

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOUSING AND FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL** held on **THURSDAY, 25TH JANUARY, 2024** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors McIntyre (Co-Chair), Gulbahar Begum (Co-Chair), Ceri Baraclough, Catherine Crawford, Razaq Dawodu, David George, Gavin Haynes, Ryan Heng, Maria Jacobs, Dominic Johnson, Silvia Kirk, Brian Leavey, David O'Keefe, Tezar Miah, Thomas Watkins, Councillor Meric Apak, Councillor Pat Callaghan and Councillor Gio Spinella

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Francis Dias, Gillian Farrugia, Simon Murray, Jo Rose, Councillor Kemi Atolagbe, Councillor Anna Burrage, Councillor Tom Simon and Councillor Loran Jane Russell

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Mathew Kirk

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 Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kemi Atolagbe, Anna Burrage and Tom Simon, and Francis Dias and Simon Murray Resident Panel Members.

It was noted that Councillor Mathew Kirk was attending on behalf of Councillor Tom Simon but in an observer capacity.

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 17th October 2023.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2023 be approved as a correct record.

6. APPOINTMENT OF CO-CHAIR

The meeting then sought nominations for the position of Resident Co-Chair. Gul Begum was the only nomination and the meeting agreed that she be the Resident Panel Co-Chair for a further 12 months.

RESOLVED –

THAT Gul Begum be appointed Resident Co-Chair for a further 12 months.

7. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE ACTIVITY OF THE FIRE SAFETY & COMPLIANCE ADVISORY PANEL

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

Dominic Johnson, Head of Resident & Building Safety, took the meeting through the report.

RESOLVED –

1. THAT the activity over the preceding 12 months against the objectives as set out in the Terms of Reference be noted.
2. THAT the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference as set out in paragraphs 1.4 and 4.2 of the appendix be approved.

8. PERFORMANCE ON COMPLIANCE

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

Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, took the meeting through the report and he along with Dominic Johnson, Head of Resident & Building Safety, gave the following key responses to questions:

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- The number of high risk actions was now down to approximately 22, from the 400 that had been identified last summer.
- Compliance in relation to the Legionella Risk assessment at the end of Q2 was 96.59% which was an increase in the performance (up from 67%). Category A water risks related to high rise buildings.
- The Council had been using Savills and Open View to complete the electrical safety certificating for Council homes, but due to capacity and resourcing issues the delivery programme had slipped. Officers would now be seeking to involve other companies to undertake this work so that most of the programme would be delivered by year end.
- The Council's aim was to get into every home so it could deliver all its compliance requirements.
- Future reports would now solely focus on the provision of 5 year electrical certification information as required.
- The Council was not required to undertake gas and electrical checks for leaseholder homes as this was a requirement for the leaseholder themselves, and they would also need to do it if they were sub-letting as a private landlord. The Council did publicise this requirement to leaseholders but the requirement was for the leaseholder themselves to undertake this work, the Council did not have any enforcement powers in relation to this work. Going forward the Council was able to ensure that future leasehold's allowed the service to require electric and gas checks compliance, this could not be applied retrospectively unless the leaseholder agreed to a variation in their lease.
- Where the Council had a block that needed to have a simulation evacuation policy then a linked alarm would be installed in a leaseholder's home to allow it to comply with the required regulations.
- Officers would report to a future meeting of the panel regarding some options to ensure compliance by leaseholders in relation to gas and electrical safety checks. This could include whether a programme offering the Council's services to undertake gas and electrical checks for leaseholders if they wished could be undertaken.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management/Director of Housing

- The Council had put a lot of resources into addressing the high risk actions arising from fire risk assessments along with putting in place processes and procedures for delivering the compliance checks. There was still an issue regarding accessing homes to ensure the checks could be undertaken and further work (which would include legal action, and planning to delivery all compliance certification works in one session) was being developed. Also the Council was preparing to deliver on the 188 building safety cases that it had to undertake, with the first 39 having to be delivered in April.
- The Council had written to all tenants and residents informing them that they should not store lithium battery bikes and scooters in communal areas, and advised not to do this in their homes or charge them. If officers found an e-

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bike or scooter in a communal area then they would remove them immediately.

- The Council was working with tenants and residents who had mobility scooters to find alternatives in relation to where they were stored and charged, instead of in their homes or communal areas. The number was small, and it was recognised that there were now people using mobility scooters who were using them for convenience rather than due to health needs. Officers would keep this under review and provide an update to the panel as part of the compliance report.

ACTION BY: Director of Housing

- The Council required reassurances to the work that was being undertaken by contractors through a certification process. Also consideration was being given to seeking third party assurance for the Council as a whole. Here the Council was working with Ark, who were a company who did quality assurance checks who could assess the Council's information to see whether it was a true reflection of the position it was reporting, something the Social Housing Regulator was keen to see in place.
- Officers would provide a report to a future meeting regarding the fire door testing programme for communal and front doors (which would outline the targets, performance and testing regime).

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- Officers would consider programming in annual reports regarding the delivery on water, electrical and gas safety, with appropriate delivery organisations in the meeting to answer questions.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

The panel recommended that members and officers bring the need to change the law to allow for local authority's to be able to either check for leaseholder compliance to gas and electrical safety certification requirements, or be able to undertake this in leaseholder homes to the relevant Government officials through London Council's.

ACTION BY: Cabinet Member Better Homes/Director of Property Management

RESOLVED –

THAT the performance on compliance for Q2 2023/24 and the latest position on fire safety actions be noted

9. MEETING THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT WHEN DELIVERING THE FIRE SAFETY WORKS PROGRAMME

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

Shamsul Alam, Fire Safety Works Programme Manager, took the meeting through the report and gave the following key responses to questions:

- Linked alarms (with imbedded heat detectors) would be fitted into leaseholder flats as part of the street property installation programme. The Council was able to undertake this work as local authorities had been given the powers to do so (as the buildings were deemed high risk and required simultaneous evacuation). In communal flats each home and the communal area would have a linked alarm fitted. Leaseholders were not able to refuse the Council access to undertake this work. The Council would seek to engage with residents on this so they understood why the works needed to be done, so that the authority did not need to use legal processes. These legal processes would only be used as a last resort.
- Core panels would be assessed by engineers to ascertain where a fault was and then use this information to rectify the fault in the flat that it related to.
- The Council had to follow appropriate installation regulations when fitting the alarms (would use trunking) and when possible would try to ensure that the wiring wasn't noticeable.
- For the LDT programme kitchens would receive a heat and carbon monoxide alarm, and in other parts, smoke and heat alarms, for street properties the communal area would have a multi-sensor alarm, and the flat would have a heat detector.
- Should an operative identify that a leaseholder's home did not meet electrical standards that would allow for the installation of an alarm (this was very rare), then the Council could do the work themselves to ensure that its bit met appropriate standards.
- The alarm systems installed by the Council could only be maintained by council designated operatives. A remote monitoring system would be put in place as part of the installation programme. A device would be connected to the core panel that would communicate with all the detectors within that property. If there was a fault or the alarm was turned off then the monitoring device would pick this up and send a message to a contact centre for an engineer to attend. The alarms had a battery back-up should mains electrical power cease, and would be regularly tested by an operative (as well as being part of the annual checking process), along with the tenant being recommended to test the system themselves.
- The installation costs of these alarms being fitted had been capped by the Council at a figure of £250, with an annual maintenance charge of approximately £160.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

10. FORWARD PLAN

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

The meeting was advised that Members should give consideration to items and issues they either wish to have as formal business items or for informal information gathering sessions. These issues should be forwarded to the panel co-chairs or to the clerk.

ACTION BY: All Panel Members

The meeting agreed that Silvia Kirk be appointed as the Panel's representative onto the Tenant Conference Working Group.

ACTION BY: Head of Innovation and Improvement

The meeting agreed to receive a report regarding Gateway 2 & 3 high-rise Building Control regime at the July 2024 meeting of the panel. The meeting also agreed the report on fire doors testing programme be added to the agenda for the meeting in April, and that the following issues be added to the yet to be programmed list;

- **Meeting with the Regulator**
- **Leaseholder safety checks compliance proposals**
- **Annual reports regarding delivery on water, electrical and gas safety**

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

The meeting also noted the dates of meetings and rolling programme of standing items.

New items in bold

April 2024

- LFB Annual Report
- Building Safety Act implementation
- Consumer Standards update
- **Fire Doors testing programme**
- Compliance Performance Report (Standing Item)

3rd July 2024

- **Gateway 2 & 3 Building Control Regime**
- Compliance performance report (Standing item)
- Work Programme

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22nd October 2024

- Fire and Building Safety Charter annual report
- Compliance performance report (Standing item)
- Work Programme

29th January 2025

- Annual report
- Compliance performance report (Standing item)
- Work Programme

23rd April 2025

- LFB Annual Report
- Work Programme

Yet to be Programmed

- Smoke/Carbon monoxide alarm installation programme
- Accessing Homes
- BS9997 Standard Fire Safety Management System Independent Audit reports
- **Meeting with the Regulator**
- **Leaseholder safety checks compliance proposals**
- **Annual reports regarding delivery on water, electrical and gas safety**

RESOLVED –

THAT the work programme, action tracker update, Tenant's Conference representative, and dates of meetings as outlined above be endorsed and noted.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 7.40 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END

