

<u>MEETING</u> COUNCIL
<u>DATE AND TIME</u> TUESDAY 25TH JULY, 2017 AT 7.00 PM
<u>VENUE</u> HENDON TOWN HALL, THE BURROUGHS, LONDON NW4 4BG

Dear Councillors,

Please find enclosed Opposition Amendments in relation to the items below.

Item No	Title of Report	Pages
14.1	Administration Motion in the name of Councillor Richard Cornelius - Ensuring the safety of Barnet's tower block residents	3 - 4
14.5	Opposition Motion in the name of Councillor Ross Houston - Standards in the private rented sector	5 - 6

Kirstin Lambert, kirstin.lambert@barnet.gov.uk, 020 8359 2177

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Agenda Item 14.1 – Opposition amendment in the name of Cllr Ross Houston

Administration Motion in the name of Cllr Richard Cornelius – Ensuring the safety of Barnet's tower block residents

Delete all and replace with (additions in bold):

Council expresses shock and sadness at the tremendous loss of life at Grenfell Tower, North Kensington, on 14 June 2017. Members extend their condolences to all those who lost their homes, family, and friends in the fire, and recognise this was a catastrophe made all the more tragic for being avoidable.

Council notes the decision of the Housing Committee on 26 June 2017 to instruct Barnet Homes to carry out a review of fire safety measures in the Council's 28 high rise blocks and give consideration to the installation of sprinkler systems, improved fire and smoke alarm systems, and any other measures which may be required to meet best practice.

Council also welcomes the assurance given by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid to the chairman of the Local Government Association that 'funding will be made available to those councils that need to conduct work'. The £10 million set aside by the Housing Committee from the Housing Revenue Account was taken as an emergency measure, and concerns funds otherwise earmarked for capital projects and maintenance.

In light of the tragic events at Grenfell Tower, and the ongoing misery they have caused, Council calls on officers of the Council and Barnet Homes to complete their fire safety review with due care and attention at the earliest possible opportunity to provide reassurance to, and ensure the safety of, Barnet residents and to seek funding from Government.

Council requests that the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government asking for confirmation that fire safety works in council properties will be fully funded by the Government, and calling for the HRA borrowing cap to be lifted to enable councils to invest in any subsequent works that are required to ensure the safety of their housing stock.

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Agenda Item 14.5 – Opposition amendment in the name of Cllr Ross Houston

Opposition Motion in the name of Cllr Ross Houston – Standards in the private rented sector

Delete all and replace with (changes in bold):

Council is appalled that 72 Conservative MPs, who are also private landlords, voted to oppose Labour's amendment to the Housing & Planning Bill **on 12 January 2016** requiring private landlords to make their homes safe and "fit for human habitation".

Council is further appalled that two of these MPs were Mike Freer (Finchley & Golders Green) and Theresa Villiers (Chipping Barnet).

Council notes the Conservatives also blocked Karen Buck MP's Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Bill, through a filibuster by another Conservative landlord, Philip Davies MP.

Council notes that this Bill didn't replicate existing standards or add new duties to landlords it simply gave better redress to tenants, and it would have enabled tenants to enforce against landlords directly rather than relying on local authorities.

Council notes that local authorities can't enforce against themselves.

Council also notes that the Bill would have put into effect a recommendation from the Law Commission in the 1990's, which was strongly backed by the court of Appeal.

Council further notes that the Law Society and Housing Law Practitioners Association supported this Bill, and a new version has now received backing by Shelter, the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers and the Residential Landlords Association.

Council notes that since April 2015, local authorities are now required to obtain Secretary of State confirmation for any selective licensing scheme affecting more than 20% of private landlords in their area.

Council believes this is designed to prevent local authorities from introducing borough-wide licensing schemes that would help strengthen the working relationship between private landlords and councils, improve poor standards in the private rented sector, and ensure good landlords are supported.

Council believes that local authorities should have the freedom and flexibility to use all available tools and powers at their disposal to ensure that private rented homes are safe and "fit for human habitation", **and that, in the absence of a national scheme, local authorities are best placed to decide whether or not to introduce a selective or borough wide scheme in their area.**

Council therefore requests that the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition write to the Secretary of State calling for local authorities to either be allowed to introduce schemes or that Government introduce a national scheme.