

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
SUBJECT: Commercial Property Compartmentation Programme	
REPORT OF: Director of Property Management	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Housing Fire and Building Safety Panel	DATE: 22 June 2026
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT</p> <p>The report outlines Camden Council's approach to addressing fire compartmentation risks in its commercial property portfolio, which includes 990 properties, many with residential accommodation above or adjacent under the Building Safety Act. As part of its safety programme, the Council initiated intrusive fire compartmentation surveys in 2023 to assess whether the separation between commercial and residential areas meets required fire resistance standards. Of 468 properties targeted, 440 surveys have been completed, revealing that 147 properties will need works such as upgrading ceilings, walls, fire stopping, and fire door replacements.</p> <p>This report sets out the pilot work being undertaken to two properties and the wider programmed work to reduce the risks across the portfolio.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</p> <p>No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>Contact Officers: Foyes Ahmed, Technical Lead (Commercial Property) Foyes.ahmed@camden.gov.uk, 5 Pancras Square, N1C 4AG Martin Olomofe, Head of Property Martin.olomofe@camden.gov.uk, 5 Pancras Square, N1C 4AG</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS</p> <p>It is recommended that panel note the content of this report and consider whether a further report would be of interest in the next 3 – 6 months.</p>	

Signed: 
Director Property Management

Date: 10th June 2026

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The commercial property portfolio is made up of a wide-ranging property type and use, i.e. light industrial workshops, office, street-fronted shops, car park, etc. The portfolio has 990 properties, of which 584 are in the housing portfolio.
- 1.2 It is important that the Council takes a pro-active approach in trying to understand the fire risks of its portfolio particularly those properties that have residential accommodation above the commercial demise and take necessary steps to mitigate the fire risks which are proportionate.
- 1.3 The Fire and Building Safety Acts establish the duties of the Landlord/Freeholder (in this case the Council) as the ultimate Responsible Person (RP) for multi-occupant buildings or Principal Accountable Person (PAP/AP) for high-risk buildings (HRB). The PAP/RP is responsible for ensuring that a whole building approach to fire safety is taken to the building envelope, overall structural safety and the risk of fire and smoke spread between demises. The Landlord/Freeholder is also responsible for the co-ordination, sharing and collation of fire safety information of the whole building. The commercial leaseholders are responsible for ensuring that the fire risk assessment, FRA actions and fire safety management is carried out within their demised premises.
- 1.4 It was therefore agreed to carry out intrusive fire compartmentation surveys of the commercial properties which have residential accommodation adjacent and above to it. The surveys have been commissioned through Frankham Consultancy Ltd. and the primary purpose of the survey is to ascertain whether the ceiling and walls which form the compartmentation between the two demises (commercial and residential) have the required fire resistance level.
- 1.5 This report provides an update on the progress with the fire compartmentation surveys programme, outcome of the survey reports to date, pilot sites and vacant properties works, implementation approach and next steps.

2.0 Fire compartmentation surveys – progress and outcomes

- 2.1 The surveys assess whether separation between commercial and residential areas meets required fire resistance standards. They involve site inspections and, where needed, limited intrusive checks (for example, small holes) to confirm wall and ceiling construction. A qualified asbestos surveyor also completes a dynamic asbestos risk assessment in affected areas.
- 2.2 The programme covers 468 of the 990 commercial properties because they adjoin residential flats. Since June 2023, 440 surveys have been completed, leaving 28. Of those, 18 have been removed from the list after review showed no remedial works were needed based on neighbouring survey results. The remaining 10 will be surveyed in due course and are currently assumed to require remedial works.

2.3 Table 1 summarises the outcomes of the 440 completed surveys.

Table 1 – outcome of the fire compartmentation surveys

Description of remedial actions	Number of Properties
Fire compartmentation remedial works (i.e. upgrade of ceiling, walls, fire stopping, and fire door replacement)	123
Assumed fire compartmentation remedial works (require survey to confirm)	10
Compartmentation Works Completed	11
Compartmentation Works In-progress	3
Fire stopping works only	64
Fire door replacement only	6
Review of FRAs (commercial premise)	227
Further investigation of the commercial premise	36
Repair required	39

2.4 Table 1 will be updated once the remaining 10 surveys and ongoing works are complete.

2.5 Table 1 identifies 147 properties needing fire compartmentation remedial works (including 10 assumed properties), 14 of which are complete or in progress. This report focuses on those requiring major works and consideration of tenant impact. Actions with minimal tenant impact will be managed outside this programme. These are reflected in the last 5 rows in Table 1.

3.0 2 x pilot properties and vacant properties

3.1 66 Marchmont Street (bookshop) and 38 Great Russell Street (fish and chip restaurant) were selected as two high-risk pilot properties. As both were tenanted, the works required temporary decant and compensation for business loss.

3.2 Works at 66 Marchmont Street started in early August 2025 and finished in early December 2025. A vacant Council-owned shop at 58–60 Marchmont Street allowed the tenant to relocate and avoided compensation claims.

3.3 Works at 38 Great Russell Street started in November 2025 and finished in early March 2026. As no alternative premises were available, the business closed during the works. Compensation has been agreed in principle, subject to review and validation by a competent person.

3.4 Compartmentation works often also reveal other compliance issues and remedial works.

3.5 Appendix A shows a list of vacant properties where fire compartmentation works are complete or underway. Some packages also include other works, and some completed properties have since been re-let.

4.0 Proposed implementation strategy & budget

4.1 The original plan was to decant tenants to carry out the works. However, lease reviews and legal advice showed there is no clear right of access without agreeing and negotiating compensation with tenants.

4.2 The proposed approach is to primarily complete the works when commercial properties become vacant or are reassigned with a change of use (latter will require negotiation with incoming tenant).

4.4 The Council's Fire Safety Team has therefore reviewed the 133 properties requiring works to assess whether interim measures—such as extending or linking landlord fire alarm systems and reviewing tenants' fire risk assessments—can reduce risk until the works are completed. This allows the Council to reduce risk in a planned way through interim measures.

4.5 Of the 133 properties, 18 do not need landlord fire alarm extensions or links, while 115 do. Of those 115, there are 21 high priority properties because of their commercial use, such as laundrettes, cafés and restaurants.

4.6 Budgets and programmes are being prepared for all 133 properties requiring remedial works. They cover fire compartmentation, fire stopping, fire door installations, and linked fire alarm systems, plus fees and contingency.

5.0 Indicative 10-year works programme

5.1 As set out in Section 4, remedial works will be done when properties become vacant. The 133 affected properties have varying lease expiry dates, and many are protected under the Landlord and Tenant Act, giving tenants renewal rights. This makes vacancy timing uncertain, so the programme depends on properties becoming vacant.

5.2 Opportunities may also arise when a tenant assigns a lease and the new occupier changes the use. In such cases, the Council may be able to agree that fire safety works are included in the fit-out, either through longer rent-free periods or contractor access.

5.3 The indicative overall programme runs over 10 years, though it may need to extend if vacancies do not arise as expected. In the first two years, the focus will be on linked fire alarm installations to reduce risk, with high-risk uses such as laundrettes, cafés and restaurants prioritised.

6.0 Finance Comments of the Executive Directors Corporate Service

6.1 The report updates Camden Council's approach to addressing fire compartmentation risks in its commercial property portfolio, following fire compartmentation surveys initiated in 2023 and undertaken across 468

properties, with 440 completed to date. These surveys already revealed that 147 properties need significant remedial works

- 6.2 The capital works required, cost of borrowing and revenue project management costs will affect both the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the General Fund (GF). Estimated HRA costs over 10 years are: £7.848m for capital expenditure, £2.163 borrowing costs (interest), £0.024 revenue staffing costs). Estimated GF costs over 10 years are: £2.989m for capital expenditure, £0.822 borrowing costs (interest and Minimum Revenue Provision), £0.009 revenue staffing costs). There is currently no approved budget for the works so costs will be met from existing commercial budgets until budgets are approved.
- 6.3 As both the HRA and GF are at maximum borrowing capacity unless compensatory savings are identified to cover the revenue costs of serving debt, it may be preferable to finance the capital works through the utilisation of capital receipts. The capital receipts required over 10 years period to avoid additional borrowing costs are £7.848m for HRA and £1.989m for GF. As there is no additional income generated through these capital works, there is no income stream to pay down the debt so unless capital receipts are identified, the borrowing costs could continue in perpetuity.

7.0 Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor

- 7.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no comments to add.

8.0 Environmental Implications

- 8.1 No environmental impacts from implementing this proposal.

REPORT ENDS

Appendix A

Fire compartmentation remedial works – vacant properties:

Completed:

- 1) 219 Belsize Road
- 2) 203a Belsize Road
- 3) 91 Leather Lane
- 4) 72 Marchmont Street
- 5) 30 Camden Road
- 6) 3 Bloomsbury Street
- 7) 50 Leverton Road
- 8) 51 Hemstal Road
- 9) 85 Kingsgate Road
- 10) 66 Marchmont Street (pilot)
- 11) 38 Great Russell Street (pilot)

On-going:

- 12) 24 Warren Street – in-coming to carry out the fire compartmentation works as part of their fit out works.
- 13) 138 Drummond Street – vacant - contractor appointed (includes damp proofing and structural works) and anticipated to be completed by March / April 2026.
- 14) 58-60 Marchmont Street – vacant - to be scoped and start once budget approved.