

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS: ALL</b>
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> Resident Safety Programme Update	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Cabinet Member for Better Homes	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Housing Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE</b> 14 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>STRATEGIC CONTEXT</b>  The Camden Plan 2025 commitment is that the Council will deliver the highest level of safety in our housing stock, and that our focus on safety improvement will be taken forward together with tenants and leaseholders. In 2019 Cabinet adopted an approach to delivering resident safety and undertook to co-produce a Resident Safety Charter with residents, setting out what the Camden's commitment to resident safety means in practice.	
<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b>  This report details the results of the 2019/20 borough wide <i>Safer Council Homes Survey</i> of all Camden Council homes that asked residents what would make them feel safe in their homes. The resulting charter – now titled the Fire and Building Safety Charter and the associated five-year delivery plan – was developed in response what residents told in survey and in discussion with Housing Scrutiny Committee, Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel and resident focus groups. The Charter is designed to make clear what the Council's commitments to the safety of Council homes means in practice and enable residents to measure progress.  <b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b>  No documents that require listing were used in the preparation of this report.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Melissa Dillon, Head of Resident Safety  5 Pancras Square, Kings Cross, London N1C 4AG.  Tel: 0207 974 3100. Email:melissa.dillon@camden.gov.uk	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>  The Committee is asked to consider the report and provide comments and suggestions for incorporation in the proposed Fire and Building Safety Charter and Delivery Plan.	

Signed:



Date:

## 1.0 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Our Camden Plan sets out the Council's commitment to make all Council homes as safe as possible by 2025. This commitment has seen Camden carrying out surveys and risk assessments, investing fire and building safety compliance works, updating policies and reorganising services in response to the findings of the Grenfell Inquiry, the Hackitt Review and new fire and building safety legislation.
- 1.2 On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019 Cabinet approved a Resident Safety Programme to deliver the Camden 2025 commitment to Safer Council homes. Members also agreed to co-produce a Resident Safety Charter and delivery plan with Camden's tenants and leaseholders. The proposed charter and draft delivery plan are attached to this report and both will go to Cabinet in July 2021 for approval.

## 2.0 PROPOSAL AND REASONS

- 2.1 This report provides an update on the progress to date of the Council's Resident Safety Programme and outlines the statutory fire and building safety regime the Government is introducing through fire and building safety legislation. Housing Scrutiny Committee is asked consider the proposed Fire and Building Safety Charter and the draft delivery plan that will allow residents to measure progress.

### *Progress on the resident safety programme*

- 2.2 The Council has been implementing a range of measures including in preparation for the new statutory safety regime including:
- **Restructuring the Property Management and Resident Safety divisions** – increasing the resources for fire safety advice, delivery of fire safety works and implementation of the new legislation as it is enacted
  - **Developing the Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel** – the Council recently made a number of new appointments to the panel and the panel will be helping the Council to develop its policies and approach to fire safety
  - **Participation in Government working groups** – the Council has played an active part in the review of current regulatory arrangements and the options for new legislation and regulation
  - **Delivering work programmes and new measures** – the Council has been delivering a wide range of works to address fire risk assessment recommendations, commenced its programme of façade checks and has put in place specific measures such as the quarterly monitoring of street property alarms and communal areas
  - **Introduced risk based change control** – the Council has developed and implemented a change control risk assessment process, this makes sure that all relevant factors are taken into account when risk are identified and establishes what measures should be taken – e.g. a move from stay put to an evacuation policy – with measures being agreed with the London Fire Brigade

### *Investing in fire safety*

- 2.3 In 2020, to support the delivery of the fire safety works programme, the Council introduced a new Fire Safety Capital Works team and a new capital works framework with a 'Lot' dedicated to fire safety. This will help the Council to commission and deliver the volume of fire safety work required.
- 2.4 Between 2018/19 and 2020/21 the Council delivered £43m of targeted fire safety works and is set to deliver a further £59.5m between 2021/22 and 2025/26. This is in addition to measures delivered through the Better Homes programme and the major works at the Chalcots. Works carried out typically include:
- the renewal of flat entrance doors and doors frames to fire door FD30S standard
  - installing emergency lighting in communal areas and stair cases
  - redecorating communal areas using Class O fire retardant paint
  - installing fire-stopping in external walls and between walls to provide compartmentation to prevent the spread of fire
  - installing smoke/fire alarm systems in all tenanted homes and in communal areas where required (for example in street property)
- 2.5 In addition to the above, the Council's fire safety team has commissioned a range of façade checks for buildings within scope of the new legislation. Officers are also carrying out property asset data mapping, gap analysis and commissioning surveys for the development of Building Safety Cases, in anticipation of the prospective Building Safety legislation due to come into force in 2022.

### *Safer council homes survey*

- 2.6 To help prepare the resident safety charter, and to understand resident priorities in relation to safety, all tenants and leaseholders of Camden's housing were invited to complete a survey on their views of safety in their council homes. There were 3,507 survey responses from more than 10% of Council homes, the highest response to a Camden survey in five years.
- 2.7 The findings were that residents said that whilst half of them felt safe in their homes 38% did not, and that they would feel safer if we provided them with information about how to stay safe in their building or home. People told us in some detail what we should do make them feel safer and summary analysis of their responses is attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.8 Residents told us that they would like to find out about fire and other types of safety information through letters, emails and the Camden Magazine. They would also like to get fire safety information from the Council website, via posters, through their TRA reps and council meetings and the London Fire Brigade. People told us that there were things that the Council could do to make them feel safer with almost half the responses looking for improvements in fire and building safety systems. A significant number - 19% of responses

were about installing and testing fire alarms and smoke detectors, and a further 10% were about improvements to fire escapes.

2.9 Over 20% of responses were about how informed people felt and the information they need to stay safe and included:

- Wanting evacuation signage and fire safety training
- Knowing about the safety of their building and any cladding
- The need for the Council to listen and respond to safety concerns
- Residents wanted the Council to keep them informed about the progress of a Camden safety plan.

2.10 Residents also made comments about service improvement such as the number of housing patrols and the delivery of repairs, issues that have been tackled by service improvement work and the reorganisation of the Property Management Division.

2.11 The results of the survey have been shared with residents, this Committee, District Management Committees, Tenants & Residents Associations and the Housing Scrutiny Committee. We then worked with the Fire Safety & Compliance Advisory Panel and resident focus groups to co-produce the proposed Fire & Building Safety Charter which is described below.

#### *The Fire and Building Safety Charter*

2.12 The resulting draft charter makes clear what the Council's safety commitments are and outlines the responsibilities of the Council and residents for the safety of council homes. The four proposed commitments are set out in detail in Appendix 2 and noted below;

- *We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe*
- *We will make sure you know how to stay safe at home*
- *We will be transparent*
- *We will always listen to you about safety*

2.13 The charter also asks residents to work with Camden and keep themselves and their neighbours safe. Subject to Cabinet approval the Charter will be shared with residents in late summer 2021

2.14 A commitment delivery plan is attached at Appendix 3 and it is proposed that both the Charter and the plan be reviewed and updated annually enabling residents to see what the 2025 commitments mean in practice and hold Camden to account.

#### *Fire and building safety legislation*

2.15 Government has committed itself to establishment a new statutory regime for the regulation of building safety and the implementation of the recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry. The Fire Safety Act has received Royal Assent and is due to implemented in 2021 after secondary legislation

and guidance on its application is published before the second anniversary of the Phase 1 Grenfell Inquiry report in October 2021. It applies to all buildings containing two or more domestic premises.

2.16 Secondary fire safety legislation will consist of regulations issued by the Secretary of State governing the implementation of

- Enhanced external wall system surveys
- Fire door and compartmentation checks
- Fire Risk Assessments
- Provision of individual Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for all residents of high-rise blocks who have cognitive or mobility disabilities,

2.17 The 2021 Queen's Speech committed the government to the enactment of a Building Safety Act with legislation due to come into force in 2022. In anticipation of the new legislation government has appointed a Building Safety Regulator with a new building safety regulatory system being established within the Health and Safety Executive. The Regulator will oversee the implementation of the Building Safety Act and the recommendations of the Grenfell Inquiry. The new statutory building safety regime will become law in 2022, initially covering high-rise buildings, with an unspecified transitional period. This will see the production of Building Safety Cases for tall buildings (18m and above) become a legal requirement with the Council having just over 200 residential buildings in this category.

### **3.0 WHAT ARE THE KEY IMPACTS / RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

3.1 The co-production with residents of Camden's Fire & Building Safety Charter has produced a delivery plan focussed on the work and services most immediately affected by the new legislation and ensuring the Council is best placed to fulfil the 'safe place/safe people' duties defined by the Building Safety Regulator.

3.2 The compliance and engagement processes in the delivery plan will enable Council services to assess the resources required to implement changes as part of the on-going Medium Term Financial Strategy and enable the Council to respond in a proactive structured way to initiatives and regulations emerging from government and the Building Safety Regulator.

## **4. CONSULTATION / ENGAGEMENT**

4.1 The Council has carried out extensive consultation via the safer homes survey, focus groups and engagement with District Management Committees and representative groups, as set out in section 2 of this report. The Council has also been working with its Fire Safety and Compliance and Advisory Panel to discuss changes in policy and practice.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (comments of the Borough Solicitor)**

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

**6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (finance comments of the Executive Director Corporate Services)**

6.1 The report seeks comments from the Housing Scrutiny Committee on the update to the Resident Safety Programme for incorporation in the Council's Fire and Building Safety Charter and Delivery Plan.

6.2 The report provides progress that has been made on the programme, details of investment (paragraphs 2.3-2.5) as well as recent developments on the Fire Safety Act and guidance that will arise from it that will need to be incorporated into the actions that the Council will take. The capital programme includes budgets of £59.5m over the next few years, of which £9.3m is due to be invested in 21/22. In addition, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has a budget of c.£1.6m in 21/22 relating to fire safety maintenance and non-capital works.

6.3 Budgets are being set based on current obligations, but the Council will need to reassess the requirements over time- in particular around Building Safety as described in paragraph 2.17. This is likely to have a material impact on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) expenditure.

**7. APPENDICES**

8.1 Appendix 1 – Safer Council Homes Survey Results Summary Analysis  
Appendix 2 – Proposed Camden Fire and Building Safety Charter  
Appendix 3 – Draft Charter Delivery Plan

**REPORT ENDS**

## APPENDIX 1. SAFER COUNCIL HOMES SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY ANALYSIS

<b>What can we do to help you feel safer at home?</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Install safety equipment and test it regularly</b>	<b>46%</b>
Fire alarms and smoke detectors	19.22
Better fire escapes	10.75
Fire doors	6.95
Fire extinguishers	3.69
Sprinklers	3.11
Ensure doors and windows are suitable for use by elderly or disabled people	1.21
Communal lighting	0.68
Fire blankets	0.38
<b>Keep us informed</b>	<b>22.50%</b>
Tell me how safe my cladding is	0.43
Improve Camden's safety plan and keep me informed of progress	2.18
Put up better emergency signage	3.69
Tell me about the safety of my building	6.18
Give residents fire safety training	3.74
Listen & reply to safety concerns & provide up to date information on safety	6.27
<b>Enforce Safety</b>	<b>4.10%</b>
Ban barbecues in buildings	0.097
Ensure access roads are kept clear so emergency service vehicles can reach people	1.07
Enforce a smoking ban in communal areas	1.60
Provide more housing security patrols	1.31
<b>Improve the way we do things</b>	<b>21.70%</b>
Carry out more fire safety checks	10.75
Remove rubbish and keep communal areas clear	3.01
Make sure council officers are held accountable for the work they carry out	1.703
Carry out repairs to a higher standard, especially to doors and windows	6.22

## **APPENDIX 2. PROPOSED CAMDEN FIRE AND BUILDING SAFETY CHARTER**

We want to make your homes safer. In 2025, we want everyone who lives in a Camden council home to live in a safe, well maintained building. We will be making changes. We will be making physical improvements to our homes to make them safer, but we know that safety isn't just about bricks and mortar. We will also work with you, your neighbours and your community to make sure that everyone knows how to keep themselves and the people around them safe at home. We will make sure that you always have a voice in decisions made about safety in your home and that you always have access to information about the safety of where you live.

Nothing is more important to us than your safety and we will work hard to deliver our plans and let you know how we're doing. We want to keep improving, so let us know how you think we're getting on and if we need to do things differently.

We will also need you to play your part in the safety of your building – safer homes are up to everyone. This Fire and Building Safety Charter explains our commitments to you and what we ask you to do to keep your building safe.

### **Our commitments to you:**

#### **1. We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe**

Your safety is always our first priority. We will make sure that all of our tenants and leaseholders live in safe, well-maintained buildings:

- We will install smoke detectors in every tenanted council home to make sure that everyone has early warning in the event of a fire.
- We will install a fire door with at least 30 minutes of fire resistance to every communal or front door that needs one. To make sure that everyone who lives in our council homes is safe, we will install fire resistant front doors for leaseholders at no charge.
- We will regularly inspect all of our tenanted homes to make sure they are to the highest standard of safety including checking your gas, electricity and water.
- We will remove any items left in the communal areas that could be a risk to your safety.
- We will take legal action where necessary against residents who increase the fire risk in your building.

#### **2. We will make sure you know how to stay safe at home**

We want you to feel safe and to know how to keep you, your family and your neighbours safe. We will make sure that you have all the information you need to stay safe at home and where to get it if you don't:



- We will provide clear fire exit and emergency signs in your building that are accessible to everyone, so that all residents of our council homes know what to do if there is a fire.
- We will work with the London Fire Brigade to make sure that they are aware of any residents in our council homes who may need help to get out in an emergency so that they can get the support they need.
- We will regularly send you information about staying safe with your rent statements and the Housing News, and you can sign up to receive updates about safety from the Council by email.

### **3. We will be transparent**

We will make sure that you can access any safety information that you need about your home and that you are as involved as you want to be in fire risk assessments and safety works:

- When we carry out a fire risk assessment in your building we will invite your TRA to attend the assessment visit.
- After your fire risk assessment we will let you know about any safety work that we need to do, and how and when we will do it.
- When safety works are finished, we will invite resident representatives to join the quality inspections of the works to make sure they are always completed to the highest standard.
- We will publish the results of all of our fire risk assessments online, so that you can find out about safety at your building at any time.
- We will publish an annual fire and building safety delivery plan and report on how we are doing in meeting the targets in the plan.

### **4. We will always listen to you about safety**

You know your home and your building better than anyone. We will make sure you always have a voice in decisions made about the safety of your home.

- We will make sure you know how to report a safety concern and always take you seriously when you do. A repairs operative will be with you between six and 24 hours of you reporting a repair that affects your safety.
- When we're planning safety works to your building we will always let you know what we are planning and why, and listen to your feedback on how we do it.
- We will regularly report to residents at the Fire Safety and Compliance Advisory Panel and Housing Scrutiny Committee, so that residents can ask questions, share their ideas and hold us to account on safety.

## 5. Fire and building safety is up to everyone – play your part

We have responsibilities to you as a landlord but for all of our council homes to be safe, we need all of our tenants, leaseholders and subtenants to play their part. You and everyone you live with can help keep your building safe by:

- Keeping communal areas clear. If you live in a purpose built block, you should keep fire exits, hallways, stairs and other communal areas clear at all times of anything that could catch fire or get in someone's way if they needed to get out. If you live in a street property, you should never leave anything in your communal areas. Items that we find in communal areas that could put people at risk will be removed and may be disposed of.
- Letting us in. You have a legal obligation to let us or our contractors into your home to carry out safety checks and work – for tenants, this includes your annual gas safety visit. This is to keep everyone safe. All of our contractors will always carry photo ID.
- Always asking the Council first if you want to carry out alterations to your home.
- Never removing your door closer and never removing or changing any door, particularly your front door. If you do, it can make your home less fire safe and put you, your family and your neighbours at risk.
- Using your balcony safely. Don't store things on your balcony, especially anything that can catch fire. Never have a barbecue on your balcony, and never throw cigarettes from your balcony or windows.
- Telling us if you think you or someone you live with would need help to get out in emergency, so that we can make sure that the London Fire Brigade know and can give you the support you need.

Thinking about the safety of your neighbours and the people living in your building. If you see anyone behaving in a way that could make your building less fire safe – for example storing things in communal areas or changing fire doors – report it immediately.

- Holding us to account – if we are not doing our part for safety in your building, let us know so we can make changes as soon as possible.

## APPENDIX 3 – DRAFT FIRE & BUILDING SAFETY CHARTER DELIVERY PLAN

COMMITMENT	ACTIONS
<p><b>We will work with you to keep your homes and buildings safe</b></p>	<p><b>We will carry out Fire Risk Assessments every 1, 2 or 3 years</b> depending what type of building you live in:  <b>Every year</b> – FRAs to 109 purpose built blocks 10+ floors, hostels &amp; sheltered housing  <b>Every 2 years</b> – FRAs to 770 purpose built blocks less than 10 floors  <b>Every 3 years</b> – FRAs to 1,753 Street properties &amp; TRA Halls, each street property also receives a check of its communal areas each quarter.</p> <p><b>Gas Safety Checks</b> - We will carry out annual CP12 Landlord Gas Safety checks to 13,208 individual properties each year  <b>Electrical testing</b> - We will carry out Domestic Electrical Inspections to all our tenanted housing stock every 5 years (23,000 homes)  <b>Water Safety</b> - We will service 1,008 Water Tanks every 6 months as part of our water safety management process  <b>Asbestos Surveys</b> - We will carry out cyclical Asbestos surveys 3,852 blocks over the next 18 months  <b>Lift Safety</b> – We will carry out 552 six-monthly LOLER lift insurance Inspections</p> <p><b>Fire Safety Capital works</b> – over the next 5 years we will spend £59.5m on fire safety works. In 2021/22 we will have programmed 52 projects and are expecting to spend £9.3m</p>
<p><b>We will make sure you know how to stay safe at home</b></p>	<p>We will communicate fire safety issues through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Housing News, the Home Owner Newsletter and Rent Account Statements</li> <li>• Posters and emails to TRAs &amp; residents giving seasonal safety advice</li> <li>• Information on the Council’s website about:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fire &amp; Kitchen Safety</li> <li>- Understanding smoke alarms</li> <li>- London Fire Brigade Home Safety visits</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>We will publish an annual report on our performance against our charter commitments</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Publish our plans for compliance with new fire and building safety legislation as it enacted/published</li> <li>- From 2022 we will publish a list of all blocks where a building safety case report will be required by the Building Safety Case Regulator and the timescales for their submission.</li> <li>- We will share Building Safety Case reports with residents as they are produced</li> </ul>

COMMITMENT	ACTIONS
<b>We will be transparent</b>	We invite your TRA to attend the Fire Risk assessment (FRA) for your building and will publish the results of all of our FRAs online & share them with your TRA
	After your fire risk assessment we will let you know about any safety work that we need to do, and how and when we will do it.
	We will publish the arrangements for reporting a safety concern on our website and in our tenants guide
	A repairs operative should be with you between 6 and 24 hours of you reporting a repair that affects your safety. We will publish an annual safety repairs performance report against this standard
<b>We will always listen to you about safety</b>	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- work with the Fire Safety &amp; Compliance Advisory Panel, DMCs and other stakeholders to develop safety policies, procedures and programmes</li> <li>- co-produce resident engagement strategies with tenants and leaseholders when the draft Building Safety Bill requirements are published.</li> <li>- publish an annual review of the work of the Fire Safety &amp; Compliance Advisory Panel</li> </ul>