

GRENFELL TOWER

PUBLIC INQUIRY

Further Witness Statement of

SAM MACKOVER

I, SAM MACKOVER, WILL SAY:

1. I make this Witness Statement further to receipt of the Rule 9 letter from the Public Inquiry dated 4 September 2019. This statement is supplemental to the Witness Statement dated 23 September 2018. I have been asked to address a number of questions from the Public Inquiry arising from my Witness Statement, dated 23 September 2018.
2. The matters contained in this statement are either known to me or are ones which I believe (in which case I have specifically said so) or are derived from records including computer records maintained by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea ('the Borough', 'RBKC', 'the Council,') and to which I have access and with which I am familiar and which I believe to be accurate.

QUESTION ONE

3. I have been asked whether any concerns were ever raised by the HPSC regarding oversight of the TMO, particularly in relation to fire safety. I cannot recall any concerns being raised. I felt that members of the HPSC were assiduous in following up on TMO action on fire doors and LFB enquiries (see paragraphs 40-67 of my original statement). I felt there was a recognition by HPSC members of the limitations of the scrutiny process over the TMO given that it was an external organisation with its own structure, Board and did not report to the HPSC (see paragraph 18 of my original statement).

4. I have been asked whether I had any further involvement in the replacement of leaseholder doors beyond the email sent to Anne Wright on 2 May 2015, and whether I contributed to the discussion at subsequent HPSC meetings. I recall, along with other HPSC members, continuing to question TMO and council officers on the progress with replacing leaseholder doors. In particular, I recall at an HPSC meeting in May 2017 that I led the committee in requiring a full report on fire doors to be presented in time for the next HPSC meeting, which was due to be held in July 2017 (as detailed at paragraph 67 of my original statement).
5. I have been asked whether I recall any specific occasions upon which fire safety at Grenfell Tower was discussed at a meeting of the HPSC. I recall seeing in the TMO performance review papers submitted to the HPSC (exhibited as SM/25 in my original statement) that RBKC Internal Audit had awarded TMO Health and Safety 'substantial assurance', which I believe was an improvement on previous ratings. There was a specific reference to Grenfell Tower fire safety in that report, as detailed at paragraph 63 of my original statement. I cannot recall any other specific occasion at HPSC when fire safety at Grenfell Tower was discussed.
6. I have been asked to detail my involvement with: the FRA programme; TMO/LFB familiarisation meetings; block familiarisation meetings and electrical inspections and testing. This question refers to paragraph 56 of my original statement, and states, 'At paragraph 56 you say that you provided an update on fire safety for the committee.' I did not provide an update on fire safety to the committee; an update on fire safety was provided to the committee. My statement says 'In the same paper, paragraph 3.11.2 of Appendix 1 [one] provided an update on fire safety...' All reports presented to the HPSC are prepared by council officers or the TMO, and not by councillors. The HPSC members do not produce or present reports. This particular report, exhibited as SM/4 in my original statement, was prepared by the Director of Housing.
7. I have been asked who at the TMO I had direct contact with regarding the above report. As explained above in paragraph 6, I did not and would not have had any involvement in the preparation of the report which provided the update to the committee.

8. I have been asked whether I recall any discussion at the HPSC regarding the 'stay put' fire strategy. It was referred to in an update given to HPSC on Adair Tower, which was mentioned at paragraph 50 of my original statement. I recall mention at HPSC that 'stay put' was the strategy of the LFB / FRAs for a number of TMO buildings, and that overall scrutiny of Fire Safety Policy was within the remit of the Cabinet and the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee (see paragraph 40 of my original statement). 'Stay put' was also referenced at HPSC in November 2016 and May 2017 (see paragraphs 63 and 66 of my original statement). However, beyond this, I do not recall any specific discussion on the 'stay put' strategy at the HPSC.

QUESTION TWO

9. I have been asked whether the HPSC identified any reason why the issues raised in the petition by Grenfell Tower residents had not been included in the updates. I recall when HPSC questioned this, members were told that certain issues within the petition had been raised by individual residents as complaints. As stated in paragraph 80 of my original statement, the HPSC was informed that it could not act as a complaints department as this was the responsibility of the TMO.
10. I have been asked whether any concerns were raised by residents during my visit to Grenfell Tower. I recall one resident expressed concern that their new central heating was not on all the time. The project manager explained to that resident and the visiting group that the control was now by thermostat in each flat. This had not been the case prior. This was the only concern that I can recall being raised by a resident during my visit.
11. I have been asked whether there was any further discussion regarding lessons learnt from the petition after July 2016. I said in my original statement, at paragraph 91, that the GTRA emails sought a meeting with the Cabinet member and a ward councillor to continue the discussion started by the petition. I gathered this from an email chain which I was later copied into. I am not aware of what further discussion regarding the petition may have taken place between the GTRA, Cabinet member, council officers or the TMO. Although it was not recorded in the minutes, I recall that enhanced resident engagement, one of the main lessons learnt from residents' complaints and the TMO

response, was discussed by members at the March 2017 HPSC in relation to a future refurbishment project at Trellick Tower.

12. I have been asked whether I recall why Part B of the HPSC meeting minutes were subsequently made public by the TMO. The process of issuing HPSC minutes would be a matter for the RBKC Governance team. Whilst I am aware, as stated in my original witness statement at paragraph 93, that the Part B minutes have since been made public, I do not know that it was the TMO that did so. The Part B minutes would have been made public once the TMO made its Board report public.

13. I have also been asked whether I had any further contact with Grenfell Tower residents following the 13 July 2016 meeting. I do not recall any further contact with Grenfell Tower residents.

Statement of Truth

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

I am willing for my statement to the Public Inquiry to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and for it to be published on the Inquiry's web site.

Full name: Sam Mackover

Position or office held: RETIRED COUNCILLOR

Signed: SMackover

Date: 26 SEPT 2019