

Grenfell Tower Leaseholder's Association
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Date:

27th October 2010

Our Reference
TMO/AP

Your Reference

Please Contact
Anthony Parkes

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for your letter of 6th October 2010 and Mr Mott's further email of 24th October 2010, I trust that the following addresses the points raised and that we can move forward with regard to arranging a meeting to discuss the detail and develop a constructive process.

Heating and meter readings

Whilst it is not impossible to fit flow meters to the hot supply, it would mean re-running the flow and return pipe work creating individual flow and returns from the riser to each flat rather than the linked system at present. This is not economically viable as it would involve re-running radiators and disturbing all of the individual dwellings.

I am afraid that we will not be able to turn off the heating, if we were to do so then this would result in turning off the hot water as well, the reason is that the flow and return pipes run through the cylinder to heat the hot water.

The hot water flows through the pipes to the hot water cylinder, even in the summer, so the boilers are still in use but at a reduced load. We have fitted valves' to reverse the flow in the summer to reduce the heat to individual flats and this has reduced the background heat. However, not all residents have provided access and if you are aware of any residents that have not, but are willing to do so, then please let us know and we will undertake the works accordingly.

If the area wide Combined Heat & Power (CHP) district heating scheme is economically viable to energy suppliers then they will replace the whole system at their cost. This proposal is being developed with RBKC and is in its initial stages with no feasibility having been undertaken yet, however we will ensure that residents are kept informed of progress.

This is not a local scheme for Grenfell Tower but the whole of Lancaster West Estate, the proposed school and academy as well as other public and private buildings in the local geographical area.

Safety, security and reception services

As previously mentioned, the TMO are reviewing the security service that is currently in place. I appreciate the comments that you have made in respect of CCTV, we will therefore be looking to review our processes, particularly with view to establishing the culprits when it comes to vandalism. The TMO have a responsibility to ensure that where possible, residents are billed directly for any vandalism, bulk refuse etc... In some cases the culprits may not be residents and the TMO will continue to work with the police to address anti-social behaviour.

Fire Alarm and Health & Safety

I do apologise for the confusion on this matter, after further discussion with our Asset, Investment & Engineering team and our Health and Safety officers, I trust that this clarifies matters:

The system is designed to open a vent on the floor where a fire occurs allowing natural ventilation to help clear smoke to that floor. This functioned correctly, however, a small amount of smoke, when entering the vent, escaped onto other floors where the seals were not quite tight enough. So the mechanism actuated correctly.

A fault was noted on the panel. This was traced to a water leak above the panel. When replacing the water damaged panel the new panel was bigger so it was better to re-locate the panel than to move all the pipework.

We have not put a new fire alarm system in; furthermore, I can confirm that the LFB have been shown a number of times how and where the controls to the mechanical fan are.

This system is only activated once the fire is under control, otherwise it would pull additional air onto the source of the fire.

The recent Fire Risk Assessment of the communal areas of Grenfell Tower confirmed that the evacuation strategy for this block – in common with the overwhelming majority of RBKC's residential blocks - is "stay put" or what the fire brigade would refer to "defend in place". Specifically, as the block is a purpose-built block of self-contained dwellings the level of compartmentation means that if a fire breaks out elsewhere in the block residents should be safe to stay within their home with their front door closed. Clearly, this is only advice and residents have discretion to decide whether they prefer to stay in their home or whether they would feel safer evacuating the building. Where they do evacuate then clearly they should close their front entrance door, use the staircase and not return to the building until the Fire Brigade advise that it is safe to do so – which is the advice given in the old fire procedure notices which are still in place throughout this block. Obviously if a fire

breaks out within the dwelling it is imperative that the resident leave at once closing the door behind them, evacuate the building and telephone the Fire Brigade to alert them.

I can confirm that we regularly publish fire safety information in "The Link" magazine, however, we are hopeful that, resource-permitting, we can soon also embark upon a programme of writing to residents on a block by block basis to advise of their specific fire procedure. I would also add that Grenfell Tower was assessed as having an overall fire risk of "normal" ("medium") - which is the minimum our assessor would ever allocate to a residential block.

Lift

I appreciate the comments that you have made in respect of the lifts, particularly regarding the lift replacement scheme, however, as previously stated, whilst the lift works did overrun it was by one month, this was a direct result of complaints by residents in respect of the noise.

There are regular inspections and servicing in place, for this year they have been as follows:

Zurich Insurance inspections:

2.11.09

19.5.10

The next inspection is due in November 2010.

Servicing:

15.1.10

9.2.10

9.3.10

13.4.10

11.5.10

8.6.10

7.7.10

10.8.10

16.9.10

14.10.10

With regards to your comments on recent problems with the lifts, our records show that Lift H91 was shutdown – a call out was issued on Sunday 19th September and the engineer attended but was unable to repair the problem. A further inspection took place on Monday 20th September and established that the fault related to the printed circuit board, a replacement board was ordered; the engineer re-attended on Tuesday 21st September, fitted the replacement circuit board and returned the lift to working order, throughout this process the other lift, H90, was fully operational.

The cost of the contract would be prohibitive if we had to stock every part of a lift for all the different types of lifts we maintain. It is therefore not unreasonable for it to take a short period of time for replacement parts to arrive.

Proposed School

You have confirmed that you will be contacting Ms Jane Trethewey of RBKC directly.

Consultation and summary of Costs

When majors works take place you do have the right to nominate a contractor provided that the value of the contract does not require public notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEC) , however, this is not applicable to day to day service charges.

We undertook statutory consultation in respect of the lift works (LHS 1884), the first notice (Notice of Intention) details the works and invites lessees to nominate a contractor should they so wish. The second notice (Notice of Proposal) invites lessees' to make observations and clarifies the lessees' rights to view copies of the tenders and specification, no nominations or observations were received in respect of either notices.

Enclosed is a breakdown of the recently released service charge final account for 2009/10, this provides greater detail than the final accounts and shows each individual item of work for the financial year 2009/10.

Garden Maintenance

Please find enclosed a copy of the estate plans which show the areas covered by the garden maintenance contract. As previously mentioned, your leases state that you are to contribute to the costs of not only Grenfell Tower but the estate itself. The contract is a large borough wide document, should you wish to have sight of this then we can arrange for you to review the document at our offices.

Common Parts Electricity

We will keep you informed of our findings in respect of the motion sensors.

Roof Renewal Works

We do not agree with the assertion that the newly replaced lift keeps malfunctioning.

TMO Budgeting

Our re-charges for both day to day service charges and major works are transparent. With regard to major works projects, you are perfectly entitled to see all tender documents and priced specification for the successful tenderer.

Upon the release of the service charge final accounts, released every September, you have the right to request, within six months of the release of the accounts, supporting documentation for all charges.

Conclusion

I want to reiterate our commitment to working with you, I would be grateful if you could let me have some provisional dates with view to arranging a meeting to discuss matters further.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Parkes
Director of Financial Services