

MDA No.: 1686

Title: Letters to Ministers regarding Building Safety and Remediation

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the Fire Committee meeting on 14 January 2025, the Committee discussed the impact of the new building safety regime on the London Fire Brigade and the progress of remediation of London's multi-storey residential buildings and resolved that:

Authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to approve any output arising from the meeting.

- 1.2 Following consultation with the party Group Leaders, the Chair of the Fire Committee is asked to agree the letters to the Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire (Home Office) and the Minister for Local Growth and Building Safety (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government), as attached at **Appendix 1** and **Appendix 2**, regarding concerns raised in the meeting.

2. Decision

That the Chair of the Fire Committee, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, approves the letters to the Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire and the Minister for Local Growth and Building Safety regarding concerns related to building safety and remediation.

Assembly Member

I confirm that I do not have any disclosable pecuniary interests in the proposed decision and take the decision in compliance with the Code of Conduct for elected Members of the Authority.

The above request has my approval.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Hina Bokhari OBE AM, Chair of the Fire Committee

Date:

7 March 2025


3. Decision by an Assembly Member under Delegated Authority

Background and proposed next steps:

- 3.1 The exercise of delegated authority will be formally noted at the Fire Committee's next appropriate meeting.

Confirmation that appropriate delegated authority exists for this decision:

Signature (Committee Services):



Printed Name: Diane Richards

Date: 6 March 2025

Financial Implications: NOT REQUIRED

Note: Finance comments and signature are required only where there are financial implications arising or the potential for financial implications.

Signature (Finance): Not required

Printed Name: N/a

Date: N/a

Legal Implications:

The Chair of the Fire Committee has the power to make the decision set out in this report.

Signature (Legal): 

Printed Name: Rory McKenna Monitoring Officer

Date: 10.03.25

Email: Monitoringofficer@london.gov.uk

Supporting Detail / List of Consultees:

Susan Hall AM (Deputy Chairman), Anne Clarke AM and Zack Polanski AM

4. Public Access to Information

- 4.1 Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the FoIA, or the EIR and will be made available on the GLA Website, usually within one working day of approval.
- 4.2 If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.
- 4.3 **Note:** this form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral:

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive Information:

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA or EIR should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form? NO

Lead Officer / Author

Signature: Philippa Goffe

Printed Name: Philippa Goffe

Job Title: Senior Policy Adviser

Date: 6 March 2025

Countersigned by Executive Director:

Signature:



Printed Name: Helen Ewen

Date: 7 March 2025

LONDON ASSEMBLY



Hina Bokhari OBE AM
Chair of the Fire Committee

Alex Norris MP

Minister for Local Growth and Building Safety
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

(Sent by email)

11 March 2025

Dear Minister,

We sought participation from your officials in the London Assembly's Fire Committee (the Committee) meeting on 14 January 2025, but they were unable to attend. I am therefore writing to you to share some of the concerns and questions for Government arising from that meeting that we had hoped to discuss with them. The meeting examined the impact of the new building safety regime on the London Fire Brigade, and progress of remediation of London's multi-storey residential buildings.

Since we held our meeting, the Government has responded to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 2 recommendations. The Committee welcomes this response and its agreement to take forward all the recommendations. But this response is only the start; it is crucial we don't miss this opportunity to do everything we can to ensure a lasting legacy of safety from the Grenfell tragedy.

I am setting out below the key areas where clarification/resolution is required and would ask for your response.

Building safety regime - allowance under regulations to take account of local variations, i.e., London Plan

The Committee was concerned to hear from the London Fire Commissioner (LFC), Andy Roe KFSM, of a "disconnect" between the new building safety regime and the fire safety priorities set out by the Mayor in the London Plan.

The LFC identified a need for “an alignment between regional plans and the national legislation.”¹ The Committee is concerned that this disconnect could be used by developers to potentially undermine fire safety in London’s higher risk buildings (HRBs). We also heard from Tim Galloway of the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) that the BSR keeps its processes under review. Also, that the BSR is regularly speaking with Government about these kinds of issues.²

1. Will the government consider providing for local variation of the building safety regime, particularly the London Plan?

Remediation - enforcement

The Committee is very aware of the high number of unremediated high rise buildings across the capital, and supports action to speed up remediation, a matter of longstanding interest. We were therefore keen to hear about blockages to remediation and action that could be taken to enforce this.

The Committee heard how pursuing court action can be protracted and expensive for LFB and other parties. Deputy Commissioner Charlie Pugsley told the Committee about recent court cases which resulted in “record-breaking fines” of £1 million for a care home and £0.5 million pounds for a local authority. But he pointed out that these cases took two to three years to complete.³

We note that Government has recognised some of the additional costs arising from enforcement action by providing for a remediation enforcement support fund. But, we heard from LFB that this would not cover their costs.⁴

The Committee supports the view of the LFC that using penalty charge notices would “save the burden of bureaucracy, cost, and legal fees that go with it, and place the pressure back into the built environment ...to meet the need of the new regime.”⁵

The Committee also supports the potential for buildings to be seized in cases of non-engagement or refusal to action remediation. As the LFC told us, “It is removing the asset that carries the greatest threat in the end for the people who are the most recalcitrant.”⁶ We note that the LFC has already raised these options with your officials and told us he had “very positive engagement”.⁷ The Committee strongly supports the adoption of such measures to speed up action to remediate buildings and reduce costs for LFB.

- 2. Is the government considering making provision for fixed penalty notices and/or seizure of buildings where there is non-compliance or non-engagement? If yes, when would you expect to action this?**
- 3. What discussions have taken place on seizure of assets where issues of building safety liability are not being acted on by building owners?**

¹ [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p4

² [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p5

³ [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p19

⁴ [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p19

⁵ [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p6

⁶ [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p18

⁷ [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p6

4. Has the government considered how an enforcement regime could be made self-financing via hypothecation of the fines?

National strategy to develop a skilled workforce

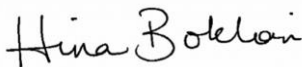
Throughout our meeting we heard about the shortage of qualified people across the sector, particularly fire safety engineers. This is adding to delays in both remediation and new developments, with all parts of the sector requiring input from a limited pool of qualified people. The Government's response to the GTI Phase 2 recommendations include commitments to regulate fire engineers and to support and promote Masters degree courses to help increase numbers. This is particularly welcome. However, the Committee would like to see a national strategy to build the pool of skilled people across the sector, as called for by London Fire Brigade.

5. Beyond the commitment to implement the GTI Phase 2 recommendations, how is the government addressing the need for a skilled workforce to take forward the various building safety remediation issues?

6. Has the Government considered developing a national skills strategy to support quicker remediation and a more efficient building approval process?

I would be grateful if you could please respond to the Committee by 8 April 2025. Your response should be copied to Philippa Goffe, the Committee's Senior Policy Adviser (philippa.goffe@london.gov.uk).

Yours,



Hina Bokhari OBE AM
Chair of the Fire Committee

LONDON ASSEMBLY

City HallKamal Chunchie Way
London
E16 1ZE

Tel: 020 7983 4000

www.london.gov.uk

Hina Bokhari OBE AM
Chair of the Fire Committee

Dame Diana Johnson
Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire
Home Office

(Sent by email)

11 March 2025

Dear Dame Diana,

We sought participation by officials from your Department in the London Assembly's Fire Committee (the Committee) on 14 January 2025, but they were unable to attend. I am therefore writing to you to share some of the concerns and questions for Government arising from that meeting that we had hoped to discuss with them. In this meeting, the Committee examined the impact of the new building safety regime on the London Fire Brigade, and progress of remediation of London's multi-storey residential buildings.

In the Committee's meeting we heard concerns raised by Andy Roe KFSM, London Fire Commissioner (LFC), about the proposed new residential personal emergency evacuation plans (RPEEPs) for vulnerable residents. Given the large number of high-rise and higher risk buildings in London, this is an issue the Committee has had a longstanding interest in.

When the Committee asked the LFC about the Government proposals for residential PEEPs (RPEEPs) he said he welcomed them "in as far as how much they have moved from where we started."¹ He added:

"[W]e think it is much better than where we were but we will need to understand all the detail that lies beneath it and how it will be practically implemented before we can say

¹ [London Assembly Fire Committee Transcript 14 January 2025](#), p29

reasonably what parts of it we think are really going to operate well and other bits that seem like they might need to go a bit further.”²

The Committee shares the LFC’s view that these proposals do mark a step forward. Yet, there are areas of uncertainty on which we wish to seek clarification:

- **The role of the responsible person:** We heard from the LFC that clarification was required on the role of the responsible person “in the context of what decisions they are enabled to take, what their responsibilities are and then how we might regulate and enforce against it”.³ The consultation response identified that a toolkit for responsible persons would be developed. This toolkit needs to be introduced urgently.
- **Funding:** Alongside supporting the rollout of these new proposals for RPEEPs, LFB also has substantial new responsibilities under the new building safety regime. We heard from the LFC that: “We need to know – really as a basic premise – what scale of funding sits beneath this ... because there are 1.2 million disabled Londoners. If we think only ten per cent of those live across high and medium-rise environment, then that is still 120,000 people who might need support.”⁴ Without adequate funding there is a risk that these new plans – laudable as they may be – will not come forward; or this work could ultimately come at a cost to other areas of LFB’s responsibilities.
- **Enforcement:** We heard from the LFC that he wants “to understand how we can usefully be part of the enforcement of any regulation that follows, again, within the context of another duty placed upon us. We fully accept that duty; it is very important to us.”⁵

The Committee welcomes the Government response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report and the agreement to take forward action on all the commitments. The Committee welcomes the commitment to legislate for RPEEPs later in 2025 and provide funding to social housing providers. However, it would like to know:

1. **How and when you will consult Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) on regulations and guidance for RPEEPs?**
2. **Whether you will consult LFB specifically given the significant number of buildings in London that will be impacted by RPEEPs?**
3. **When the toolkit for responsible persons in RPEEPs will be published?**
4. **What funding is being considered to support RPEEPs and how this will be applied across the different housing sectors?**
5. **How the Government envisions enforcement of RPEEPs and what role is envisioned for FRSs?**

² [\(Public Pack\)Minutes Appendix 1 Fire Committee Transcript January 2025 Minutes Supplement for Fire Committee, 14/01/2025 10:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) p29

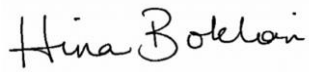
³ [\(Public Pack\)Minutes Appendix 1 Fire Committee Transcript January 2025 Minutes Supplement for Fire Committee, 14/01/2025 10:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) p30

⁴ [\(Public Pack\)Minutes Appendix 1 Fire Committee Transcript January 2025 Minutes Supplement for Fire Committee, 14/01/2025 10:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) p29

⁵ [\(Public Pack\)Minutes Appendix 1 Fire Committee Transcript January 2025 Minutes Supplement for Fire Committee, 14/01/2025 10:00 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#) p29

I would be grateful if you could please respond to the Committee by 8 April 2025. Your response should be copied to Philippa Goffe, the Committee's Senior Policy Adviser (philippa.goffe@london.gov.uk).

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hina Bokhari". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'H' and 'B'.

Hina Bokhari OBE AM
Chair of the Fire Committee