

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE: Annual Report on the work of the Panel and Review of Terms of Reference	
REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing & Fire Safety Advisory Panel	DATE 25 January 2024
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT: The report reviews the range of issues the Housing & Fire Safety Advisory Panel) has considered over the last 12 months and proposes an amendment to the panel Terms of Reference.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report:</p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report,</p> <p>Contact Officer: Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety Engagement & Government Lead.</p> <p>Email: Melissa.dillon@camden.gov.uk Tel.0207 974 3100</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>The Panel is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Review activity over the preceding 12 months against the objectives set out in the Terms of Reference attached as an appendix to the report. ii. Agree the proposed amendment to the Terms of Reference set out at paragraphs 1.4 of the report and 4.2 of the appendix to the report. 	



Gavin Haynes
Director Property Management

Date 15th January 2024

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The Housing & Fire Safety Advisory Panel Terms of Reference (ToR) require that a review of the work of the Panel against its objectives is undertaken every year. Terms of Reference are normally reviewed in January every year as part of the overall review of the work of the panel. In 2023 the ToR were subject to an additional review and updated 17 October in response to the publication of new social housing consumer standards by the Social Housing Regulator and the Regulatory Notice issued to the Council.

1.2 The new consumer standards include a safe homes standard. The ToR and membership changes now provide for increased oversight and scrutiny of the Council's resident safety programme and performance against Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments. Additional expertise and support to Panel members is also provided by an independent safety expert co-chair.

1.3 A further minor amendment to the ToR is proposed; Section 4.2 currently states:

Potential agenda items may be submitted to Co-Chairs, for consideration by Panel members or Council Officers. Items may be submitted up to three weeks prior to each meeting. Potential items are discussed with the Chair(s) in order to finalise the agenda prior to dispatch (two weeks in advance).

1.4 To make sure the Panel can review the work plan as a whole, and there is time for a report to be developed, it is proposed we change this to the following:

Potential agenda items may be submitted to Co-Chairs, for consideration by Panel members or Council Officers. Items may be submitted up to three weeks prior to each meeting. These proposals will be added to the standard work plan report for discussion by the Panel, and subject to their agreement added to the report forward plan and allocated to a Panel agenda to allow time for the preparation of the appropriate report.

1.5 This report also reviews the activity of the Panel over the last 12 months in preparation for the implementation of the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act which received Royal Assent on 28th April 2022.

2.0 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PANEL

2.1 **The purpose of the Panel** is to support the Council's Landlord service:

- To manage the risk of fire in Council homes by making recommendations and carrying out reviews to facilitate effective fire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery strategies
- To have oversight of the Council's building safety compliance in line with prospective, post-Grenfell building safety legislation

- To support the Director of Property Management in ensuring that tenant and leaseholder voices are at the centre of the Council's innovative approach to property safety.

2.2 The objectives of the Panel are to:

1. Receive officer reports on the status of work being undertaken, in and around council owned homes in order to achieve compliance with current fire safety legislation and regulation.
2. Consider whether arrangements for reviewing fire safety and related safety issues in and around council owned homes are adequate.
3. Receive reports on relevant staff training to ensure that there is improved recognition of fire safety breaches and appropriate action taken.
4. Consider what training and information might be appropriate for residents to improve fire safety awareness and readiness in the event of a fire.
5. Receive officer reports summarising recent fire safety and compliance concerns raised by residents who are tenants, leaseholders and tenants of leaseholders across the borough; and consider Council actions in response to those concerns.
6. Understand the nature of, and reasons for recent fires in Council owned homes in order to inform the Panel's own fire safety recommendations.
7. Find ways to encourage residents to become more aware of fire safety issues and to take responsibility for fire safety in and around their homes.
8. Review the Council's tenancy conditions and new residential leases (and rules and regulations for leaseholders generally) to ensure that they are sufficiently robust around fire safety issues and to receive reports on appropriate action being taken by officers where breaches occur.
9. Review the *Tenants Guide* in relation to fire safety and make proposals for amendments to address any new requirements developed as a result of the findings of the Panel.
10. Consider wider best practice and recommend to the Council where good fire safety initiatives implemented elsewhere might also work in Camden.
11. Work with the Council to develop effective regular communications in appropriate formats for Camden residents around fire safety.

3.0 Panel Activity January – December 2023

3.1 The pace of change and introduction of new regulatory requirements accelerated during 2023 ahead of the conclusion of the Building Safety Act transitional period in April 2024. This is reflected in the range of reports the Panel considered addressing the majority of the objective set out in the Terms of Reference.

3.2 The Panel

- Met formally four times in 2023
- Requested and considered 19 reports
- Received 15 written briefings/invitations to participate in conferences or external panels/invitations trial and review information and communication materials.
- Attended half day fire risk assessment training.

The Panel's activity covered 9 of the eleven objectives in their terms of reference outlined in section 2 of the report.

3.3 A summary of the Panel's work in 2023 is provided in the table below:

Date	Written Briefing	Topic
17/1/23 Objective 10 – Consider wider best practice	Building Safety Regulator Conference	Invitation to panel members to attend conference
18/1/23 Objective 3 - Receive reports on relevant staff training	Fire Safety Awareness Training for Caretakers	Slide deck & training materials provided to caretakers
Panel Meeting 24th January 2023	Report Title 6 Reports	Report Summary
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Annual Review of the Operation of the Panel	Terms of Reference for the Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel require that they are reviewed every 12 months. The report looked at the work of the Panel during 2023 & considered how it was meeting its objectives.
Objective 7 - Find ways to encourage residents to become more aware of fire safety issues and to take responsibility for fire safety in and around their homes.	Updating the Tenants Guide	Details of Councils approach to refreshing and updating the Tenants Guide to reflect changes in fire and building safety legislation and the prospective changes to the regulation of social housing being introduced by the Social Housing Regulation Bill currently before Parliament,
Objective 10 – Consider wider best practice	Fire doors & closure mechanisms update	Details of new requirements for the inspection of fire doors in residential buildings over 11m in height and the Council's approach to specifying closure mechanisms and building entrance doors

		to residential buildings and internal communal area door
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Universal Key Programme	Report on the background and process for installing a universal key system to street properties and TRA Halls. The UK system enables authorised council staff & contractors to access communal areas of street properties to complete statutory checks and obligations and address a c30% non-access rate. Checks include those relating to the Regulatory Reform Order (Fire Safety) 2005.
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	The Building Safety Act & Leaseholder Protections	Details of legal protections for qualifying leaseholders from the costs of removing dangerous cladding and remedying building safety risks related to the spread of fire and structural collapse in qualifying residential buildings.
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Work Programme & Action Tracker	Update on the FSCAP's work programme for 2021/22 and action requested at previous meetings.
30/1/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Fire Risk Assessments for Council Homes & Fire Safety Pages on the Council website	Details of information provided to date and published in Council website
14/2/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 4 - Consider what training and information might be appropriate for residents	Updating Fire & Building Safety Pages on the Council website	Invitation to trial online test site
23/3/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 4 - Consider what training and information might be appropriate for residents	Updating Fire and Building Safety Information for Residents on the Council's website	Request for Panel review of draft web page content
16/3/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 6 - Understand the nature of and reasons for recent fires in Council owned homes	LFB Borough Risk Management Plan	Plan provided to Panel members ahead of discussion at April meeting as part of the Annual Performance report
Panel Meeting 20th April 2023	5 Reports	Report Summary
Objective 10 – Consider wider best practice Objective 6 - Understand the nature of and reasons for recent fires in Council owned homes	London Fire Brigade Annual Performance report	Report by the London Fire Brigade on their performance in Camden. Including selected operational statistics, community fire safety performance and regulatory fire safety information.
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Emergency Services Communication	Sets out general responsibilities of local authorities for communication, liaison and cooperation with local fire and emergency services under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The report also describes the Council's new duty for the provision of

		specific information about fire safety in Council residential buildings to local fire and emergency services
Objective 4 - Consider what training and information might be appropriate for residents	Fire and Building Safety Information & Communications Programme for Residents	Report sets out the new responsibilities of the Council and the residents of Council homes under the Fire Safety Act 2021 and the Building Safety Act 2022. It also sets out proposals for how we communicate this with residents
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Update on Fire Safety Capital Works Programme	Report sets out the work being delivered by the Capital Works team to address fire risk assessment actions.
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Forward Plan	Update on the FSCAP's work programme and an update on actions requested at previous meetings.
21/4/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Fire and Building Safety Advice and Information on LB Camden web pages	Link to updated web page and details of published advice & information
2/5/2023	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 10 - Consider wider best practice	London Fire Brigade - setting up a local fire consultancy/advisory panel.	Details of LFB plan & invitation to panel members to participate
9/5/2023	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 4 - Consider what training and information might be appropriate for residents	Fire door leaflet for residents.	Request for panel suggestions & input
11/5/2023	Written Briefing	
Objective 4 - Consider what training and information might be appropriate for residents	Fire & Building Safety Information for Residents	Request for panel suggestions & input
8th June 2023	Training Session	Topic
Objective 6 - Understand the nature of and reasons for recent fires in Council owned homes	Pilot British Safety Council training for resident representatives	Fire Risk Assessment
Panel Meeting 21st June 2023	4 Reports	Report Summary
Objective 10 - Consider wider best practice Objective 2 - Consider whether arrangements for reviewing fire safety and related safety issues in and around council owned homes are adequate.	The Social Housing Regulation Bill and Consumer Standards	Report on changing regulatory landscape & how the Regulator for Social Housing will be working with local authorities to assess how they are meeting their consumer standards. May include inspections, monitoring of compliance information (e.g. electrical checks, fire risk assessments and gas safety checks), resident satisfaction and referrals made to them.
Objective 9 - Review the Tenants Guide in relation to fire safety	Updating the Tenants Guide	Details of the proposed fire & building safety update to the Tenants' Guide to reflect changes in fire & building safety legislation. Seeking Panels comments & suggestions.
Objective 4 - Consider what training and	Proposals for resident information about safety	Details of what the Council is doing to provide the safety information residents

information might be appropriate for residents	in the home & in communal areas	need to play their part in ensuring the safety of their homes
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Work Programme & Action Tracker	Update on the FSCAP's work programme and on actions requested at previous meetings.
21/7/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 10 - Consider wider best practice	Notice of breach of consumer standards by Camden issued by Social Housing Regulator	Details of the Council's response/action plan to deal with the breach of standard
25/7/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 6 - Understand the nature of and reasons for recent fires in Council owned homes	E-bikes and Scooters - Safety Advice	Copy of letter to all Council homes on e-bike & scooter safety & links to advice from London Fire Brigade
Panel Meeting 17th October 2023	5 Reports	Report Summary
Objective 2 - Consider whether arrangements for reviewing fire safety and related safety issues in and around council owned homes are adequate.	Updating the Panel's Terms of Reference	Panel asked to consider proposals to amend their TOR and title as part of the Council's work to update its governance and the changes brought about by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.
Objective 2 - Consider whether arrangements for reviewing fire safety and related safety issues in and around council owned homes are adequate.	Fire Safety Delivery Update	Provided Panel progress in delivery of the fire risk assessment actions. Updates on the work to comply with the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022 and address the issues raised in the Regulatory Notice.
Objective 11 - Work with the Council to develop effective regular communications in appropriate formats for Camden residents around fire safety.	Fire & Building Safety Charter Annual Report	Report on the Councils performance against targets & charter commitments development in consultation with the Panel, and reporting to residents of all council homes
Objective 2 - Consider whether arrangements for reviewing fire safety and related safety issues in and around council owned homes are adequate.	Regulatory Update Report	Updates on the current stage of implementation and new regulatory requirements arising from the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022 and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Forward Plan	Update on the FSCAP's work programme and on actions requested at previous meetings
3/11/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Fire Risk Assessment actions	Copy of performance report on completion of FRA actions delivery to Housing Scrutiny Committee
14/11/23	Written Briefing	Topic

Objective 7 - Find ways to encourage residents to become more aware of fire safety issues	Planning Tenants conference 2024	DMC report on conference proposals & invitation to be involved in planning and running break out session(s)
21/11/23	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 5 - Receive officer reports summarising recent fire safety and compliance concerns raised by residents who are tenants, leaseholders and tenants of leaseholders across the borough; and consider Council actions in response to those concerns.	Forward Plan for work programme for 2024	Note for Panel members on ToR provision for them to suggest items/request reports for Panel agendas,
8th December 2023	Written Briefing	Topic
Objective 1 – Status of work being undertaken	Fire Risk Assessment Actions & Voluntary Undertaking	A copy of the Fire Risk Action report to December Housing Scrutiny Committee with an update to on progress to 30 th November 23 on delivery of outstanding fire risk actions. Also provided a copy of the Council's Voluntary Undertaking with the Social Housing Regulator on the delivery of a fire risk action plan and return to compliance process.

4. **Review of Terms of Reference and Panel Membership**

- 4.1 The Terms of Reference for the Panel were reviewed and updated in October 2023 in response to the publication of new social housing consumer standards by the Social Housing Regulator which includes a safe homes standard. The ToR now provide for increased oversight and scrutiny of the Council's resident safety programme and performance against Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments.
- 4.2 In 2023 the number of resident places on the panel was increased to a total of 12 in order strengthen the voice of residents, There has been some turnover of resident members over the year with resignations of 7 members; following recruitment in November 2023 vacancies have been filled and new members are welcomed to their first meeting,
- 4.3 The number of councillor places has increased to 7 to provide representation from all political groups on the Council and now includes attendance by the Leader and Cabinet member for Better Homes.
- 4.4 The Panel continues to be led by a Resident Chair and is supported by an independent safety specialist as co-chair as set out in section 1 of the report.

- 4.5 Updated terms of reference approved at the October 2023 meeting, incorporating the proposed amendment at paragraph 4.2, are attached as the appendix to the report.

5.0 Legal Comments

- 5.1 The Borough Solicitor was consulted in the preparation of this report and legal comments are incorporated.

6.0 Finance Comments

- 6.1 The report asks the Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel to review the activity over the past 12 months alongside the objectives set, review the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference and to consider the work programme for the next 12 months. There are no financial implications that arise as a result of this paper

7.0 Environment Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific implications arising from this work.

ENDS

APPENDIX



PROPOSED LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN HOUSING AND FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel supports Camden Council's landlord service to meet its regulatory requirements to tenants and leaseholders in relation to the safety of residents' homes. This includes how the Council monitors the condition of its stock, including damp and mould, as well as compliance with fire, electrical, gas, legionella, asbestos and lift safety checks.
- 1.2 The panel will also support how the Council manages risk of fire by making recommendations and carrying out reviews to facilitate effective fire prevention, preparedness, and response and recovery strategies. The Panel will scrutinise and advise on the Council's fire and building safety compliance in line with the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022 and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The Panel will support the Director of Property Management in ensuring that tenant and leaseholder voices are at the centre of the Council's innovative approach to property safety.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel meets regularly to;
 - Receive officer reports on how the Council is working to comply with the Safety & Quality consumer standard, as monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing.
 - Receive officer reports on the status of work being undertaken, in and around council owned homes in order to achieve compliance with current fire safety legislation and regulation.
 - Provide quarterly oversight of progress in delivering Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments.
 - Consider whether arrangements for reviewing fire safety and related safety issues in and around council owned homes are adequate.
 - Receive reports on relevant staff training to ensure that there is improved recognition of fire and building safety breaches and appropriate action taken.
 - Consider what information and training might be appropriate for residents to improve fire safety awareness and readiness in the event of a fire.
 - Receive officer reports summarising recent fire safety and compliance concerns raised by residents who are tenants, leaseholders and tenants of leaseholders across the borough; and consider Council actions in response to those concerns.

- Understand the nature of and reasons for recent fires in Council owned homes in order to inform the Panel's own fire safety recommendations.
- Find ways to encourage residents to become more aware of fire and building safety issues and to take responsibility for safety in and around their homes.
- Review the Council's tenancy conditions and new residential leases (and rules and regulations for leaseholders generally) to ensure that they are sufficiently robust around fire safety issues and to receive reports on appropriate action being taken by officers where breaches occur.
- Review the *Tenants Guide* and make proposals for amendments to add any new requirements developed as a result of the findings of the Panel
- Consider wider best practice and recommend to the Council where good fire safety initiatives implemented elsewhere might also work in Camden.
- Work with the Council to develop effective regular communications in appropriate formats for Camden residents around fire safety.

3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 The Panel will be chaired in rotation by a Camden Council resident and an independent safety expert, the membership of the Panel is as follows:

3.1.1 Resident Membership

Up to 12 resident (tenant and leaseholder) members selected for their expertise, with speaking and voting rights, to include where possible:

- 1 District Management Committee representative with speaking and voting rights
- 1 Tenant Management Organisation representative with speaking and voting rights

During recruitment the Council will be mindful of trying to achieve a Panel that includes residents living in:

- a high rise block
- a TMO managed property
- a street property.

A resident member may be co-opted to serve on the Housing & Fire Safety Advisory Panel to achieve this balance.

3.1.2 Other Membership

- The Leaders of all groups on the Council (3 places)
- The Green Party (1 place)
- The Cabinet Member, Better Homes (1 place)
- Nominated Councillors (2 places)
- The Council's Director of Property Management

- Two nominated representatives of the Borough Fire Brigade Commander (Including a representative from the Regulatory Fire Safety Department)
- A nominated representative from the Council's Property Service (observer)
- A nominated representative from the Council's Housing Management Service (observer)

- 3.2 The majority of the resident members will be Council tenants.
- 3.3 Resident Panel Members may serve up to a three-year term subject to review at the end of year's one and two.
- 3.4 The resident Chair is rotated annually on the anniversary of the Panel's establishment.
- 3.5 An independent safety expert will be appointed to serve as co-chair.

4 AGENDAS

- 4.1 Agendas are agreed by the Co-Chairs in advance of the meetings, to ensure that all Panel members can be fully prepared.
- 4.2 Potential agenda items may be submitted to Co-Chairs, for consideration by Panel members or Council Officers. Items may be submitted up to three weeks prior to each meeting. These proposals will be added to the standard work plan report for discussion by the Panel, and subject to their agreement added to the report forward plan and allocated to a Panel agenda to allow time for the preparation of the appropriate report
- 4.3 Nothing goes on the agenda that is subject to investigation; or should the Borough Solicitor advise that for any reason that an item would be inappropriate.

5 MEETINGS

- 5.1 The Chair(s) with the support of the Council will:
- Facilitate no less than four formal meetings of the Panel per year
 - Consult members prior to setting each agenda
 - Ensure that the meeting is run in accordance with the Engagement Code of Conduct
 - Be non-voting (in circumstances where a formal vote is required to agree a recommendation)
- 5.2 Alongside four formal meetings, members may be asked to attend up to two private workshops per year for additional training and information gathering. They will also be invited to attend other informal briefings where relevant.

6 ATTENDANCE

- 6.1 There is an expectation that Panel members will attend at least 75% of all formal meetings. It will be assumed that members who fail to attend 2 consecutive meetings without having given apologies will have stepped down and a new nomination will be formally requested.

Quorum

- 6.2 A minimum of 5 Panel members (including 2 resident representatives) must be present at the meeting for recommendations to be made.
- 6.3 Other residents may be invited to the meeting to provide information. Other officers may be invited to present reports or provide legal advice.

7 DECISION MAKING

- 7.1 The panel will make recommendations to decision makers in the Council and the results of those recommendations will be reported back to the panel.
- 7.2 The Director of Property Management will be responsible for ensuring that recommendations are reported to the appropriate officer, action taken and feedback given.

8 DISPUTES

- 8.1 An independent method will be sourced in order to find resolution in cases where disputes arise between Panel members.

9 ANNUAL REVIEW

- 9.1 The performance of the Panel against its objectives and its Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

ENDS