

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: ALL
REPORT TITLE: Updating the Panel's Terms of Reference	
REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY MANAGEMENT	
FOR SUBMISSION TO: Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel	DATE 17 October 2023
<p>SUMMARY OF REPORT:</p> <p>The terms of reference (TOR) for the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel (section 9.1) require that they are reviewed annually. It is proposed that the Panel bring forward this review and consider proposals to amend their TOR and title as part of the Council's work to update its governance and the changes brought about by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.</p> <p>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information The following documents have been used in the preparation of this report: No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report,</p> <p>Contact Officer: Melissa Dillon, Resident Safety Engagement & Government Lead. Email: Melissa.dillon@camden.gov.uk; Tel.0207 974 3100</p>	
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS:</p> <p>The Panel is asked to consider the proposed amendments to their Terms of Reference set out in full in the Appendix and summarised at section 2 of the report as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To increase the number of councillor places on the panel to 7 and for 4 of the places to be for leaders of party political groups on the Council and our Green Party councillor and the 5th to be reserved for the Cabinet Member for Better Homes. As detailed at paragraph 2. ii. For the Cabinet Member for Better Homes to step down as co-chair of the panel from January 2024 and for the replacement co-chair to be an independent safety industry expert as set out in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.7 iii. Adopt the remuneration proposals for resident panel members set out in paragraph 2.8 iv. Provide the training and support for resident panel members proposed at paragraph 2.10. v. To change the name of the FSCAP to the 'Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel' as set out in paragraph 2.3 	

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Haynes', with a small dot at the end.

Gavin Haynes
Director Property Management
Date: 5th October 2023

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel reviews its terms of reference every year to ensure that they remain relevant and this annual review is next due to take place in January 2024. It is proposed that the panel review and amend their TOR and title in recognition of the changes and strengthened regulatory regime for Council homes introduced by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

2. Proposed Changes

- 2.1 The proposal is to change the title and update the terms of reference for the Panel to extend its remit ensure that the Council provides a consistent overview of compliance with the property related health and safety across regulation by both the Building Safety Regulator and the Social Housing Regulator.
- 2.2 This will include the Safety & Quality consumer standard introduced by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and will complement the wider oversight of landlord performance and compliance with all consumer standards maintained by Housing Scrutiny and District Management Committees.
- 2.3 In recognition of the dual regulation of safety standards for Council homes it is proposed to change the name of the panel to *Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel*.

Membership

- 2.4 The current terms of reference provides for up to 12 resident (tenant and leaseholder) members with speaking and voting rights, one of is the resident co-chair of the Panel. Resident members to include:
- 1 District Management Committee representative
 - 1 Tenant Management Organisation representative

The other members of the Panel are currently:

- The Cabinet Member, Better Homes plus two other nominated Council Members.
 - The Council's Director of Property Management.
 - Two nominated representatives of the Borough Fire Brigade Commander. (Including a representative from the Regulatory Fire Safety Department).
 - A nominated representative from the Council's Property Management Division.
 - A nominated representative from the Council's Housing Division
- 2.5 It is proposed that from January 2024, councillor places on the panel should be revised to a total of 7, with the 3 leaders of the party-political groups and the Green Party councillor invited to take up membership to contribute to the discussions. There would be no substitute councillor places on the panel. The Cabinet Member for Better Homes would step down as panel co-chair from

January 2024 but continue as a councillor member of the panel representing the Cabinet. The 2 remaining councillor places would be determined by the Leader of the Council.

- 2.6 From January 2024 the vacant second co-chair place to be filled by an independent safety industry expert alongside the resident chair to reinforce the independence of this advisory panel from the Council and bring further expertise to the sessions. If agreed the Director of Property Management will oversee the recruitment of this expert member who would be appointed for an initial period of one year from January 2024.
- 2.7 The officer and London Fire Brigade seats on the panel would remain as currently specified in the Terms of Reference.
- 2.8 The quorum for the panel will continue to be a minimum of 5 Panel members (including 2 resident representatives) to be present at the meeting for recommendations to be made.

Remuneration

- 2.9 Camden has established several resident panels to develop and deliver Council services and remunerates those volunteering their time on at a rate of £12 per hour. It proposed to apply this approach to the Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel in line with the approach taken to remunerating volunteers on other Camden resident panels.

Training & Support

- 2.10 The panel will continue meet formally at quarterly public meeting and receive written briefings and or have informal briefings between meetings to ensure they are get up to speed with safety issues and developments. In addition to the formal quarterly meetings officers will facilitate two training workshops with panel members every year to provide them with on-going fire and building awareness and support in shaping the future work programme of the panel. The workshops will be provided by external safety training bodies such as the British Safety Council and by the Council's in-house fire and building safety teams.
- 2.11 The proposed amended Terms of Reference are attached as the appendix to the report.

3.0 Legal Comments

- 3.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted and has no specific comments

4.0 Finance Comments

- 4.1 The report asks the Fire Safety Advisory Panel to consider proposed amendments to their terms of reference including increasing number of councillor places, appointing an independent safety industry expert as co-chair, remunerating and providing training and support to resident panel members.
- 4.2 The estimated budgetary impact of the remuneration and training and support proposed in the current financial year is £10,368 and the full year impact from

2024/25 is £20,736. The cost will be funded from the budget allocated to H26430 Fire Risk

5.0 Environment Implications

5.1 There are no specific implications arising from this work.

END

APPENDIX



LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN HOUSING AND FIRE SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel supports Camden Council's landlord service to meet its regulatory requirements to tenants and leaseholders in relation to the safety of residents' homes. This includes how the Council monitors the condition of its stock, including damp and mould, as well as compliance with fire, electrical, gas, legionella, asbestos and lift safety checks. The panel will also support how the Council manages risk of fire by making recommendations and carrying out reviews to facilitate effective fire prevention, preparedness, and response and recovery strategies. The Panel will scrutinise and advise on the Council's fire and building safety compliance in line with the Fire Safety Act 2021, Building Safety Act 2022 and the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. The Panel will support the Director of Property Management in ensuring that tenant and leaseholder voices are at the centre of the Council's innovative approach to property safety.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The Housing and Fire Safety Advisory Panel meets regularly to;
- Receive officer reports on how the Council is working to comply with the Safety & Quality consumer standard, as monitored by the Regulator for Social Housing.
 - Receive officer reports on the status of work being undertaken, in and around council owned homes in order to achieve compliance with current fire safety legislation and regulation.
 - Provide quarterly oversight of progress in delivering Fire & Building Safety Charter commitments.
 - Consider whether arrangements for reviewing fire safety and related safety issues in and around council owned homes are adequate.
 - Receive reports on relevant staff training to ensure that there is improved recognition of fire and building safety breaches and appropriate action taken.
 - Consider what information and training might be appropriate for residents to improve fire safety awareness and readiness in the event of a fire.
 - Receive officer reports summarising recent fire safety and compliance concerns raised by residents who are tenants, leaseholders and tenants of leaseholders across the borough; and consider Council actions in response to those concerns.

- Understand the nature of and reasons for recent fires in Council owned homes in order to inform the Panel's own fire safety recommendations.
- Find ways to encourage residents to become more aware of fire and building safety issues and to take responsibility for safety in and around their homes.
- Review the Council's tenancy conditions and new residential leases (and rules and regulations for leaseholders generally) to ensure that they are sufficiently robust around fire safety issues and to receive reports on appropriate action being taken by officers where breaches occur.
- Review the *Tenants Guide* and make proposals for amendments to add any new requirements developed as a result of the findings of the Panel
- Consider wider best practice and recommend to the Council where good fire safety initiatives implemented elsewhere might also work in Camden.
- Work with the Council to develop effective regular communications in appropriate formats for Camden residents around fire safety.

3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 The Panel will be chaired in rotation by a Camden Council resident and an independent expert from the British Safety Council and comprises of the following membership as follows:

3.1.1 Resident Membership

Up to 12 resident (tenant and leaseholder) members selected for their expertise with speaking and voting rights, to include:

- 1 District Management Committee representative with speaking and voting rights
- 1 Tenant Management Organisation representative with speaking and voting rights

During recruitment the Council will be mindful of trying to achieve a Panel that includes residents living in:

- a high rise block
- a TMO managed property
- a street property.

A resident member may be co-opted to serve on the FS&CAP to achieve this balance.

3.1.2 Other Membership

- The Leaders of all groups on the Council (3 places)
- The Green Party Councillor (1 place)
- The Cabinet Member, Better Homes (1 place)
- Nominated Councillors (2 places)
- The Council's Director of Property Management
- Two nominated representatives of the Borough Fire Brigade Commander (Including a representative from the Regulatory Fire Safety Department)
- A nominated representative from the Council's Property Service (observer)

- A nominated representative from the Council's Housing Management Service (observer)

3.2 The majority of the resident members will be Council tenants.

3.3 Resident Panel Members may serve up to a three-year term subject to review at the end of year's one and two.

3.4 The resident Chair is rotated annually on the anniversary of the Panel's establishment.

4 AGENDAS

4.1 Agendas are agreed by the Co-Chairs in advance of the meetings, to ensure that all Panel members can be fully prepared.

4.2 Potential agenda items may be submitted to Co-Chairs, for consideration by Panel members or Council Officers. Items may be submitted up to three weeks prior to each meeting. Potential items are discussed with the Chair(s) in order to finalise the agenda prior to dispatch (two weeks in advance).

4.3 Nothing goes on the agenda that is subject to investigation; or should the Borough Solicitor advise that for any reason that an item would be inappropriate.

5 MEETINGS

5.1 The Chair(s) with the support of the Council will:

- Facilitate no less than four formal meetings of the Panel per year
- Consult members prior to setting each agenda
- Ensure that the meeting is run in accordance with the Engagement Code of Conduct
- Be non-voting (in circumstances where a formal vote is required to agree a recommendation)

5.2 Alongside four formal meetings, members may be asked to attend up to two private workshops per year for additional training and information gathering. They will also be invited to attend other informal briefings where relevant.

6 ATTENDANCE

6.1 There is an expectation that Panel members will attend at least 75% of all formal meetings. It will be assumed that members who fail to attend 2 consecutive meetings without having given apologies will have stepped down and a new nomination will be formally requested.

Quorum

6.2 A minimum of 5 Panel members (including 2 resident representatives) must be present at the meeting for recommendations to be made.

6.3 Other residents may be invited to the meeting to provide information. Other officers may be invited to present reports or provide legal advice.

7 DECISION MAKING

- 7.1 The panel will make recommendations to decision makers in the Council and the results of those recommendations will be reported back to the panel.
- 7.2 The Director of Property Management will be responsible for ensuring that recommendations are reported to the appropriate officer, action taken and feedback given.

8 DISPUTES

- 8.1 An independent method will be sourced in order to find resolution in cases where disputes arise between Panel members.

9 ANNUAL REVIEW

- 9.1 The performance of the Panel against its objectives and its Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually.

ENDS