

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **FIRE SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE ADVISORY PANEL** held on **WEDNESDAY, 21ST JUNE, 2023** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Meric Apak (Co-Chair), Gulbahar Begum (Co-Chair), Irene Awoto, David O'Keefe, Gavin Haynes, David George, Dominic Johnson, Councillor Kemi Atolagbe and Councillor Anna Burrage

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Lynn Addis, Francis Dias, Ryan Heng, Angela Rokad, Jo Rose and Gillian Farrugia

The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Francis Dias, Ryan Heng, Glendine Shepherd (Director of Housing) and Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety Engagement & Governance Lead.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Webcasting

The Chair announced that the meeting was being broadcast live to the internet and would be capable of repeated viewing and copies of the recording could be made available to those that requested them. Those participating in the meeting were deemed to be consenting to being filmed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were none.

4. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There were none.

5. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2023.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 20th April 2023 be approved as a correct record.

6. THE SOCIAL HOUSING REGULATION BILL AND CONSUMER STANDARDS

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management

Dominic Johnson, Head of Safer Homes, took the meeting through the report, and gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council had put in place a programme for ensuring that it would be able to meet its communal fire doors, the installation of smoke and CO detectors requirements. The majority of the smoke and CO detectors were expected to be in place by the end of September 2023. The Council also had put in place a new team which would carry out the building safety checks and registration requirements on tall buildings, and would prepare the required building safety cases which would be submitted within the required timescales. Tenants and residents views on the buildings they lived in would form part of the assessment process.
- The Council undertook approximately 3600 Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) every three years and the frequency varied depending on the risk. The last cycle of FRAs generated approximately 15,000 actions, 9,000 actions which were overdue and the Council was working through there prioritisation. A large number of these actions were deemed low risk (e.g. door closure mechanisms) and all the actions were identified in a programme of works. Capital and revenue resources were allocated in the budget to enable the actions to be undertaken. These resources were allocated from other budgets which would have an impact on other housing services, as no new money had been given by the Government to fund these works. Officers agreed to provide a report to the next Panel meeting on the progress of the FRAs actions.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel - Wednesday, 21st June, 2023

- The Council would continue to have conversations with Government officials regarding new burdens funding, but as yet they had not been willing to provide much extra resources to fund most of the works arising from the requirements.
- It was recognised that most local authorities were in a similar position to Camden in relation to the works required, procurement and delivery issues, and the lack of additional funding to meet those needs.
- The Council would ensure that when undertaking appropriate actions they sought to ensure that they met appropriate energy efficiency and sustainability requirements.
- Whilst undertaking a FRA the assessor would give any action identified a priority level, as a result of this the action would then be programmed. An action which was deemed immediately dangerous or considered an emergency would be phoned through to colleagues, so that an immediate report could be undertaken and action taken (when necessary the Fire Brigade would be involved).
- The service had dedicated fire safety managers and they, along with agency staff, would oversee the assessment and actions programme and seek to ensure that the quality control processes worked effectively. Though the use of external providers had enabled the Council to gain access to specialist advice, economies of scale and a speedier delivery route, the Council would be considering whether further parts of the overall process could be brought back in-house.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

7. UPDATING THE TENANTS GUIDE

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Housing.

Maria Jacobs, Head of Neighbourhoods, took the meeting through the report, and gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council had circulated regular reminder information leaflets regarding its removal policy and explained the reasons why this approach was now being undertaken.
- As part of its removal policy for items in communal areas, the Council would give tenant's 48 hours' notice before an item was taken away. The item would have a sticker attached that would make it clear that if the item was not removed by the owner then it would be taken away and disposed of by the Council. This 48 notice was a last resort measure. When caretaking staff or other council staff had sought to engage with a tenant by knocking on their door asking them to remove an item, a number of them had then been verbally abused by the tenant and were now reluctant to place themselves in

that position. Tenants and residents would though continue to receive appropriate regular reminders of the approach now being followed by the Council, along with the reasons why. Fire Brigade staff had filmed a number of videos regarding the impact of leaving items in the hallway and the escape routes, which the Council would be able to use to help educate tenants and residents as to why this policy had been adopted.

- If the item was deemed to be of high value, then officers would look to store the item for a limited period of time. The Council did not want to be in a situation of having to spend limited resources on the storage of items, so it was expected that items deemed of low value would be disposed of. On occasions the Council may consider offering a tenant or resident a goodwill gesture as a result of an item being removed, but this goodwill should not be used as an opportunity for individuals to seek to get items replaced. Officers were still working through how to ensure that this policy was being applied consistently.
- Tenants who were not changing behaviours and consistently ignoring advice and guidance could be deemed in breach of their tenancy. Though when the hoarding or collection of items was considered to be a serious issue then staff in the social work team would be alerted and they would become involved.
- Officers would look into having a equality impact assessment of the proposed approach that was to be followed, and update the panel accordingly.

ACTION BY: Director of Housing (MJ)

- Officers would contact Councillor Burrage regarding a casework issue relating to the removal of belongings on the Chalcots Estate.

ACTION BY: Director of Housing (MJ)

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

8. PROPOSALS FOR RESIDENT INFORMATION ABOUT SAFETY IN THE HOME AND IN COMMUNAL AREAS

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management

Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, took the meeting through the report.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

9. WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management.

The Council had to formally response to the outcome of Fire Brigade fire inspection audits which would lead to the Council undertaking appropriate actions. The Council was looking to ensure that appropriate processes were in place that routed these audits to the correct people within the authority so they were not missed.

The meeting agreed to receive a report regarding the role the Panel could play in the proposed Housing Conference. This report would be submitted to the January meeting so the Panel could feed into the conference planning.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (MD)

New items in bold

Reports Proposed for October 2023

- Emergency Evacuation Information Sharing – Update Report
- Fire & Building Safety Charter Commitments – Annual Report to Residents
- Regulatory and legislative update
- **Fire Risk Assessment update**

January 2024

- Fire Safety Delivery Progress Update
- Annual panel report
- **Housing Conference**

April 24

4. LFB Annual Performance report

Yet to be Programmed

None.

RESOLVED –

THAT the work programme and dates of meetings as outlined above be agreed.

Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel - Wednesday, 21st June, 2023

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

CHAIR

Contact Officer: Gianni Franchi

Telephone No: 020 7974 1914

E-Mail: gianni.franchi@camden.gov.uk

MINUTES END