

Questions and Speakers for Housing Committee – 26 June 2017

All the following items relate to the Item on Grenfell Tower:

<p>1. Is Barnet council going to put in place The BEST (rather than minimum) of health and safety measures that will stem from the results of their own as well as the government enquiry?</p> <p>Tirza Waisel</p>	<p>Yes. The approach to fire safety within dwellings and communal areas adopted by LBB and Barnet Homes already exceeds a minimum standard, and Housing Committee is being asked to commit to a programme of fire safety enhancements.</p>
<p>2. Would it be possible to see the paperwork from the estate inspections of the tower blocks in Barnet over the last six months particularly as regards fire safety and the necessary repairs done to communal areas as a result?</p> <p>Caroline Powls</p>	<p>To be sent information relating to periodically completed fire risk assessments and the actions arising from them for any Barnet Homes blocks please email this address TalkToUs@barnethomes.org or call 0800 389 5221.</p>
<p>3. I understand that Grenfell tower still hadn't had fire safety certification passed/signed off by the council following the works. What time frame does Barnet Council commit to in terms of fire safety certification of new works?</p> <p>Alexandra Ben-Yehuda</p>	<p>For new building/extensions works that fall under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 a <i>Full Plans - Building Regulations Application</i> is required. There is a statutory time limit for the issuing of decision notices relating to Full Plans Approvals (5 Weeks, which may be extended to 8 weeks with the approval of the applicant).</p> <p>Consultation with the Fire Brigade (LFB) will be undertaken during the appraisal period. The application must comply with building regulations including any determinations made by the Council to make the building compliant in line with these regulations. Only on satisfactory completion of all relevant works will a certificate of a 'Certificate of Completion' be issued. The Certificate of Completion is usually issued with 48hrs of a satisfactory completion inspection taking place. Any failure to comply with Building Regulations is subject to enforcement action.</p> <p>It should be noted that developers are not obliged to use the Council's Building Control service and may employ an 'Approved Inspector, as alternative to using the services of the Building Control department of LBB.</p>
<p>4. What are you doing to ensure that private</p>	<p>Please refer to the 'Grenfell Tower Fire Response' report which has been published</p>

<p>landlords are complying with the same high safety standards?</p> <p>Tirza Waisel</p>	<p>and will be considered at the 26th June Housing Committee.</p>
<p>5. I understand councils are not obliged to implement the fire brigade's recommendations after any surveys or visits. Will the council now commit to implementing all fire brigade recommendations</p> <p>Alexandra Ben-Yehuda</p>	<p>Housing Committee will decide this evening on a programme of investment in enhanced fire safety measures in consultation with the London Fire Brigade. Barnet Homes work in partnership with the London Fire Brigade and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing to this. As a part of this understanding we regularly undertake joint visits and surveys to our properties. During these surveys and visits we review our fire risk assessments and ensure any actions as a result of this are addressed. We will continue to work with the London Fire Brigade in this respect.</p>
<p>6. Having now committed to installing sprinklers in all its housing tower blocks, Croydon council have asked central government to release limits on local council borrowing in order to fund this essential measure. Will Barnet Council now do the same?</p> <p>Alexandra Ben-Yehuda</p>	<p>The Housing Committee on Monday, 26 June will consider proposals to invest up to £10m in measures to ensure that all of the borough's high-rise tower blocks meet best practice, including consideration of sprinkler systems, improved fire and smoke alarm systems and other measures.</p>
<p>7. Given that the Grenfell Tower disaster occurred partly as a result of the inefficiencies and unaccountability of an Arm's Length Management Organisation (in this case, Kensington and Chelsea Tenants Management Organisation), will Barnet now end the ALMO arrangement with Barnet Homes, and bring council housing management squarely back within the exclusive remit of the elected council?</p> <p>Alexandra Ben-Yehuda</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>A comprehensive evaluation of the housing service delivered through Barnet Homes was completed in February 2016. The review confirmed that services provided by Barnet Homes are overall of a good quality and provide value for money. High levels of tenant satisfaction are being achieved (79% in 2016/17) and it has good support from residents and councillors alike.</p> <p>The Council entered into a 10 year Management Agreement with Barnet Homes on the 1st April 2016. The Management Agreement requires that an Annual Delivery Plan is produced between the Council and Barnet Homes outlining the required outcomes and targets for each service year of the agreement. On-going oversight of performance against commitments and outcomes is provided by the Council's Performance and Contract Management Committee periodically. There is no intention for the Council to bring the management of council housing back within the remit of the Council.</p>

A request to speak on Members Items for up to 3 minutes has been received from Anne Clarke