



To: The Chairman of Housing, Finance and Customer Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

From: Cabinet Member for Housing Services

Date: 14th January 2019

Subject: Response to recommendations of the CityWest Homes and Sprinklers Task Group

Recommendation 1

Issue a front door regulation.

Cabinet Member comments:

An addendum paper to support the primary briefing paper has now been drafted, which outlines the authority's options in regards to a "lessee offer" to support leaseholders in remediating their doors. Work has been completed on drafting appropriate wording for the proposed regulation and counsel will be instructed early in the new year to progress this matter.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 2

Ensure a system is developed to record the inspection of all front entrance doors in tall buildings

Cabinet Member comments:

Inspections have already been carried out of all tall building (over 6 floors) with fire doors by an independent fire door inspection company. Records of inspections are held in the CWH database. Future inspections will also be stored in the same location. A strategic project has been initiated to scope a future door inspection and maintenance programme.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 3

Build into major works on blocks that inspections are done of all front entrance fire doors (both tenants and leaseholders)

Cabinet Member comments:



Where available fire inspection reports are included within the scope of works (client brief) for the major works projects. In every circumstance, contractors carry out validation surveys of the works including the requirements for fire doors for both tenants and leaseholders.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 4

Data on fire safety matters should be presented to the relevant cabinet member and included in reports to Audit and Performance committee at least on a quarterly basis

Cabinet Member comments:

Fire safety updates are provided to all councillors on a monthly basis and to the cabinet member quarterly. This will be extended to include quarterly reporting to Audit and Performance committee

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 5

Provide a programme of how many CityWest Homes or Westminster City Council personnel can be trained as fire inspectors and the programme to include a timeline for all fire doors to be inspected

Cabinet Member comments:

Staff engaged in the inspection and specification of fire doors will be trained as fire door inspectors. To date all CWH quality managers have been trained who are responsible for managing contractor works on-site. The programme of training a further c20 staff is expected to be completed by March 2019. Fire door inspections have been completed to all blocks over 6 stores where fire doors are required. The programme has identified that more than 10,000 doors need to be replaced or upgraded. A programme of this scale will need to be delivered over three years. The inspection of fire doors in blocks of 5 storeys and below will follow the completion of this programme. It is anticipated that inspections will commence in 2020 and work commence in 2021.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 6

Lobby for appropriate bodies to dedicate resources to support local authority building owners to train the staff and carry out inspections in accordance with London Fire Brigade's expectations.

Cabinet Member comments:



We have engaged with a number of sector bodies to support us in delivering a range of building safety events, as part of our (internal) training and engagement strategy.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 7

Install sprinklers in all properties regardless of tenure, seeking to recover costs from post-1987 lessees only.

Cabinet Member comments:

Glastonbury House has been approved as the first sprinkler installation. Glarus Court, an extra care scheme, will also be recommended for approval early in 2019. Work is expected to complete by the end of 2019 for both projects. It is recommended that any lessons learnt from these installations are incorporated into the wider roll-out across WCC stock. It is proposed to prioritise the remaining sheltered housing (community housing schemes) ahead of the tall buildings. The full costs of installation to the remaining sheltered and tall buildings is £28m. This is made up of £6m to complete the sheltered housing schemes and £20m for tall buildings. Funding will need to be considered as part of the HRA business plan from the 2020/2021 financial year. The £2m for Glastonbury House and Glarus Court sprinklers is already included in the business plan for 2019/2020.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 8

Work to establish a legal agreement for the right of access in to lessee properties and for charging post-1987 lessees only.

Cabinet Member comments:

Further legal advice is required on the type of agreement that can be put in place that is legally binding. This may include seeking to vary lessees and seeking a pre-emptive judgement at the First Tier Tribunal.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 9

Carry out section 20 consultation for post-1987 lessees and then undertake the installation of the system to a block, deferring demanding the service charge until completion.

Cabinet Member comments:

The absolute intention is to fully engage leaseholders and encourage full participation and cooperation throughout the process. It is therefore recommended that this approach is piloted in a general needs tall building to understand issues and lessons before it is rolled out across our stock.



Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 10

Installation of 'boxed in' plastic pipework with concealed sprinkler heads.

Cabinet Member comments:

Boxed in pipework with concealed sprinkler heads is the established design standard for all future sprinkler systems.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 11

Work with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and key industry bodies to develop a comprehensive programme of ongoing dialogue and communication with all leaseholders to obtain access to their properties and to document all such individual engagements.

Cabinet Member comments:

This approach is in place and forms part of the lessee improvement plan.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 12

Prioritise sheltered housing over tall buildings and establish budget for doing so within the HRA business plan.

Cabinet Member comments:

This is consistent with the approach to date. Glastonbury House is a sheltered housing scheme and it proposed to add Glarus Court, an extra care scheme. The programme will continue to prioritise the remaining sheltered housing schemes before moving on to general needs tall buildings, once lessons have been learned from these installations.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 13

Ensure comprehensive records of fire safety works on each property are kept, including work and inspections undertaken by others such as the fire brigade, as per the recommendations of the Hackitt report.

Cabinet Member comments:

The process of collecting and collating comprehensive records of not only fire safety works but all building related information has been underway for some time. Building information (safety) plans for all high-rise buildings are expected to be in place by the end of 2019.

Recommendation is **AGREED**



Recommendation 14

Communicate advantages of sprinklers to private freeholders of tall buildings and to maintain a record of all such communications.

Cabinet Member comments:

Communications will go out by March 2019 to all known private freeholders of tall buildings and housing associations including advice from the LFB on advantages of sprinkler systems. The in-house expertise within Housing will be drawn on to inform the communications. Other media, such as the website, will be updated to provide advice to private landlords.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 15

Lobby Government (through LGA and London Councils where appropriate) on funding for the retrofitting of sprinklers, especially in cases where the Housing Revenue Account is having to fund such works.

Cabinet Member comments:

This is agreed and will commence. In addition it will be important to understand the full impact of the removal of the HRA borrowing cap and the options available for investment.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 16

Lobby the Government to amend regulations to ensure retrofitting sprinklers is easier for social landlords.

Cabinet Member comments:

We will continue to lobby government for changes to the regulations to make installation of sprinklers across our tall buildings and sheltered housing the priority.

Recommendation is **AGREED**

Recommendation 17

Continue to lobby the Mayor of London so that LFEPA provide specific guidance on the installation of sprinklers to mixed tenure blocks, specifically where leaseholders decide (as is currently their right) whether or not to allow access to their properties for works to be done and to be maintained in the future. Also lobby Government for any changes that can be made to regulations to permit the Council to enter (by appointment) such properties to carry out the works

Cabinet Member comments:

We will continue to lobby the Mayor so that the LFEPA provide guidance on mixed tenure blocks. Lobbying government for changes to the regulations to make access easier to leaseholder properties for works will also continue.



City of Westminster

Recommendation is **AGREED**