

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **HOUSING FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY PANEL** held on **WEDNESDAY, 28TH JANUARY, 2026** at 6.30 pm in Committee Room 1, Town Hall, Judd Street, London WC1H 9JE

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Gulbahar Begum (Co-Chair, in the chair for items 1-8), Jason McIntyre (Co-Chair), Silvia Kirk (Deputy Co-Chair), Cei Barraclough, Razaq Dawodu, Ryan Heng, Brian Levey, Simon Murray, Gavin Haynes, Elizabeth Henderson-Sambell, Michal Jankowski, Maria Jacobs, David O'Keefe, and Councillor Steve Adams, Councillor Sagal Abdi-Wali, Councillor Kemi Atolagbe, Councillor Anna Burrage, and Councillor Lorna Russell

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT**

Catherine Crawford, Francis Dias, Gillian Farrugia, David George, Tezar Miah, Jo Rose, Thomas Watkins, Councillor Pat Callaghan and Councillor Tom Simon

**The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Housing Fire and Building Safety Panel and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.**

## **MINUTES**

### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from David George (who was being substituted by Adam Lawson, Station Commander), and Councillor Pat Callaghan and Francis Dias.

Apologies for lateness were given by Councillors Anna Burrage and Lorna Russell, and Adam Lawson.

### **2. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Webcasting**

The Chair announced that the meeting was being broadcast live to the internet and would be capable of repeated viewing and copies of the recording could be made available to those that requested them. Those participating in the meeting were deemed to be consenting to being filmed.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA**

There were none.

**4. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT**

There were none.

**5. MINUTES**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2025 be approved as a correct record.

**6. ELECTION OF RESIDENT PANEL CO-CHAIR**

The meeting sought nominations for the position of Resident Co-Chair. Gul Begum was the only nomination and the meeting agreed that she be the Resident Panel Co-Chair for a further 12 months.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Gul Begum be appointed Resident Co-Chair for a further 12 months.

**7. ELECTION OF DEPUTY RESIDENT CO-CHAIR**

The meeting sought nominations for the new position of Deputy Resident Co-Chair. Silvia Kirk was the only nomination and the meeting agreed that she be the Deputy Resident Co-Chair for the next 12 months.

**RESOLVED –**

THAT Silvia Kirk be appointed Deputy Resident Co-Chair for the next 12 months.

**8. ANNUAL REPORT - WORK OF THE PANEL & TERMS OF REFERENCE REVIEW**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management

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Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety Engagement & Governance Lead, took the meeting through the report. She highlighted the input that panel members had provided in reviewing the fire and building safety information that's available to residents on the website. This had led to a number of changes being made to the way the information had been presented with the new approach receiving positive feedback from residents who had used the site to access information on this issue.

She also advised that arising from the Grenfell Inquiry recommendations the Government would be issuing further consultations and draft and final regulations in building and fire safety areas. As these could have an impact on the work of the panel that consideration of the terms of reference should be delayed until the position became clearer.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. THAT the activity over the preceding 12 months against the objectives in the Terms of Reference attached as the appendix to the report be noted.
2. THAT the main review of the Terms of Reference be deferred as proposed in paragraph 1.3 of the report.

**ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (MD)**

## **9. STRUCTURAL SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management

Sinéad Burke, Head of Property Asset Management, took the meeting through the report and she along with Gavin Haynes, and Michal Jankowski, gave the following key responses to questions:

- The balconies at Campden House had been subject to detailed and ongoing investigation. While the specifics were limited in what could be shared in the meeting, it was explained that the issues identified had prompted a wider review of balcony risks across the housing stock to determine whether similar risks existed elsewhere on the estate.
- A risk-based assessment had been undertaken across approximately 160 blocks, covering around 3,500 homes. This assessment focused on balcony types considered more vulnerable, including those constructed from timber or glass, as well as blocks with a higher frequency of repairs and those where the Council's cyclical structural inspection programme had previously identified concerns.
- The work was delivered through the internal stock condition survey, which meant that detailed inspections were carried out in tenanted homes only. However, it was noted that the sample size was relatively high, providing confidence that any systemic issues had been identified. Approximately 700

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balconies were surveyed in detail using a structured questionnaire covering structural integrity, drainage and general condition. In addition, a balcony safety leaflet had been issued to residents across all affected homes, providing safety advice and encouraging residents to report any repair concerns. The balcony-related questions would continue to be included in the stock condition survey for all homes where balconies were present.

- The internal stock condition survey was not a structural survey programme. The survey focused on internal elements of the home, including kitchens, bathrooms and Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assessments, reflecting the Council's repairing responsibilities for tenanted properties. These responsibilities did not apply to the internal parts of leasehold homes.
- Balcony surveys had been added to the programme as a pragmatic measure, as surveyors were already accessing homes as part of the internal survey. As a result, detailed balcony inspections were carried out only in tenanted properties.
- The primary way in which the outcomes of the internal stock condition survey were currently reflected was through the Council's decency rate. While the survey was not primarily focused on structural issues, where it identified matters such as hazards, kitchen or bathroom renewal needs, or other HHSRS concerns, the property would be recorded as non-decent. At present, this was the main mechanism through which the results of the survey were published. The findings from the Council's periodic structural survey programme were not currently published through any formal forum. This was an area that could be considered further as part of the redesign of the programme and in connection with the development of building safety case file information.
- In relation to resident access to building safety case files, it was clarified that, at present, residents did not have access to the full safety case files. However, work was underway to develop a simplified summary version of the safety case report. This summary would be made available to residents and would include information on the outcomes of structural surveys. This information would be provided for residents in high-rise buildings where a building safety case had been completed and issued.
- The Council's approach was to maintain buildings in a condition that ensured continued safety and usability for as long as reasonably possible. It was acknowledged that all buildings had a design life and that, over time, some assets would eventually reach the end of their useful life. However, it was emphasised that reaching a nominal design life did not mean a building would automatically become unsafe or unusable. By way of example, Darby Lodge was cited as a building of significant age which had benefitted from extensive and costly maintenance works, extending its lifespan for a further period. The presumption underpinning the Council's asset management approach was the ongoing maintenance of the housing stock to ensure buildings remained safe and in good condition. That decisions about when a building may have reached the end of its life were not currently made through a continuous or formalised assessment process. Instead, such decisions tended to arise

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through observations and ad hoc considerations, often in collaboration with colleagues in Community Investment and Property (CIP). Periodic structural surveys were acknowledged as informing this position, but the default assumption remained that the stock would continue to be maintained rather than replaced.

- The detailed balcony surveys had been completed in October and November 2025. Of the approximately 700 balconies inspected, fewer than ten were identified as requiring serious repairs. This represented a low single-digit number of cases. These issues had been passed to the Council's repairs team and had been, or were in the process of being, addressed.
- The decision to block off balconies depended on the nature and severity of the issue identified during inspection. In many cases, the matters recorded were relatively minor, including decorative defects, drainage issues such as blocked outlets, or other maintenance-related observations, which did not require balconies to be taken out of use. That where a safety-related issue had been identified, the affected balcony had been restricted or blocked off as an appropriate precautionary measure. The number of balconies requiring such action was very small.
- Officers had undertaken analytical work to probe potential "unknown unknowns" within the housing stock. By way of example, the balcony survey instrument had been deliberately broadened beyond balustrade integrity to include a wide range of factors—such as drainage and condition—so that any issue with the potential to indicate wider risk could be detected.
- An Asset Performance Model, developed under the Asset Strategy, had been used to examine a broad set of indicators at property level to inform decisions on retention or potential disposal. This work sought to identify patterns across the stock that might warrant targeted intervention. As part of this proactive approach, officers had also reviewed approximately 100 historic street-property subsidence cases over recent years to determine whether there were geographic clusters or other commonalities within the borough that could indicate elevated risk. This analysis was intended to move beyond purely reactive responses and to anticipate issues that could arise.
- Some risks would remain hard to foresee; the focus therefore remained on maintaining a "live" awareness of emerging themes and continuously testing datasets and survey tools so that potential issues could be surfaced at the earliest opportunity.
- The Council's approach to understanding the likelihood of incidents arising from structural deterioration was embedded within the building safety case assessment process. Structural assessments undertaken for Building Safety Regulator purposes involved detailed, risk-based analysis of buildings, and officers confirmed that the approach continued to evolve as experience of the regulatory process developed.
- It was explained that, when assessing buildings, officers considered the regulations and design standards that were in force at the time the building was constructed, rather than assessing older buildings against current construction codes. However, this was supplemented by intrusive investigations where appropriate, to better understand current conditions and

potential risks. By way of example, officers described how intrusive investigations were used to assess the condition and adequacy of concrete protection to steel elements. While buildings were known to have been constructed in line with the standards applicable at the time, it was not always possible to determine whether materials had been installed correctly or how they had deteriorated over time. Such investigations were therefore necessary to assess risks associated with hazards such as severe or uncontrolled fire and the potential impact on structural stability.

- This methodology formed part of a wider assessment of structural and other hazards undertaken to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act, supporting a proactive and evidence-led approach to building safety risk management.
- Officers would consider the suggestion regarding undertaking an in-depth analysis of a vacant flats to see what's working, what wasn't working, what's surviving its design life and what wasn't, both for safety and for future purposes.

**ACTION BY: Director of Property Management (TC)**

- A number of emerging or “cutting-edge” structural safety issues were being identified through national alerts, including CROSS and SCO notifications, as well as through learning arising from building safety case assessments for taller buildings. These sources acted as registers of issues to be monitored, such as transfer or transverse slab risks, and informed the Council’s understanding of potential emerging hazards.
- A key consideration was how such issues were integrated into wider assessment activity beyond high-rise buildings. This was being considered as part of the ongoing review and development of the structural survey process. By way of example, officers explained that transfer or transverse slabs could exist in a significant number of buildings but were more likely to present higher risk in specific circumstances, such as buildings with large commercial spaces at ground level where structural columns may be absent. A proportionate approach had therefore been adopted. Rather than commissioning immediate structural investigations across all blocks, officers had identified building types where the risk was more likely to arise and had incorporated this issue as a new line item within the standard structural risk assessment used for building safety case files.
- The structural risk assessment operated as a standardised risk register against which all relevant buildings were assessed. Certain risks, such as Large Panel System (LPS) construction, were routinely considered, even where the assessment concluded that the building was not of that type and therefore did not present that risk.
- The register of risks considered through structural surveys and building safety case work was evolving over time, reflecting new information, national guidance and regulatory experience. This developing approach sought to balance proportionality with vigilance, ensuring emerging risks were

systematically considered without diverting resources away from higher-priority hazards.

- The Building Safety Act had been helpful in identifying and managing emerging structural and safety risks. The Building Safety Regulator routinely made enquiries or drew matters to the attention of providers where potential risks were suspected. While the precise source of such concerns was not always shared, this process supported effective information-sharing and helped ensure that emerging issues were considered at an early stage. This regulatory engagement complemented the Council's own assessment processes by highlighting matters that may or may not ultimately present a risk, but which nonetheless warranted further consideration.
- The use of artificial intelligence was not currently sufficiently developed or reliable to support structural safety assessments. While this may be an area for future development, professional judgement, engineering assessment and regulatory oversight remained the primary means of managing structural risk at present.

## **RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

## **10. PERFORMANCE ON COMPLIANCE Q2 2025/26**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management

Sinéad Burke, Head of Property Asset Management, took the meeting through the report and highlighted the following:

- That that lift safety performance had declined during the last quarter. This reflected the six-monthly inspection cycle, which resulted in a number of LOLER inspections falling overdue at the same time. This included a cohort of lifts that had previously been difficult for Zurich to access. Similar access issues had re-emerged six months later. Work was ongoing with Zurich and that a back-up contractor had been engaged to prevent inspections remaining overdue for extended periods.
- That electrical safety had now been confirmed as a Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM). Performance had been tracked as a draft TSM for some time and was currently in the low 90 per cent range. The working assumption was that compliance would require both communal and domestic electrical checks to be completed, although the Regulator of Social Housing methodology had not yet been published and this position may change. Overdue electrical remedial actions had previously been high but were continuing to reduce steadily.
- Overdue fire risk assessment actions continued to reduce. A previous peak in high-risk actions, particularly relating to fire alarm works undertaken last

summer, had since declined. Two overdue high-risk actions remained as at November, largely due to access issues. Faults identified in newly installed fire alarm panels were categorised as Category A and required resolution within ten days, with access often being the main constraint.

- That new Electrical Regulations would come into force from April 2026 requiring all social homes to have a valid Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR). While landlords had previously been responsible for ensuring electrical safety, there had been no explicit legal requirement to evidence this through an EICR. A delivery plan was now in place to complete inspections and associated remedial works in advance of the deadline.
- Water safety performance was reported as broadly in line with targets at Quarter 2, supported by an agreed water safety plan. Ongoing challenges were highlighted in street properties where communal water tanks were located in loft spaces accessed through individual flats, making access consistently difficult and without an easy solution.
- Steady progress was reported in reducing fire risk assessment actions overall. The data reflected continued improvement, with no new significant issues raised.
- There was no material change reported in Quarter 2 in relation to building safety case files.
- Initial findings from the completed internal stock condition survey had identified a relatively low number of Category 1 hazards, which was considered positive. The most common hazard identified was the absence of smoke alarms. Structural issues were also noted as a potential hazard, reinforcing the need to align work under Awaab's Law with structural survey and inspection programmes.

## **RESOLVED –**

THAT the report be noted.

## **11. FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Property Management.

The panel was advised that as the Government had decided not to change the position on the definition of high-rise/higher risk buildings, and that this matter should now be removed from the work programme of the panel (April meeting). To replace this item, it was proposed that the new Decent Homes Standard proposed by the Government be submitted to the panel for consideration.

The panel asked that further reports be submitted to the June cycle of meetings regarding the key issues and themes arising from the stock conditions survey, along with a report on fire safety training for residents. The panel noted that the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the panel would be reviewed following the outcome arising from the Grenfell phase 2 Inquiry recommendations, subject to further publication by the

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Government, amendments to the ToR would be put to the June 2026 meeting of the panel for consideration.

Officers advised that in relation to the lift protocol, an information page was now live on the Camden website, and a leaflet on what to do if a lift brock down was being prepared for printing and would be delivered to all blocks with lifts.

Officers agreed to give consideration as to how serious case incident review reports and the lessons learnt could be looked at by the panel.

**ACTION BY: Director of Property Management**

**New items in bold and dates of meetings**

**14<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

- Compliance performance report (Standing item)
- LFB Annual Report.
- **New Decent Homes Standard**

**22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026**

- Compliance performance report (Standing item)
- Commercial Properties Compartmentation Programme Update
- Grenfell phase 2 inquiry recommendations (Subject to publication of government programme)
- **Review of the Terms of reference**
- **Stock Conditions Survey**
- **Fire safety training for residents update**

**20<sup>th</sup> October 2026**

- Compliance performance report (Standing item)
- Chalcots Stage 2 Independent Review finding report

**To be Programmed**

**Serious case incident review reports**

**RESOLVED –**

THAT the report, dates of meetings for 2026/27 and action tracker updates be noted.

**12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were none.

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The meeting ended at 7.35 pm.

**CHAIR**

**Contact Officer: Gianni Franchi**

**Telephone No: 020 7974 1914**

**E-Mail: [gianni.franchi@camden.gov.uk](mailto:gianni.franchi@camden.gov.uk)**

**MINUTES END**