

# **JCMB MoB Fire Committee**

## **Minutes of Meeting 1**

### **Wednesday 22nd October 2.00pm**

### **JCMB Room 4309**

**In attendance:** Will Hossack (Convenor), Jim Brown, Brian Cameron, Helen Foster, Andrew Harrison, David Hamilton, Peter McDonald, Michael Moore, Sotirios Sabanis & Nancy Sprague.

**Apologies:** None.

#### **Welcome, Introduction and Remit of the Committee**

The Convenor welcomed all to the first JCMB MOB fire committee meeting and circulated a TABLED PAPER 1 which detailed the membership of the Committee and their roles.

The Convenor outlines the roles and reason for this new Committee, being,

1. This Committee structure was being introduced in all multiple occupier buildings across the University in response to forthcoming changes in the Health and Safety at Work legislation which put increased responsibility of the “occupier” of the building.
2. A single “point of contact” for emergency and fire issues in the multiple occupier buildings and/or buildings with extensive “common” space which was not under the control of a single School.
3. Coordinate a single, coherent, response to risk assessment reports, alarm test reports etc., across the whole building.
4. To define common emergency policy and documentation in multiple occupancy buildings regarding alarm testing, evacuation, fire stewards and disabled procedures.

Micheal Moore (University Fire Officer), elaborated on the changes to the Health and Safety or Work changes, and in particular the responsibilities regarding building users (including students), and evacuation of disabled in the event of an emergency.

Will Hossack noted that we were really “two building” with the main public section and the secure EUCS wing, however we shared a common fire alarm, some common doors and also EUCS had extensive occupation on both sections. On this grounds the Committee should deal with both sections. This was agreed with Helen Foster (EUCS) who represents EUCS in both sections.

#### **Fire Risk Assessment Reports.**

The first action of the Committee was to consider the recent Fire Risk Assessment Reports carried out by the Fire Safety Unit on 1st and 9th September. A copy of the main JCMB report has been circulated to all and secure EUCS area report to Helen Foster only.

Mike Moore introduced the reports which are now in their fourth year of operation. The reports are in four sections as follows:

1. Building maintenance and modifications that require “urgent” action, typically within 12 months. “Critical” dangers requiring immediate action are highlighted (none in these reports). This is sent direct to Estates & Buildings. Jim Brown (Building Manager) will report on progress to this Committee.
2. Longer term maintenance and modifications, typically with a 3 to 5 year time period for implementation, also sent direct to Estates & Buildings. Jim Brown will report progress to this Committee.
3. Routine fire precaution measures required to maintain the present standard of fire safety that are to be included as part of the routine building maintenance, also sent direct to Estates & Buildings. Jim Brown will report progress to this Committee.
4. Items for the Occupiers, to be considered by this Committee.
5. Items for the Fire Safety Unit, typically associated with escape signs and fire fighting equipment. Sent direct to Fire Safety Unit.

### **Priority 4 Follow-up (JCMB Main Building)**

**Obstruction of Escape Routes:** WJH and Colin Thomson (acting building superintendent), toured the cited locations and arranged removal of items (mainly old furniture, empty boxes etc) in all locations except.

- Upper circulation area outside Lecture Theaters. There is a large number of old/spare chairs. Relocation to discussed with servitor staff.
- East end of loading bay. Obstructions caused by temporary stair installed by heating contractors. This will be removed when contractors are finished.

Mike Moore noted that this problem would be minimised once a proper Fire Stewart scheme was introduced with weekly inspection of escape routes. (Discussed later)

### **Provision for the Disabled**

To be discussed as an agenda item.

### **Fire Alarm Testing**

Peter McDonald confirmed that the building alarm is tested by the servitors at 8.55am every Wednesday and records kept in the servitor’s box. Mike Moore noted that a “Building Log-book” would be distributed in the near future in which all such records are to be kept.

### **Fire Stewart Training**

To be discussed as an agenda item.

## Priority 4 Follow-up (EUCS Section)

Items highlighted were obstruction of escape routes (one instance), Fire Alarm Testing (in common with main JCMB), disabled evacuation, and Fire Stewart Training. These are identical to the main JCMB report and are considered as agenda items.

## Common Fire Evacuation Leaflet

One of the main aims to this Committee is to have common fire procedures. To this end the Convenor tabled a first draft of a common evacuation leaflet. The aim of this leaflet is to contain all fire evacuation information, including disabled, in one short and readable form being a single A4 page folded to a A5 leaflet.

This first draft is an edited extract from the general Physics leaflet given to all staff, post grad students and undergrad students in year3 and above.

Comments, modifications etc, to be returned to the convener by the as soon as possible. A new draft will then be circulated.

## Fire Stewards

It was confirmed that there was a number of trained fire stewards, but not all parts of the building were covered and there was little central coordination. Peter McDonald confirmed that there was a fire steward record sheet at the servitors box but there was no associated names and the regions were ill-defined, for example “floor 4”. In addition some fire steward regions were impractically large, for example “floors 7, 8 and parts of 6” to one steward.

Mike Moore outlined the need for Fire Stewards, especially in relation to the new Health and Safety regulations, and also the current debate a University level regarding additional payment, they are currently voluntary. This is still unresolved.

Will Hossack suggested that we needed to basically start again and define new fire steward areas. Mike Moore confirmed that each area must take a *maximum* of 3 minutes to check, and *must not* involve going up the building.

Mike Moore suggested that each fire steward should also do a weekly check of their allocated area. David Hamilton was not happy with this suggestions as it would add to their already voluntary duties and that some alternative inspection scheme should be considered. WJH was not keen on introducing a “clip-board” culture with additional inspection teams, but agreed that an alternative scheme may be more appropriate in some parts of the building than others.

Andrew Harrison highlighted the problem of CSEC where the obvious fire steward was normally located on floor 2 and so could not cover floor 3. It was agreed that there would be a fire steward on floor 3 as well. From this discussion, it is clear that there will be many fire stewards needed (estimate of 30), for all the sections of this building.

Defining this will clearly be a significant role of this Committee.

## Disabled Evacuation

Disabled evacuation in the building is somewhat muddled. Various old Departments (including Physics), developed one (stay in current location) policy, while the previous building safety committee introduces a “safe havens” policy, which the Fire Safety signed as requested, however, without agreement, or discussion with the the Departments.

Mike Moore explained the role and location of the “safe havens” which are located in the stairwells. These are in 30 minute burn resistant regions and are regions that should be checked by Fire Stewards, with the locations of disabled people reported to the Fire Point Controller on exiting the building.

WJH questioned the problem of several “safe havens” being in busy stair-wells where, for example a large wheel-chair would effectively block the exit for other people. Mike Moore noted that the evacuation policy should cover this, in particular that disabled people should *only* proceed to the “safe haven” after the main evacuation rush was over. This should also be covered by Fire Steward policy, where they should oversee the evacuation.

Sotirios Sabanis was concerned about lack of telephones in the “safe haven” areas. Mike Moore noted that this was “desirable” but not essential and it is unlikely that Estates and Buildings would install such telephones. Again the use of Fire Stewards and correct policy should solve this issue.

Mike Moore also raised the potential problem that under the new responsibilities for safety being introduced that it will be the responsibility of the building occupiers to arrange for safe removal of disabled people from the “safe havens”. This is currently a task that the attending Fire Officers would undertake. The safe removal of a wheel-chair bound person requires a recovery team of *five* trained personnel. Nobody is sure how this would work, and there was even more complex issues when this was combined with “out-of-hours” working.

WJH was keen that disabled evacuation policy was included in the single “evacuation leaflet” discussed above and not is a special document. He also noted that the biggest problem was the sports-injury disabled (broken leg), who do not considered themselves “disabled” but for evacuation purposes are in this category. WJH will attempt to add sensible disabled evacuation policy to the leaflet which will be circulated asap.

## Building Zoning

Mike Moore noted that new fire alarm in this building was capable of zoned and staged evacuation. This could be used to solve some of the problems, in particular:

1. Evacuation of the whole building when there is a single, isolated alarm alert. Regions to considered are EUCS “locked area” and CSEC, both of which are isolated by automated closing doors.
2. Staged evacuation where the floors containing and above an alarm alert are evacuated first with several minutes delay until the lower floor are cleared. This would help with overcrowding in the main stairs.

Helen Foster was very keen on the zoned evacuation of EUCS as this area was essentially separate and was intended to be secure and this security was at risk every time there was a

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general JCMB alarm. All agreed that this was a sensible first step, WJH to write to Jim Brown to discuss the details of this.

Mike Moore also suggested that CSEC would also be another suitable candidate for for zoned evacuation. It was agreed that EUCS should be the first priority.

## **Annual Building Evacuation Test**

WJH was somewhat concerned that he had only heard about the forthcoming evacuation test “second hand” via the Mathematics administrator and at rather short notice. It appears that the e-mail had gone to the previous HOS, who was on holiday. It was agreed that future communication should be to the Convenor of the MOB Committee.

Information regarding building evacuation tests will initially be send to the Convenor of the MOB Fire Committee who will distribute the information to the members of the committee by e-mail. The committee members should then inform a restricted set of senior staff in their School or Unit, typically, Head of School / Unit / Institute, Senior Administrator(s), Senior Technical Staff. It *must* not be make generally known.

Report after the test will be send to Convenor of MOB Fire Committee who will distribute a summary be e-mail, deal with any urgent problems, and table at the next MOB Fire Committee meeting.

Andrew Harrison discussed some details the evacuation of CSEC. Since this is a new wing it was suggested that a full check of automatic fire doors, automatic locks etc would be appropriate. Mike Moore agreed that the Fire Safety Unit would undertake this check.

## **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of next meeting was agreed as Wed 3rd December 2003, in JCMB Room 4309. WJH to send out e-mail reminders 1 week prior.

## JCMB MoB Fire Committee Membership of Committee

Name	Head	Committee Member	E-Mail
School of Physics	Prof A Lawrence	Will Hossack	w.hossack@ed
School of Informatics	Prof M Fourman	David Hamilton	David.Hamilton@ed
School of Mathematics	Prof A Gillespie	Sotirios Sabanis	S.Sabanis@ed
ECS (JCMB)	Mr Brian Gilmore	Helen Foster	Helen.Foster@ed
EPCC	Dr A Trew	Will Hossack	
Cosmic	Dr J Crain	Will Hossack	
CECSC	Prof A Harrison	Andrew Harrison	A.Harrison@ed
Meteorology	Prof R Harwood	Brian Cameron	B.Cameron@ed
Geophysics teaching labs		Brain Cameron	
Library (JCMB)		Nancy Sprague	Nancy.Sprague@ed
Uniformed Staff		Peter McDonald	Peter.McDonald@ed
Fire Unit representative		Michael Moore	Michael.Moore@ed
Building Manager (JCMB)		Jim Brown	Jim.Brown@ed