

Appendix 2 - Fire Safety Scrutiny Review Action Plan

Recommendation 1:

Tower Hamlets Homes, in consultation with the Council and members of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum, develops, monitors and evaluates a clear, easy-to-use separate notifications process for residents to:

- raise fire safety concerns separately from general repair issues
- receive clear timeframes for remedial actions, according to the level of risk
- Track the progress of remedial actions.

Comments from Service:

Comments from Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) - The current system in place is working well and the reporting fire safety concerns has been widely publicised to residents. The current process has been discussed with TRA Chairs and Members. Fire safety enquiries/ concerns are logged on iCase with 'Health and Safety' code so can be easily monitored and extracted for reporting purposes.

Repairs system – THH record incidents that have happened on a separate code 'Caused by Fire'. Fire related repairs are logged as a repair and normal approach based on priority system and residents kept informed. Note that the majority of fire safety repairs come from routine inspections, walk about and FRAs findings rather than resident requests.

Accessing services is available to residents in a number of ways – in person, telephone, and writing. Further development work on recording fire incidents is planned for Q3 2018/19 which will automatically alert the Health and Safety Team to any fire related incidents.

It would be good to keep the detailed dialogue going as THH are considering adopting the findings of the Dame Judith Hackitt report (particularly on the Resident's voices section) and the national picture will continue to evolve.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Housing and Regeneration set up a meeting with Tower Hamlets Homes to discuss <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing a separate fire safety notifications system / adapting current repairs system so residents can notify fire safety concerns separately (including for residents who do not have internet access); 	Mark Baigent / Susmita Sen	October 2018

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how monitoring and evaluation feeds into performance indicators referred to in Recommendation 2 • How to feedback to residents on the progress of these items. 		
<p>Tower Hamlets Homes to discuss fire safety notifications processes at the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum to establish best practice around</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • timeframes for responding to residents • timeframes for addressing issues • How best to keep residents updated on progress (including residents without internet access). 	Tower Hamlets Homes	March 2019

Recommendation 2:

The Council develops performance indicators to monitor and manage residents' concerns on fire safety in high rise buildings, in consultation with the London Fire Brigade, Tower Hamlets Homes, Registered Providers and Private Providers, to report to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

Comments from Service:

While Housing and Regeneration and Tower Hamlets Homes can consult with Registered Providers in the borough through the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum, the Council has no statutory powers over Registered Providers or Private Providers to require them to report on performance indicators.

Indicators being monitored at present by THH include (Business Critical Indicator) Fire Safety: reduce risk on 9 High Rise Blocks to tolerable, and (Key Performance Indicator) Fire Risk Assessments in place. A key challenge likely to have an impact on THH's ability to reduce the risk on 9 high rise blocks to tolerable, will be the replacement of leaseholder doors, which may receive objections from leaseholders. This could therefore keep the BCI in red status.

For Tower Hamlets, the Fire Brigade has a target of 800 fire safety visits per annum across residential (purpose built flats over 4 floors) and commercial properties. Safety vests which raise concerns are actioned with informal or formal action. Informal action which includes a written letter of deficiency and recommendations and formal action which includes enforcement notice leading to a prosecution if not actioned within the time allowed.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
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Reporting annually to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the percentage of tall buildings (over 18m) owned by the Council and RPs that have an up to date FRA in place, inclusive of recommendations outstanding for more than 12 months.	Mark Baigent / Alison Thomas / THHF	June 2019
THH to reduce risk on 9 high rise blocks to tolerable, with progress reported to the operational meetings, strategic meetings, Mayor's housing meeting and to the Place Directorate Leadership Team and the HSSC.	Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent	March 2019
Progress updates against the THH Fire Safety action plan (high risk and low risk blocks) reported to operational meetings, strategic meetings, Mayor's housing meeting and to the HSSC.	Susmita Sen	March 2019
London Fire Brigade to report annually to the Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee on the percentage of residential purpose built flats visited, where informal / formal action has been taken.	London Fire Brigade / Marc Gibbons	June 2019
Housing and Regeneration to set up an initial meeting with Tower Hamlets Homes to discuss the data available and potential performance indicators, particularly around timeframes to address remedial actions, keeping residents informed and responding to fire safety notifications. (link to Recommendation 1)	Susmita Sen / Mark Baigent	September 2018
Housing and Regeneration and Tower Hamlets Homes to discuss with Registered Providers of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum what data is available to monitor and benchmark Tower Hamlets Homes' performance	Mark Baigent / Susmita Sen / Sandraw Fawcett	March 2019

Recommendation 3:

The Council develops a clear position statement encouraging all Responsible Persons in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets to publish Fire Risk Assessments with a clear programme of works, outlining the scope and timing of the works.

Comments from Service:

In 2017, the Council stated that all Fire Risk Assessments would be published for Council blocks. Accordingly Tower Hamlets Homes have committed to do this in their Business Plan. The Council has no statutory powers to require Registered Providers and Private Providers to publish Fire Risk Assessments but can publicise its expectations around this from other housing providers.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Housing and Regen to liaise with Communications, the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Mayor to agree wording for the position statement	Mark Baigent / Andy Bate	October 2018
Communications team to develop and implement a plan of where this will be publicised (website, printed and digital media to be considered)	Housing and Regen / Communications officer	December 2018

Recommendation 4:

The Council develops a Fire Risk Assessment dashboard template, in consultation with Tower Hamlets Homes, Registered Providers, Private Providers and resident representation to accompany published Fire Risk Assessments. The dashboard template should highlight:

- key risks
- works taken and planned to address the risks
- Any implications for use of the building by residents.

Comments from Service:

The Council has no statutory powers over Registered Providers or Private Providers to require them to develop and publish dashboards, accompanied by Fire Risk Assessments.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Housing and Regeneration and Tower Hamlets Homes to meet to discuss developing dashboard templates	Mark Baigent / Susmita Sen	October 2018

Recommendation 5:

The Council develops a joint communication strategy with clear consistent messages, in consultation with the London Fire Brigade,

Tower Hamlets Homes, Registered Providers, Private Landlords or their agents and resident representation, to raise awareness with tenants and leaseholders on the following issues:

- communal area fire doors and external fire doors on individual flats must meet the appropriate fire safety standards
- means of escape need to be kept free of storage items (including barbecues on balconies) and obstacles (including grilles over flat windows and doors)
- external areas around entry/exits to buildings must be kept free of obstacles to ensure emergency services can access the building
- minimizing fire risks in homes through referral services, such as London Fire Brigade home visits and encouraging residents or family members to seek mental health support for hoarding issues
- installing smoke alarms to save lives
- certain internal refurbishment works require approvals (including Building Control approvals)
- What to do in an emergency, including when to stay put, when to evacuate and how to develop personalized evacuation plans.

The Communication strategy needs to consider

- a) A variety of communication channels, including digital, non-digital and meetings or 'fire safety awareness days'.
- b) The diversity of the borough and develop communication materials in key languages spoken in the borough.
- c) how information is accessible to those sub-letting and visiting the building
- d) Best practice models in engaging elderly and disabled residents, such as the Social Model of Disability.

Comments from Service:

A joint Communications Strategy could be an effective method to ensure consistent messaging. The Council currently has very little access to Private Landlords and therefore proposes consulting with known private providers to share any lessons learned and approaches to fire safety messages to residents.

Environmental Health has contact details for about 300 of the 600 plus tall private sector residential buildings following the ACM work. Most private sector tall buildings are owned by companies who employ managing agents who would carry out the Fire Risk Assessments and communicate with residents.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Communications Team to liaise with the Chair of Tower Hamlets Housing Forum to set up a working group with the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum Asset Management	Andy Bate / Sandra Fawcett	October 2018

Sub-group and the Council's communications team to develop key messages		
<p>The working group to approach Chairs of Tenant and Resident Associations to better understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residents' knowledge of the issues set out in the recommendation • potential challenges or reasons for non-compliance to determine how best to address these in key messages • to provide feedback/ experience from the Fire Safety specific meetings and training held with the THH TRA Chairs 	Tower Hamlets Housing Forum / Tower Hamlets Homes	January 2019
The Working Group approach private providers through the Landlord Forum and the Housing Forum to share experiences and practices	Alison Thomas / Tower Hamlets Housing Forum / Tower Hamlets Homes	March 2019
Based on its findings on residents' issues, the working group develops key messages in consultation with the London Fire Brigade	Tower Hamlets Housing Forum / Tower Hamlets Homes	March 2019
<p>The Working Group to develop and implement a communications plan around how best to publicise the key messages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • across a variety of communication channels • in different languages spoken in the borough • so visitors to buildings are aware of evacuation routes if applicable • to engage older residents and those with a disability 	Tower Hamlets Housing Forum / Tower Hamlets Homes / Andy Bate	March 2019

Recommendation 6:

The Council invites Registered and Private Providers to the Tower Hamlets Resilience Forum and monitors attendance to ensure housing providers are aware of emergency protocols.

Comments from Service:

Following the Fire Safety Scrutiny Review the Civil Protection Unit have delivered a presentation on emergency planning to the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum, followed by Civil Contingencies training/exercising for Registered Providers who are members of the Forum. A representative from THHF is a regular member of the Tower Hamlets Resilience Forum. The CPU is also available to offer the same services to the Private Sector Landlords Forum and the Private Sector Housing Forum.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Presentation to the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum Executive	Andrea Stone / Ann Corbett	May 2018
Registered Providers to be invited to Civil Contingencies Training/Exercising: Exercise Heron – Nov'17 Exercise Safer City – Mar'18 Exercise Corvus – Apr'18 BRF Workshop – May'18	Andrea Stone / Ann Corbett	May 2018
The CPU to ensure the Council's website is updated with clear protocols and guidance.	Andrea Stone / Ann Corbett	July 2018
The Council invites the Chair of the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum to the Tower Hamlets Borough Resilience Forum (BRF) so the Chair can feed back to other Registered Providers on the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum	Andrea Stone / Ann Corbett	On going
Civil Protection Unit (CPU) to deliver a presentation to the Private Sector Landlords Forum and to the Private Sector Housing Forum on emergency planning work that the unit delivers	Andrea Stone / Ann Corbett	March 2019
The CPU to offer Civil Contingencies Training on emergency Planning procedures to private landlords via the Private Sector Landlords Forum and the Private Sector Housing Forum	Andrea Stone / Ann Corbett	March 2019

Recommendation 7:

The Council develops and maintains an emergency contact database of Private Providers of dwellings in High Rises.

Comments from Service:

Due to limited access to general private providers, the Council will prioritise approaching large private rented sector providers in high rise buildings. Contact details for 300 of the +600 private blocks in the Borough are available, for those with some form of cladding. Cladding status updates is reported to the MHCLG monthly, however as at 8th August 18, there are approximately 8 buildings where contact details are available although cladding status is yet to be confirmed. Once confirmed this will be reported to MHCLG.

Emergency contact details should be visible and available on housing blocks; however can also range from managing agents (some off shore), lettings agents and various landlords. Building Owners are responsible for maintaining emergency contact details and to provide these details to their residents. The London Fire Brigade should pick up on emergency contact details as part of the Fire Risk Assessments. The Council already holds a comprehensive list of contact details for high rise blocks it's been involved with (300), but they are not emergency details – it is not the Councils responsibility to hold emergency contact details.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
N/A – See comments above.		

Recommendation 8:

The Council improves engagement with Private Providers by developing a forum to share best practice.

Comments from Service:

Due to limited access to general private providers, the Council will prioritise approaching large private rented sector providers in high rise buildings. Best practice will be shared via existing forums.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Share best practice of Fire Safety through the Private Sector Landlords Forum and the Private Sector Housing Forum.	Marc Lancaster	March 2019

Recommendation 9:

The Council encourages Tower Hamlets Homes, Registered Providers and Private Providers in the borough to develop personalized emergency evacuation plans with residents who need assistance to evacuate and priorities any remedial works or adaptations that are required to facilitate safe evacuation

Comments from Service:

The responsibility of developing personalised evacuation plans rests with the landlord.

Comments from THH:

- a) Plans only developed for identified evacuation blocks. LFB advice on 'Stay Put' and 'know your escape plan' widely published by THH along with the LFB Fire Safety Visit offer which covers evacuation plans. LFB orchestrate evacuations

<p>during incidents. THH share vulnerability and mobility data with LFB. Signage is displayed in blocks for escape routes and signage improvements plans in place where identified in FRAs)</p> <p>b) Continued publicity and discussion by Neighbourhoods Fire Safety Team who are visiting all residents (6-9 storey blocks 2018/19 with 10+ storey blocks already visited)</p>		
Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
<p>Housing and Regeneration to discuss at the Tower Hamlets Housing Forum:</p> <p>a) THH and Registered Providers' existing services for developing personalised evacuation plans</p> <p>b) Current uptake</p> <p>c) How to improve outreach</p>	<p>Mark Baigent/Alison Thomas/Sandra Fawcett / Susmita Sen</p>	<p>March 2019</p>
<p>Presentation by the London Fire Brigade at the Private Sector Landlords Forum and the Private Sector Housing forum to raise awareness of fire safety and the need for evacuation plans including for those needing assistance.</p>	<p>Dave Tolley / Marc Lancaster / London Fire Brigade</p>	<p>March 2019</p>
<p>Promote services available in the borough under communication initiatives referred to in Recommendation 5.</p>	<p>Andy Bate</p>	<p>March 2019</p>

<p>Recommendation 10:</p> <p>Within 6 months of the publication of the Government's response to the findings of the Independent Review of Building Regulations, the Director of Place submits a report to the Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • detailing the legal, financial and resource implications on service areas • advising how the Council proposes to implement the Review's recommendations • assessing the impact on residents and the provision of affordable housing • Outlining how the Council will work with Registered Providers and private sector housing providers to engage residents in the implementation of the proposals. 		
<p>Comments from Service:</p>		
Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
<p>Produce a draft report on Independent Review of Building Regulations for Place</p>	<p>John McGeary</p>	<p>October 2018</p>

DLT support		
Submit Report to Housing Scrutiny Sub-Committee, to include resource implications, future actions and monitoring approaches	John McGeary/Mark Baigent	November 2018
Council services to work with THHF / Chairs of Sub Groups to support implementation of recommendations	Alison Thomas / John McGeary / Dave Tolley / Sandra Fawcett	December 2018
Deliver a presentation to the MHCLG on Tower Hamlets as a best practice model for the identification and remediation of ACM cladding on high rise blocks.	Mark Baigent / Alison Thomas	September 2018
Work with MHCLG to help set up a multi-disciplinary task force to enforce the removal of ACM cladding, providing advice	Mark Baigent / Alison Thomas	March 2019

Recommendation 11:

The Planning and Building Control Teams develop clear guidance for developers on the distinct fire safety responsibilities in tall buildings throughout the building process, taking account of:

- requirements under the New London Plan
- international best practice; and
- the findings of and Government response to the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety

Comments from Service:

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
To produce draft guidance including best practice for Developers on Fire safety and Tall Buildings	John McGeary and Paul Buckenham	March 2019
To define and confirm a clear planning and building control application process for Fire safety for Tall buildings - publishing this information onto the Councils website.	Paul Buckenham and Umbreen Qureshi	March 2019

Recommendation 12:

The Council adopts a proactive approach to encourage residents to enter the Building Control and Planning professions and works with the Local Authority Building Control (LABC), other boroughs and key partners, to develop a joint strategy to attract and retain a skilled Building Control and Planning workforce. The Council should consider:

- Better use of shared resources
- Apprenticeship schemes to support local residents and economic development
- Incentives to attract young people into university courses.

Comments from Service:

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Complete and launch the Graduate Planner programme	David Williams	October 2018
Develop an action plan with relevant partners for promoting Planning & Building Control as a career (to young people, schools, apprenticeships)	Vicky Clark / David Williams / Diane Lomas / Christine McInnes	March 2019
Building Control and Planning to consider market supplement approaches to address recruitment and retention issues at a more experienced level	John McGeary / Paul Buckenham	March 2019
Careers education programme pilot to be developed in the Autumn to identify current hard to fill vacancies in the Council, converting these to apprenticeships - Planners to attend and speak at the event.	Vicky Clark / John McGeary / Paul Buckenham	December 2018

Recommendation 13:

The Council continues to advocate for Government funding to fit automatic fire suppression systems in local authority housing in the borough

Comments from Service:

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Housing and Regeneration discusses with the Cabinet Member for Housing, the Mayor, Tower Hamlets Homes and Registered Providers to agree an approach to advocating for funding.	Mark Baigent	October 2018

Recommendation 14:

The Council considers fitting automatic fire suppression systems in High Rises in the borough, prioritizing Vulnerable Residents (including residents with hoarding issues or who require assistance in evacuating) and high risk buildings by carrying out a

feasibility study by March on:

- the anticipated cost of work; and
- the impact of the works on other housing services provided by the Council

Comments from Service:

The Council can only consider the implementation of this recommendation in relation to its own housing stock, managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.

Actions	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Housing and Regeneration, in consultation with Tower Hamlets Homes and Registered Providers, conduct a review on: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The number of High Rise flats in the borough, according to tenure, known Vulnerable Residents and high risk flats 2. Lease terms in mixed tenure to clarify whether the Council can gain access for the works to be carried out 3. Whether the Council can recharge the costs of works to leaseholders 	Mark Baigent / Dave Tolley / Susmita Sen / Sandra / Sandra Fawcett	December 2018
THH stock - Finance prepares a feasibility report with different models of costings for works on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its housing stock • the number of flats with known Vulnerable Residents 	Mark Baigent / Paul Leeson	January 2019
Housing and Regeneration presents the feasibility report to MAB, suggesting a preferred option.	Mark Baigent	March 2019