

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: The Economy, Housing and the Arts Policy and Accountability Committee

Date: 09/11/2021

Subject: Fire safety housing

Report author: Richard Buckley, Assistant director, residents and building safety

Responsible Director: Johnathan Pickstone, Strategic Director, Economy

SUMMARY

As a landlord, H&F is the Responsible Person in law for managing fire safety of its 17,000 housing properties, of which just over 12,000 are tenanted households. This report provides an overview of the fire safety arrangements in place, on-going monitoring and reporting arrangements and planned capital fire safety works.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. 'For the Committee to note and comment on the report'.

Wards Affected: ALL

Our Values	Summary of how this report aligns to the H&F Values
Building shared prosperity	<i>Safe council housing for all residents</i>
Creating a compassionate council	The Administration has championed operating above minimum legal standards. H&F has proactively introduced personnel emergency evacuation plans for residents in tower blocks who are unable to self-evacuate. Leaseholders safeguarded from costs of fire safety works.
Doing things with local residents, not to them	FRAG is a resident led, fire and building safety residents working group that leads on working with residents to aware of the fire safety arrangements in place for their homes.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The Administration prioritises safety of all residents and has exempted fire

	safety capital work recharges to leaseholders. Capital works are procured in accordance with value for money processes and maximising social value.
Taking pride in H&F	Leading in fire safety compliance with highly competent teams to enhance our existing properties & making residents feel safe and heard.
Rising to the challenge of the climate and ecological emergency	Building in resilience to our properties such as boroughwide LED reducing CO2 emissions through high quality product and maximising technology.

Contact Officers

Name: Richard Buckley
Position: Assistant director, residents and building safety
Telephone:
Email: Richard.buckley@lbhf.gov.uk

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

Not applicable

DETAILED ANALYSIS

1. The Grenfell tragedy 14 June 2017 has impacted greatly and widely throughout the country and continues to do so. The subsequent Dame Judith Hackitt review and the on-going Public Inquiry continue to shape changes to the law and associated guidance and British Standards. The Building Safety Bill is set to fundamentally change the way we operate with the introduction of the Accountable Person, the Building Safety Regulator, Building Safety Certificates and Building Safety Managers.
2. London is home to 60% of the nation's tower blocks of seven storeys (18 metres) and above, and currently over 1,000 blocks have moved from Stay Put to Simultaneous Evacuation requiring a Waking Watch. The impact on leaseholders who have to cover these costs, are unable to sell their properties or re-mortgage is reported in the press to be destroying many lives.
3. As revealed in Phase 2 of the Public Inquiry, trust and confidence in all areas of fire safety from the product, testing, designing, installing, checking and managing has shown to be fractured and the process, as stated by Dame Judith Hackitt, is not fit for purpose.
4. Against this background the H&F Administration has committed to operate above minimum legal standards, adopting best practice, and not to pass on

charges to leaseholders. H&F has committed significant investment, in excess of £80 million to enable compliance works and has just committed (6 September 2021) to further investment of over £600 million in upgrading its housing stock as part of a 12 year capital strategy.

H&F properties & responsibilities

5. H&F, as the Responsible Person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order has set duties in law, which includes fire risk assessment, fire safety arrangements, firefighting and detection, emergency routes and exits, maintenance, training for employees etc.
6. In H&F, we are landlord to just over 17,000 properties, of which 12,000+ are tenanted households and the remainder are leaseholders. Leaseholders are responsible for the inside of their homes, whilst H&F remains responsible for the communal parts including external façade, lobbies, stairwells, plant rooms, etc.
7. We have sixty eight blocks that are six storeys and above, it is likely that circa 40 of these will be subject to the new bill and require the Appointed Person to register with the new regulator to acquire a building safety certificate confirming:
 - appointed a Building Safety Manager (BSM)
 - assessed building risks
 - taken steps to prevent a major incident
 - produced a safety case report
 - put in place a mandatory occurrence reporting system
 - keep prescribed information (Golden Thread) on the building
 - given prescribed information to residents
 - produced a residents' engagement strategy
 - respond to requests for additional information
 - a system for the investigation of relevant complaints by the BSM
8. Failure to comply with the Fire Safety Order and the Building Safety Bill can result in imprisonment of officers and significant fines to the organisation.

fire safety arrangements

9. We have in place a fire safety management system document setting out the policy, roles and responsibilities and arrangements for managing our premises.
10. All properties of six storeys and above have a safety case file detailing the features unique to that building. Schematics of the building for the fire brigade (LFB) are held in Premise Information Boxes (PIBs) normally located in the entrance lobby. Our sheltered properties have PIBs too.
11. A team of fire safety officers oversee the fire safety risk assessment process including quality checks. There are in place circa 1,488 fire risk assessments (FRAs) that cover all the communal parts of our buildings. The FRAs for six storeys and above are published on our website and updated routinely. Other FRAs are available upon request.
12. The actions from the FRAs are manifold. Many are batched as part of capital works programme, such as fire door upgrades, whilst others require minor works such as firestopping by our in-house fire safety works team (DLO).

13. Our Safety First team oversee the proactive identification of persons requiring assistance in an emergency to self-evacuate a tower. Officers work with residents to put a plan in place. Information is provided to the LFB.
14. A dedicated officer from the fire compliance team is attached to the 23 sheltered blocks, working with staff and providing training. Person Centred Fire Risk Assessments are completed for residents requiring assistance in an emergency.
15. Housing officers, geographically located, routinely inspect to a set programme the internal means of escape to work with residents or removing hazards to escape or potential fuel sources. All inspections are recorded.
16. Training is provided using in-house expertise for housing officers, sheltered officers, concierge and wardens. Bespoke specialist training is also sourced as required, for example, from the British Research Establishment on facades and Association of Specialist Fire Protection on firestopping. Records of training are maintained.
17. In preparation for the Building Safety Bill becoming law, we have appointed two Building Safety Managers. The Bill sets out the legal requirement for these posts and their duties. We are working with other London Boroughs through the London Councils to develop the role as guidance takes shape under the new regulator.
18. There are bi-monthly meetings in place with the LFB to discuss strategic and operational matters. The new Borough Commander has recently taken up the post. The LFB are initiating a number of operational exercises at our tallest blocks at Edward Woods and Charecroft estates to identify any issues proactively.
19. FRAG, fire safety and building safety action residents group, was set up in 2017 and is chaired and made up of a group of residents, many who live in tower blocks, to act as the voice of residents and who shape policy and decisions with officers. FRAG reports to a wider Housing Representatives Forum made of resident representatives from estates across the council. FRAG is currently working with officers on the format and content of the bespoke Resident's Strategy required under the Building Safety Bill for each relevant building.
20. The status of building compliance is reported to the Cabinet Member for Housing on a fortnightly basis, with a copy sent to corporate risk, and to the Strategic Leadership Team (including CEO) every six months.

fire incidents

21. The LFB is the busiest brigade in the country. In 2020, in H&F there were 313 fires: [London Fire Brigade Incident Records - London Datastore](#).
22. With over 17,000 properties there are routine fire incidents in our own approx. 20 per annum. All reported incidents are investigated by the team to establish learning in terms of cause and preventative measures from compartmentation to detection.

fire safety maintenance

23. All tenanted properties have internal smoke and heat detection. As part of the rolling Electrical Condition Installation Reporting (EICR) 5 year cycle, to check the hard wiring (electrical circuitry), all detectors are checked to ensure they are in date and upgraded as required. In addition, owing to changes in regulations, the engineer will upgrade the consumer unit (fusebox) and install additional

detection (see table 1) as required, which reduces further the likelihood of electrical fires and ensure early detection.

Table 1 – electrical upgrades since August 2020 to August 2021

Items	Q1 (August start)	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Consumer Units	77	223	244	257	801
Heat detectors	183 properties	634 properties	687	567	2,071
Smoke Detectors	681 for 278 properties	1273 for 716 properties	1307 for 797 Properties	1095	4,356

24. The Fire Safety Plus initiative, introduced by the Administration, provides a proactive free service to all residents (leaseholders too) to request an inspection by an officer of the internal fire safety arrangements. This includes a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) of white goods (e.g. fridges), with free replacement where necessary, a check of fire detection and the kitchen door as well as general advice.

Table 2 – fire safety plus inspections

Number of visits	922
Alarm Works	304
FED Installations	26
Kitchen/Internal Door Installations	95
PAT Completed	594

25. The Mechanical & Electrical team oversee maintenance and checks of communal firefighting systems as set out below, for period August 2020 to July 2021:

FFE (firefighting equipment)

- Services undertaken: 389 (100% of target)
- Number of Assets upgraded: 196 (from inspection)

Fire Panel / system testing programme

- Services undertaken: 20 (100% of target)
- Repair jobs raised: 69

AOV testing programme (smoke control systems)

- Services undertaken: 6 (100%) - 2 blocks in West Ken that are not on any schedule are to be upgraded following engineer report
- Repair jobs raised: 3

Emergency Lighting programme

- Services undertaken: 794 (100% of target)
- Repair jobs raised: 442 (from inspection/test)

Lightning Protection testing programme

- Services undertaken: 95 (100% of target)
- Repair jobs raised: 93 (from inspection)

26. An in-house fire safety works team sits within the DLO and undertakes compartmentation, firestopping, signage, fire detection and door installation and maintenance works. The works originate from the FRAs and fire safety plus

inspections. There is circa 7,000+ works programmed over the next two years. The team is working to a recognised system, and a percentage of works are independently verified to maintain assurance. All records are maintained for uploading to the asset management system.

27. The frequency of inspections of front entrance fire doors and communal fire doors is still to be determined through regulations. Across our estate we have circa 17,000 fire doors. The in-house team will be part of the team to maintain and inspect with records held on the asset management system. The team will shortly seek to attain recognised accreditation through a third party body.

fire safety capital works programme

28. A major compliance based programme signed off by Cabinet in 2018 continues to progress. See ward maps of works in appendix 2.
29. Works include the installation of 4,000+ enhanced fire doors in blocks of six storeys and above, sheltered and higher risk properties. Over 3,500 have been installed to date.
30. A borough wide LED programme to communal parts of our estates includes upgrade of emergency lighting that will employ cloud based technology to check and test it in accordance with regulations.
31. Sprinklers and evacuation alarm systems (in the event of an emergency – LFB activated) are being installed in five tower blocks (approx. 600 households), with others planned. Show flats are in place for residents to view and a H&F video made by officers demonstrating the installation process as well as a FAQ sheet to dispel any myths and address concerns and to ensure full engagement.
32. Converting dry wet risers in five towers over 50m in height is planned over the next 18 months including Roseford, Woodford, Linacre, Barton, Herbert Morrison and Jepson House.

building specific issues

33. Complex works are programmed at Edward Woods towers (Stebbing, Norlands and Poynter) which will see the replacement of the rainscreen cladding and removal of photovoltaic panels. Internal works, including the installation of sprinklers and evacuation alarm are underway. The buildings are staffed by concierge and fire wardens patrol every hour to ensure any risks (e.g. flammable materials such as mattresses etc) are resolved and reported immediately. Residents are routinely updated.
34. Historic design issues at Drake and Shackleton towers create a potential risk in exiting the internal rooms of a flat in an emergency. Works to address include the installation of sprinklers and a LD1 fire detection system throughout each flat; these are on-going.
35. Cheesemans – historic configuration of a number of properties creates an inner room scenario where residents must pass through a room, rather than a protected route, to exit in the event of a fire. Properties are currently fitted with suppression systems and fire detection in all rooms, but further works, alterations, are required to the interior layout; a pilot is underway.
36. The fire at Shepherds Court in Charecroft estate, 2016, resulted in the damage of seven flats. The blocks are not owned by the council, with two that sit above a shopping centre and the others next to a petrol garage; creating access issues for external work at height. Works have been delayed owing to the

complexity. Interim arrangements remain in place with fire wardens patrolling 24/7. A feasibility study is now complete, and we are commissioning the scoping and delivery of works. We continue to engage with residents and landlords.

37. Twenty seven towers have some form of combustible infill panel on the external façade, not cladding (see appendix 1). All properties have been risk assessed and are part of the capital programme for upgrade works over the next 18 month – 24 months.
38. It is worth noting that current national skilled labour shortages, material costs and supply chain issues are delaying projects nationally.

Conclusion

39. There is a robust fire safety management system in place, and it continues to develop and enhance as we gather detailed information on our buildings and internal assets, work through capital programmes and FRA actions.
40. The new Building Safety Bill is a gamechanger for compliance and though it brings with it many challenges and resource demands, both financial and expertise, it importantly prescribes requirements leaving no room for ambiguity. It gives residents who live in the buildings, in law, a mechanism to identify who is accountable, complete transparency on the technical details and maintenance regimes and a route to escalate.
41. H&F has committed to operate above minimum legal standards, to significant long-term investment in its buildings, to working with residents who know their homes and estates best, and to not re-charge leaseholders for fire safety improvement works.
42. Mazars are currently undertaking an independent audit of housing fire safety arrangements.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Spandrel panel update

Appendix 2 – programmed capital works including fire safety by ward

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 - Spandrel Panel Update.

Package 1

Block	Location	Risk	Status
Churchward House	West Kensington Estate	High	Spec confirmed, planning approval obtained, awaiting contract sign off.
Desborough House	West Kensington Estate	High	Spec confirmed, planning approval obtained, awaiting contract sign off.
Fairburn House	West Kensington Estate	High	Spec confirmed, planning approval obtained, awaiting contract sign off.
Lickey House	West Kensington Estate	High	Spec confirmed, planning approval obtained, awaiting contract sign off.

Package 2

Block	Location	Risk	Status
Barton House	Townmead Road	High	Spec confirmed. planning application submitted.
Drake Court	William Church Estate	High	Spec confirmed. planning application submitted.
Shackleton Court	William Church Estate	High	Spec confirmed. planning application submitted.
Barclay Close	Barclay Close	High	Spec confirmed. planning application submitted.

Package 3

Block	Location	Risk	Status
Michael Stewart House	Clement Attlee Estate	High	Spec confirmed. planning application submitted.

Package 4

Block	Location	Risk	Status
Verulam House	Hammersmith Grove W6 ONW	Low	Spec confirmed. planning application to be submitted.

Package 5

Block	Location	Risk	Status
Jepson House	Bulow Estate	Medium	Spec confirmed. planning application to be submitted.
Muscal House	Field Road/ Margavine	Medium	Spec confirmed. planning application to be submitted.
Standish House	1-28 St Peter's Grove	Low	Spec confirmed. planning application to be submitted.
Herbert Morrison House	Clement Attlee Estate	Medium	Spec confirmed. planning application to be submitted.

Complex Works

Block	Location	Risk	Status
Norland House	Edward Woods Estate	High	Feasibility/ Design stage
Poynter House	Edward Woods Estate	High	Feasibility/ Design stage
Stebbing House	Edward Woods Estate	High	Feasibility/ Design stage
Bush Court	Charecroft Estate	High	Feasibility/ Design stage
Roseford Court	Charecroft Estate	High	Feasibility/ Design stage
Shepherds Court	Charecroft Estate	High	Feasibility/ Design stage

Woodford Court	Charecroft Estate	High	Feasibility/ Design stage
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Block	Location	Risk	Status
Walham Green Court 112-126	Walham Green Court	Medium	Complete
Cox House	Field Road/Margravine	Low	Complete
Horton House	Field Road/Margravine	Low	Complete

Block	Location	Risk	Status
Ash Lodge	non estate	Unknown	unactioned
Cedar Lodge	non estate	Unknown	unactioned
Cobbs Hall	non estate	Unknown	unactioned

Appendix 2 – programmed capital works including fire safety by ward (draft)