

Name: Councillor Judith Blakeman

Number of Statement: 1

No. of Exhibits: 41

Date 11 October 2019

IN THE MATTER OF THE GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

WITNESS STATEMENT OF
COUNCILLOR JUDITH BLAKEMAN

Introduction

I, Councillor Judith Mary Blakeman, will say as follows:

1. I make this statement in response to a request for evidence under Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006 from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The request invites me to address so far as I am able, a number of issues, which I set out below.
2. I am one of three elected Councillors for the Notting Dale ward in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) where Grenfell Tower is situated.
3. Although the request to me has been made in my capacity as a Council Member for RBKC I have not been provided with any assistance by the lawyers for RBKC. I have been provided access to some of the documentation that I understand has been provided by RBKC to the Inquiry, namely emails (with attachments) to which I was a party, as well as some TMO documents. In all there are nearly 30,000 documents, which I was given access to at the start of September. I have done my best to go through those documents in the time available.
4. Through my position on the Council I was nominated by the Council to the Board of the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO). My membership

of the Board was terminated by KCTMO following the fire. I have therefore not sought any assistance from KCTMO or their lawyers

5. I make this statement based on those documents that I have been able to find on my computer and in my emails within the time available, together with those that I have been able to identify from the material provided by RBKC (which I identify with a FORT reference). I am content to comment on any other documentation that is drawn to my attention so far as I am able.
6. As an opposition councillor effectively working full-time on Council matters, with no access to administrative or other support resources, I do not have the time or capacity to review the (literally) hundreds of enquiries I have sent to the KCTMO since 2012 concerning issues at Grenfell Tower. I am therefore exhibiting examples where I can to illustrate my responses to the questions.
7. I have provided two witness statements to the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS). The first (MPS1) is dated 28 June 2017 (7 July 2017). This was very much a preliminary statement and I do not intend to rely on it here in my response. The second statement (MPS2) is dated 28 June 2019. It is more comprehensive and I do seek to rely on it in responding to this Rule 9 request, and to supplement my evidence with this statement.
8. I refer to MPS2 in which I detail the circumstances of my election to RBKC and explain my longstanding involvement with Grenfell Tower and its residents as one of three Labour Councillors for Notting Dale Ward. This ward includes the whole of the Lancaster West Estate, the Silchester Estate and other social rented housing provided both by RBKC and by housing association Registered Providers (RPs). According to the RBKC website the housing tenures within Notting Dale ward are approximately 41% Council housing, 30% RP social housing and 29% private sector (homeownership and private rental sector).
9. I refer again to MPS2 where I detail on Page 13 the circumstances in which I was dismissed by the TMO Board following the fire at Grenfell Tower in 2017.
10. Although the KCTMO is supposed to be 'resident-led' I saw little evidence of this during my time on the Board. I found myself, as the only Labour-nominated Board member, being asked to take up issues on behalf of residents of estates and blocks across the whole of the Borough, including concerns about fire safety.
11. The TMO Code of Conduct seems to restrict the opportunity for tenant and leaseholder Board members to raise issues affecting residents, which is one reason why I felt that I was often the only Board member speaking on their behalf.

12. I live within 250 metres of Grenfell Tower and witnessed first-hand the awful events of 14 June. I returned home at around 8 am and found representatives of many of the world's media in my front garden waiting for me. I was asked for comments and interviews, which I provided, allegedly in breach of the TMO Code of Conduct. This is why I was expelled from the TMO Board.
13. The TMO provided no guidance or support to Board members about the Fire until the end of August 2017. I was left on 14 June 2017 without any assistance, either from the TMO or RBKC and was put in the position where I felt to have refused interviews and comments could have jeopardised my personal safety, given all the anger there was out on the streets.
14. So I make no apology for speaking up on behalf of the residents of Grenfell Tower and if in doing so I have breached the TMO Code of Conduct. I saw my role primarily as a ward councillor to work for the residents, to support them and speak up for them in their dealings with the TMO and the Council.

1. Fire safety measures in Grenfell Tower at the time of the fire

a. What were the fire resistance, prevention, mitigation, evacuation and other fire safety measures ("fire safety measures") in place at the time of the fire?

15. I am not in a position to say exactly what the fire safety measures were. This is a question that is probably best answered by the KCTMO Health Safety and Facilities Manager Janice Wray, the Executive Director of Financial Services and ICT, Barbara Matthews, and the Chief Executive, Robert Black.
16. I refer to a Report to the RBKC Housing and Property Scrutiny Committee (HPSC) dated 10 July 2014 on Tenant Management Organisation's Performance Review 2013/2014 and Tenant Management Organisation's Performance Agreement 2014/2015 which I exhibit as JMB/1 (JMB/1) in which the Director of Housing for RBKC, Laura Johnson outlines in para 1.1 that 'The management of the Council's housing stock is delegated to the TMO through the Modular Management Agreement. The activities undertaken through this delegated authority are monitored by the Housing Department on an ongoing basis through a performance management framework...'
17. I refer also to two reports to the Housing, Environmental Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee in 2010 and the HPSC in 2011. Although I was not a member of the HPSC at that time, the reports may have been passed to me then, but in any event have

been brought to my attention more recently. The first report to the Committee on 15 March 2010 is a joint report by the TMO Chief Executive, Robert Black and the Chief Housing Officer, Laura Johnson and is titled 'LGA report extinguishing the risk: A councillor's guide to fire safety'. I exhibit this as JMB/2 (JMB/2). The second report to the committee on 20 January 2011 is titled 'Fire Risk Assessments in RBKC Residential Blocks – Progress Report' and I exhibit this as JMB/3 (JMB/3). They deal with the approach to Fire Risk Assessments (FRA's) in RBKC Housing Stock, the progress of them and recommendations made. These include a recommendation to 'confirm that each dwelling door is rated to FR30 standard' and 'consider...the installation of intumescent strips and cold smoke seals to each flat access door.' (JMB/3 para 4.4).

18. I refer also to MPS2 where I exhibit as JB/2 a copy of the report to the KCTMO Operations Committee on 2 May 2013 by Janice Wray on 'Current TMO position on Fire Risk Assessments and related Fire Safety matters'. The document makes reference at Para 7.1 to 'The need to document our approach to fire safety...and a policy covering a wide range of issues such as the evacuation strategy in the blocks, fire risk assessments, arrangements for maintaining fire safety equipment...has been drafted'. I have never seen the fire safety policy and strategy document referred to.
19. There were regular updates to the TMO Board and to the HPSC on the programme of Fire Risk Assessments, as can be seen from the various agendas and minutes. An example of the report to the HPSC can be found in JMB/1 at Appendix 1 section 3.6.
20. I only ever received one KCTMO annual report on health & safety (HSR) as these were normally provided to the Finance Audit and Risk Committee of which I was never a member. It is dated 28 Sept 2017 and I produce it as my exhibit JMB/4 (JMB/4). It was provided to the KCTMO Board after the 2017 fire at Grenfell Tower (although I was not permitted to attend the Board meeting that the report was provided for as I was about to be removed from the KCTMO Board). The report details engagement with LFB (Page 7) and work on FRAs (Pages 8 and 11). I note that the document also states at Page 13 that 'A comprehensive review of the Fire Safety Policy and Strategy was undertaken by the H&S Committee this year' It then goes on to detail 'some of the significant enhancements in the new policy' although I never saw a copy of the new policy document.
21. At KCTMO Board meetings we were not shown the FRA's, but were told by the Executive Team that they had been done or that the programme was ongoing. We were also advised of any recommendations from the Finance Audit and Risk Committee. By way of example I exhibit a JMB/5 an extract of the KCTMO Board Pack for 31 March

2016 (JMB/5) where this can be seen within the Chief Executive's report in section 6.

22. I am aware that there was a 'Stay Put' evacuation strategy which in terms stated that unless their dwelling was the location of the fire (in which case the rule was Get Out and Stay Out) residents should stay put in their flat and await rescue by the London Fire Brigade (LFB) if necessary. These instructions were included in at least two of the KCTMO/Rydon newsletters delivered to all residents of the Tower. I exhibit copies of those newsletters dated July 2014 and May 2016 as JMB/6 (JMB/6)
23. The stay put policy is mentioned on Page 5 of a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) for Grenfell Tower by Carl Stokes dated 20th November 2012, which I exhibit as JMB/7 (JMB/7 FORT 00831859 / 02765375), although I did not see this FRA until after the fire in 2017. This document also refers on Page 5 to 'articles on fire safety advice and emergency procedures (being) included in the residents magazine called 'Link'.
24. The stay put policy was confirmed in an email to me from Peter Maddison dated 5 January 2015 in respect of the refurbishment, which I exhibit as JMB/8 (JMB/8 FORT01094143) wherein he states that 'We have posted notices throughout the building and explained in newsletters that a stay put policy is in place in the event of a fire'. It was also confirmed following the refurbishment in a response to a matrix of outstanding issues (exhibited within MPS2 as JB/5) wherein it was stated that 'In the May 2016 newsletter the 'stay put' policy was reiterated as requested by the Fire Brigade in case of fire'.
25. I was aware through my work with the residents of Grenfell Tower of issues that had been raised in respect of fire safety, which lead to fire safety notices being installed on every landing.
26. Another issue raised was in respect of the closure of Station Walk. At the time that the new Academy was being built, residents were worried about the closure of Station Walk and its effect on access to Grenfell Tower in the event of a fire. I will return to this topic later in my statement.
27. During the refurbishment there was a big issue raised with regards to the Heating Interface Units (HIU's) and the effect on fire safety of their placement in the hallways. Again I will return to this topic later.
28. After the refurbishment was completed, residents also had major concerns when National Grid (now Cadent) installed gas pipes in the stairwell, the only fire exit for residents. Again I will go on to discuss this elsewhere in my statement

b. What checks, assessments or inspections were made into fire safety measures at Grenfell Tower before the fire on 14 June 2017?

29. Once again I believe this is a question best addressed by Janice Wray, or Barbara Matthews and Robert Black from the Executive Team of the TMO. The HSR 2017 (JMB/4) makes it clear that there was an ongoing FRA review programme. I have not seen any FRA for Grenfell Tower other than JMB/7 which is dated 20 November 2012, and which was provided to me after the fire. As stated above the FRA's were never sent to the KCTMO Board, or the HPSC. The HSR 2017 (JMB/4) also references regular liaison meetings with LFB staff at paragraph 6.8 that took place during my time as a Board member.
30. The 2013 report from Janice Wray (JB/2) states at paragraph 4.3 that '...FRA reviews will be undertaken...regularly, (and) following 'material alterations' at the block...' The FRA's were conducted by an independent consultant, who I understand to be Carl Stokes. The FRA in 2012 (JMB/7) should have been reviewed by 1st January 2014. Furthermore my understanding is that it should have been reviewed following the refurbishment. I refer to an email which I exhibit as JMB/9 (JMB/9 FORT00829727) between David Hughes of Rydon and Paul Hanson of RBKC Building Control dated 5 July 2016 which refers to a 'latest report' from the fire risk assessor, but I have not seen any report other than JMB/7. This email was subsequently sent to Claire Williams of KCTMO and on to Janice Wray.
31. I am aware that the residents of Grenfell Tower were very concerned with regards to various aspects of fire safety and asked on numerous occasions for either an independent fire safety review and/or a fire drill. I refer to and exhibit as JMB/10 (JMB/10 FORT01207859) an email from me to Eddie Daffarn dated 19 July 2013 following a HPSC meeting, in which I report my understanding from the TMO that a fire safety exercise took place and was satisfactory. I am not sure now whether residents were informed of the outcome. I refer to as my exhibit JMB/11 (JMB/11 FORT01031738) email correspondence with Peter Maddison of KCTMO in which I outlined the request for '...another independent inspection of the arrangements in the event of a fire' which I suggested might be better left to the end of the project, and to which he responded 'Agreed'. I refer to as my exhibit JMB/12 (JMB/12 FORT 01042331/01030048/ FORT01028461) email correspondence from Grenfell Tower Leaseholders Association (GTLA) dated 29 September 2016 in which they make the point that a fire

- drill at Grenfell Tower is due. I attach as my exhibit JMB/13 (JMB/13 FORT01188939/FORT00507099) a response that was drafted by Peter Maddison at Laura Johnson's request in which it is stated that 'Fire drills are not required in blocks with a stay put fire strategy'.
32. I am aware that 'At the conclusion of the (Grenfell Tower refurbishment) some of the operational firefighters from the local fire station attended an onsite briefing where the contractor demonstrated the fire safety features of the building'. This is mentioned in JMB/13 and was reported to the TMO Board at the meeting on 24 November 2016 and to the HPSC, and can be found at page 13 of the Report by The Director of Housing and Town Clerk and Executive Director of Finance within the Board Pack which I exhibit as JMB/14 (JMB/14). However I note from an email from Claire Williams to Janice Wray dated 15 August 2016 which I exhibit as JMB/15 (JMB/15 FORT 00833436) that this involved 3 nameless chaps possibly all from the same watch!
- c. What decisions about fire safety measures that applied to Grenfell Tower were made, by whom and when?**
33. I refer to paragraph 10 above and the Modular Management Agreement between RBKC and KCTMO which meant that such decisions about fire safety were made by KCTMO.
34. Those decisions about fire safety would have been made by the professional employees of the KCTMO, essentially the Executive Team which at the time of the Grenfell Tower fire comprised Robert Black (Chief Executive), Barbara Matthews (Executive Director of Finance & ICT), Sacha Jevans (Executive Director of Operations) and Yvonne Birch (Executive Director of People and Performance). The TMO employed a Health & Safety and Facilities Manager Janice Wray who reported to Barbara Matthews.
35. To evidence this I produce an email from Barbara Matthews dated 12 January 2016 which followed the Adair Tower fire, and the issuing of enforcement notices by the LFB. In that email which I exhibit as JMB/16 (JMB/16) Ms Matthews states 'The Executive Team together with relevant TMO staff are now reviewing the steps considered necessary and will prepare an action plan to ensure compliance...'. I have now seen the Enforcement Notices which I exhibit as JMB/17 (JMB/17 FORT01923740) although did not see them previously and had no call to.
36. The HSR 2017 (JMB/4) was prepared by Barbara Matthews and Janice Wray. It states that 'The KCTMO Health & Safety Committee meets quarterly and reports to the Executive Team'. (Page 3). It goes on to state that 'KCTMO officers continue to have regular (bi-monthly) meetings with London Fire Brigade Staff. Officers from the LFB's

Borough Fire Safety Team (who are responsible for inspecting, auditing and enforcement) and from the Operational Team (usually the Station Manager from the North Kensington Fire Station) meet with KCTMO staff from Health & Safety and Supported Housing to discuss...' and 'Further, they have provided the opportunity to raise queries and concerns, seek advice / guidance and discuss changes in best practice with the LFB' 'These meetings have ensured that fire safety is constantly scrutinised to highlight how it can be improved, LFB requirements met and risks further mitigated' (Page 7)

37. I am aware that the KCTMO also had an independent Fire Safety consultant, Carl Stokes, and his work may have contributed to TMO decisions about fire safety measures. I know that he prepared a report in respect of the issue of the positioning of the Heat Interface Units (HIU) which I exhibit as JMB/18 (JMB/18 FORT04741258).
38. I also produce as my exhibit JMB/19 (JMB/19 FORT00395919) an email from Robert Black dated 23 March 2017 in which he responds to a request from the GTLA for funding for an independent health and safety inspection following the installation of gas pipes in the fire exit. In his response he outlines a discussion with Laura Johnson, the Director of Housing for RBKC and the responsibility for Health and Safety including fire safety. He states therein that 'Laura and I are content that our approach has been reasonable, that hazards have been identified, risks assessed... I would hope as a Councillor and Board member this provides you with the assurance...' This indicates to me that they were both making decisions about fire safety measures.

d. What was the chain of decision-making, communication and responsibility about those decisions?

39. I refer again to the HSR 2017 (JMB/4) where it is stated at Page 2 that the Board of the KCTMO was responsible for Health & Safety, together with RBKC who remained the freeholder of the housing stock. '...KCTMO is responsible in the first instance as it is in control of the premises and responsible for the operational management and for repair and maintenance activities'
40. All decisions made by RBKC were made by the Cabinet. With regards to Housing matters the main responsibility fell on the Cabinet member for Housing and Property Services, who was also the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen. Day to day responsibility was delegated to the Housing Department of which the Director was Laura Johnson. The Housing Department oversaw the activity of the KCTMO. The HPSC was there to scrutinise the work of the Cabinet Member, the Housing Department

(at Scrutiny Committee meetings approximately every 2 months) and the KCTMO (every 6 months). I refer again to JMB/1, a copy of the report to the HPSC dated 10 July 2014 which shows the detail of the information provided to the HPSC.

41. Within KCTMO the decisions on fire safety measures come under the head of health and safety and I am not in a position to dispute what is said about this in the HSR 2017 (JMB/4). As outlined above all such decisions on fire safety measures would be made by the Executive Team, and Barbara Matthews (and before her Anthony Parkes) would report to the Board of the KCTMO as necessary. To the best of my knowledge and understanding Janice Wray as Health Safety and Facilities Manager would be involved in the meetings with the LFB and the decisions to be made. She reported to Barbara Matthews.
42. The KCTMO Board were provided with regular risk assessment reports, including financial risk and health and safety including fire safety. As Board Members we relied on the accuracy of reports and this risk assessment information provided.
43. The Director of Housing at RBKC would be expected to work closely with the TMO. The Scrutiny Committee would see reports every 6 months in the form of a report from the Director of Housing including an appendix which covered Health and Safety issues including Fire Safety. I refer again to my exhibit JMB/1 Appendix 1 Section 3.9 at page 15 for an example of this.

e. To what extent did the relevant persons or organisations responsible for the fire safety of occupants of Grenfell Tower communicate with one another about their knowledge of the building and the decisions they were making?

44. I was not privy to this information, other than as reported from time to time to the TMO Board, the TMO Operations Committee and the RBKC HPSC. I was a member of all of these Committees - the TMO Board from November 2012 until September 2017, the TMO Operations Committee from 2013 and the HPS Committee from May 2014 until May 2019.
45. Paragraph 6.8 of the HSR 2017 report (JMB/4), quoted above refers to the bi-monthly liaison meetings with London Fire Brigade staff. The discussions included 'familiarisation visits to RBKC Housing blocks, Fire Risk assessments, (and) these meetings have also provided a regular opportunity for KCTMO staff to keep the LFB apprised of and updated on any planned or ongoing major works...'

46. As stated above in paragraph 32 I am aware of a visit by local firefighters to Grenfell Tower following the refurbishment.

f. Was any consideration given to the evacuation of disabled and other vulnerable residents, and if so, was adequate provision made for them?

47. I am not aware of the details of any specific consideration being given to the evacuation of disabled and other vulnerable residents at Grenfell Tower, nor any provision being made for this. I recall that the issue was raised at one of the meetings between the Grenfell Tower Residents' Compact and TMO staff in respect of one particular resident during the refurbishment, but no more widely than that.

48. I note from the HSR 2017 (JMB/4) on page 8 that 'Policy Officers from the LFB met with KCTMO and RBKC staff to discuss the elevated level of fire safety risk faced by the vulnerable and those in sheltered housing...'; that LFB had just published a Guide which included a 'requirement to complete person-centred risk assessments' and work to apply this was underway in KCTMO's sheltered schemes. Furthermore on page 19 that the TMO aimed, 'where vulnerable residents with special needs were identified...to work with them to clarify their specific emergency procedures and ensure their safety is protected'. I was not however present at those meetings.

49. The fact that it is in the report and was discussed between officers from the LFB, KCTMO, and RBKC means that some consideration must have been given to the issue, although I cannot assist any further. I am not aware whether this consideration specifically included residents of Grenfell Tower as it seemed to target only sheltered housing schemes.

g. What factors or motives influenced the decisions about the fire resistance, prevention, mitigation and safety measures at Grenfell Tower before 14 June 2017?

50. As I have explained above the decisions fell within the ambit of the KCTMO. To the best of my knowledge RBKC did not get involved in these decisions other than through Building Control who for example are referred to in the report of Carl Stokes relating to the Heating Interface Units (JMB/18).

51. The expectation of RBKC and the KCTMO Board members was that KCTMO was confident it had the appropriate internal technical and professional expertise amongst its employees and its fire safety consultant, in conjunction with the LFB to make the right

decisions. This is evidenced by the email from Robert Black (JMB/19). Further, that the contractors it employed similarly had the necessary expertise to ensure that all decisions about fire resistance, prevention, mitigation and safety measures at Grenfell Tower were competent and fully informed.

52. The KCTMO Board was told that there were internal checks by Janice Wray and also external checks by the consultant commissioned by KCTMO (Carl Stokes). The KCTMO Board relied on the advice and information provided by the Executive Team, and the Health and Safety Committee in conjunction with LFB.
53. I am not in a position to add or counter anything which is stated in the HSR 2017 (JMB/4) with regards to the decisions about the fire resistance, prevention, mitigation and safety measures, or to suggest what factors or motives may have influenced those decisions.
54. The HSR 2017 (JMB/4) states at Page 13 that 'A comprehensive review of the Fire Safety policy and strategy was undertaken by the H&S Committee this year...' although as I have stated already I am not aware of the outcome and have not had sight of any other reports or recommendations.
55. Following the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower I raised concerns over the numbering of the landings, the need for fire safety notices, and the need for a fire safety inspection as did the Grenfell Tower Leaseholders Association (GTLA), the Residents Compact, individual residents and I understand the local constituency MP (at that time Victoria Borwick MP). To the best of my knowledge only one of those concerns was dealt with namely that fire safety notices were put up on each landing, (although I believe they were only in English).
56. There was a very significant issue around the installation of gas pipes in the stairwell, which was the fire escape route. I have detailed this in my statement to the police MPS2. I took up the complaints from the residents and the GTLA and contacted RBKC about this. I refer to JMB/19 my email correspondence with Laura Johnson from RBKC, and Robert Black from the KCTMO. I refer also to my formal complaint on behalf of GTLA and other residents which was submitted on 20 March 2017 and which I exhibit as JMB/20 (JMB/20 FORT01000611). Whilst acknowledging responsibility with regards to health and safety and fire safety specifically they relied on the work of Janice Wray and 'a competent independent consultant' to inspect and raise issues, and refused to fund an independent consultant. I also exhibit as JMB/21 (JMB/21 FORT01001205) an email from Sacha Jevans providing a more thorough response to the GTLA request. The residents were so concerned that they were threatening to sue councillors if we failed to persuade the TMO to commission the Fire Brigade to carry out a further check, as

evidenced by further email correspondence which I exhibit as JMB/22 (JMB/22 FORT01099316 / 00993195)

h. What if any assessments were carried out to balance such factors or motives with the safety of the residents?

57. To the best of my knowledge this is a matter which RBKC left largely for the TMO to deal with, and updates on fire safety issues were provided as part of the 6 monthly reports to the HPSC.
58. The TMO Board and the Operations Committee were told that there were regular assessments by the Health, Safety and Facilities Manager, Janice Wray, checks by the consultant commissioned by the TMO and regular meetings between the TMO, the LFB (generally the North Kensington Fire Station) and the Council.
59. As I have referred to above the GTLA requested an independent fire safety assessment following the refurbishment and the installation of gas pipes in the stairwell, and sought funding from the TMO or RBKC for an independent report. This request was refused by both the TMO and RBKC as set out in the emails from Robert Black at JMB/19 and Sacha Jevans at JMB/21, and they relied on the involvement of Janice Wray and the fire safety consultant.
60. I am aware also that the GTLA asked for the LFB to attend and carry out a fire drill, but again this did not take place, although there was the visit from local firefighters that I have referred to in paragraph 32. The GTLA remained very concerned about fire safety.
61. As mentioned above and in my statement to the police MPS2 David Collins from the Grenfell Compact expressed the residents' concerns about the placement of the HIU's and this lead to the TMO instructing and obtaining a report from the independent consultant Carl Stokes which I have exhibited as JMB/18.

i. If such assessments were carried out, who carried them out, when and what did they conclude?

62. I have answered this question to the best of my ability above.

j. What advice was given to those responsible for fire safety in Grenfell Tower and how did they respond to that advice?

63. I do not know what official advice was given to those responsible for fire safety at Grenfell Tower nor how they responded to that advice. The emails from Robert Black and

Sacha Jevans I have referred to (JMB/19 and JMB/21) make it clear that ‘...the TMO take our health & safety responsibilities very seriously and are committed to complying with our statutory obligations and implementing effective control measures to mitigate risks to residents, their visitors, our staff and our contractors. To assist us with this we employ a competent and experienced Health and Safety Advisor, Janice Wray. Additionally, in relation to fire safety specifically. Janice is supported by a competent independent consultant who undertakes our Fire Risk Assessments and provides a range of fire safety inspections, advice and guidance as necessary...Further, as necessary, my staff will seek advice / guidance / clarification from other professionals such as Building Control Officers, the Health & Safety Executive...’ (JMB/19)

64. The HSR 2017 (JMB/4) makes it clear that there was also engagement with LFB.

65. I have been made aware of a letter from LFB dated May 2017 regarding ‘Tall Buildings – External Fire Spread’ I refer to a copy of that letter as my exhibit JMB/23 (JMB/23 FORT01004404) I was not aware of the letter until after the fire, when I understand it was provided to Councillor Pat Mason by RBKC. To the best of my knowledge it was not seen by the Board of the TMO before the fire or by the HPSC. I cannot say how or whether it was responded to by RBKC or the TMO Executive Team.

2. Governance/Management

a. What was the legal relationship between the different persons and organisations that were responsible for fire safety at Grenfell Tower as at 14 June 2017?

66. I do not believe that I am the right person to answer this question and to comment on or explain the legal relationship between the persons and organisations responsible for fire safety.

67. I refer again to the HSR 2017 (JMB/4), which describes the KCTMO as the managing agent and RBKC as the freeholder of the housing stock that the TMO managed (including Grenfell Tower) so both parties shared responsibility for health and safety, including fire safety. That management was delegated to the TMO through the Modular Management agreement referred to in JMB/1.

68. Within KCTMO, the Board had overall responsibility for health and safety. Robert Black in his email (JMB/19) states that ‘There is a formal governance structure through the Health and Safety Committee which reports to the Executive Team’. The Executive Team would report to the Board.

69. The following TMO staff members were, to the best of my knowledge and belief, directly responsible for fire safety management at Grenfell Tower: the Chief Executive, Robert Black, the Executive Director of Finance & ICT Barbara Matthews, the Health, Safety & Facilities Manager Janice Wray.

70. Within RBKC responsibility for fire safety would fall upon the Leader of the Council, Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown, the Cabinet member for Housing and Property, Councillor Rock Feilding-Mellen, the Cabinet, the Town clerk Nicholas Holgate and the Director of Housing Laura Johnson. Other staff including Building Control would presumably also have some responsibility.

b. As at that date, how did the relationships between the different persons and organisations that were responsible for fire safety at Grenfell Tower work in practice?

71. To the best of my understanding RBKC reviewed the operation of the TMO, through the Housing Department and the HPSC which scrutinised the work of the TMO receiving a report every six months. This included a report on fire safety examples of which can be seen in JMB/1 at page 23 and JMB/14 at page 12. Whilst the Council received regular reports from the TMO on the progress of the refurbishment, it was not scrutinised in any depth by councillors on the HPSC but would presumably have been considered in more detail by the RBKC Housing Department and RBKC Building Control officers.

72. Within the TMO the day to day consideration of fire safety issues was the responsibility of Janice Wray, and she reported to Barbara Matthews. I refer again to the email from Robert Black (JMB/19) and his explanation of the way in which the TMO take their health and safety responsibilities seriously.

73. I cannot comment on how the relationships between the TMO and the various contractors and sub-contractors worked, but KCTMO Board members received regular albeit brief reports on the progress of the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower, generally in the Chief Executive's report.

c. As at that date had any other fires taken place at Grenfell Tower or other similar buildings under the authority of RBKC?

74. Once again by reference to the HSR 2017 (JMB/4), I understand that during the reporting period of 2016/2017 there were 11 small incidents of fire or suspected fire in and around KCTMO managed properties (with 14 incidents in 2015/2016). This included the major fire at Adair Tower in October 2015 that caused the LFB to serve Enforcement Notices

covering Adair Tower and its twin Hazlewood Tower on both KCTMO and RBKC. See Para 35 and JMB/17. There was also a fire at Trellick Tower in April 2017.

75. I am aware of a fire at Grenfell Tower in 2010 which I mentioned in MPS2 at page 3.

d. If so, were any investigations, reports or lesson-learning exercises carried out?

What did they conclude?

76. Following the 2010 fire at Grenfell Tower, the residents raised concerns about the efficacy of the smoke vents and lighting in the stairwell, the only escape route. They raised them with me as their ward councillor and I raised them on their behalf with the TMO. I recall we were told by the TMO that these matters would be resolved, but do not have access to my emails before 2012 and so cannot check and confirm this. This request was repeated by GTLA in 2015 during the refurbishment as can be seen from JMB/8

77. Following the 2010 fire there was a programme to replace front doors of tenanted apartments with fire rated doors with self-closers fitted. This is referred to in the report to the HPSC dated 15 March 2010 (JMB/2) at paragraph 4.3. I understand that with leasehold apartments the flat doors belonged to the leaseholder and there was a discussion between LFB and RBKC / TMO as to who should enforce leaseholders to replace their doors. This is referred to in JB/2 the report of Janice Wray to the Operations Committee on 2 May 2013 (exhibited within MPS2). There was a difference of opinion as to who was responsible for enforcement and eventually the TMO were told to get on and do it. This is also referred to within the HSR 2017 (JMB/4) at para 6.10.

78. The fire at Adair Tower in 2015/2016 was serious and the LFB served enforcement notices on both the TMO and RBKC to remedy a number of defects (JMB/17).

79. Progress reports on how the TMO was addressing these defects were provided regularly to the KCTMO Board and the HPSC. I exhibit a copy of a Report to the HPSC 13 July 2016 by Laura Johnson as JMB/24 (JMB/24) which outlines at para 1 the response and work done to comply with the Enforcement notices. Once again I refer to the HSR 2017 (JMB/4) at page 13 as well as the Board Report from Robert Black (JMB/5) at page 4 wherein the indication is that the TMO had learned lessons from this fire. Lessons said to have been learned included those relating to fire door compliance and the need for working self-closers on tenanted and leasehold flats. Although we never saw the Enforcement Notices, the TMO Board requested regular updates and asked whether the issues raised were applicable to other tower blocks. It was made clear that the issues should be addressed in the wider housing stock.

- e. Were any recommendations made? If so, were they implemented? If they were not implemented, who was responsible for that decision and what reasons did they have?**

80. The report to the HPSC in July 2016 (JMB/24) and the HSR 2017 (JMB/4) both make reference to the Enforcement Notices that were served, and 'the key matters raised...the installation of self-closing devices on all flat entrance doors and the requirement to review the protection to each staircase and ventilation to the lobbies to ensure that the staircases would not be affected by smoke and were available for use by residents and attending fire crews'. (JMB/4 page 13, JMB/24 para 1.3)
81. The HSR 2017 (JMB/4) also makes reference to 'additional works to improve fire signage and identify and address any breaches of compartmentation within the communal areas...' page 13)
82. The July 2016 report (JMB/24) also makes clear that 'The TMO and RBKC agreed to ensure that all flat entrance doors in both blocks are sufficiently fire-rated' at para 1.4.
83. I refer to page 12 of MPS2 where I detail some of the issues that arose with regards to the self-closers and the replacement of non-fire rated doors. Essentially when the Council took back responsibility for housing management after the fire, it became apparent that the reports concerning the implementation of, for example, fire compliant doors on both leasehold and tenanted flats, were inaccurate. RBKC immediately took action to replace all the front doors on the Lancaster West Estate and began a programme to replace them across the whole housing stock.

3. Communications with residents

- a. What system was there, if any, for residents to express their concerns and views about fire safety?**

84. In theory residents could express their concerns and views to the KCTMO, to Rydon during the refurbishment, to RBKC, through the GTLA and the Compact, to the Lancaster West Residents Association, to ward councillors, via the Grenfell Action Group blog and directly to Cabinet Members and the Member of Parliament.
85. During the refurbishment residents asked the TMO to allow them to set up their own Residents' Association but were told that as the Lancaster West Estate already had one, they should raise issues through that. However, the Estate Residents' Association was rather inactive at the time and the Grenfell Tower residents felt that given the importance of the refurbishment to them, they should have their own representative organisation to

raise issues and concerns. Eventually, and only following the intervention of the then Member of Parliament, Victoria Borwick MP, the KCTMO allowed them to set up a Grenfell Tower Residents' Compact.

86. In practice, complaints made to RBKC would be referred to KCTMO. Laura Johnson would sometimes take an interest and deal with issues that were referred directly to her, such as with the gas pipes.
87. My understanding was that concerns/complaints raised with the TMO often received brief replies and/or referrals to other authorities, such as Rydon, the local police, RBKC or National Grid (now Cadent). There were complaints of a lack of reply or even an acknowledgement. This was raised by me for example in an email on 29 June 2015 which I exhibit as JMB/25 (JMB25 FORT01045094).
88. Sometimes the TMO refused to consider them under the terms of the KCTMO complaints procedure, as they were not complaints "about services". I know that David Collins the Chair of the Grenfell Tower Residents' Compact, made a fire and safety complaint which was considered not to be a complaint as it was not about services. I have referred to this in my statement to police MPS2 and exhibited the email correspondence as JB/6.
89. I rely again on my statement to police MPS2 where I outline the position with regards to complaints to the TMO.
90. Complaints could be lodged with Rydon (in respect of the refurbishment) or the TMO. I understand that complaints raised on residents behalf, by ward councillors (generally me) were classed as enquiries and were then not included in the TMO's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reports that went to the Board Members on a quarterly basis and to the RBKC HPSC every 6 months. Enquiries were not collated and reported separately, either to the Board or the HPSC.
91. As residents became more and more frustrated and feeling that their concerns about the refurbishment and fire safety issues were being ignored I suggested that they submit a petition to the HPSC. I worked with them on the prayer of the petition and submitted it to the full Council meeting in December 2015. This was then considered by the TMO and I exhibit as JMB/26 (JMB/26 FORT010899856) a Briefing note on the petition that was sent by Sacha Jevans to the TMO Board in advance of a TMO Board meeting on 4th January 2016. The petition was then discussed at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 6th January 2016 and I produce the minutes of that meeting at which representations on behalf of the Grenfell Tower residents were considered, as my exhibit JMB/27 (JMB/27).

92. I rely on my statement to police MPS2 and my explanation there (page 8) of what happened following that meeting, and the inadequate review of the refurbishment that was carried out by the TMO.
93. My position is that I was prevented from expressing my concerns about the internal review at both the TMO Board meeting and the subsequent HPSC meeting on 11 May 2016. In MPS2 I exhibit JB/11 my email to all members of HPSC of the same date in which I outlined some of my comments on the KCTMO internal review. I was not allowed to speak on the subject at the HPSC meeting on 11 May 2016.

b. What channels of communication did it provide?

94. Enquiries and complaints about the Grenfell Tower refurbishment were generally dealt with by the project manager, Claire Williams or the Director of Assets and Regeneration Peter Maddison. Peter Maddison reported to the Executive Director of Operations Sacha Jevans who in turn reported to the Chief Executive Robert Black.
95. The TMO would usually refer all resident complaints and concerns about the refurbishment to Rydon or alternatively tell the complainants to refer it to Rydon themselves.
96. Pre and post refurbishment enquiries and complaints from ward councillors would receive a response from KCTMO's complaints officer/s, usually Dulce de Oliveira Watts or Joanne Burke.
97. The Board of the TMO were made aware of the number of formal resident complaints although not the details of them.
98. As Ward Councillor I would submit complaints on behalf of the residents, and would on occasion direct them to individuals at the TMO such as Peter Maddison or Robert Black, or to the Director of Housing at RBKC, Laura Johnson. I refer to my email to Mr Black, Laura Johnson and Councillor Feilding-Mellen dated 17 June 2013 as an example of such a practice. I exhibit the email as JMB/28 (JMB/28 FORT 01065523). Further, I raised matters at TMO Board meetings and also at HPSC meetings, and refer to my email and attachment, dated 16 July 2013 which I exhibit as JMB/29 (JMB/29 FORT 01305522/FORT 01305523) as an example of the latter.

c. Was there a formal system for recording concerns and addressing them?

99. At the time of the fire I was not aware of RBKC's system for recording complaints or enquiries, although I am confident they would have had an internal monitoring process.

100. I believe recording was in place at KCTMO but the system for recording them was not formally communicated to ward councillors or residents until around April 2017. I refer to my draft briefing for the Labour Group on the Complaints procedure in April 2017 which I exhibit as JMB/30 (JMB/30 FORT00997242). Initially complaints did not have a registration number, but after a while they had either a 'COM' number or a 'CAS' number. I do not know the implications of the difference between these numbering systems.

101. At the HPSC meeting on 6th January 2016 the Committee noted that there was no mechanism for residents to submit collective complaints and concerns and identified a gap in governance. This can be seen in JMB/27 at page 5 where I 'said to the Committee that a number of people did not understand the complaints procedure and often things had been implemented before the complaint had been addressed' and I 'explained that there was no mechanism for collective complaints...' The Committee asked the TMO to look at its procedures in this regard and the Chief Executive of KCTMO agreed to do this. However, at a meeting of the TMO Board on 31 March 2016 as part of the Grenfell Tower internal review it was noted at para 6.5 that it was not necessary as the complaints system was sufficient. I refer to as my exhibit JMB/31 (JMB/31 FORT01946130) a copy of the Grenfell Tower Board Review report.

102. The TMO's Complaints Procedure was set out on its website. This permitted complaints to be lodged only about 'the delivery of services', so to the best of my knowledge concerns about potential fire, safety and other risks were not accepted or recorded as bona fide complaints. Some matters submitted by both councillors and residents as complaints were re-designated as enquiries and thus also fell out of the formal complaints procedure.

103. As an enquiry it should still be replied to by the Complaints team but wouldn't be recorded within KPI's and therefore was not communicated to the Board and to RBKC HPSC.

104. I have had few positive experiences with the TMO's complaints procedure and I do not feel that they dealt well with complaints. I have literally hundreds of e-mails about complaints and issues I sent to the TMO on behalf of Grenfell Tower residents, before, during and after the refurbishment. Residents would often approach me when they had had no or an inadequate response from the TMO. I have not had the time to identify them all, but they covered a range of issues, including poor communications, disrepair, safety (including fire safety) and security, overpayments, poor work during the refurbishment,

behaviour of contractors, lifts, rubbish, and excessive energy charges after the refurbishment.

105. I received many complaints from residents throughout RBKC about lift breakdowns. These were not included in the KCTMO KPI reports unless the lift was out of action for more than 48 consecutive hours and was the only one available in the building. This meant that the KPI statistics were not a true reflection of what was happening. Residents were often trapped in lifts for lengthy periods and people with mobility difficulties in blocks where the lift only stopped on alternate floors (such as on Silchester Estate) could be trapped in their homes for several days or even weeks. Residents also told me that repairs would be carried out and the lift would work for a brief time before breaking down again, which they felt was a means to reduce the number meeting the 48 hour KPI criterion. I asked the TMO several times to amend this KPI but was told that KPIs were set by RBKC and they would need permission to change them.

d. What concerns, warnings and other statements were expressed about the fire safety of Grenfell Tower by its residents or any other person before, at the time of, or after the recent renovations?

106. In 2013 there was an incident which caused residents concern about the fire safety at Grenfell Tower. There were a number of electrical power surge(s) which caused damage to the electrical equipment of a significant number of residents. The residents who were affected pushed for an explanation as well as for compensation, but only ever received an ex gratia payment of £200 from the TMO, with no acceptance of liability or satisfactory explanation. The power surges were reported to the HPSC on 16 July 2013 and I refer firstly to my email complaint at JMB/28 and then to the report to the HPSC which I exhibit as JMB/32 (JMB/32 FORT01923741) as the best explanation provided.

107. One early concern raised by residents, the Grenfell Action Group and by myself, concerned the closure of Station Walk. Station Walk was a pedestrian pathway leading from Latimer Road station along the southern side of the Hammersmith & City railway line to Silchester Road. This pathway went alongside the western side of Grenfell Tower and provided access to the back of the Tower in the event of an emergency. It was a public right of way and wide enough for fire engines to access from Silchester Road.

108. It was closed during the building of the Kensington Aldridge Academy. Grenfell Tower residents, Cllr Tim Coleridge (the first RBKC Cabinet Member responsible for the Grenfell Tower refurbishment programme), and I, were all re-assured by RBKC until the

end of December 2013 that Station Walk would re-open once the new Academy was completed. We were not informed at the time that the Order extinguishing the Right of Way had been confirmed to the Council in January 2013. These concerns were raised in an email from Eddie Daffarn to James McCool on 4 Jan 2013 which I exhibit as JMB/33 (JMB/33 FORT02242499).

109. Other worries expressed by residents included

- The fact that there was only one fire escape
- The gas pipes that had been fitted in the stairwell.
- A suspicion that the smoke vents and the emergency lighting systems were not working properly
- The numbering of the floors being changed during the refurbishment, which could have misled firefighters attending a fire
- The absence of clear fire safety instructions on each landing until the end of the refurbishment programme
- The absence of any fire drills
- No known plans for how a vulnerable resident would escape in the event of a fire. This was certainly raised at a meeting between Peter Maddison of the TMO, representatives of the Grenfell Tower Compact, and myself.

These concerns were all raised either in emails or during meetings or on the Grenfell Action Group blog and are documented.

110. Fire safety was a persistent major issue for the Grenfell Tower residents and the subject of many arguments with the TMO. Residents would discuss their concerns with me and I raised many of their issues with the TMO. The prevailing view was that concerns about safety risks were not being taken seriously enough by the TMO.

111. Some fire safety issues were mentioned from time to time on the Grenfell Action Group blog. On occasion I would suggest to the Chief Executive, Robert Black that the TMO should take the blog seriously, but he told me that no one at the TMO ever read it. I do not believe that this was true, but had no grounds to challenge that assertion.

112. The GTLA were especially robust in raising their concerns about fire safety and sent many e-mails to the TMO and a wide range of other individuals, including ward councillors, many others at the Council, Rydon staff, other residents and the Member of

Parliament. I refer by way of example to JMB/8 an email from GTLA on 2 January 2015 which I asked Peter Maddison to deal with.

113. In 2012 the GTLA asked the TMO to arrange for a fire inspection to be undertaken by the LFB. The TMO advised that this was carried out and that no concerns were identified. During the refurbishment the GTLA asked for another fire drill to be carried out. I am not aware if one took place.
114. After the refurbishment was complete, the GTLA asked for funds to enable them to commission an independent fire safety assessment. This request can be seen in an email from GTLA dated 22 March 2017 within JMB/19. This was forwarded by me to RBKC and the KCTMO. This request was initially refused apparently on the grounds that an assessment had already been carried out by the Health, Safety & Facilities Officer (Janice Wray) and by their independent consultant (Carl Stokes). The GTLA persisted and I have now seen an email from Laura Johnson dated 21 April 2017 where she expresses that 'The Council has no intention of appointing independent inspectors for health and safety...' I exhibit this email as JMB/34 (JMB/34 FORT01923749). I was not aware of this previously.
115. Floor numbering was another important issue for the residents because they worried that firefighters would not be able to locate fires in flats if they were summoned. First, there were complaints that the new floors were not numbered; then when they were numbered, it was only with paper notices that were soon removed. I refer to my initial email complaint regarding this dated 1 December 2015 which I exhibit as JMB/35 (JMB/35 FORT04740557) and follow up dated 10 December 2015 which I exhibit as JMB/36 (JMB/36 FORT04741666). I can't recall a response but note with concern an email from Janice Wray to Peter Maddison dated 15 Dec 2015 which I exhibit as JMB/37 (JMB/37 FORT 04741664). Although this wasn't sent to me I note firstly that there was a LFB Familiarisation visit in October 2015, and a visit from the LFB Station Manager arranged for later that week. Secondly that when Ms Wray visited the block the previous day there were issues with the signage. Thirdly there was an inspection by Carl Stokes due on that day, and finally that there were issues with the ventilation system which was not operational.
116. The TMO also refused residents' requests for the floors to keep their same number (because the prefix to the flat numbers showed the floors where they were located). Residents suggested that the new lower floors should have letters rather than numbers.

Initially they were told this could not happen for planning reasons, and then that it was due to the post office.

117. During the refurbishment there were many complaints about the positioning of the Heating Interface Units which I detail in my MPS2 statement to the police at page 6. There was also a complaint by David Collins, the chair of the Residents Compact about the fire safety aspect of the positioning of the HIU's which the TMO dealt with as an enquiry rather than a complaint. The problem raised about the HIU's can be seen in the email correspondence exhibited as JB/6 to my police statement MPS2. In particular I refer to Mr Collins emails dated 3 December 2015 and 11 December 2015. The KCTMO responded with a report from Carl Stokes on the issue which I have exhibited as JMB/18.
118. The residents were hugely concerned at the ramifications for fire safety of the installation of gas pipes in the stairwell at Grenfell Tower especially as this was the only fire escape. I refer to page 7 of MPS2 where I deal with this and to my correspondence with Laura Johnson on this issue. I refer also to JMB/19 and JMB/21 which provide a response from the KCTMO. I have now seen email correspondence between the TMO and National Grid in October 2016 in which there are discussions about the location of the gas riser which contradicts what is said in JMB/19 and JMB/20. The TMO were not being open and transparent with the residents.
119. Arguably the correspondence shows that the TMO were not being honest when they said that National Grid '...are not required to enter into contractual agreements with the TMO or RBKC... (and) are not required to apply to Building Control for Building Regulations approval...' On the contrary I exhibit as JMB/38 (JMB/38 FORT00829303) an email chain between KCTMO and Triio (National Grid) which shows National Grid asking 'whether permission will be granted to complete the works'. As the correspondence continues it is clear that there were discussions about the need to box in the pipes, and to comply with Building Regulations. The pipes weren't subsequently boxed in to the best of my knowledge. This is in my view an example of a lack of communication /information being provided by the TMO to the residents.

e. How and to whom were any such complaints expressed?

120. These complaints were often expressed directly to KCTMO via the complaints email address. Some were made directly to Peter Maddison or Claire Williams. There were several meetings between Grenfell Tower residents and the TMO, some of which I

attended. Many complaints appeared on the Grenfell Action Group blog. As their ward councillor I assisted many of the residents with their complaints and enquiries.

121. Concerns and complaints about fire safety arising from the renovations were also made directly to Rydons. The residents were encouraged to make complaints to Rydons in the first instance as can be seen from the Newsletter dated May 2016 within JMB/6.
122. After the refurbishment was finished, I met residents Mr William Thompson and Mr Edward Daffarn on several occasions to discuss problems. Together we drew up a matrix of outstanding issues that remained to be addressed. The matrix included fire safety concerns.
123. I passed the matrices on to the KCTMO, who would ask Rydon for responses. The responses would be included in the matrix and I would copy them to Mr Daffarn and Mr Thompson. These matrices are referred to in my MPS2 statement and are exhibited there as JB/5.

f. What was done in response to such expressed concerns?

124. Residents complained that they often had neither acknowledgement nor response.
125. The replies on the matrices show what was done in response to those concerns identified therein.
126. As a result of the many concerns expressed by residents about the way the refurbishment had been carried out, they asked for a formal independent review to be undertaken. The TMO refused this, but agreed to carry out an internal review, as I have already detailed above. A copy of that review can be found at JMB/31.
127. I refer to my statement to police MPS2 at page 9, where I detail the concerns I had about the way that review was carried out and its outcome. I was given no time to raise those concerns at the TMO Board meeting when the report was presented. I go on to detail in my police statement how I was prevented from subsequently raising those concerns at the next TMO Board meeting.
128. When the review report went to the HPSC I contacted each member of the RBKC HPSC. I exhibit as my exhibit JMB/39 (JMB/39 FORT01146593) a copy of my email to the other members of the scrutiny committee, but again was prevented from speaking on the matter on the grounds that I had had the opportunity to raise my concerns at the TMO Board meeting (which was untrue); as a TMO Board member I was told that I was bound by collective responsibility and the TMO Board had already accepted the internal review and commended all those involved with the refurbishment.

c. What provisions, if any, were put in place to ensure that those with language or other special needs could send and receive communications to and from the TMO and the Council about matters of fire safety or safety more generally?

129. I understand from the FRA by Carl Stokes on 20 November 2012 (JMB/7) that there were articles on fire safety advice in the residents magazine 'in the 7 major languages...being the most likely to meet the needs of the residents'.
130. To the best of my knowledge, there was little provision other than a comment on some of the KCTMO/Rydon Grenfell Tower newsletters that said that information was available in several community languages. That comment can be seen on the newsletters I exhibit at JMB/6.
131. I had made the TMO aware of at least one native British resident who was illiterate, identified during the post-refurbishment survey conducted by members of the Grenfell Tower Compact. I am not aware of other methods used to communicate with that resident. The fire safety notice eventually put up on every landing was only in English.
132. To my understanding there was nothing else in place to ensure that those with language or special needs could send and receive communications to and from the TMO and the Council about matters of fire safety or safety in general.
133. I provided a detailed note to the KCTMO Board about lessons to be learned from the refurbishment project, which included the point that communications should be very clear. This is exhibited in my statement to police MPS2 at JB3. Subsequently David Collins and I drew up The Grenfell Pathway as a recommendation to RBKC to be followed when other tower blocks were to be refurbished. We met the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property, Cllr Rock Feilding-Mellen and discussed it, but did not get a formal response. David Collins subsequently sent a copy to the Chairman of the HPSC, Councillor Mackover, and I exhibit a copy of the email and the document as JMB/40 (JMB/40 FORT01249316/7).

4. Fire advice to residents 2012 to 14 June 2017

a. What advice was given to residents about fire precautions?

134. I understand that advice on fire precautions in the home may have been provided to residents within the Tenants' Link newsletters that were delivered quarterly. Although I have seen some of the newsletters I do not recall seeing any such advice and so cannot say what it was. I refer to an email exchange with Janice Wray in November 2016 which I

exhibit as JMB/41 (JMB/41) in which she outlines the advice given to residents about fire precautions and I queried whether the reliance on information in The Link was sufficient.

135. After requests from residents and councillors during the refurbishment, a fire safety notice in English was put up on every floor telling residents what to do in the event of a fire. I understand that the GTLA may have photographs of this notice and of a much earlier notice.

136. On behalf of residents I asked the TMO to arrange for the LFB to visit the Tower and advise on fire precautions, given that they had visited Trellick Tower following either the fire in October 2016 or April 2017. I believe this was in an email to Peter Maddison. RBKC and the KCTMO promoted the Stay Put policy to all residents throughout the borough. During and following the refurbishment, Grenfell Tower residents received no further advice about fire safety other than two references to Stay Put in the KCTMO/Rydon newsletters which I have exhibited as JMB/6.

b. How was that advice communicated and by whom?

137. To the best of my understanding the stay put advice was communicated through the notice eventually placed on each landing and was also included in the two KCTMO/Rydon newsletters delivered to all residents I have exhibited at JMB/6.

c. What provisions were in place to ensure that that advice had been received and understood by residents?

138. I am not aware of any provisions in place to ensure that the advice had been received and understood by residents.

139. The "learning issues" document given to the KCTMO Board (MPS2, JB/3) includes a stress on the importance of providing good communications and having up-to-date information about residents' needs and changing circumstances, as does the 'Grenfell Pathway' document which was provided to RBKC (JMB/40).

d. What was the basis of the advice?

140. I am not in a position to answer this question. I can only assume it was arrived at in discussions with the LFB. The stay put strategy is referred to by Carl Stokes in his 2012 FRA. It is also referred to by Peter Maddison in his email to me dated 5 January 2015 responding to matters raised by the GTLA (Exhibit JMB/8).

c. Was the advice appropriate and consistent with the then current fire safety standards and practice for high-rise residential buildings in general, and in particular where used for social housing?

141. I am not in a position to answer this question. I can only rely on the report of Janice Wray (exhibited as JB/2 to my MPS2) and the fact that there were regular meetings with LFB and an ongoing programme of FRA's. If there was any inconsistency I would expect it to be highlighted as such and reported to the Board of the KCTMO and to the HPSC.

f. Was the advice periodically reviewed and if so by whom and on what basis?

142. The HSR 2017 (JMB/4) makes reference to the Fire Risk Assessments, which are 'undertaken and recorded in line with best practice and low level reviews are undertaken as necessary in the period between the comprehensive reviews' (para 6.9). There were 110 FRA's comprehensively reviewed in 2016/17 although I do not know if that included Grenfell Tower. The HSR 2017 also makes reference to the engagement with LFB (6.8), which suggests to me that the advice was being periodically reviewed.

143. I cannot however say whether it was in fact reviewed.

144. Any review of advice would presumably involve Janice Wray together with the LFB and the input of Carl Stokes and would be conducted by the Health and Safety Committee which reported to the Executive Team of the TMO.

g. What were the conclusions resulting from any such review and were they implemented?

145. I cannot answer this question. It is better addressed to Janice Wray and the Executive Team of the TMO.

h. Were there any evacuation plans in place and, if so, what were they?

146. I am not aware of any evacuation plans in place for Grenfell Tower. The focus was on the Stay Put evacuation strategy, a policy that worked at the time of the 2010 fire at Grenfell Tower, before the refurbishment. I refer to JMB/13 and the letter that was drafted by Peter Maddison and agreed by Laura Johnson which states that 'On arrival the LFB will make an assessment and determine whether evacuation – either partial or total – is required. If the LFB decide that this is necessary they will instigate and assist with an evacuation.'

i. Who drew them up?

147. I am not aware of any evacuation plans.

- j. **Were they independently reviewed, and if so, by whom, when and with what conclusions?**

148. I cannot answer this question.

5. Response to Recommendations

- a. **What recommendations, including from inquiries, inquests, investigations experts, professional and trade bodies and Parliamentary Committees were relevant to the risk of fire at Grenfell Tower as at 14 June 2017 given its composition and occupancy?**

149. I am not qualified to answer most of these questions.

150. The only recommendations I was aware of followed the Lakanal inquest, and were detailed in the report of Janice Wray and Anthony Parkes for the TMO Operations Committee meeting on 2 May 2013 (exhibit JB/2 to my statement to police MPS2). This report sets out the recommendations from the Lakanal and Southampton Coroners, and essentially concludes that until they are enshrined in legislation, and therefore mandatory, they were not required to be implemented for Grenfell Tower.

151. The Report does state that the “TMO have adopted the criteria set out in the current best practice guidance on fire safety in residential accommodation ‘Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats’ produced by the Local Government Group (published in July 2011)”, one criterion of which was that FRAs should be reviewed following “material alterations” at a block. This provided me with some comfort that this would happen following the Grenfell Tower refurbishment.

152. However, the Report went on to say that “depending upon their complexity these FRA Reviews are being carried out by either the TMO Health & Safety Team or the (internally commissioned) Fire Consultant”, so there was a perceived lack of independence.

153. Since the Fire occurred, it has come to light that earlier that year the LFB wrote to all local authorities, including RBKC, about fire safety issues affecting high rise residential buildings. The letter which I have exhibited as JMB/23 is dated May 2017, but I was not made aware of the letter prior to the fire. The existence of this letter was never reported to the RBKC HPSC or the TMO Board.

- b. **Were appropriate steps taken by central and local government and other relevant bodies to act upon such recommendations insofar as they were relevant to the risk of fire in high-rise residential buildings?**

154. I am not in a position to answer this question.

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.


I am willing for this statement to form part of the evidence before the Inquiry and to be published on the Inquiry's website.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Judith Blakeman', written over a dotted line.

Councillor Judith Blakeman

Dated

A handwritten date '11 October 2017' in black ink, written over a dotted line.