

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOUSING AND FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL** held on **TUESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER, 2024** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Gulbahar Begum (Co-Chair) in the Chair, Jason McIntyre (Co-Chair), Ceri Baraclough, Razaq Dawodu, Ryan Heng, Silvia Kirk, Brian Leavey, Tezar Miah, Simon Murray, David O'Keefe, Thomas Watkins, Gavin Haynes, Maria Jacobs, Michal Jankowski, Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali, Councillor Kemi Atolagbe, Councillor Steve Adams and Councillor Lorna Russell

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Catherine Crawford, Francis Dias, David George, Gillian Farrugia, Jo Rose, Councillor Pat Callaghan, Councillor Anna Burrage and Councillor Tom Simon

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 Councillor Pat Callaghan and Councillor Anna Burrage and Francis Dias.

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 18th July 2024.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2024 be approved as a correct record

6. PERFORMANCE ON COMPLIANCE Q1 2024/25

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

Sinead Burke, Head of Property Asset Management, took the meeting through the report and she along with Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, Michal Jankowski, Head of Resident and Building Safety, Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety Engagement & Governance Lead, and Maria Jacobs, Head of Landlord Services, gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council was delivering its action plan that covered all the outstanding Fire Risk Actions (FRAs), and these would be completed by the end of 2025. The Council now had no high-risk actions remaining.
- The Council's Insurer carried out statutory inspections of its lifts, this involved each lift being inspected every 6 months and annually to make sure they were compliant, and ensured that insurance was in place. Issues around no access by inspectors to lifts related to health and safety hazards that had to be rectified before the operative would undertake the inspection. Also, where an estate had two lifts in place, and one of them was out of service, the inspector would not undertake the inspection as they did not want tenants and residents to be without a lift. An internal Council working group had been set up to ensure that any no access issues to lifts were rectified as quickly as possible.
- An action plan has been put in place to seek to deal with lift issues, as part of this process officers had identified the different types of repairs that needed to be undertaken, along with a process that ensured that high profile or high urgency repairs were escalated and undertaken quickly.
- Officers sought to work with its external lift inspectors to ensure they were able to undertake inspections quickly once the Council had completed any necessary health and safety works.
- Landlords were required to ensure that electricians in their building were safe but they did not have to undertake an Electrical Inspection Condition Report

(EICR). Having this as a formal requirement was something that there had been Government consultation on. Officers had been working with colleagues in legal regarding producing letters that could be sent to leaseholders regarding allowing access to homes to allow for EICRs. Officers were looking at the outcome arising from a recent court ruling regarding access to see if it could be applied generally, or was just case specific. Should this ruling apply more widely, then it would give the Council greater powers regarding access. Officers would provide an update regarding the position on the ruling, when it was available.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (MD)

- Officers would also look into the performance of its lift contractor regarding the health and safety hazard access issues to see if the service needed to be improved.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

- The external inspection programme was one part of the inspection process that was done on lifts, if the external inspection raised defects then these would be picked up by the Council's lift service manager. These defects would then be forwarded by the lift services manager to the external contractor to action. Many issues were already dealt with as part of the normal monthly servicing of lifts. The lift services manager would look at the breakdown data, servicing data and the lift inspection report that would provide a combined view of the performance of a lift.
- Officers were putting in place better record management process regarding gas safety checks and decommissioning regarding void properties. An action plan seeking to improve the position on gas compliance issue in relation to voids was in place and officers would provide details of the delivery timeline.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

- The Council had 6,000 low and medium FRA actions to deliver and had a plan to complete them by the end of 2025. Officers would seek to ensure that the delivery programme would be reflected in future Compliance reports.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

- Officers would provide further information regarding the floor levels of 8 FRAs beyond their programmed date for High Rise Buildings.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

- Officers would ensure that the next report gave further details of the types of actions that were arising following an EICR, including the levels of seriousness as identified in the grading levels.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

- The Council already had a plan in place for producing all of its building safety case files so that it was ready to provide the information, when it was given the 28 days notice to submit a Building Safety Case by the Building Safety Regulator. Currently the team had 90% of its data ready for it tranche 1 buildings (37 buildings). The Council had already submitted 6 case files to the regulator to date.
- The Council had gone to Court to gain access to tenants' homes to allow for the required regulatory checks. Once injunctions are obtained, tenants generally allowed the Council access. Should the tenant not comply with the injunction then there could be a committal leading to prison for a refusal to comply with that injunction. In general, the strongest action the Council could undertake in these circumstances was to seek a possession order. The Council was reviewing its approach to non-access with clear procedures for officers to follow and use of non-legal and legal remedies. The Council recognised that it did not currently capture the right data on this, so it would be looking to build in data capture on outcomes so that this may be reported more accurately in future.

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

7. BS9997: FIRE RISK MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AUDIT

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

Michal Jankowski, Head of Resident and Building Safety, took the meeting through the report and he along with Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, and Steve Boulton, Fire Safety Advisor Manager, gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council was undertaking a pilot that sought to identify and improve engagement with vulnerable residents. The pilot would be covering tenants and residents in 6 Council buildings, and would allow tenants and residents to self-identify themselves with regards to any vulnerability that they may have that could potentially prevent them from effectively being evacuated in the case of an

emergency. As part of the pilot the Council would also be pro-actively reaching out to tenants and residents to obtain information, and would be using other localised information and not just relying on the tenants and residents themselves responding. Once this information had been obtained and analysed, further contact would be undertaken seeking clarification from the tenant and resident if necessary. The information would then be used to compile a person-centred risk assessment that would contain information about a person's living arrangements (e.g. smoker, user of oils, overloading sockets) and whether they had a disability. This would allow for an anonymised risk assessment (high, medium or low) to be available regarding the premises and the people who lived there to be shared with the London Fire Brigade (LFB). This information would be updated at least every 12 months and GDPR requirements would be followed regarding the storing and sharing of the information even within the Council. An example of a high risk person would be someone who was bed bound, lived alone, and would need full rescue in an evacuation by the LFB, so they could attend fully prepared. The pilot would be expanded in due course across the whole of the borough.

- The outcomes from the BS9997 risk management audit were driving the Council's programme on this, but learning from best practice elsewhere would always be taken on board and help shape the finalised scheme.
- The Council shared its best practices with housing associations in Camden on a regular basis, but they were responsible for fire safety issues within their homes.
- The Council has an officer working group looking at fire safety issues regarding commercial properties on its housing estates or where under Council homes. High-risk premises had already been identified through this work. This work was a requirement for the authority under the provisions of the Building Safety Act.
- The Council had undertaken some type 4 surveys to start the process of understanding the scale of the issue regarding firebreaks between commercial properties and tenants homes, so they could be improved if necessary. Officers would provide an update on the progress of this work in the future.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

8. FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023/24 INCLUDING DELIVERY OF WATER, GAS AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Sinead Burke, Head of Property Asset Management, took the meeting through the report and she along with Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, Susanne Afra, Head of Capital Works, and Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety Engagement & Governance Lead, gave the following key responses to questions:

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- The Council's Capital Programme covered the proposed work plan to deliver the outstanding fire risk actions by the December 2025 deadline. The Regulator was aware of the Council's plan and understood the issues that may face the authority regarding delivery (e.g. access or regulatory issues).
- One of the recommendations that was arising from the Grenfell Inquiry recommendations was the need for a national building control service and this was now with the Government to consider.
- Information had been shared with tenants and residents in the Council's Housing News publication and other correspondence, reminding them that if they wished to undertake works to their properties then they needed to check in with appropriate Council officer (e.g. Neighbourhood Housing officer or Officer in Capital Works Team) and they would provide them with appropriate advice. This advice would cover the issue of internal asbestos that they may have in their home when it was known to the Council.
- The Council had its own Asbestos Team that worked closely with the delivery teams to make sure tenants and residents were kept safe. The Council had an internal register of asbestos information in Council homes that was reviewed annually. The Council used the information obtained from its void and pre-works property surveys to help build a picture regarding whether asbestos could be in other similar buildings.
- Officers would consider whether there should be a 6th Charter Commitment regarding accountability, along with making the process of reporting a fire safety concern easier and not through the Council's Complaints portal.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (MD)

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 meeting asked that the following reports be added to the work programme:

- Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report – Government response (to be added to the yet to be programmed list)
- Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report and recommendations – Update on Camden's response (January 2025)
- Building Safety Case information (January 2025)

New items in bold

29th January 2025

- **Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report and recommendations – Update on Camden’s response (January 2025)**
- **Building Safety Case information (January 2025)**
- Leasehold Property Access Options
- Annual report on work of the Panel
- Compliance performance report (Standing item)
- Work Programme

23rd April 2025

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

Summer 2025

Resident/TRA training

Compliance performance report (Standing item)

Autumn 2025

Annual Fire & Building Safety Charter report 2024/25

Compliance performance report (Standing item)

Yet to be Programmed

- Grenfell Inquiry Phase 2 report – Government response

RESOLVED –

THAT the work programme as revised above, and action tracker update be endorsed and noted.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There were none.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm.

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CHAIR

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MINUTES END