

Minutes

CORPORATE RESOURCES & INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE

4 March 2025



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors John Riley (Chair), Adam Bennett (Vice-Chair), Kaushik Banerjee, Farhad Choubedar, Stuart Mathers (Opposition Lead), Elizabeth Garelick and Narinder Garg</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Anisha Teji – Senior Democratic Services Officer, Kirstie Newham – Emergency Management & Response Service Manager, Gary Penticost – Director of Operational Assets, Richard Webb – Director of Community Safety & Enforcement, Mark Preston – Private Sector Housing Officer</p>
57.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence received.</p>
58.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
59.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting from 11 February 2025 be approved subject to a minor correction in the attendee list.</p>
60.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART I WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED AS PART II WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that agenda items 5-8 would be heard in Part I and agenda item 9 would be heard in Part II.</p>
61.	<p>BUILDING SAFETY STRATEGY - ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Director of Operational Assets introduced the Annual Monitoring Report on Building Safety Strategy. The report provided an update on the Building and Tenancy Safety Strategy for Council-owned residential dwellings, including high-rise buildings. It outlined the implementation of the Building Safety Act 2022, which became fully enforceable in October 2023, requiring landlords of high-risk residential buildings to have safety measures in place. The strategy included an operational delivery plan for 2022-2025, collaboration with the London Fire Brigade, and various safety measures such as fire risk assessments, fire door replacements, and sprinkler system installations. The report also highlighted the Housing Management Service's draft</p>

strategy for ensuring compliance with safety regulations and maintaining resident safety.

Members enquired about the strategy specifically if there were any major differences in the targets compared to the previous year. Officers explained that there were no major differences but some items appeared stagnant and were under review. The documents were updated quarterly. There were also further queries about the measures in place for fire safety, to which officers detailed the various elements such as pre-design, design, planning, building control, maintenance and management for tenancy.

The Committee sought further information on human behaviour and how this impacted fire safety in high rise buildings. Officers highlighted the efforts made by the police and anti-social behaviour team to ensure robust security access and prevent non residents from entering the buildings. The use of technology and early detection intelligence to prevent initial fire incident was also explained to Members.

In response to questions about the stay- put policy and its effectiveness in the event of fires, it was noted that all high-rise buildings had been assessed as low risk and that the stay-put policy was still advised unless there was a fire in the property, in which case tenants should evacuate. The importance of tenant engagement and awareness was also stressed, with dedicated tenancy engagement officers in regular communications with tenants to address any issues.

Clarification was sought on the fire door replacement programme, specifically the number of door sets replaced. It was confirmed that a total of 5674 door sets had been replaced and that the programme was ongoing, with a target completion date of 2026. Further information was also provided on the purchase of new properties and the fire safety measures in place for these buildings.

During Member discussions, the Committee noted the involvement of the London Fire Brigade in resident education and awareness. It was confirmed that the fire service regularly visited high-rise blocks to familiarise themselves with the building layout and provide free smoke alarms and other safety information. The importance of raising awareness about the dangers of bringing hazardous items into buildings was also discussed.

The Committee thanked officers for their work and the report.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee noted the supporting information for Fire Safety and Operational Delivery Plan.

62. **EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE (GRENFELL TOWN INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS) PRESENTATION** *(Agenda Item 6)*

The Emergency Management & Response Service Manager provided the Committee with an overview of Hillingdon's progress in implementing key resilience recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2.

Members heard that a Red-Amber-Green (RAG) assessment was used to evaluate the status of various recommendations, focusing on areas such as LLAG guidance, training for key officers, humanitarian assistance plans, resilience as an organisational responsibility, electronic resident registration, temporary accommodation, financial assistance, key worker arrangements, and communication with impacted residents.

	<p>The presentation highlighted the challenges faced and the actions taken to address these recommendations, with a particular emphasis on the need for clearer guidance, structured training, improved communication and better coordination across all services areas.</p> <p>During Member discussions, the financial difficulties of all local authorities and the reliance on digital processes was noted. The swift response of the London Borough of Hillingdon during the pandemic was discussed where staff quickly turned into emergency workers. Officers emphasised that risk should be based on consequence not just likelihood and there was a need to challenge central government funding. Suggestions to be best prepared for serious incidents included thinking out of the box initiatives like emergency centres training for all local authority staff, and regional and mutual aid procedures.</p> <p>In response to questions about the types of emergencies that could be encountered and the scale of response required, it was explained that emergencies varied in size, scale and complexity and arrangements were designed to be flexible and scalable.</p> <p>Further information was sought on the arrangements for displaced residents during major incidents and the impact of emergencies on housing. The importance of mutual assistance between boroughs and the need for a coordinated response was emphasised. The importance of investment and resources to develop community resilience was highlighted.</p> <p>The Committee echoed the importance of embedding resilience in employees. It was noted that key workers came from various employment sectors, not only social care and there was a need to identify and deploy key workers effectively during emergencies.</p> <p>The Committee concluded with a discussion on the importance of cultural change within the London Borough of Hillingdon to prioritise emergency planning and resilience. Leadership and decision-making in driving this change was stressed and the need for a collective effort across local authorities to enhance emergency preparedness.</p> <p>The Committee thanked the Emergency Management & Response Service Manager for their presentation and commended their drive.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the information in the presentation.</p>
63.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.</p>
64.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>The Committee discussed the work programme and noted CIPFA'S involvement in reviewing and supporting the finance team to build capacity and address audit report recommendations. It was suggested whether updates on financial improvements based on these recommendations could be provided to the Select Committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the updates to the work programme be noted and agreed.</p>

65.	<p>BUILDING SAFETY PROGRAMME - FIRE SAFETY IN PRIVATE SECTOR MID AND HIGH-RISE BLOCKS OF FLATS (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p><i>The reports in Part 2 of this agenda are not for publication because they involve the disclosure of information in accordance with Section 100(A) and Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), in that they contain exempt information and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.</i></p> <p>The Director of Community Safety & Enforcement and the Private Sector Housing Officer provided the Committee with an update on the Building Safety Programme (BSP) initiated by the London Borough of Hillingdon to improve fire safety in mid and high-rise blocks of flats following the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Members heard about the progress made, including the identification and investigation of high-rise and mid-rise buildings, the enforcement actions taken, and the challenges faced due to funding constraints. The report also highlighted the legislative context, the role of various stakeholders, and the potential impact of the government's Remediation Acceleration Plan.</p> <p>The Committee agreed that a redacted version of the Report should be released in the public domain in recognition of the significant public interest in the subject matter.</p> <p>RESOVLED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noted the contents of the report. 2. Noted the need to press central Government to continue providing New Burdens funding for this important project. 3. Resolved to release a version of the report, as agreed by the Committee and Cabinet Member, into the public domain for transparency
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 9.28 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji, Senior Democratic Services Officer on ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk or 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.