

# Polydamas Close- Overview of Landlord's Response

London Borough of Tower Hamlets  
Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Sub Committee

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# Contents

- Overview of issues at Polydamas Close (Milo House and Diagoras House)
- Timeline of what happened and planned rectification works
- Customer engagement
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Update on progress of works
- Lessons Learnt



# Overview of issues at Polydamas Close Milo House and Diagoras House

- As part of a routine building inspection, a leak was discovered on the gas supply pipe between the gas meter and five homes in Diagoras House.
- This specialist supply pipe (“Tracpipe”) is weaved throughout the construction of the building.
- Confirmed that there had been incorrect installation of the Tracpipe at the point of construction.
- Immediate measures were put in place to ensure safety of residents.



# Overview of issues at Polydamas Close Milo House and Diagoras House

- Once work started and upon further investigation, further unforeseen interlinked issues became apparent.
- Plan agreed for safe repair of the system.
- Plan agreed to support residents back into homes from temporary accommodation and throughout works.



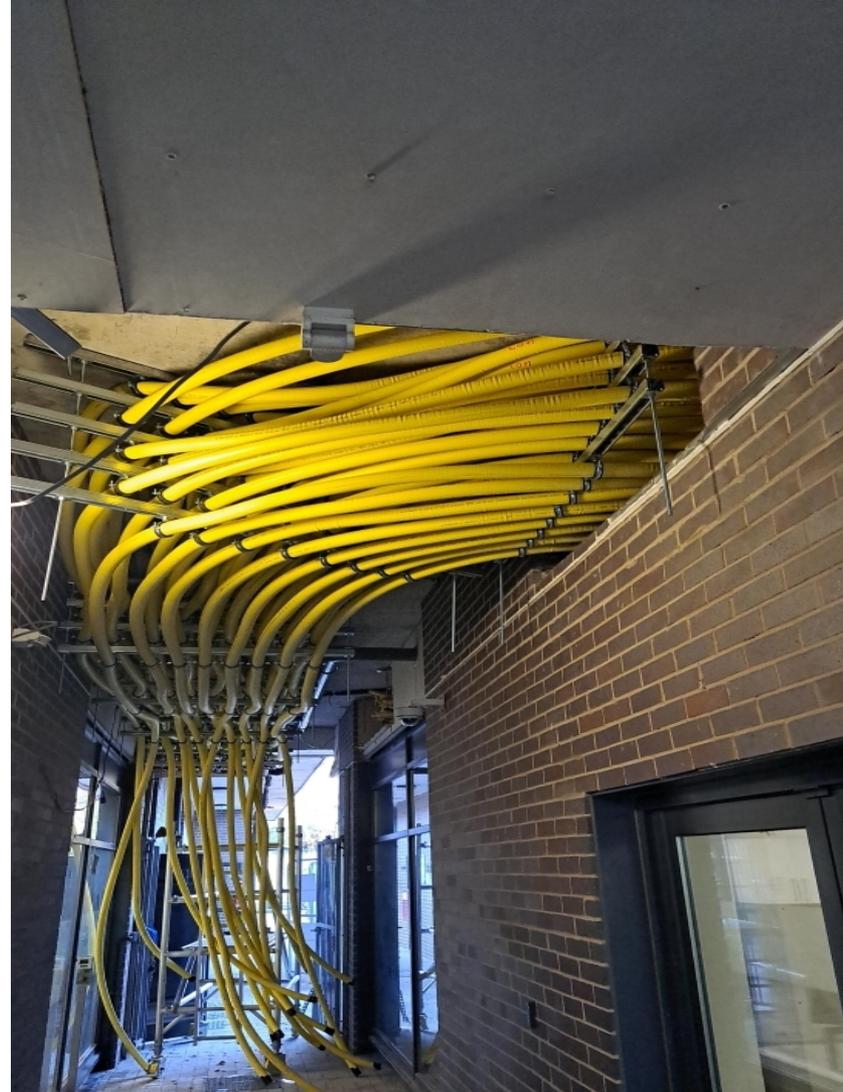
# Timeline of what happened and planned rectification works

- **14/09/22** Gas leak in communal parts detected during an inspection by Swan Fire Risk Assessment team
- Supply pipework isolated while a repair solution was investigated shutting off supply to five flats
- **22/09/22** Inspection of the rest of the supply pipe (Tracpipe) was carried out and a number of incorrect installations were found, indicating that the issue was systemic throughout the building.
- Swan/Axis jointly inspected with Cadent who agreed. Cadent switched off the gas to both buildings and capped all meters.
- Residents offered alternative accommodation whilst we identified an interim solution for hot water, cooking and heating. This was complicated by a shortage of hotels due to the London Marathon taking place that weekend.



# Timeline of what happened and planned rectification works

- **26/09/22** Following initial engagement with the construction company about the defect a joint site meeting was held between a director from the developer, Swan, Axis, Swan's Gas Audit team and a Senior team member from Tracpipe, to allow the developer to see the scale of the issue and give them an opportunity to put it right, at their cost.
- Once it became clear that there would be ongoing negotiations with the developer and this may mean that work would not be started in what we considered to be an acceptable timescale for residents, Swan instructed strategic repair partner Axis (who had a team on standby) to start the enabling works ready to carry out the work themselves if needed.



## Timeline of what happened and planned rectification works

- To enable reoccupation of the building and try to minimise disruption to families, a plan to install 61 electric showers and supply oil filled electric radiators to households was put in place.
- A survey of the electricity supply entering the building was undertaken to ensure that it could cope with the additional demand from the electric showers, heaters and cookers.
- **20/10/22** Axis started enabling works to deconstruct the internals of the building, exposing all the Tracpipe weaved throughout the building.
- Building Safety team in regular attendance to ensure fire safety compartmentation was put back correctly and that the building was safe to occupy.



# Timeline of what happened and planned rectification works

- Swan agreed that should the developer have not agreed to start works by the end of the enabling works, Axis would be instructed to continue with the re-installation of the Tracpipe enabling Cadent to reconnect the gas supply to the building.
- Replacement of flues from the gas boilers, due to be extended as part of the replacement cladding work, was brought forward to minimise future disruption to residents.
- A customer engagement plan was put in place to ensure regular communication with residents.
- **30/09/22** the developer's technical team visited the site to ascertain the size of the problem.
- **30/09/22** Swan's Independent Gas Auditor's report was received.



# Customer engagement

- Onsite presence until late evening when the gas was switched off
- Temporary accommodation (hotel accommodation or £30 per night if able to stay with family/ friends offered)
- Staff presence onsite over the weekend to offer in person support
- Meetings held both in person and on Microsoft Teams chaired by the Director of Property Services (both in the working day and evenings to suit residents)
- Alternative cooking solutions offered (£100 to purchase an air fryer or similar)
- Electric heaters (2 oil filled radiators) and electric shower offered with further heaters provided on request
- Financial support - £120 towards electric costs
- Goodwill gesture of £250
- Welfare Benefit support offered

## Customer pledges:

- Face to face surgeries on site twice a week until the gas issue is resolved
- A written weekly update every Friday to include answers to any questions raised and updates (*copies provided to Council*)
- Provide information on progress of work for gas remediation and advise if there are any changes
- A dedicated Resident Liaison Officer to organise repair appointments
- Flexibility of appointments with advance notice
- If Axis failed to attend an appointment within 1 hour, payment of an enhanced missed appointment fee of £100
- All staff and contractors to treat residents with respect, our Regional Neighbourhood Manager to attend drop in sessions for feedback on our teams

# Stakeholder Engagement

- Officers briefed as situation developed
- Regular updates provided to LBTH officers throughout
- Updates provided to Members to ensure they had information to update their constituents
- Timely responses to members' enquiries throughout



# Update on progress of works

- **30/09/22** Shower installation started
- **10/10/22** Shower installation complete and decanted residents moved back in
- **24/10/22** Axis instructed to start enabling works
- **26/10/22** New Tracpipe ordered and mobilisation/ enabling works started
- **16/11/22** Installation of new Tracpipe started
- **13/12/22** Tracpipe installation work completed
- **13/12/22** Cadent uncapped meters and reconnected gas supply to the building
- **21/12/22** New flues and new boiler installs started
- **24/12/22** Almost all cookers reconnected to the mains gas
- **19/01/23** 61 New boiler installs complete
- **30/01/23** Making good works started
- Making good works due to be completed by **24/03/23**
- Audit by independent surveyors and quality check on work in residents homes scheduled for **30/03/23**



# Lessons Learnt

- Previously unencountered complex issue which has turned out to be larger than first anticipated.
- We have identified that some things could have been done better in hindsight.
- Continuous 360° learning has been undertaken during the project to try to improve as work moved along.
- Customers needed a variety of support communicating in person, in writing and on individual basis.
- Lessons we have learned will be used to help improve how we deliver any similar projects in the future.



**Questions?**