

Minutes

PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

6 March 2024



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Keith Burrows (Chair), Darran Davies, Elizabeth Garelick, Kamal Preet Kaur, Peter Money (Opposition Lead) and Philip Corthorne (in place of Steve Tuckwell)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Gary Penticost, Director of Operational Assets Rod Smith, Head of Housing Management Lisa Mayo, Road Safety & School Travel Manager Danielle Stanley-Watts, School Travel & Road Safety Officer Anisha Teji, Senior Democratic Services Officer</p>
62.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies from absence were received from Councillor Steve Tuckwell with Councillor Philip Corthorne substituting. Apologies for absence were also received from Councillor Alan Chapman.</p>
63.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
64.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on 8 February 2024 be agreed as an accurate record.</p>
65.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part I.</p>
66.	<p>BUILDING SAFETY UPDATE (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Director of Operational Assets and Head of Housing Management introduced the report on Building Safety Updates which provided details on the Building Safety Strategy for Council owned residential dwellings including High Rise Buildings.</p> <p>An update was provided following extensive work programmes undertaken since the Grenfell tragedy in June 2017. Members heard that the government had reformed building safety regulations to improve building and fire safety across residential tower</p>

blocks including changes to the design and development phase, construction stag, building control sign off and occupancy. The Committee was taken through the report and the various appendices including Fire Door information packs for residents, the Building Safety Strategy, High Rise Blocks Evacuation Strategy and a Building Safety Case.

The Committee was informed that there was a proactive management response that focussed on human behaviours, what people brought into buildings and the safety measures in place to prevent fires.

In response to queries around the refusal of sprinkler systems and fire doors, it was explained that installation had been completed right up to the entry of the properties. Extensive consultations had been undertaken with residents highlighting the benefits of the system however there were still some residents that were reluctant to install sprinkler systems. Some residents believed that the sprinkler system would impact the whole building if they were triggered or they did not want them due to cosmetic reasons. It was noted that there were also refusals around smoke and heat detectors.

It was highlighted that Hillingdon was a leading borough in providing free fire doors to ensure the safety of buildings. There had only been a few refusals for the installation of fire doors, however the fire doors programme was being enforced regardless as they were a key protection measure. The same safety measures were also being applied to sheltered housing accommodation and low and medium rise buildings.

Members heard that councils across the board were collaborating closely, particularly through the London Directors team. The Fire Safety Board had been established and key officers were a part of this. Shared practices, designs, and approaches were exchanged between different councils to meet the common objective of increasing fire safety. While some councils faced larger challenges, compliance with safety regulations was now mandatory and officers were satisfied about Hillingdon's level of compliance. It was anticipated that the legislation around fire safety was expected to extend to all buildings, regardless of height as the goal was to take all reasonable steps to ensure building safety.

Safety packs tailored to individual properties had been delivered to residents, but further consideration was needed for those with mobility issues or vulnerabilities. The Committee heard that a considerable programme of hand delivering information packs and in person structured conversations with residents across high rise buildings had recently taken place.

The Committee was advised that an update would be provided on the Ocella Building Control System.

It was confirmed that there were dry risers in every tower block and they were serviced by the Council every six months. Any issues were reported to the term contractor. Automatic air vents were also a requirement on high rise buildings to disperse or remove smoke.

In response to the policy prohibiting E-scooter and mobility scooter charging within stairwells, the Committee was informed that the Council had taken a proactive approach. Relying on mobility scooters in high-rise buildings was not ideal and an intensive approach had been undertaken to identify all Category 1 residents and these residents were flagged within the premises. These residents had personal emergency

evacuation plans put in place by the Council. Given the Council's relatively low number, there were plans to prioritise relocating these individuals to suitable alternative accommodation. There were 47 category one individuals across 640 dwellings, with 10 already prioritised for removal and six more underway. Whilst this approach was not feasible for larger councils like Southwark, it was an option in Hillingdon and ensured safety by removing potential fire risks.

It was reported that the premises boxes met legislative requirements and were regularly checked by officers. Access to the boxes was via controlled keys that were only accessible by specific officers and the Fire Services.

Clarification was sought on situations where some residents reported that their smoke alarms and smoke detectors had stopped working due to water infiltration. It was explained that water leaks could disrupt the sensors in smoke alarms, leading to false alarms or impaired functionality. However if there were any issues then residents could contact repair services where they would be looked into and replaced if needed. As some of the buildings were old there were ongoing issues with roofing or pipe work however these matters were being addressed. Clarification was sought on how fire safety was maintained on tower blocks near main roads as these were often targets of vandalism. If fire doors were damaged this could be reported by residents and this would be looked into by the Council's repairs team.

In terms of challenges, it was explained that those refusing sprinkler systems remained an issue. Officers were pleased with the work undertaken so far and the measures in place for fire safety. Hillingdon was one of the councils that acted straight away following Grenfell with replacing doors and undertaking what was necessary.

Fire safety in tower blocks demanded a proactive approach. By addressing water leaks, vandalism, and necessary improvements, a safer living environment could be provided for residents. Members commended officers for their work particularly in replacing the 4689 fire doors since 2017. Officers were thanked for the very detailed report and appendices and answering the questions in full.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

67. **REVIEW INTO THE COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Committee considered the report on the Council's Road Safety Initiatives and Activities Around the Borough's Schools.

Although representation and data information had been requested from Apcoa Parking Services, the Chair advised that it had not been possible to obtain this information due to various reasons. This information request would be placed on the work programme for the Committee's next municipal year.

An account of the findings relating to child safety around schools in Hillingdon between 2019 and 2023 was highlighted to the Committee. It was noted that:

- two child fatalities occurred in Hillingdon during this period. Neither of these fatalities were of school age, and both incidents happened on weekends.
- 27 serious collisions involving children aged 0 to 15. Eleven out of these 27 collisions occurred during school rush hours and three pedestrians did not look before stepping onto the road. Two collisions were due to chasing balls into the

road.

- Only one serious injury occurred in a 20 mph zone outside a school. Most other serious collisions happened on 30 or 40 mph roads.

It was reported that the benefits of having 20 mph zones outside schools included reducing traffic speeds and enhancing safety. While funding constraints had limited widespread implementation, 20mph signage alone made a difference in promoting safer streets for children. Drivers tended to adjust their speed when transitioning from a 30 mph road to a 20 mph zone. The 20 mph zone outside school zones was supported by the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport.

In terms of any correlation between accident data and schools engaging well with road safety initiatives, it was explained that by 2025 all schools would need to have a Climate Change Sustainability Lead in place who would be responsible for providing data for active travel. Some schools tended to engage with the team more than others.

It was noted that there is one permanent school street in the borough which is on a dead-end road and has no impact on local residents during the closure times. No further information could be provided on future plans at this time.

The Committee heard that secondary schools were generally harder to engage with for a number of reasons such as being larger and having different priorities. Any planned works would be communicated to the school from different teams within the Council. If the team heard of any unplanned instances such as flooding then the school would be contacted. It was difficult to recruit and maintain School Patrol Officers.

It was emphasised that collaborating with schools and parents to enhance safety measures around schools was essential. The team liaised closely with engineers and were aware of engineering measures implemented in schools. Officers were open to discussing safety measures with schools or parents and were always willing to engage in dialogue. Fostering communication and transparency remained a priority in promoting safer routes to school.

Officers were thanked for the work and attendance. It was agreed that any ideas for recommendations would be sent to Democratic Services.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and ideas for recommendations be sent to Democratic Services.

68. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 7*)

It was confirmed that Democratic Services would advise the Committee if the School Capital Programme Update could be shared with Members prior to the Cabinet meeting in April 2024.

RESOLVED: That Democratic Services update Members regarding the School Capital Programme Update report and the Forward Plan be noted.

69. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 8*)

It was agreed that Democratic Services would provide an update on potential dates for site visits for the Leisure Centre and suitable areas for the Decarbonisation of Buildings.

	RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.30 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on 01895277655 or ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

This meeting was filmed live on the Council's YouTube Channel to increase transparency in decision-making; however, these minutes remain the official and definitive record of proceedings.