

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **HOUSING AND FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL** held on **WEDNESDAY, 23RD APRIL, 2025** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Jason McIntyre (Co-Chair) in the Chair, Gulbahar Begum (Co-Chair), Ceri Barraclough, Razaq Dawodu, Brian Levey, Thomas Watkins, Gavin Haynes, Maria Jacobs, Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali, Councillor Kemi Atolagbe, Councillor Steve Adams, Councillor Anna Burrage, Councillor Pat Callaghan, and Councillor Lorna Russell

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE abSENT

Silvia Kirk (Deputy Co-Chair), Catherine Crawford, Francis Dias, Razaq Dawodu, Gillian Farrugia, Ryan Heng, David George, Councillor Tom Simon and Jo Rose

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 Silvia Kirk, David George, Catherine Crawford and David George.

The meeting was advised that David George, Borough Commander, was being substituted by Adam Lawson, Station Commander for the meeting.

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 29th January 2025.

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6. LONDON FIRE BRIGADE (LFB) ANNUAL REPORT - BOROUGH RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN CAMDEN 2025

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Commander.

Adam Lawson, Station Commander, took the meeting through the report and he along with Gavin Haynes, Director of Property Management, gave the following key responses to questions:

- LFB officers would look into whether the cycle shops on Camden Road and Eversholt Street had received a fire safety check, especially in relation to electric bikes and their batteries, and if so the outcomes from the inspections. If none had been undertaken, then they would be progressed by the service.

ACTION BY: Borough Commander

- As part of any fire safety checks, fire crews would check to ensure that a fire could not spread easily from one floor to the next, and if they identified any issues then these would be raised with the appropriate specialist LFB teams. These teams would conduct a thorough inspection and provide appropriate advice and recommendations for action.
- Officers would look into what further action they could undertake in these commercial properties that were part of the Council's housing estate, should they fail or did not respond to the recommendations arising from these fire safety checks.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

- As part of future reports information would be added under the where fires started section regarding the number caused by lithium batteries, along with the diagrams being in a bigger font.

ACTION BY: Borough Commander

- Camden Council only had one of the 34 residential high-rise accommodation where a fire risk assessment deemed the building safety features were not adequate, so a temporary simultaneous evacuation strategy was required to be in place. Information on these premises was kept on a database by the LFB and was updated when work had been undertaken or needed to be done. The building's owner was required to advise all the residents what they were supposed to do if the alarm went off. This information was provided to fire crews should a fire arise, and the buildings would be visited monthly, with the signage, the managing agent, and residents would be checked and contacted to see if they knew what the correct evacuation strategy was. This would be monitored and recorded until the remedial works were done and the evacuation strategy changed.
- When the position was more serious, then a waking watch could be put in place which meant the building was staffed by operatives for 24/7 and they would evacuate the building should there be a fire. These premises would be inspected and monitored by the LFB until the remedial works were completed. The last resort would be taking away a building's certification should the owner be reluctant to follow the recommendations of the LFB.
- The LFB were developing a leaflet for charity workers working with rough sleepers regarding fire safety risks that they would share with the Council when available. They were also willing to work with officers from the rough sleeping team in the Council regarding helping prevent fire safety issues involving rough sleepers across the borough and including Camden Town Tube Station.

ACTION BY: Borough Commander

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

7. GRENFELL INQUIRY PHASE 2 REPORT - GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

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

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

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- The Council would be writing to all tenants and residents across the tenures, living in High-Rise and Medium-Rise buildings asking them to self-refer themselves to the Council so that a person-centred fire risk assessment could be undertaken. This process would involve officers then visiting the property and undertaking a review of the arrangements and identification of any hazards in the properties. Residents of high-rise buildings had a responsibility to give access for the purposes of safety checks, and that didn't differentiate between leaseholders and tenants. Should they be unwilling to allow access then a new power was available for the authority to use (Resident Contravention Notice (Access)), to undertake appropriate safety checks. The Council was exploring whether this new power gave more flexibilities than the existing arrangement for the authority to access a premises. As currently the authority would have to go to court for access to a premises.
- The Grenfell Inquiry recommended that the Government should revisit the definition of a high-rise building, as it felt that the definition was too narrow. This was still with the Government for them to clarify.
- There was currently a national shortage of Registered Building Control Officers in both the private and public sector, and the Government had yet to formally confirm its final proposals for a national Building Control service. It was possible that this could lead to a far greater level of licensing of approved inspectors that would then avoid a log jam in the process.
- There would be a statutory requirement for the construction clients commissioning or procuring the work of principal designer and contractors to ensure that they were competent in undertaking that role. Councils and Housing Associations were currently discussing what this could look like in practice. This could mean that the commissioner had to ensure that the principal designer was part of a recognised body, and had the appropriate qualifications, knowledge and experience to undertake the work. These assurances had to be provided to the governance processes of the authority, and it was expected that the Council and other large developers would do this responsibly.
- An update on the Resident Safety Programme could be provided to the Council's Cabinet and other Member level bodies regarding the progress on the programme and the work undertaken to meet the requirements of the Fire and Building Safety Acts, any new actions required to implement Awaab's Law, Housing Consumer Standards for Council Homes, and the Grenfell Inquiry recommendations, along with considering the way the Council should continue taking forward the work arising from these changes. This could be linked into the update that was provided on the Fire and Building Safety Charter annual report.

The Panel supported the proposal to provide the Cabinet and other appropriate Member level bodies with a report on the progress that had been made in meeting the legislative and other requirements surrounding the work in this area, and to consider the best way forward.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (MD)

RESOLVED –

THAT the report be noted

8. PERFORMANCE ON COMPLIANCE Q3 2024/25

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

Michal Jankowski, Head of Resident & Building Safety, took the meeting through the report and he along with Gavin Haynes and Melissa Dillon, gave the following key responses to questions:

- The Council had recently been advised by the Building Safety Regulator that it had received its very first building assessment certificate. This was a great milestone for Camden because not only was the Council the second London borough to have received a certificate, but it also recognised all the hard work that the authority had put into meeting the requirements and showed that the work was on the right track and gave confidence in the work going forward. The certificate would be displayed on the building in due course.
- The Council was on track to complete the current medium and low risk outstanding actions by December 2025. Access to properties was the main reason why the programme needed the time allocated to enable it to be completed. A team was in place who were working through how best to deal with the individual access cases delaying the work being undertaken. The Master Key programme had helped provide access to some street properties that had been difficult to access in the past.
- The Compliance Data related to the requirement to undertake the appropriate checks, and officers would ensure that in future reports further information was provided regarding the remedial works that were sometimes required as a result of the checks, along with how the resulting works were programmed for action. A breakdown of such issues could be provided in a table format to show the kinds of issues and the level of risk attached to them. The report would also include an update regarding the Council's lift contractor's performance.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

- Difficult to resolve issues would remain in the programme until either the issue was resolved or a fully considered assessment had been undertaken surrounding the issue and a way forward determined.

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- Officers were seeking to address the issue of compliance checks for void properties. A briefing note would be provided to Panel Members on the approaches being proposed to rectify the issues.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (SB)

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 was advised that a response on the outstanding actions identified regarding the last performance report had now been circulated to panel members. Also the Director of Property Management advised the meeting that in relation to the last outstanding action point on the Chalcots Phase 2 Inquiry, they had now appointed a chair to lead the inquiry and the details surrounding this would be circulated in the near future.

ACTION BY: Director of Property Management

The meeting agreed that the new name of the panel should be as recommended, the Housing Fire and Building Safety Panel, and that they should co-opt a representative from the Tenant Management Organisation Liaison Group to serve on the panel.

New items in bold

Summer 2025 (10th July)

Resident & TRA training Update

Terms of Reference Review following publication of Government Response to Grenfell Phase 2 Inquiry Recommendations

Compliance performance report (Standing item)

Autumn 2025 (23rd October)

Annual Fire & Building Safety Charter report

Compliance performance report (Standing item)

PEEPs Programme (If government has published new Regulations in time)

28th January 2026

14th April 2026

Yet to be Programmed

Compartmentation work in commercial premises

RESOLVED –

- (i) To agree to recommend to the Leader to update the name of the Panel to Housing Fire and Building Safety Panel as proposed in paragraph 1.3 of the report
- (ii) To agree that a nominee from the TMO Liaison Group be co-opted to serve on the panel as proposed in paragraph 1.4
- (iii) To note the action tracker in Appendix B and the information circulated separately and the updates to the work programme

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

There was none.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END