

Replacing windows in Soho Housing stock with more energy efficient ones

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Dear Caroline,

Replacing windows in Soho Housing stock with more energy efficient ones

I have been contacted by a Soho Housing tenant who is concerned that, when the windows in their home needed to be refurbished last summer, they were not replaced with double-glazed units. They comment that this would make sense as it would save heat and cut down noise at the same time.

When they queried the decision, their Housing Officer responded by saying: “Unfortunately, we would not upgrade it for a double glazing, it will be repaired or if replacement is needed replaced like for like.”

The tenant asked me for advice on grants for social housing tenants or their landlords from Westminster Council, the GLA, central Government or the energy companies for help with energy-saving improvements, which I was able to do, but they were ineligible for any support.

Therefore, I am contacting you to query this decision by Soho Housing not to upgrade single-glazed windows to double glazing when they are being repaired or refurbished. This seems wrong, given the need to make UK housing stock more energy efficient to reduce carbon emissions, tackle the climate crisis and cut heating costs for tenants.

This decision also does not seem to accord with the Asset Management risks as outlined in the [Soho Housing Annual Report and Accounts 2022-2023](#), which state:

“Future investment plans will need to reflect expectations regarding longer-term sustainability of the portfolio, including warmth and energy efficiency, with Zero Carbon 2050 moving closer.”

Nor does this meet one of the four ambitions that makes up [Soho Housing’s five-year development strategy](#):

“Proactively manage the entire portfolio to improve quality, energy ratings and overall sustainability through regeneration, development and targeted disposals.”

Could I ask you to look into this issue and come back to me with a response?

Yours sincerely,

Sian Berry, Green Party London Assembly Member

Response from Soho Housing about replacing windows

Dear Sian,

Wherever possible we repair and maintain current components, and I cannot find a record that any windows were renewed in St James’ Residences last summer. I suspect the resident who has contacted you had their window repaired and at that time requested that they were replaced with double glazed units. This was refused as the windows did not need replacing.

St James’ Residences is in a conservation area so we must be very careful about any renewals or improvements that take place. I believe this is where the comment from the Housing Officer about ‘like for like’ replacements came from.

Soho Housing Association are absolutely committed to long-term sustainability of our stock and creating energy efficiency for our residents wherever possible. This must also be balanced with budgetary constraints and planning restrictions. We are not able to replace all single glazed windows with double glazed units when a repair is required. We are currently reviewing our portfolio and where improvements could be made in the future, this will then inform our asset management strategy.

If the resident is concerned about the windows in their home, I can ask a surveyor to reinspect and make any recommendations for further repairs if required. If they’re happy for their flat number to be shared, please let me know and we can get this arranged.

I hope I’ve been able to answer your queries.

Kind regards,

Caroline James-Ford

Operations Director

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