

COUNCIL

24 JUNE 2021

MOTION 1

Proposed by: Councillor Saeed Ebrahim

Seconded by: Councillor Huw Thomas

This month marks the 4 year anniversary of the Grenfell Tower disaster in which 72 people tragically lost their lives.

Cardiff Council acted swiftly to ensure all Council-owned high rise buildings were safe, whilst Welsh Government have also acted to enable Registered Social Landlords to do the same.

However, the situation for privately owned high-rise remains unresolved, and the cladding scandal has also exposed other defects affecting private high-rise development, including the absence of appropriate fire compartmentation, other ineffective fire-stopping measures, and unsafe balconies, with many buildings, including in Cardiff, requiring 'waking-watch' regimes in place to ensure residents' safety in the event of fire.

The introduction of EWS1 forms, without sufficient numbers of qualified engineers to carry out inspections has further exacerbated the issues faced by residents living in high-rise accommodation.

These arrangements have clearly impacted on the mental wellbeing of the residents who, through no fault of their own find themselves unsure if their homes is safe, with their lives placed on hold. They also face a significant financial impact, with residents struggling to get insurance for their properties, owner-occupiers falling into negative equity and unable to sell their property, and residents facing the possibility of having to fund the costs of making the good the defects to their properties themselves, despite having purchased their properties in good faith.

This Council therefore –

- Endorses the principle that Leaseholders did not create the issues that have been identified and believe that they should not have to pay to rectify these issues.
- Welcomes the recommendations of the Welsh Government's Building Safety White Paper, and calls for its enacting as legislation as quickly as possible, with additional support provided in terms funding and resources to deliver its objectives.

- In doing so, but recognising the time required to prepare legislation, also believes that there are a series of urgent actions should be enacted straight away, including
 - The rapid establishment of Joint Inspection Teams to undertake an audit of affected buildings with funding made available to address the defects identified
 - Investment to increase the availability of qualified surveyors able to issue EWS1 certificates.
 - An accelerated testing process for new cladding
- Further calls on Welsh and UK Government to work jointly to bring developers to the table so that a wider funding package can be created to resolve the issues that continue to affect the lives of residents in high-rise buildings in Cardiff and across the UK. Requests the Cabinet to explore how developers who have unresolved cladding and building control issues can be better held responsible for their obligations through planning policy and by Shared Regulatory Services

And

- Further asks Cabinet to consider what additional support could be provided to affected residents