

### TMO Opening Statement

1. On 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017 an horrific event occurred - 72 people lost their lives and many other lives were devastated.
2. Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) is deeply sorry for these terrible events and extends its sincere condolences and sympathy to the bereaved, survivors and residents. No words can express the feelings of sorrow felt by all staff associated with TMO for what occurred at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017.
3. TMO acknowledges that these tragic events demand a thorough investigation of how the fire started; how it came to spread so rapidly through the tower; and why so many people came to lose their lives.
4. In Phase One, the eye witness accounts of residents of Grenfell Tower and the Lancaster West Estate as well as those who attended to fight the fire from the LFB will be pivotal to piecing together and understanding what happened on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
5. TMO recognises the great courage it has taken for these individuals to come forward and provide their accounts and the courage required to give evidence to this Inquiry.
6. TMO acknowledges the central role it played in the refurbishment of Grenfell Tower and its role in the management of fire safety issues there. It accepts its involvement will, and should, come under great scrutiny.

7. However, as matters that touch more directly on TMO's involvement will be considered mainly at Phase Two this opening statement will be relatively short.
8. What may be helpful is if I say a little about the nature and history of TMO and its involvement in the management and refurbishment of Grenfell Tower and fire safety issues.
9. TMO was incorporated on 20 April 1995 under the right to manage legislation. It is a not-for profit company limited by guarantee which was set up by RBKC to manage and maintain RBKC housing stock. TMO has approximately 5,600 members who are the residents of RBKC's housing stock and has no shareholders. It is a resident-led organisation with a majority of local tenants on its Board. Any profits or surpluses are put back into TMO to improve its services to residents.
10. TMO is effectively a managing agent operating mainly in the public sector. It dealt with the full range of matters that go with the management of largely social housing stock: these included repairs and maintenance, rent collection, communal issues such as anti-social behaviour and environmental matters.
11. As of 2016 it employed some 218 staff and its Senior Management Team consisted of 18 people. In March 2018 RBKC took over TMO's function of managing its homes.
12. While it is a specialist in the management of social housing stock, it is not a specialist construction company and so, when it commissioned the large-scale refurbishment project at Grenfell Tower in 2012, it had to engage specialist contractors to carry out

the work, and consultants to advise on regulatory and building compliance, including fire safety issues.

13. In 2011 TMO was informed by RBKC that funds were available for the general purposes of housing regeneration including the regeneration of Grenfell Tower.
14. The purpose of the Grenfell Tower refurbishment was to improve its functionality and amenity for residents, and to bring it into line with modern standards for energy efficiency.
15. The refurbishment included the replacement of single-glazed windows with double glazed windows; the fitting of new external cladding and rain screen; the remodelling of the lower four levels to provide nine new residential homes; the relocation and improvement of the nursery and Dale boxing club; and the replacement of the communal heating and hot water system with individual units controllable by residents.
16. TMO's role in relation to the refurbishment project was that of 'Client'. This was the role it occupied pursuant to the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2007 (CDM) for the duration of the project. While this is an important role, the Regulations acknowledge that clients may not themselves be specialists in the design or construction techniques and so they are not required to plan or manage the projects themselves. TMO appointed Rydon as principal contractor (PC) following its successful tender. This was a design and build contract and Rydon was required to carry out the design, construction and completion of both the proposed re-cladding and installation of windows.

17. TMO's role was to monitor and manage progress of the refurbishment work against budget to ensure delivery of the programme on behalf of RBKC and the residents, and to liaise with residents to facilitate the works and to achieve their requirements.
18. TMO procured a specialist design team, which consisted largely of organisations that had been appointed by RBKC in relation to the nearby project to develop Kensington Academy and Leisure Centre (KALC). All were experienced, well-resourced and reputable organisations that had been engaged following an EU compliant tendering process. The specialist design team included Studio E, Curtins Consulting and Churchman Landscape Architects.
19. TMO appointed Artelia as its agent in August 2012. It had a varied role in relation to the project: among other things, it reviewed and scored the tender responses received from bidding contractors in 2013, concluding that Rydon's bid was of the highest quality and offered the best value for money, and recommended it be appointed.
20. Studio E was engaged at a very early stage as architect and lead consultant. It, in consultation with other construction professionals, identified materials to be used in the cladding. A sample of the type of cladding found to have been used on the Tower was shown to RBKC, who had made it a condition of the grant of planning permission that this occur. It was provided with advice by Exova (UK) Ltd, a consultant specialising in fire testing and certification, in connection with the fire strategy to be adopted at Grenfell Tower.

21. Prior to and during the refurbishment project TMO engaged the services of the fire safety consultants C S Stokes and Associates Ltd, who advised on fire safety matters and completed fire risk assessments at Grenfell Tower. TMO also had bi-monthly fire safety meetings with LFB.
22. Aside from these bodies, the project was overseen by a number of other specialist bodies, including RBKC building control, which visited and inspected the project on some 16 occasions between August 2014 and July 2016, and signed off the final works; and a Clerk of Works, which visited site on a regular basis, assessing the quality of the building works as they progressed.
23. It is reported that the fire doors that were installed on flats from 2011 may not have performed to the standard suggested by their fire rating. TMO procured these doors from a company, Masterdor, who fitted them and held them out as being compliant with prevailing fire standards.
24. While the cause of the fire and the way in which it took hold is complex and multi-faceted, some overriding factors have emerged from the reports of the experts commissioned by the Inquiry. Components of the aluminium rain screen fuelled the fire and allowed it to spread up and around the tower at a great rate. Combustible materials and the lack of cavity barriers in the new windows also seem to have played a major role.
25. Why combustible cladding was used at Grenfell Tower is something this Inquiry will have to consider. The answer may not be simple or straightforward, but what can be said is that the use of this material – or this type of material – had been contemplated

since the beginnings of the project in 2012 and was visible to, and seen by, a whole range of technical and professional bodies, including those with specific responsibility for building control and fire safety.

26. Investigations after the fire show how widespread the use of these materials was; numerous high-rise residential buildings, in both the public and private sector, were clad in the same or similar materials used at Grenfell Tower. Only last month, the government agreed to fund the removal and replacement of cladding now identified to be dangerous by councils and housing associations across the country; and work has started to remove the cladding from some 104 towers owned by councils and housing associations.
27. TMO supports the Inquiry's thorough investigation into how these materials came to be used by contractors at Grenfell Tower and so widely throughout the housing sector. Also, how the current systems of building regulations and fire safety, which Dame Judith Hackitt found to be 'not fit for purpose' were not reviewed prior to this date.
28. Finally, TMO supports a thorough investigation into the nature and implementation of the stay put policy in relation to high rise buildings and, crucially for Phase 1, on the advice residents were told by LFB, given as events unfolded on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017.
29. Answering these questions might be vital not just for the present Inquiry but also for the safety of countless other residents across the U.K.

**18<sup>th</sup> May 2018**