

Scrutiny & Overview Committee Supplementary Agenda



- a) **Urgent Item: Scrutiny Update on Regina Road** (Pages 3 - 10)
- To receive an update on the Council's response to the housing conditions at Regina Road and the terms of reference for the subsequent investigation.

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1-87 Regina Road - Council response and Planned future actions

Key priorities identified were:

- Support the tenants of 7 & 15 into alternative accommodation
- Stop the leak at source, which was at 31
- Support the tenant of 31 into alternative accommodation
- Ensure that the building is safe
- Support other tenants in the building
- Carry out checks in all homes within the building
- Establish a plan to provide wider assurance on all 16 Wates Tower blocks

1-87 Regina Road – Tenancy response

- 44 one bedroom flats, all odd numbers.
- 3 Tenants were decanted (2 secure 1 TA) into Emergency accommodation
- TA tenant has now been rehoused permanently into 2 bedroom council property
- The 2 Secure tenants have been moved into Airbnb
- 1 would like to return on completion of works. Awaits offer of 1 bed. TO in daily contact.
- The other was in 1 bed. Awaits a 2 bed property. TO in daily contact.
- 1 other property/secure tenant identified for decant. Has declined EA asked to remain pending decant into alternative due to complex needs of children. TO in daily contact.
- 1 secure tenant (minor works needed) being facilitate by TO with transfer into Sheltered accommodation.

Tenancy presence

- Daily presence at 1-87 (and other blocks), two members of Tenancy Team & Resident Involvement team 1pm-4pm, 7 days a week, WEF Tuesday 23 March 2021.
- Block letter hand delivered on 29 March 2021, to all residents in block advising of how to make contact with tenancy as well as to give info of current and plans.

1-87 Regina Court – Repairs response

- The leak at 31 Regina Court was identified and stopped as soon as the tenant provided access
- Building Control have confirmed that the building is safe
- Visits have taken place to identify other repair problems within the building by repairs staff – follow up action is now being implemented
- Further decanting may be required – this work is ongoing
- Steps are now being taken to recover the building, although it will be a long drying out process
- Investigation has been launched by an independent investigator that will examine how this happened. It will report within 2 weeks

Repairs – future actions

- Contact will be made with tenants of all 16 Wates blocks
- Greater resident involvement on all repairs matters
- Assess, plan and implement improvements to:
 - Risk assessments on repairs matters
 - Repairs service structure and accountability
 - Reporting, tracking and learning from complaints
 - Escalation/interventions in serious cases
 - Intra service working on complex cases
- Improvements to audit and inspection of repairs services

Investigation – progress and timescales

- Ark Consultancy – started Wednesday 24th March, verbal report back Wednesday 7th April and written report Friday 9th April
- Interviews of staff and tenants starting today
- ToRs attached below, recommendations for follow up will be made
- Officers are beginning to scope options for improving the service

Regina Road – Terms of Reference

An urgent fact finding investigation has been commissioned to understand the circumstances that led to residents at Croydon Council owned flats on Regina Road living in the conditions as publicised on the national news.

The intention is to have a verbal report back on 7 April 2021 and a written report on 9 April 2021.

The investigation will seek to understand the circumstances surrounding the disrepair issues reported by residents of 1-87 Regina Road, London SE25, 4TW.

The immediate investigation will focus on these four flats and will establish

- a detailed timeline of events including, but not limited to: contact with the council or our contractors from residents of the flats; attendance at flats in the block by tenancy or repairs staff, or our repairs contractor; reporting or recording of issues by tenancy or repairs staff or our repairs contractor; any repairs work carried out; and other reporting or recording of issues by others including cllrs, MPs or other staff who visited the flats
- the likely cause of the damp and mould based on the technical assessment made by the council
- action or inaction taken by the council, its staff and its contractors in respect of repairs
- action or inaction taken by the council and its staff (and its contractors) in respect of accessing flats to get a full assessment of the issues in the block
- action or inaction taken by the council and its staff (and its contractors) to support or rehouse resident facing repair issues
- any issues in contacting the council by these tenants
- whether there is any evidence that discrimination, in particular on the grounds of race, as alleged in the news coverage played a part in the treatment of these tenants

The investigation will also seek to understand whether or not the council's processes for the reporting of and rectification of repairs and relationship with tenancy management are fit for purpose and identify where they fall short of both standard and best practice.

The investigation will explore the role of both staff and contractors that led to conditions in the flats deteriorating and highlight likely failings and where possible make recommendations for the oversight of repairs work and related tenancy functions.

The initial investigation should report within two weeks and may make recommendations for any immediate action and areas where further work is required to address performance or conduct issues.

The investigation will involve tenants from the Scrutiny Panel and be led by an external housing expert for independence.

The outcome from the investigation will be shared with Scrutiny and Overview, MHCLG, the Improvement and Assurance Panel, the LGA and the Social Housing Regulator.

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