticipated that these would be completed by 10th March allowing the final three weeks in March for writing the reports and drawing the plans.

4. Reports and Plans received to date

- 4.1 AF circulated a breakdown of reports produced to date, those currently in quality control and those still outstanding. JW confirmed that TMO had been impressed with progress as our initial concerns that a 6-month timescale was too tight had very quickly been addressed by Salvus.

5. Queries arising from the FRA reports

- 5.1 JW asked about reference to "first aid fire fighting equipment" and sought clarification that this actually refers to portable extinguishers, hose reels, fire blankets etc. AF confirmed that this was the case.
- 5.2 JW advised that the TMO have recently acquired a "TP Tracker system" and we have just engaged in a programme of intensive door knocking in an effort to increase the level of information held about the residents. This includes information on people's physical ability and should assist us in identifying residents who may require additional devices to provide them with early warning of smoke / fire in their home and may also require their own Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan. It would be helpful if Salvus could incorporate this information into their FRA with regard to identifying and assessing the needs of disabled and vulnerable residents.
- 5.3 "Future correspondence in relation to fire safety produced by TMO should take into account all persons, including those whose first language is not English." JW advised that it would be helpful if Salvus could include that "TMO confirm that future fire safety correspondence will be offered in 7 major languages".
- 5.4 Checks / regular inspections on escape route signage, flooring condition, etc already incorporated into Neighbourhood Services regular inspections.
- 5.5 With regard to the priority 3 action advising us to consider extension of current emergency lighting system (LACoRS Guidance) to lift lobby areas etc. – this has been highlighted to our Asset & Engineering Team for inclusion in major works.

- 5.6 With regard to monthly tests of emergency lights it is our intention that this will be undertaken by caretakers and a written log kept on site.
- 5.7 Annual checks on first aid fire extinguishing equipment is being undertaken by RGE Services appointed in Aug 09 after rigorous vetting.
- 5.8 Staff (estate staff, community officers, fire marshals etc.) receive annual fire safety refresher trg which always incorporates practical use of extinguishers. Next course due in April / May 10 – records available from H&S team.
- 5.9 Checks to see if contractors are suitably trained in use of fire extinguishing equipment – Contractor vetting takes account of H&S trg & awareness. Where there is a specific fire safety risk this will be reflected in the risk assessment & method statement.

6. Gillray House – requirement for dry riser

- 6.1 AF confirmed that he had now had an informal meeting with Nick Coombs at the LFB and the requirement for existing buildings in excess of 18 meters high to have dry risers fitted retrospectively was discussed at length. As expected no definitive statement was forthcoming, however, Mr Coombs did confirm that the fire brigade equipment can now attain 4 bars of pressure at roof level in buildings of this height and this clearly goes some way to mitigating the risks presented by these buildings. Mr Coombs advised that specific buildings be discussed with the local operational fire fighters and their needs be taken into account via communication with the Borough Commander.

7. Standard-setting meeting with the LFB

- 7.1 AF advised that this is now likely to be arranged for the third week in March and he asked if JW could provide convenient dates / times on behalf of all of her colleagues who needed to attend.

Action: JW to provide convenient dates for standard-setting meeting

- 7.2 It was agreed that the issues of dry risers, deficiency notices etc. should be raised at this meeting and we should attempt to get a definitive position from the LFB.

8. Health & Safety

AF advised his team had raised no issues.

9. Invoicing

Again no issues

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Trellick Tower Deficiency Notice

RT advised that the TMO's consultants had met with Collette O'Hara from Fire Safety and discussed our proposals for progressing the actions identified by the LFB Notice. Collette confirmed that she was happy with our proposals and

was flexible on the Nov 10 deadline. Consultant will distribute copies of minutes from their meeting.

10.2 Deficiency Notice – King Charles House

Janice advised that we had recently received this and provided AF with a copy. After some discussion the possibility of raising this formally with the LFB was raised.

- 11. Date of next meeting** – try to link this to the standard setting meeting with the LFB.

Distribution:

Those attending plus:

Valerie Sharples	Project Services Manager
Abi Accosta	Project Manager
Lornette Pemberton	Director of P & OD