

**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

<b>Recommendation 1: Ensure Fire Statements submitted to the council by developers/builders as part of the Planning process are robust and address all known fire safety issues.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
This is an ongoing 'business as usual' activity.	Planning & Building Control	Ongoing as business as usual	Both the 2021 London Plan and the Gateway One process require fire statements to be submitted as part of certain applications. In addition, the HSE (Health and Safety Executive) has become a statutory consultee for applications including relevant buildings submitted since August 2021. The aim of this is to ensure that fire safety is being considered as early as possible in the process. Assessment of detailed fire safety plans is carried out at Building control stage.
<b>Recommendation 2: Investigate the promotion of "Commonhold" with our PRP partners, builders, and developers.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
Using THHF's Development sub-group, the implications of 'commonhold' and how it affects affordability can be highlighted and reviewed by this forum with RPs encouraged to ensure that they publicise the implications and advise and promote the reforms to their residents.	THHF/Partnership Officer	Ongoing as BAU	THHF's Development Sub-group have agreed to discuss this topic as an Agenda item at their meeting in February 2024.

**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

<b>Recommendation 3: Explore regular quarterly meetings between the Mayor/officers and leaseholders.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
Mayor’s Office to consider if future ‘Ask the Mayor’ sessions can include a session or sessions on Fire and Building Safety within the timetable for the forthcoming municipal year.	Mayor’s Office/ Director of Housing & Regeneration	Complete	The ‘Ask the Mayor’ sessions are no longer being used as a vehicle for engagement with residents. The Mayor has fortnightly surgeries to hear directly from residents.  Furthermore, residents of private high rise residential building can talk direct to officers in the Fire Safety Team at the council - Email: <a href="mailto:fire-safety@towerhamlets.gov.uk">fire-safety@towerhamlets.gov.uk</a> and check our webpage <a href="https://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/safety-at-home">Fire safety at home (towerhamlets.gov.uk)</a> for further information.
<b>Recommendation 4: Further publicise the council’s building safety pledge to residents, building owners and PRPs</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
This is an ongoing communications activity which involves:  1. horizon-scanning; and 2. ensuring the council’s website and communications are updated in accordance with the latest information and government policy/legislation.	Senior Communications Officer	Ongoing as business as usual activity	This is ongoing as business as usual

**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

**Recommendation 5: Set up a fire safety portal that contains clear information for homeowners, tenants, leaseholders and clarifies the role of Housing Associations, builders, and developers**

**Already Completed with web-site revamp.**

**Recommendation 6: Ensure the council’s revamped website explains how the BSF application process works to leaseholders and builders/developers submitting bids.**

**This remains a ‘business as usual’ activity. The relevant content on the council’s website will be updated as and when any new information or material is provided by the government.**

**Recommendation 7: Explore with the LFB and other London boroughs using CIL money to purchase firefighting equipment**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
Further conversations needed with LFB to understand potential for any CIL compliant uses.	Planning & Building Control	November 2023	Discussions were had with the LFB about the potential use of CIL for fire equipment last year. There were operational and practical issues associated with the proposal to fund a 64m appliance for the borough that meant it was not taken forward at that time. Other equipment asks were explored but were found not to be consistent with the use of CIL.

**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

<b>Recommendation 8: Continue to lobby the government with our PRP partners for increased funding for independent advisory services at every opportunity.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
<p>The council webpages on fire safety contain links to independent advisory and support services for leaseholders. This remains an ongoing communications activity with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. continued horizon scanning to identify government consultations; and</li> <li>2. to use opportunities to work/liaise with the DLUHC.</li> </ol>	<p>Senior Communications Officer &amp; Fire Safety Team</p>	<p>Ongoing as part of business as usual activity</p>	<p>This is ongoing as business as usual.</p>
<b>Recommendation 9: Raise gathering of economic data/cost implications of building safety issues at the London Housing Directors Fire Safety Group meeting to enlist the support and collaboration of other councils and PRPs.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
<p><b>Continue to raise this as an issue at every possibly opportunity at London Housing Directors Fire Safety Group.</b></p>	<p>Director of Housing &amp; Regeneration</p>	<p>Ongoing at every possible opportunity</p>	<p>This is an ongoing activity as we continue to raise these costs with the London Housing Directors Fire Safety Group at every opportunity.</p>

**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

<b>Recommendation 10: Review the findings of the final LFB report into the fire at NPW with our PRP partners, building owners and developers and consider commissioning our own independent research.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
The learning and any recommendations arising from the LFB’s final report will be discussed as part of ongoing and continued discussions with THHF and with building owners and developers to ensure that they become embedded.	Fire Safety Team/THHF Partnership Officers	Ongoing and part of business as usual activities.	<p>The THHF Asset Management subgroup were due to receive an update from Richard Tapp, (Borough Commander for LFB), during their meeting on 12/06/2023. However, the LFB were unable to attend this meeting.</p> <p>The subgroup is very much working with the LFB on fire safety aspects such as PEEPS (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans PIB’s (Premises Information Boxes) and ensuring RPs are doing more to update and monitor Building Safety Plans. This also includes advice around ‘staying put’ and evacuation policies for high rise buildings.</p> <p>RPs who have unfortunately bought stock from developers that now contain numerous defects are exploring and trying to identify any latent defects that could be attributed to poor quality works at handover and where it manages the buildings will try to add this to any claims. Where RP’s do not manage the buildings, they are looking at the Defective Premises Act (1972) as a route to potentially recover the costs, the timescales in the Act mean that RPs potentially have 30 years to seek recovery of costs.</p>

**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

<b>Recommendation 11: Work with our PRP partners and building owners and developers to implement the Building Safety database.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
As stated, the data we collect is for a government database and cannot be shared. Improvements are being made internally to how this data is being held with a new database management system underway which is currently being procured.	Fire Safety Team	Ongoing part of business as usual activities	The database has now been procured from Civica UK and is currently being configured to meet the business requirement, with the expectation that the database will go live at the end of October 2023.
<b>Recommendation 12: Explore the feasibility of contributing to the Building Safety Map with our PRP partners and building owners.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
<p>The LA cannot put information out into the public domain in the form of a map or any other format. Affected residents should already know from their building’s owner if their building is affected or has fire safety issues.</p> <p>This information is exempt from disclosure under Section 38(1) of the Freedom of Information Act (FoIA) (2000). Disclosure of this information may be likely to endanger the physical or mental health of any individual - (this could be the applicant, the supplier of the information or anyone else). Releasing this information could cause unnecessary fear or panic and/or risk health and safety of those living in tower blocks.</p> <p>In addition, this information on the safety of buildings has been provided to the council in confidence. Section 41 of the FoIA (2000) sets out an exemption from the right to know where the information requested was provided to the public authority in confidence by another person, company, local authority or any other 'legal entity'.</p>	Building Safety Owners/THHF	No further Action concerning the development of a Building Safety Map	<p>The THHF Asset Management subgroup has asked the LFB’s Borough Commander to attend on a regular basis to provide updates and guidance on fire safety (case studies and lessons learned). Where possible the group have also set aside additional meetings if required to discuss fire safety as a sole topic for group members.</p> <p>Throughout meetings dating back to 2021-22, the subgroup has explored the implications of recent legislation encompassing what this means for RP’s, the difficulties RP’s face to meet new rules and regulations resulting from the legislation.</p> <p>During the meeting held in Nov 2022, Roythornes Solicitors attended and presented on the Building Safety and Fire Safety Acts - discussing aspects which RP’s need to ensure they abide by, such as: nominated persons, PIB (Premises Information Boxes for LFB) and any lifts in high rise blocks out of service for over 24hrs to be reported to the regulator to name a few. The group envisaged many notifications will be made to the LFB and RSH (Regulator of Social Housing) as lift parts can often take 8-12 weeks to arrive in worst case scenarios. The</p>

## HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023

<p>RPs meet within the Asset Management Sub-group to discuss estates and management of the physical estate. Building Safety is becoming an increasing topic of discussion of this group and building owners prepare for the implementation of the Building Safety Act.</p>			<p>Borough Commander, Richard Tapp, instructed all RPs to take stock of changes and submit follow up questions if they required further clarity. To ensure information boxes are up to date and easily accessible to the LFB.</p> <p>A bespoke meeting was scheduled for Jan 5<sup>th</sup> 2023, focussing on both the Building and Fire Safety Acts and it was agreed that an item of Building Safety would become a standing item on the Agenda for every Asset Management Sub-group meeting, with updates from the LFB.</p> <p>The LBF are encouraging RPs through the relevant THHF subgroups to use the LFB's High Rise Building Data Portal. Regulations under article 24 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (Fire Safety Order) include a requirement for responsible persons of high-rise blocks of flats to provide information to the Fire and Rescue Services to assist them to plan and provide an effective operational response.</p> <p>Responsible persons (in the RPs) are only required to provide up-to-date electronic building floor plans and information for all high-rise residential buildings that are at least 18 metres or at least seven floors.</p>
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**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

<b>Recommendation 13: Continue to meet with LFB and PRP partners to develop a joint Fire Safety Engagement Plan.</b>			
<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Update October 2023</b>
<p>The LFB have a Fire Safety Engagement Plan in place. Since the NPW fire, the level of engagement by the LFB with residents has increased rapidly, achieving good positive engagement. The council, THHF partners and the LFB have been working together since June 2021 to develop a joined-up approach to ensure Fire Safety messages are heard and seen by all residents.</p> <p>Meetings with the LFB, THHF Executive and/or Housing Management sub-group take place periodically where there are specific issues or updates that need to be discussed. One of the actions arising from the meetings around New Providence Wharf, was that the THHF Housing Management sub-group take forward Recommendation 14.</p> <p>A representative from the LFB used to regularly attend the THHF Public Realm sub- group meetings to update staff on fire hotspots, discuss fire incidents on a quarterly basis and provide advice. The sub-groups are currently under review and this work will be slotted into the work-path of one of the revised sub-groups.</p>	<p>THHF, Partnership Officers and Senior Communications Officer</p>	<p>Ongoing as part of business as usual activities</p>	<p>The Asset Subgroup has requested Richard Tapp (Borough Commander) attend every subgroup meeting to discuss case studies and follow up on any incidents and lessons learned.</p> <p>The LFB continues to engage with THHF and the sub groups. Their Borough Commander and Resident Engagement Manager attended THHF Executive in March 2023 and introduced the group to their new LBTH Risk Management Plan centred around 6 key themes:</p> <p><b>Prevention, Protection, Response, Preparedness, Recovery and Engagement.</b> :<a href="https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/tower-hamlets-borough-risk-management-plan">Tower Hamlets Borough Risk Management Plan   London Fire Brigade (london-fire.gov.uk)</a>.</p> <p>The LFB encourages THHF partners to use the Borough Risk Management Plan as the basis of a joint Fire Safety Engagement Plan moving forward.</p> <p>The LFB reported on their newly launched Community Forum which is a pan London approach to engaging residents and they are looking for resident reps from Tower Hamlets to join the forum and help shape future service delivery.</p>

HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023

Recommendation 14: Work with PRP partners and LFB to develop a fire safety video and other engagement/communication material to promote fire safety.			
Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline	Update October 2023
<p>This activity is ongoing and links in with the continued communications activity of the council and the horizon scanning which is shared with RP partners. The THHF Housing Management sub-group are working together to produce communications material with a video which will place residents as the primary promoters of the need for everyone to be involved in keeping themselves and others safe from fires. We want to involve residents from minority and disadvantaged groups with lived experience in the video.</p>	<p>Senior Communications Officer/Partnership Officers and THHF</p>	<p>Engagement and communication activities are still ongoing although the development of a fire safety video was put on hold as the LFB were unable to commit the resources into this.</p>	<p>The LFB did not proceed with the fire safety video, over the course of the past year although a considerable amount of time was spent scoping the video: what should be included, calling on residents to participate and how the video should be progressed. The LFB said they had to withdraw from it due to other pressing commitments and that the residents who agreed to participate were unsuitable because they did not have the lived experience of a fire that the LFB were looking for.</p> <p>Things have moved on considerably and the recent report on the LFB has brought widespread changes with immediate effect. The LFB have devised a new Communication &amp; Engagement Strategy and held several sessions in the borough to find out from residents what they want from the LFB - this was fed into the strategy and Management Plan. See links below.</p> <p><a href="https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/community-engagement-your-london-fire-brigade/">https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/about-us/what-we-do/community-engagement-your-london-fire-brigade/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/7631/lfc-23-041communicationsandengagementstrategy202326-002.pdf">https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/media/7631/lfc-23-041communicationsandengagementstrategy202326-002.pdf</a></p> <p>The LFB has now indicated, as of October 2023, that there may be some capacity to work with the RPs to revisit the development of a Fire Safety Video and communication material which will be explored at future meetings with the relevant THHF Sub-groups.</p>

**HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023**

**Recommendation 15: Establish a Tower Hamlets Fire Safety Forum with LFB and THHF partners to examine evacuation procedures and to promote appropriate fire alarms and signage.**

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline	Update October 2023
<p><i>This is an ongoing activity that is discussed within existing meeting arrangements at THHF, and it is more appropriate that these structures are used rather than to create a separate structure. Each building will have its own unique evacuation procedure – either ‘stay put’ or evacuate in the event of a fire safety incident, this will depend on the physical/design features of the building. The owners of each building will work with the LFB to ensure that the correct advice is given to residents in the event of a fire incident. Similarly, the LFB will continue to advise owners on the correct fire alarm systems and signage required for an individual building.</i></p> <p>This is an ongoing business as usual activity which rather than to create and hold a separate forum, can be facilitated through the THHF sub-group meetings, and can address these issues and include residents at these meetings as and when their engagement and input are required. THHF sub-groups provide an opportunity for discussion and to share good practice.</p>	<p>Senior Communications Officer/Partnership Officers and THHF</p>	<p>Ongoing as part of business activities of the THHF subgroups</p>	<p>A representative from the LFB attended the THHF Neighbour subgroup group to talk about PEEPS, and what’s need to ensure an effective one is set up. The representative has encouraged RPs to do these given the number of high-rise flats in the borough and the LFB indicated their willingness to work with individual RPs to set these up where needed even though this is not a legal requirement.</p>

## HRSSC Fire Safety Action Plan – Update 2023

<b>Recommendation 16: Establish a Resident and Landlord Fire Safety Forum to ensure effective resident involvement and collaboration in all relevant fire safety issues.</b>			
Recent guidance published by the Mayor of London reiterates that building owners should talking to and actively engaging with residents. As a council we are endorsing the Mayor of London guidance and promoting this to all residents as part of our ongoing Comms Work	Senior Communications Officer	Ongoing	The LFB has created a London-wide panel across all boroughs for residents to feed into the LFB’s strategy and approach to fire safety. The Borough Commander from the LFB and their Community Engagement Manager attended the THHF Executive meeting (22 March 23) to update on their new engagement strategy, asking for their support and seeking nominations from interested tenants of RPs who might want to join this panel.