

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE  
Appointment Centre Room 10 & 11, Town Hall, Romford  
28 August 2024 (7.00 - 8.15 pm)**

**Present:**

**COUNCILLORS**

<b>Conservative Group</b>	David Taylor (Chairman) and Damian White
<b>Havering Residents' Group</b>	Philippa Crowder, Laurance Garrard and Robby Misir
<b>Labour Group</b>	Matthew Stanton
<b>East Havering Residents Group</b>	Darren Wise

The Chairman reminded Members of the action to be taken in an emergency.

**58 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillor John Wood and Ray Best. +Councillor Damian White substituted for Councillor Best.

The Sub-Committee also received an apology from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration Councillor Graham Williamson who had been invited to the meeting.

**59 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Damian White disclosed a Non-Pecuniary Interest during discussions on the Waterloo Road & Queens Street development - by virtue as the former Council Leader.

**60 MINUTES**

The minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 16 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**61 VERBAL UPDATE - BANK HOLIDAY REFUSE COLLECTION**

The Sub-Committee received a verbal presentation from the Director of Environment regarding the waste collection issues on the 6th of May Bank

holiday. Apologies were extended for the disruption caused to the service and inconvenience to residents.

The Sub-Committee was informed that Urbaser, the waste management company, had been taken over by FCC. It was stated while some changes were anticipated, many of the senior staff from Urbaser remained in place.

The Director of Environment informed Members that discussions with FCC regarding contractual adjustments, such as parent company guarantees, were ongoing. Officers assured the sub-committee of its continued partnership with FCC.

It was mentioned that previously, under Serco, a catch-up service operated, with collections delayed by a day after bank holidays but under the current contract, collections occur on bank holiday Mondays (except during Christmas/New Year) to simplify the process for residents. Communications were consistently issued to inform residents of this arrangement.

The Sub-Committee was informed that a misalignment in terms and conditions for waste collection staff on certain bank holidays led to the disruption. During the transition from Serco to Urbaser (now FCC), due diligence regarding the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) was conducted by the contractor. However, the terms for bank holiday collections had not been finalised.

It was stated that previous bank holiday collections were completed successfully, ongoing consultations about contractual changes during the Easter period were not fully resolved by the May Bank holiday. This led to some staff, with union support, opposing the new terms, which resulted in insufficient resources on 6th May 2024.

The Director of Environment stated that the Council was informed of the issue at short notice, with efforts been made to minimise resident inconvenience by updating communications through the call centre, website and other channels. The information that was sent to residents informed that collections would be delayed by one day due to the shortage of resources for the 6th May rounds.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the Service worked proactively with its communications team to address the situation and ensure residents were informed about the adjusted schedule. The situation underscored the importance of finalising contractual agreements during contractor transitions to prevent similar issues in the future.

In response to a Member enquiry, on resident communication and disruption. It was stated that messages were sent through the call centre and other channels to inform residents of the disruption to waste collection services. It was acknowledged that the disruption was unexpected and caused inconvenience, especially as the service was relatively new.

With regards performance management and monitoring, Members were informed that a comprehensive performance and client management system was in place to monitor service delivery. Issues during the disruption period were escalated to the UK Operations Director for Urbaser (now FCC) and discussed in regular client management meetings.

It was stated that these meetings addressed service failures, mitigation strategies, and contractual provisions for rectifying issues, including performance deductions and monetary penalties. Since the May incident, no further issues were reported. Regular checks with the Urbaser management team confirmed the resolution of previous issues.

Members noted backup plans, including agency staff and additional resources, were in place to address any future challenges, such as staff sickness.

Waste collection service performance was measured by missed collections per 100,000. The service reported a figure of 38 per 100,000, equating to a success rate of over 99%.

It was noted that this performance was significantly better than that of the previous contractor, Serco, which had a missed collection rate more than double the current figure during its latter stages. Despite the improvements, it was noted that missed collections were still being reported by residents. Efforts were ongoing with Urbaser to reduce these incidents.

The Sub-Committee was reassured that performance indicators across all services under the integrated contract, including waste collection, street cleansing, litter removal, and bin emptying, were being actively monitored and discussed.

A question was raised regarding the performance rate of 99% achieved by Urbaser compared to the earlier performance of Serco during their active contract period (prior to extensions). Officers did not have the exact data on Serco's performance during that time but agreed to forward the information to the committee for comparison.

It was noted that Urbaser was still in the early stages of the contract, with a period of mobilisation during which performance indicators were being developed. Officers offered to provide performance data for Serco's last two years alongside Urbaser's current performance for a more detailed comparison.

A request was made for data on graffiti removal, including how much graffiti was being removed across the borough and the responsiveness of the service. Officers offered to return at a later date with comprehensive key performance indicator (KPI) data once the reporting suite had been fully developed.

A Member requested for statistics on missed collections, such as by bin type (e.g. recycling bins, green bins at specific locations like New Green and

Park Rise). Officers confirmed that it would be possible to provide this breakdown and agreed to supply the committee with the latest information. Officers assured the Sub-Committee of their willingness to return with detailed performance reports on various aspects of the integrated contract, including waste collection, graffiti removal, and other services.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the update.

## 62 **HOUSING RESIDENT SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received an update report on the position of Housing Services Resident Safety and Compliance programmes against its statutory and regulatory duties under the Building Safety Act 2022 from the Assistant Director of Housing Property Services.

The report provided an update on the Services current activities on the approximately 9,400 homes and 2,500 leasehold properties, including around 15 tower blocks and over 1,000 medium- and low-rise blocks. housing programs that the Council owns and manages.

The Assistant Director of Housing Property Services explained that as a landlord, LBH fulfilled its statutory duty to ensure that each of the properties was safe and met all relevant statutory requirements. This included regular testing and servicing of equipment, adhering to consumer standards set by the regulator for social housing, and compliance with the Building Safety Act as mandated by the building safety regulator.

Members noted that appendix one of the report detailed the compliance features, both old and new. The first heading related to Fire Safety. It was noted that there were no "switch on" notices applications received, which was positive, and there were also no outstanding logs. The Services remained in regular contact regarding the overall safety of everything.

The report also noted that fire risk assessments were conducted on a risk-based cycle, typically between one to three years, and at present, 100% of the properties had an updated assessment. The report also highlighted that dry riser testing was up to date, with 100% of the necessary certifications in place.

In terms of fire alarm testing, as of last month, 95.45% of alarms were tested in July. The only block outstanding at that time was the recently completed New Green and Path Rise, which had since been added to the schedule, and the fire alarms were tested there on the 6th of August, bringing the figure back up to 100%. This update confirmed that all was in good order.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the Service needed to register some of its buildings with the Building and Safety Regulator due to their high-risk

status. Fifteen buildings, defined as being over seven stories or at least 18 meters high, were registered with the building safety regulator. Additionally, in May the Building and Safety Regulator building safety regulator requested building safety case files for five of these buildings. The Council successfully submitted these files to the Building and Safety Regulator and were awaiting the outcome of these submissions.

Communal door checks had been undertaken in 13 out of the 15 high-rise buildings. The two remaining buildings, Park Rise and another unnamed building, were not yet occupied, and door checks were scheduled to commence once they were occupied.

For flat entrance doors and general needs, door checks were completed in 244 properties, but 298 properties encountered multiple no-access issues, indicating that access had been attempted three times or more. This issue was now being addressed as part of the KMT contract, which was also part of the Landlord's gas safety record and inspections. The KMT contract allowed for simultaneous door and gas safety inspections, which was intended to improve access rates.

Members noted that the new contract began this month, and 467 properties were booked for checks in August. It was hoped that the remaining checks would be completed by the end of this financial year.

In terms of fire safety inspections for shelters and hostel schemes, the Service achieved 100% compliance. In response to new legislation introduced following the Greenfield inquiry, specifically the Fire Safety Regulations 2022, it was stated that the service implemented visual monitoring regimes. These included quarterly inspections of communal doors and manual checks of flat entrance doors.

The service also adopted a new tool that enabled us to create 3D models of each high-rise building, allowing us to identify and document service isolation points and other critical information effectively. The tool was shared with the building safety regulator as part of the building safety case files. Additionally, the Service regularly shared information concerning any mandatory occurrences as part of our engagement strategy, which extended access across relevant sectors and to residents. The tool functioned similarly to Google Maps, allowing users to navigate around the building in a 3D environment, which was beneficial.

The report detailed that the Service was ahead in terms of gas compliance and safety. All gas compliance must undergo annual inspections, resulting in the issuance of a landlord gas safety certificate. As of July, the service had conducted 8,573 gas safety checks. Only one of the 8,574 properties remained unchecked due to the resident being hospitalised. The remaining inspection was carried out on the 6th of August, bringing the total compliance in gas safety to 100%.

Gas carburising, which involves properties without individual boilers, also achieved 100% compliance. This included tests on parts of the work within the property and a visual check on appliances such as cookers and other gas supplies. In terms of communal gas servicing, compliance was also at 100%, which was positive.

On electrical components and safety, social rented properties require an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) every 10 years, the Service adopted the practice of every 5 years for its social rented properties to align with best practices. It was stated that 9,309 were completed out of 9,321 EICR inspections, which equates to 99.87% compliance. The 12 remaining inspections were due to access issues, with one excess injunction being granted by the courts.

The service completed 835 inspections, including 135 emergency lighting tests. These tests also achieved 100% compliance, with 800 of the 835 inspections completed this month.

The report indicated that with regards Protection planning and portable appliance testing (PAT), 100% compliance was maintained.

Members were informed on the Lift compliance and safety, monthly inspections that were conducted along with planned maintenance regimes. New certificates were provided by the council's Insurers to ensure compliance with Lift maintenance. It was stated monthly maintenance inspections, annual servicing, and annual insurance certification inspections all achieved 100% compliance.

Legionella compliance, achieved 100% compliance in both monthly and bi-annual monitoring with all required risk assessments and monitoring carried out.

The report indicated that the Service dedicated a section in the compliance report for properties rented from private landlords and occupied by Havering residents. Officers explained that the service maintained a duty of care to residents and adopted a more rigorous approach to monitoring and addressing instances where landlords failed to provide requested information.

The Assistant Director stated that significant progress had been made in aligning systems to efficiently collect and monitor data. The figures presented in the report allowed the service to track ongoing improvements whilst also reflecting compliance.

The Sub-Committee was informed that the service was in the process of reviewing relevant key documents to ensure that all compliance areas were supported by contracts that delivered high performance and accommodated emerging technological advancements.

The Sub-Committee was informed that following recently completed the renewal of the painting maintenance contract, the focus would now shift to renewing the electrical services contract, along with other compliance-related contracts such as asbestos surveying, removal, fire risk

assessments, fire safety works, all types of general services, and lift maintenance.

In response to a Member question, on the split between MEARS and K&T regarding the ease of access and the conjunction with gas safety measures. The query was raised about why K&T was not assigned to handle all inspections, especially considering the significant split and the mixed tenure of developments involving some Leasehold and some general needs. It was suggested that the decision might relate to capacity and the desire to reflect different tenure mixes. There was also mention of a trial with painting to try and improve the figures, and the need to compare two different rooms to see how each contractor was performing, which would be evaluated in the future.

In terms of door checks within communal areas, questions were raised about the compliance rate of doors following inspections and the timescales to bring those not in compliance up to standard. It was stated that if a door, particularly a leasehold door, was found non-compliant, the cost of replacement was being covered by the council rather than charging the leaseholder, to ensure safety. This approach was explained as part of maintaining a secure environment.

In response to a question on timescale for bringing non-compliant doors, such as a front door in a block, into compliance. Officers responded that whether noted during a fire assessment check, reported by Housing or Estate staff, or brought to attention by a resident, the aim was to address all such issues by the end of the financial year.

In addition, it was stated that Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections were being conducted, with around four thousand of these inspections planned. These inspections were designed to pick up any issues like non-compliant doors, which would then be referred to the maintenance team and prioritized accordingly.

A question was raised regarding the response times for priority one repairs, particularly concerning the replacement of doors. It was stated that the target was to replace such doors within a week, although this was dependent on gaining access to the premises.

Further discussion revolved around the completion of compliance rates following inspections. It was suggested that it would be useful to know how many of these repairs met the target of one-week post-inspection. This information was deemed essential for future planning and adjustments. Concerning the testing of emergency lighting, it was explained that the main test involved ensuring the lighting was operational and that the backup batteries functioned correctly during power outages.

In response to a question about wayfinding signage and its compliance, especially in relation to fire risk assessments. It was noted that signs, particularly those indicating fire exits, were sometimes vandalized or removed. The importance of maintaining compliance with wayfinding

signage was emphasised, and it was confirmed that this was part of the Building Safety case file, with a program in place to address any deficiencies.

Members discussed the issue how residents were informed about building safety, including evacuation strategies and how to make complaints. Officers mentioned that a specific software, Twin Edit, was trialled which allowed residents to access information about their specific building. Additionally, booklets had been distributed to residents in high-risk buildings, providing key information and directing them to further resources online and from the London Fire Brigade. Roadshows had also been conducted to engage directly with residents, allowing them to ask questions and express concerns about fire safety.

Further deliberation on Lift compliance. It was clarified that not all lifts go into what is known as firefighting mode when the fire alarm is activated. This mode involves the lifts descending to the ground floor and then being operable by the Fire Service. A lift replacement programme was underway, partly to ensure that more lifts could support this functionality, including ensuring a separate electrical supply for such lifts. It was noted that the testing regime for lifts with firefighting capabilities differed from others, and further technical details could be provided separately if needed.

Members discussed fire risk assessments, particularly regarding fire paths and removable bollards used for access in some developments. The frequency of the testing and compliance rates, such as whether they could be unlocked or securely placed into the ground, were questioned. It was acknowledged that specific statistics and compliance rates needed to be clarified and would be addressed in the future.

In reply to a question regarding the 15 high-risk buildings that had completed all necessary case filings, which was positive news. Inquiries were made about whether these buildings would meet current standards if they underwent 3DWS certification and what remediation work was still required. It was explained that while the buildings were generally safe according to the building safety case files, some areas needed improvement through a planned action programme. Officers stated the programme was designed to bring the buildings up to current standards, considering that building regulations might have been different at the time of their construction. Temporary evacuation measures were also in place as part of these safety efforts.

The Sub-Committee **noted** the update report with assurances that efforts were ongoing to actively engage with residents, especially those in high-risk buildings, to enhance their safety and compliance awareness.

63 **WATERLOO AND QUEEN STREET, PHASE , BLOCK 1 AND 2 UPDATE**

The Director Housing & Property and the Senior Regeneration Manager provided the Sub-committee an update on the evolving changes to the Part



B (Fire Safety) of the Building Regulations and the implications for the Waterloo and Queens Street regeneration sites.

It was noted that the Bridge Close development scheme had recently been amended to include a dual-staircase design, which required substantial redesign. The planning approval process would likely need to restart which would cause further delays.

The complexity of the Bridge Close site, including the potential need for a Planning Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) was highlighted as a contributing factor to the delays.

The Sub-committee was informed that despite losing some units in the redesign, the scheme remained viable from a regeneration perspective, aligning with anticipated regulatory changes.

The evolving building regulations and lack of detailed guidance under BS 9991 were discussed as challenges. The Service had proactively redesigned schemes like Bridge Close to include dual staircases in anticipation of these changes.

The Senior Regeneration Manager explained that while Bridge Close was in a good position due to early adjustments, other schemes with existing single-staircase designs might face more significant delays and redesign requirements.

The Sub-Committee agreed to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting due to the nature of the business and the potential disclosure of exempt information under Paragraph 3 of part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**Chairman**