



Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State
Department for Communities and Local
Government,
2 Marsham Street,
London,
SW1P 4DF

Sir Steve Bullock
Mayor of Lewisham
Civic Suite
Catford
London SE6 4RU

steve.bullock@lewisham.gov.uk

17/08/2017

Dear Sajid,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 26 July 2017, in which you outline the DCLG position on funding for essential fire safety works.

In my letter dated 6th July 2017, I expressed my concern that that the government was appearing to retract its initial offers of financial support. As I outlined, the financial costs of dealing with the three buildings in Lewisham that had failed the first set of BRE tests is likely to be considerable. Since writing to you, the same blocks have failed the second tests at category three. We are now in the process of gathering the exact costings of the following essential works for which we would like Government help:

- Fire safety wardens
- Scaffolding for all tower blocks where identified cladding requires immediate removal
- Assorted costs involved in this removal, including surveyors fees, contractor fees and associated construction costs
- Assorted costs involved in recladding the properties, including sourcing new and confirmed safe cladding and contractor and construction costs as above
- Costs associated with parking re-zoning and alterations to tower access to ensure adequate access for emergency services
- Retro-fitting sprinkler systems

There are also escalating costs associated with fire safety on a further 3 blocks which are fully clad and 5 partially clad in non-ACM materials. These blocks are undergoing rigorous surveying and testing. We do not have final figures as yet but early indications are that the cost will be at least £10m.

I know that we share a commitment to the safety of all residents and I think we are both clear that cladding is not the only fire risk. Like other local authorities we are putting in place arrangements to undertake intrusive fire risk assessments in all our blocks which includes a further 62 non clad blocks. These more extensive investigations are expected to result in further works at additional costs including the installation of sprinklers where appropriate.

We are keeping a record of essential fire safety related costs and will provide details when appropriate to do so.

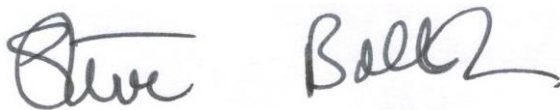
None of these additional works and costs could have been accounted for in the HRA business plan and will impact on our ability to invest in other areas and indeed to build further new housing. It is disappointing to learn that there is limited financial support on offer to assist us in completing this essential work, with an expectation that local authorities “draw on

[their] own existing resources” to carry out essential works. I would urge that this position be reviewed as the figures become clearer.

There is high demand across the country to carry out works on affected buildings in a timely manner, with local authorities seeking professionals to source safe materials and perform any necessary construction work. Without any regional or national coordination of these efforts, it is likely we will be competing against neighbouring authorities for the same resources to undertake this work, possibly at inflated prices. We await further details on the Industry Response Group and its remit to assist us with these concerns.

As you know I am the executive lead member on Housing for the London Boroughs and I work closely with my Conservative colleague, Cllr Ravi Govindia. Might I suggest that it would be useful for us to meet in September along with officials from your Department and London Councils to consider how the growing financial burden faced by London authorities in this context can be met?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Steve Bullock', written in a cursive style.

Sir Steve Bullock
Mayor of Lewisham

CC: Cllr Ravi Govindia, Leader of LB Wandsworth,
Heidi Alexander MP,
Vicky Foxcroft MP,
Ellie Reeves MP