

Meeting GTLA and RBKC TMO Questions (ref: Finance Director Mr Anthony Parkes)

Heating and meter readings

1. Do you share the same view as every resident of Grenfell Tower that each dwelling is extremely hot and during the summer they can be unbearably hot? Due to these hot conditions some residents may also have developed illnesses such as insomnia, do you agree? If not, why? Do you not think the condition at Grenfell Tower is that serious?
2. Why have you ignored our request when we invited yourself or the Chief Executive Mr. Robert Black to visit the individual dwellings and feel for yourselves whether our concerns about the conditions are genuine or not? Why you have refused our request may we have your answer please?
3. Would you be prepared to send your medical team to Grenfell Tower to ascertain the health risk due to the unusually hot condition? If yes, please can we arrange this as soon as possible and if not, why?
4. In May 2006 you spent £194,503.80 to replace the valves to reduce the discomforts to residents due to high temperatures. This failed to rectify the problem. Why has nothing been done since? Don't you agree with our feeling that you the TMO see everything as commercial point of view? If you agree please tell us why?
5. Have you done any specific survey to find out more about the claim the residents are making that the flats are extremely hot causing immense discomfort?
6. The surrounding high rise buildings in this area all have their own boilers which can easily provide hot water. They have all been installed with cost effective and energy saving individual system about 20 years ago but Grenfell Tower was left untouched. How can you justify the crucial request made by us that the council should install a boiler system in each flat?
7. Because of your intentional negligence, leaseholders have been overpaying hot water and heating charges. Do you agree your unwillingness to install meters or boilers for individual dwellings has resulted in high rent for residents, also high and unreasonable service charges for hot water and heating? If you disagree, why?
8. Out of the 365 days of heating we pay for, we do not use the heating system for more than 15 days? How is this fair treatment?
9. Would you agree to install a boiler system for leaseholders to run their own hot water and central heating system and cost effective way to charge?
10. Do you not think the council and the TMO should aim to provide the most efficient and cost effective services? If your answer is yes, how have you been doing so?

Safety, security and reception services:

1. We welcome the fact you are looking to review your processes and we intend to be part of any future decisions made because it is our neighbourhood; but we need an answer for the sub-standard services you have provided for the number of years for which we have had to bear hefty costs. We have made numerous suggestions and on every occasion you have failed to take action. We would like your comments on the matter.
2. On our service charge bills it states we pay for concierge not reception. Does a concierge service not keep a written record of guests entering the building and to which flat. Is there such a record? The concierge is meant to be designed to monitor the entrance of the building and is also meant to fulfil caretaker duties. Is any of this actually undertaken by your so called 'concierge'?
3. Objects continue to be thrown out of windows from the flats, but has anyone ever been prosecuted for this act? We have paid a substantial amount of money to install the CCTV camera precisely for that purpose. We have recently reported such incidents and have yet to hear from you.
4. On Saturday 27th November two ladies call Anne and Lils from Recycling Advisors were giving leaflets promoting recycling. They noticed people were throwing objects from the building. Every time we report such instances to the EMB, they claim either the CCTV was not in order or it was facing the wrong way. Why do you expect us to pay for such low standard services?
5. Security and anti-social elements is a major concern for leaseholders and residents alike, as of yet you have failed to deal with this, can you justify this? You are charging us for a service, which quite frankly we are not getting. Do you not think demanding such elevated payments for a number of years without dealing with these security issues is scandalous?

Staircases

1. The staircase is home to many anti-social activities and we pointed this out in our previous correspondences. As you obviously know, the security system does not cover the staircases. Our day to day experiences of the staircase is a smell of urine, as well as other revolting smells and there needs to be a change. What is your opinion on this issue?
2. Why have you continued to ignore our suggestions on this issue? Is kicking out anti-social activity from Grenfell Tower not a priority for you?

Fire Alarm and health and safety

1. We are very confused and bewildered by your inconsistency explanation in relation to the Fire Alarm and the Health & Safety procedure. Could you please answer the simple question, when the fire broke out on 6th floor and there was only a **minor** fault in the smoke vents, how did heavy smoke reach the 20th floor? If a small leakage could cause such damage what would happen if it was a major fault?

2. You also say that after further investigation there were loose seals to the smoke vent on other floors, how many floors are you talking about?

3. You have not answered the questions we have raised in relation to the security guard on the day. To our knowledge she deliberately let residents enter the building knowing there was a fire and CCTV footage will prove that. That means she put individual lives in danger, for which you have to be blamed for not providing health and safety training. Do you think our assertion is correct; If not, why? We need to have a clear explanation in relation to your security staff on that day. Would you be prepared to provide us with the CCTV footage of reception prior to the arrival of Fire brigade on 30th April 2010? If not, why?

Repairs

1. The residents report repairs at the reception, but the reception service is so unprofessional that this often becomes very strenuous. Most of the time, having reported emergency repairs to you; it seems to take forever to get the repairs done if at all. This frustration is shared by every household in the building. Do you understand this frustration?

2. We have made note of such an emergency repair reported to the reception three weeks ago and we are monitoring how long you are taking to repair it. What action do you plan to take with regards to this sub standard service?

Roof work

1. Do you think it was the right thing to do when roof work was conducted to carry raw materials via the lift, which caused so much inconvenience for the residents?

Lift

According to our experience the lifts were out of services for the following days within the space of 56 days, an average once a week. This is unacceptable.

20.09.10 21.09.10 01.10.10 14.10.10

21.10.10 27.10.10 01.11.10 14.11.10

15.11.10 (lift was stuck on 15th floor but repair maintenance and EMB made no attempt to meet your claims of fixing a fault in the lifts within 4 hours on week days)

1. In 2004, after years of untold suffering, the TMO decided to replace the lifts, costing residents £700,000. You also sorted a maintenance contract with the service providers costing LIFT Number –H090 £1674.40 and Lift Number H091-£1674.40. Yet despite this, every time the lift breaks down, it costs us £90.44 per call out and within the space of one month the lift was out of service seven times. Why is it necessary to pay call out charges?

2. These are essential services and you should be aiming to provide the most efficient and economical services. Do you feel that this is what you are providing? The newly replace lifts malfunction on such a regular basis, we would like to know why this is so?

Proposed School;

1. We are directly communicating with Ms Jane Trethewey of RBKC; but you have to give serious consideration to replacing the windows at Grenfell Tower before the school is built from the school budget. We have given a detailed explanation in our previous correspondences. We need to know your opinion.

Consultation and Summary of costs

1. We agree with you 100% that we have never exercised our right to make any observations in the past, since we believed that you had the interests of the residents of the borough at heart; but now we feel you give priority to your subcontractors. From now on we can assure you that we will be more involved. Please provide us with a further breakdown along with copy invoices and corresponding orders for the concierge services of £44,716.90; Caretaking of £56,936.37; management fees of £85,003.00; fire service of £2,893.00; Fire Alarm – Contract maintenance £1,577.49 Lancaster West 1; £58,850.53; Cleaning contract £10,811.11; Cleaning contract £9,938.54; Replace columns as per quotation £7,765.00; Estate Lighting Contract £16,451.12; air –condition estate office £7,100. Breakdown of hot water and heating cost to individual dwellings with corresponding invoices.

Garden Maintenance

1. Estate garden maintenance costs the Grenfell Tower a staggering £41,585.24 per annum and you have reminded us our leases state that we are to contribute to the cost of not only Grenfell Tower but the estate itself. This space will be severely depleted with the building of the new Academy and Leisure Centre meaning two things. Firstly, we will not have access to the same garden area, reducing our standard of living and secondly, garden maintenance costs should be substantially cut. Do you agree with these assertions?

2. Furthermore, the building of the school is intended to benefit all members of the borough not specifically residents of Grenfell Tower. If anything the disadvantages in terms of noise, inconvenience in terms of proximity and general disruption outweigh the benefits for residents of Grenfell Tower. So that begs the question what is being done for residents of Grenfell Tower? Do you not feel it necessary to meet our demands to install double glazed windows at Grenfell Tower from the school budget immediately?

Common Parts Electricity

1. We welcome your initiative, but could you please give us the timetable or the deadline as to when you are going to replace 24 hour lighting with motion sensors at Grenfell Tower wherever is appropriate?
2. Surely having unnecessary lightning has contributed to the flats heat as well as to excessive costs? As we mentioned in our previous correspondences the Grenfell Tower does get open air like the surrounding building and no balconies. We would like your comments on this please.

Rubbish and cleaning of the Landing at Grenfell Tower.

1. A leaseholder has been complaining to the Grenfell Tower Estate officer for the last decade regarding rubbish being left near doors and on the floor near to the chute, but no action or even a formal warning has been sent to residents of the floor. Are you aware of this?
2. There should be regular monitoring of the landings for left rubbish in appropriate places and if such rubbish is found, you should attempt to find the culprits. The EMB has promised deep cleaning on 15th Floor 3rd February 2006 and we are yet to receive such a service. What does this show? Does this mean you are good on paper but delivering goods and services are of a very poor and low standard?

TMO Budgeting

1. As we mentioned, Mr. Reg Kerr-Bell writes in an article titled, Delivering Value for money how he was able to drastically cut a budget due to unnecessary costs. When have the TMO delivered any cost saving initiatives for Grenfell Tower?
2. In addition, we requested in our previous correspondence that the wooden frame at the Grenfell Tower reception area needed maintenance with painting of waterproof varnish, yet you have ignored our request. That proves your feelings to other things we have mentioned in our previous letters in relation to the reception area. Your day to day service charges and major works are transparent only on paper. We need to know why you have not acted upon this.
3. Can you justify how you have managed to replace the windows of surrounding buildings with double glazing but not Grenfell Tower? In 20 years, Grenfell Tower has had the windows cleaned once. You can ask every resident about this, but the standard of cleaning done by your appointed sub-contractors was so low. Now the windows have security locks on them making it now impossible for residents to clean the outside of them.

Estate office at Grenfell Tower

1. Can you justify installing double glazing at the Estate Office but depriving the rest of the residents in the building the same improvement. Every year we

have to bear costs of air conditioning in the office; although in our flats many residents suffer from tiredness and heat exhaustion in the summer months.

2. It is costing residents £85,000 for so called management fees and £89,000 in reception services. Some of this money can be used to improve and modernise the building. What are your feelings about this? We feel we should play a more influential role in your budgeting.

3. Any cost incurred by the EMB for so many years must be reimbursed to the Leaseholders and tenants to reduce the service charges and rents. They are an unnecessary bureaucratic body. Our estimated cost of running the EMB runs into millions. A significant proportion of our service charges is to maintain the office which is why our service charge payments are unnecessarily high. Grenfell Tower is a residential building and having offices in the tower does serve any purpose for the residents of Grenfell tower.

4. You are providing customer services for the whole estate and on the service charges itinerary this comes under concierge service which we are paying for. We should not be paying for customer services for the estate office which is situated here. We did not choose to have the office in the building and therefore we should be made to pay for it. A lot of your budget which should be spent on modernising Grenfell Tower is taken by office costs which we should not bear.

5. Please provide us with the breakdown of costs to run the EMB and information on how long you have been running the EMB offices from Grenfell Tower.

Grenfell Tower, Grenfell Road Entrance lighting ceiling cover parking and garage area:

1. Recently why did you decide to remove the white ceiling cover in the garage area and expose the pipes, ruining the feel of the area? Surely it was a waste of manpower and money as well.

2. How do you find the time to do this work and not make an effort to improve the environment at Grenfell Tower?

Leasehold agreement

1. It would be interesting to find out in our leasehold agreement, whether RBKC TMO are entitled to base their estate office at Grenfell Tower and in that process charging residents high rent and leaseholders high service charges by the way of so called management fees and in addition charging for the fixture and fitting of estate office at Grenfell Tower.

2. At the moment we think the leasehold agreement simply penalises the leaseholders and gives very little room for leaseholders so we will seek legal advice to renegotiate towards a fairer agreement if comes to that.

Smoke Vents

1. The smoke vents, as experienced by residents of Grenfell Tower, were blocked by cigarettes buds, empty cigarettes boxes, crisp packets and all sorts of objects and the TMO never took any notice of it. The only time the TMO rushed to clean the vents was after the fire broke out on 30th April 2010 due a malfunction of the smoke vents. Do you agree with our assertion? If not, why?

Reason for the refund on heating and hot water charges

1. The surrounding high rise building within 100 meters had individual boiler system installed two decades ago, which has resulted in huge savings in terms of heating and hot water bills and also making a huge energy saving.
2. However the TMO for their commercial benefits intentionally did not upgrade the heating and water system for Grenfell Tower. This is why we demand the immediate installation of an individual boiler system and compensate us with a contribution for the additional costs we have incurred on heating and hot water charges.

Replacement of Communal Boiler

We strongly oppose investing to replace the main boiler now and for the foreseeable future. We, however, do demand a similar upgrade made almost 20 years to the surrounding high rise building in this area of the individual boiler system.

Refurbishment and maintenance of Grenfell Tower and the Garage Area

As a senior member of the RBKC TMO along with Mr. Robert Black you must be aware that neighbouring boroughs such as Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham have recently been refurbishing there high rise buildings to a high standard, but you have chosen to neglect Grenfell Tower since it was built. The reception entrance is in dire condition and the exposed piping in the garage area make for a very unwelcoming feel entering Grenfell Tower. Why you have removed the white ceiling from the garage area and have not kept the reception entrance in good order.

Your standard of Services at Grenfell Tower

When it comes to the reality of getting actual work done in Grenfell Tower either directly by you or your subcontractor we are provided with a very dissatisfactory service. We do not recognise you as a tenant led organisation. We have given you enough examples to prove our claim. If you disagree please give your reason for not dealing with our issues and concerns. We made an emergency repair complaint at the reception on 25th October 2010 at 12.10pm on Monday and no action has been taken. It was in relation to the fact that the cover of lift calling buttons is loose, one of the lights does not work and a compartment in

the landing opposite 155 has been left open for years, exposing all sorts of cables and wires. These issues are all on the 15th Floor. The exposed cables are an accident waiting to happen. We do not understand how the TMO and the EMB have neglected such an emergency repair for years. It has serious health and safety concerns and we want to know whether anyone picked that up on their regular inspection. If not, why? You should be judged not by the claims you make but how you act in practice. You are quite clearly not value for money.

Conclusion

In conclusion, years of low level and very sub-standard services for such elevated charges can continue to go on. We have tried to bring matters to your attention but if you continue to refuse to take action, when quite clearly action needs to be taken, then we will not hesitate to take legal action. The poor service you have provided is a breach of your responsibilities to the leaseholders. You have by no means justified or answered our points to a satisfactory level. We expect you to be open and transparent as a tenant led organisation; and provide the same efficient and cost effective services as the rest of the surrounding high rise buildings receive. We expect your genuine attention and desire to resolve our issues which we have passionately and emotionally brought to your attention. As of yet you have decided not to remedy them, so we are obliged to pass this matter with proof in its initial stage to the Housing ombudsman for their review.