

| Housing Select Committee | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Title | Key Housing issues | | |
| Key decision | No | Item no | 7 |
| Wards | All | | |
| Contributors | Executive Director for Customer Services | | |
| Class | Part 1 | 6 September 2017 | |

1 Summary

1.1 Key Housing Issues is a general report that aims to update the Housing Select Committee on current and new issues important to housing.

2 Fire safety following the fire in Grenfell Tower

2.1 At the Housing Select Committee on 5th July 2017 the committee received the report '*Fire Safety in Tall Buildings*' which was then presented to Overview & Scrutiny on 11th July. This report outlined in full the response from the London Borough of Lewisham in the immediate period after the fire in Grenfell Tower.

2.2 Sections three, four and five of this key housing issues report highlights updates relating to fire safety since '*Fire Safety in Tall Buildings*' was released.

3 Fire safety update – London and national context

3.1 On the 28th July 2017 DCLG announced the Building Safety Programme which aims to identify buildings of concern through testing how different Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding in combination with two forms of insulation react in a fire. These tests follow on from the initial test carried out by DCLG reported on in the previous report.

3.2 The DCLG is publishing regular updates on the testing that is being undertaken, including information on what is being tested, why this has been identified as necessary and the outcome of this testing. These are being published online as tests are completed and validated.

- 3.3 The DCLG have tested seven combinations of ACM cladding and insulation. Six test results of differing ACM and insulation types have been released so far. Four combinations have failed and three combinations have passed safety tests.
- 3.4 At the time of writing, only ACM cladding has been tested by the BRE and the DCLG have not indicated whether the buildings safety programme will test non-ACM forms of cladding.
- 3.5 London Councils met on 12th July 2017 to discuss the initial response to the fire and to provide assistance, advice and co-ordination to local authorities in London.
- 3.6 It was agreed that a board should be established to facilitate ongoing co-ordination amongst councils, to share best practice and to ensure that member authorities have access to advice and support from across the region. This group would provide overall strategic direction to the regional response.
- 3.7 The board also agreed that a technical board be set up to discuss guidance and recommendations produced by the DCLG, to advise authorities with regards to the detail of any such publication, and to work with DCLG and others as necessary to ensure the suitability and appropriateness of future guidance.

4 Fire safety in Lewisham update

Tower blocks with ACM cladding

- 4.1 Members will recall that Lewisham Homes (LH) and Regenter B3 (RB3) manage Lewisham Council properties, including 81 tower blocks (71 LH, 10 RB3). No blocks under RB3 required testing, but six blocks managed by LH did. Of these, three blocks failed the initial test carried out by DCLG. These blocks are Hatfield Close 1-48, Hatfield Close 49-96 and Gerrard House.
- 4.2 Since the last report, these blocks also failed the second tranche of testing carried out by the Building Safety Programme.
- 4.3 Lewisham Homes (LH) has appointed a contractor and professional services to start work removing and replacing the cladding. A site visit has occurred and a planning workshop has been organised for early September to determine a programme of works. After this workshop, a start date will be established. Our priority at this stage will be to remove the cladding as quickly and safely as possible.

- 4.4 The London Fire Brigade (LFB) conducted intrusive inspections at Hatfield and Gerrard blocks. All three blocks received notices listing fire safety works deemed necessary, which have commenced and are well underway. It should be noted that administrative errors on behalf of the LFB have delayed the formal issuing of these notices, and LFB have indicated they will be revisiting to do a further inspection.
- 4.5 Twenty-four hour fire wardens continue to be on site at three blocks to ensure resident safety until the cladding has been fully removed.
- 4.6 Residents continue to be updated and LH will arrange public meetings in consultation with the Tenant Resident Association as deemed necessary.
- 4.7 In respect of blocks managed by registered providers in Lewisham, since the last report it has emerged that London and Quadrant (L&Q) have five blocks at Clyde Terrace which also failed the BRE testing carried out by the Building Safety Programme.
- 4.8 L&Q have informed us that they are currently in the planning stage to remove and replace the cladding on the affected blocks. They have also put in place twenty-four hour fire wardens.
- 4.9 We have now been in correspondence with all of our private landlords who have tall buildings in Lewisham. Whilst we await formal response from two landlords, we are entirely confident no private blocks in Lewisham have ACM cladding. All building owners have further been advised of their fire risk assessment regimes and that they are fully aware of their responsibilities in relation to fire safety.
- 4.10 Goldsmiths University have also confirmed that none of their buildings in Lewisham have ACM cladding. They have also reassured us in relation to their fire risk assessment regime.
- 4.11 A full list of tall buildings and their status in relation to ACM cladding can be found at Appendix A.
- 4.12 Regarding the funding of works, the Mayor of Lewisham wrote to Mr Javid MP on July 7th regarding funding of essential fire related works (accessed [here](#) via Lewisham Council website, and also included in the appendices). The reply from Mr Javid MP dated 26th July 2017 is attached at Appendix B.
- 4.13 Since then communication from DCLG has maintained the position that *‘as landlords, you will fund measures designed to make a building fire safe, and will draw on your own existing resources to do so’* and that *‘where a Local Authority has concerns about funding essential fire safety measures, they should approach us as soon as possible to discuss the position.’* (Letter from The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP to Chief Executives of Local Authorities and Registered Providers, dated 31st July 2017).

4.14 The Mayor of Lewisham has been in further correspondence with Mr Javid outlining concerns with funding fire safety works. In this correspondence, he asked for a meeting with Mr Javid and officials to discuss the matter further.

Wider fire-safety

4.15 RB3 are starting a programme of works identified during the most recent fire risk assessment (FRA) inspections across the entirety of their estate.

4.16 LH will be conducting the same rigorous assessment of fire safety that has been overseen by LFB. Intrusive inspections are due to start in the autumn and may take up to a year to complete.

4.17 In response to concerns which have been raised by residents and as part of prioritising work following assessments undertaken to date, Lewisham Homes commissioned independent tests on a sample of front entrance doors in Daubeney and Eddystone Towers by one of their main contracting partners.

4.18 The contracting partner has sampled the work of three appointed certified installers and have established poor workmanship.

4.19 As a result they have agreed to test all of their fire door installations and to correct any poor work. They will do this at their own cost. Lewisham Homes will also ensure the testing and corrective work is fully and independently verified. They will also pay for this.

4.20 As a result of the above, they are investigating and correcting, where needed, work in both Hatfield Close and Gerrard House. TRAs and residents will be fully informed and advised throughout all of this work.

4.21 We will monitor very closely the outcome of these works and consider whether any wider action is necessary as a result of any findings.

5 Safety in concrete panel buildings

5.1 Following concerns around cracks to the fabric of a flat raised by a resident of the Ledbury Towers in the borough of Southwark, Southwark council carried out a detailed structural survey of the blocks on the estate to satisfy themselves as to the safety and security of the towers.

5.2 Southwark records indicated that the design of the blocks had been strengthened following the incident at Ronan Point, a building of similar construction where an explosion had taken place previous to the construction of the blocks at the Ledbury estate.

5.3 Investigations carried out by Southwark and Arup technical specialists found the flank wall did not meet the level of robustness required for blocks

containing piped gas. These investigations indicated that the blocks fall significantly short of the standard set out in the 2010 Building Regulations. They recommended that Southwark council increase the safety and security of the blocks whilst more intrusive surveying can be undertaken.

- 5.4 Lewisham Council has identified 6 blocks at the Heathside & Lethbridge estate that were constructed in a similar manner to those on Ledbury Estate. These blocks are due for demolition in phases 5 & 6 of the ongoing regeneration scheme on the estate.
- 5.5 Since the issue was identified on the Ledbury Estate, Lewisham Homes – which continues to manage the remaining homes until they are demolished – has appointed a structural surveyor who has confirmed that there are no signs of distress or cracking which require immediate attention.
- 5.6 As a further precaution a structural engineer will review the strengthening work that should have been undertaken, as set out in the report. The structural engineer is due to undertake assessment at the end of August 2017.
- 5.7 The current decant plan is for phase five (132 homes in total) to be fully decanted this December ahead of demolition. Phase six (52 homes) are scheduled to be decanted by June 2018.
- 5.1 Contingency plans have been drawn up to enable the decant to take place at greater speed if this is required.

6 Update on the housing team structure

- 6.1 Over the past three months there have been some changes in the housing teams within the London Borough of Lewisham.
- 6.2 The Housing Strategy and Programmes team continues to be led by Jeff Endean. Private Sector Housing is now led by Madeleine Jeffery
- 6.3 The Housing Needs team has expanded to include refugee services and no recourse to public funds. This team is led by Lee Georgiou.
- 6.4 Appendix C shows the structure of the housing teams and their remit.

7 New Homes Programme Update

- 7.1 A series of update reports has subsequently been considered by Mayor and Cabinet and Housing Select Committee outlining progress in meeting the target of starting 500 new Council homes for social rent, by March 2018.
- 7.2 17 new council homes have now been completed, 203 are on-site and being delivered. This means that a total of 196 new social rented homes are now underway. In addition there are a further 19 projects on which

design development is advancing and which have the capacity to provide around 301 council homes, all of which could start before March 2018.

- 7.3 During the next six months many schemes will be subject to consultation and we will see a significant number of schemes being considered by Mayor and Cabinet for final approvals. If these approvals are provided, the projects will then be progressed through the statutory planning process.
- 7.4 A full summary of the development programme is appended to this report as appendix D.

8 Homes for Londoners: Affordable Homes Programme 2016-21

- 8.1 In July, The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, announced that £1.7bn is to be invested in affordable housing through the Greater London Assembly's (GLA) 2016-2021 main grant programme. This will deliver nearly 50,000 new affordable homes across all London Boroughs. Of this funding, £23,032,577 has been granted to schemes in Lewisham which are being delivered by our partners including L&Q, Peabody, Viridian, City of London Corporation, and Moat Homes. This funding will be used to deliver 648 new affordable homes (of a mix of tenures including shared ownership) including 433 new London Affordable Rented Homes.
- 8.2 While some London Authorities bid for funding from the GLA's main grant programme, many – including Lewisham - did not, choosing instead to take advantage of other funding sources such as recycled right to buy grant funding which is not compatible with GLA grant funding.
- 8.3 As well as the main grant programme, the GLA is also funding projects which seek to innovate in housing delivery through the GLA Innovation Fund. Lewisham Council is in the process of bidding for around £13m from the GLA Innovation Fund to help deliver a Precision Manufactured Housing Programme, to build new affordable homes across 4 sites in the borough, and is currently through to the second stage of the bidding process.
- 8.4 An update on the Innovation Fund bid will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet in Autumn, prior to entering into any agreements with the GLA.
- 8.5 The innovative precision manufactured technology being used is the next iteration of the approach used at PLACE/Ladywell, which means we can create high-quality and sustainable homes more efficiently and cost effectively than with traditional construction methods.
- 8.6 The programme will deliver around 140 new homes, including 105 new Council homes and 35 new homes that will be used as Temporary Accommodation for homeless families, reducing the amount the Council spend on costly nightly paid accommodation.

8.7 The GLA have recognised that this innovative approach can provide a model for how precision manufactured housing can grow and become an important tool that the public sector can use to deliver much needed new affordable housing.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

10 Financial implications

10.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on current housing issues. As such, there are no specific financial implications arising from the report itself.

11 Crime and disorder implications

11.1 There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

12 Equalities implications

12.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

13 Environmental implications

13.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

14 Background Documents and Report Originator

14.1 If you have any queries relating to this report please contact Jeff Endean on 020 8314 6213.