

Fire Risk Assessments in high risk blocks - briefing meeting 7th September 09

Present:

Valerie Sharples	Project Manager
Janice Wray	Health & Safety Adviser
Andrew Furness	Salvus Consulting
Steve Wain	Salvus Consulting

Apologies:

Ann Muchmore	Council Client-side Officer
Liam Good	TMO Director of Technical Services

1. Introductions & Responsibilities

1.1 Valerie advised that as Project Services Manager she would be overseeing this work, however, it is possible that one of her staff would take over the project management responsibility at some stage. Janice confirmed her role as TMO Health & Safety Adviser and her responsibility for identifying the priority blocks and ensuring progress meets the Fire Brigade's requirements. Andy Furness advised that he was Managing Director of Salvus Consulting and with regard to this contract his role would be largely a quality control one - although this would not be exclusively desk-based as Andy would be attending site periodically to ensure consistency of assessments. Steve Wain confirmed that he would be overseeing the team of assessors and carrying out assessments himself. The team would be made up of Karl Stokes, Jenny Harris, Sean O'Flanagan and Steve himself.

1.2 Valerie asked if we could be provided with contact details (mobile telephone numbers and e-mail addresses) but Andy advised that the best way to get hold of one of his assessors was by contacting his admin team at the office – Kim and Ann. Janice confirmed that she had contact details for Kim already.

2. Project Objectives & Scope of Work

Valerie advised that she intended to go through the relevant sections of the Consultants Brief - "Part 2: Specification of Services".

2.1 Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) and Reviews

- "The FRA and FRA reviews will include an individual examination of each fire door including whether it operates correctly."
Steve sought clarification of what this would mean practically in terms of quantity of flat entrance doors to be assessed. Janice advised that she expected a random sample of doors to be inspected and assessed. Specifically, where many doors were clearly identical several should be inspected and where there were a wide range of door types it would be helpful to inspect as many of the different types as possible – and where possible comment on the fire safety of all.
- "The FRAs will focus on compartmentation and operation & adequacy of –
 - fire doors,
 - fire fighting equipment

- automatic detection systems
- extraction systems
- sprinklers
- dry risers
- wet risers
- assessment of means of escape (to include final exit doors) & secondary m.o.e where present & its appropriateness, viability
- emergency lighting
- signage
- fitness for purpose of building in relation to fire safety
- fire safety management systems and their recording procedures
- marking of all this info on floor plans.

Steve queried whether, when marking out floor plans, it would be acceptable for them to use the symbols set out in BS 1990 as opposed to those in the HM Government Guides. Janice confirmed that this would be fine.

- FRAs to be recorded in standardised format approved in advance by client.

It was confirmed that the FB were also anxious to approve our proforma in advance of work commencing and, to this end, a meeting had been arranged with the FB, the TMO and the Council to take place on 16th Sept where this could be finalised.

- Report must identify, detail & prioritise remedial action required by law, remedial action recommended by the Consultant and recommendations for fire safety improvements and in each case give an approximate cost. (Each item in schedule is to be located & described in a format ready for use as a works instruction to a contractor.)

Andy confirmed that each report would contain an outline specification of recommended works. Valerie asked if Salvus would require any assistance with costings and Andy advised that they do have access to some contractors, however, they would, perhaps, like to make contact with our planned maintenance contractors as well to supplement this information.

Salvus also confirmed that they would produce an "Outline Cautionary Report" for any urgent matters and if a caretaker is present a hard copy of this will be left with them and a copy will be e-mailed to Janice and copied to her colleague Adrian Bowman (abowman@kctmo.org.uk) asap.

The issue of whether to include photographs in the report was discussed. Janice advised that photos should be considered if a situation was difficult to explain to people who had not been present or of situations of particular severity. These may also be useful in negotiations with the Council over budgets / resources. It was agreed that photos would generally not be included in the body of the report but that photos taken by assessors would be made available to the TMO.

- FRA reports shall be completed and delivered to the client within one week of the assessment being carried out - one hard copy and one electronic copy.

Janice acknowledged that because the Consultants were now required to produce plans for every block this could potentially have an impact upon the turnaround time. However, Andy clarified that they would still aim to complete the reports (& plans) within 1 week and if there was going to be a delay for any reason the TMO would be advised.

- Floor plans need to identify not only information on communal areas but also all designated escape routes including those from individual dwellings.

2.2 Client Meetings

2.21 "Regular (monthly) meetings will be held between the Project Manager, the H&S Adviser and the Consultant to discuss possible issues, monitor progress and review the service provided. Meetings to be chaired by TMO Project Manager and minuted by the H&S Adviser."

It was agreed that we would seek to diarise these meetings in advance and that Janice should liaise with Kim about possible dates for at least the first four of these.

2.3 Ad-Hoc Advice

2.31 "The Consultant will offer fire safety help, advice and support to TMO Managers, employees, Technical Services Officers, the H&S Team etc. It is expected that these queries will be dealt with promptly."

Salvus confirmed that they would respond swiftly and to facilitate this we should channel any queries thro Kim who would ensure that a member of the team contact us directly.

2.32 Valerie mentioned that Liam was keen for a Salvus assessor attending a briefing with Technical Services to clarify their brief. Janice advised that initially the main team who would need to be briefed were the engineers and Janice had agreed she would attend their next team meeting and provide a preliminary briefing. However, it was likely that we would ask Steve to attend the engineers subsequent team meeting to brief them - once the assessment programme was underway and we were clearer about the remedial works etc. which were being highlighted.

2.4 Procurement Programme

2.41 A start date of 24th September had been agreed and the programme to be completed within 6 months.

2.5 Asbestos

2.51 "TMO maintains records of any ACMs that are suspected or confirmed as present in the housing stock. In relation to communal areas the majority of the information is obtained from an ongoing programme of "type 2" surveys and is available on a block by block basis upon request from the H&S Team. It is possible that additional ACMs are present particularly within inaccessible areas of the block." "The Consultant shall, wherever possible, identify the presence of asbestos or other suspect materials when carrying out initial inspections / surveys of buildings and notify the TMO H&S Adviser of details."

2.52 Janice confirmed that generally we have not labelled ACMs - because these are residential blocks. Janice agreed to forward details of ACMs in the common parts of Trellick Tower as this is the block where ACMs recur most frequently. Also any

Type 2 surveys of communal areas which are held electronically will be forwarded to Salvus.

2.6 Consultations , Minutes and other records

2.61 “The Consultant shall take minutes or notes of meetings and consultations with site managers and shall copy these to the H&S Adviser.”

Janice advised that she did not anticipate there would be many instances of meetings with site managers.

2.7 Surveys / Site Inspections

2.71 The Consultant shall make all necessary arrangements for accessing blocks/ dwellings and ensure that necessary notices are sent to all residents advising them of the work being carried out.

2.8 Other Constraints

2.81 The Consultant to consider and include in his recommendations for remedial works any constraints on the proposals which are risks the TMO should consider before we proceed with the proposal.

3. The Site and Dwellings including access

3.1 Janice advised that the majority of blocks have controlled entry, however, this is on a tradesman's button in the morning up until 11am / 12 noon so up to this time access is available using this button. The TMO cannot provide a master key to all entrances as there are a variety of different locks and no master exists. However, each block has a designated caretaker and with notice (suggest 1 week's notice) they can be available to facilitate access , show assessor round the block, point out areas which may not otherwise be evident etc. Janice also confirmed electrical intake cupboards, roofs, plant areas and other areas of restricted access are secured via GERDA high security locks and assessors will need to be issued with these keys. Janice emphasised the importance of key security and advised that generally we charge £100 refundable deposit per GERDA key issued.

3.2 Janice provide a copy of all recent FB correspondence in respect of our blocks and gave some additional information in relation to the highest priority blocks that Salvus will be assessing at the start of the programme –

(a) Trellick Tower

This is a Grade 2* listed block and so any recommendations will need to be considered by the Planners. Currently works are underway at this block and as part of the Consultant surveyors (John Shreeves & Partners) have been instructed to advise on whether the bedsit kitchen windows which front onto the communal corridors are in compliance with current Building / Fire Regulations. Therefore, Salvus asked to liaise with John Shreeves to ensure assessment is as comprehensive as possible. (Janice is waiting for the contact details of the individual surveyor from Shreeves who Salvus should liaise with and will pass on this info as soon as possible.) Janice advised that it is likely that in this instance Shreeves may also be able to provide plans that Salvus could use.

(b) Grenfell Tower

20-floor block with single internal staircase built with automatic fire detection detection and mechanical extract ventilation (on the landing on each floor) linked to fire alarm. There is also an Estate Office on the 1st floor, a separate Social Services office, a boiler room in the basement and a nursery at ground floor level.

(c) Worlds End Estate, Kings Road, SW10

This is a large estate (744 dwellings in total) with 7 high-rise blocks and a walkway at first and fourth floor with the lower-rise flats. It also contains some elderly-designated housing and a sheltered clubroom where these residents can socialise, do laundry. which is open during office hours only.

There is one particular resident who has repeatedly expressed concern about the size of the buttons which release the final exist doors. Whilst we do not consider that these present a risk it would be helpful if you could check them out as part of your assessment.

Janice agreed to see if an overview / layout of this estate was available so that at least Salvus could see how the blocks were positioned in relation to each other.

(d) Dixon House, Silchester Estate, W10

This is a purpose-built 20-floor residential block about which we received a deficiency notice from the fire brigade – copy provided. (There are 3 other high-rise blocks on this estate and they are identical to this one – but we are not in receipt of any FB correspondence on them.)

(e) Burleigh House, Sir Thomas More Estate, SW3

Purpose built mansion-block (6 floors including basement) about which we have received a FB deficiency notice. (The other 4 blocks on this estate are virtually identical to this one.)

(f) Gillray House, Cremorne Estate, SW10

Purpose-built block (grd & 7 floors). FB letter on this one – provided. Resident on upper floors have access to a secondary means of escape which FB consider no longer viable – but Building Control feel should remain designated. The other issue the Brigade raised on this one was evacuation of disabled residents. (There are 3 other identical blocks on this estate.)

(g) 4 Elm Park Gardens, SW10

Again a FB letter on this one. Janice advised that she had arranged for Building Control, the FB Fire Safety Officers and herself to meet on site to inspect this block and also block 68 – see below. At this meeting FB seems to review their assessment of this and accept that it had concrete floor, conversion clearly done to very high standard, flat entrance doors fire resisting, common parts inert, inspected regularly by porters etc. and as such would seem to offer low risk. However FRA still outstanding.

(h) 68 Elm Park Gardens, SW10

FB letter received – provided. Purpose-built modern block with secondary means of escape up to roof but not down to place of safety at ground level. Therefore FB unhappy although they accept that this block does not present a high risk, however, again Building Control don't have a problem with the existing arrangement.

(i) Sheltered Blocks – Burgessfield

This is purpose-built and residents are our tenants and TMO responsibility for repairs and maintenance of building. (There is some care provided to these residents and so it is a “ sheltered facility with part care”.) However, Manager and care staff are employed by the Councils Adult Social Care department.

(j) Sheltered - Cremorne

Purpose-built, self-contained flats became elderly designated, fitted with care alarms etc. and subsequently a clubroom was constructed for the resident to use.

(k) Temporary Accommodation – 41 Cambridge Gardens

This has just been significantly refurbished (and so plans may well be available) and the flats have not yet been let so it would be a relatively easy block to assess early on. The residents will be nominated by an external body called Cyrenians and their staff are currently the key-holders. I have provided their contact details on the spreadsheet. (I will ask the Project manager for a plan and forward to you. The Consultant is John Shreeves & Partners.)

(l) 9 Colville Sq, W11

11-12 Colville Sq, W11

Both these blocks were subject to conversion at some stage and the quality of this conversion appears to be questionable. There is a secondary escape route up onto the roof which leads nowhere so this is no longer viable and it is extremely likely that there will be significant work required at these.

4. Fees

4.1 Valerie confirmed that Janet Rhymes had sent out two copies of the agreement and she requested that Salvus signed one copy and return it to us.

4.2 Valerie emphasised that any additional work and resulting fees will need to be agreed in advance. Andy advised that any new works will be costed in line with the agreed schedule prices and accepted that these would need to be agreed by the client in advance.

5. Programme & Spreadsheet

5.1 Start date 24th Sept. Service delivery programme is 6 months. Reviews to be agreed.

5.2 Salvus to provide a programme as per the TMO's priorities. As per previous discussions, Salvus have agreed to maintain an up-to-date spreadsheet documenting the recommendations / Action Plans for each block assessed to date. This will be colour-coded to reflect the nature of the recommendations. Salvus asked Janice to advise what columns she would like to see on this spreadsheet as clearly if it is laid out appropriately it can be used to monitor progress with achieving actions. Janice to advise.

5.3 Valerie also re-iterated that the caretakers should be given one weeks notice of assessment. Car parking could be problematic and would require notice. (Salvus planning to use Public Transport.) Working hours are 9am til 5pm with no working on Saturdays.

6. Consultation

6.1 Janice to produce a standard letter that Salvus could use to advise residents of imminent assessment. For the blocks early in the programme, with notice the caretakers may be able to hand deliver the letters. Janice agreed to investigate with the TMO Head of Neighbourhood Services.

7. Asbestos

7.1 Covered at 2. above

8. Documentation required for Fire Brigade

8.1 As discussed the FB wish to meet Salvus and approve the proforma and this should be resolved at the meeting on the 16th Sept. FB wish to see the first 4 completed FRAs and wish to continue meeting with the TMO every 4 months to monitor progress.

9. Floor Plans

9.1 Discussed earlier in agenda.

10. Information Required

10.1 Steve advised that there were a number of documents that he would require sight of such as the TMO's Fire Safety Policy. He will be providing a list of this documentation and he confirmed that he will attend Charles House in the morning of the 24th Sept to have sight of all of these. (Assessments then to start at 9 and 11/12 Colville Sq in the afternoon of the 24th Sept.)

Valerie advised that we could provide a list of buildings for which we currently hold a CDM H&S File.

11. Any Other Business

11.1 Janice advised that the Consultants are required to report any accidents, dangerous occurrences or violent incidents to us as soon as possible. Additionally, the TMO does maintain a list of dwellings which may present an increased level of risk i.e. where residents have been abusive or threatening and where drug dealing is suspected and Janice will provide this list to the Consultants. Andy asked for a copy of our Violence policy and Janice agreed to provide.

12. Date of Next Meeting – to be advised. (Aim for w/c 19th Oct)

Distribution:

Those attending plus:

Liam Good	TMO Director of Technical Services
Ann Muchmore	Council Client-side Officer
Adrian Bowman	TMO Assistant H&S Adviser
Dave Steppel	TMO Engineering Services Manager
Alasdair Manson	TMO Head of Neighbourhood Services
Hash Chamchoun	TMO Head of Housing Support Services