



Housing and Growth Committee

25th January 2021

Title

Member's Items

Cllr Kath McGuirk – Self-employed and small business support

Cllr Ross Houston – Cladding and appropriateness of insulation materials at Zenith Close

Cllr Paul Edwards – Homelessness and evictions – follow-up

Cllr Sara Conway – Review of boiler and general maintenance in Barnet Homes properties

Report of

Head of Governance

Wards

All Wards

Status

Public

Urgent

No

Key

No

Enclosures

None

Officer Contact Details

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Summary

. The Committee is requested to consider the item and give instruction to Officers.

Officers Recommendation

That the Housing and Growth Committee's instructions in relation to these Member's Items are requested.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 Members of the Committee have requested that the items tabled below are submitted to the Housing and Growth Committee for considering and determination. The Housing and Growth Committee are requested to provide instructions to Officers of the Council as recommended.

Cllr Kath McGuirk	<p>Self-employed and small business support</p> <p>At a recent meeting of the Barnet Branch of the Federation of Small Businesses members in attendance raised the issue of self-employed people and small businesses that do not have premises and therefore have not benefitted from any of the small business grant support during the pandemic. Many of these have not been able to work or generate income because of the lockdown restrictions and are having to exist on benefits as they are not entitled to furlough arrangements, and many people are struggling as a result. I request that the Committee receives a short briefing on how many people and businesses are affected and what other support might be available to assist them including discretionary hardship funds. It may be that the Council is already working with the FSB to offer help and advice on this.</p>
Cllr Ross Houston	<p>Cladding and appropriateness of insulation materials at Zenith Close</p> <p>Following concerns raised by a resident at Zenith Close the Fire Brigade have instructed that the Kingspan Kooltherm K15 insulation materials stored in the car park under Zenith Close and that were due to be installed on the building are removed and stored off-site due to the fire risk they pose. The insulation material in question was used on Grenfell Tower and has since been discontinued but it is still currently lawful for use on buildings.</p> <p>On behalf of the Colindale ward councillors, I request that the Committee is provided with urgent advice from building control about the appropriateness of this material - which is highly combustible - for use on Zenith Close and any other buildings. The concern is that the material has been discontinued, and this is because it may no longer be advisable to be used. If this is the case it shouldn't be used, and</p>

	<p>the Council should be raising this with the Government to ensure it is banned.</p> <p>I also request that the Committee is advised of any Barnet Homes / Opendoor Homes properties that have this material in the fabric of the building - the same developer for Zenith Close has worked on the Opendoor Homes scheme for Burnt Oak for example.</p>
Cllr Paul Edwards	<p>Homelessness and evictions – follow-up</p> <p>At the last meeting (24 November) I asked about the impact of the pandemic on council and private tenants including the scale of evictions. It was agreed that an update on these issues would be included in the next Covid-19 recovery report to Committee. The BBC reports that half a million tenants in the UK are behind with their rent according to research by Citizens Advice. The research suggests that this is a new problem for many of them and caused by the pandemic as 58% were not in arrears in February last year. For those that have fallen behind on their rent the average arrears is £730 according to the study.</p> <p>As the Government ban on bailiff evictions ends on 21 February, I ask that this update is brought to the January Committee so members can discuss if any intervention is needed to tackle homelessness. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-55586081</p>
Cllr Sara Conway	<p>Review of boiler and general maintenance in Barnet Homes properties</p> <p>Following concerns in autumn and winter 2020 about residents without heat for many months or years due to the capping of supply, and other serious issues creating poor living conditions I ask that the Committee consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barnet Homes to carry out an urgent review with a view to introduce an improved system of monitoring and following up quickly on capped meters and the provision of energy supply. • Barnet Homes to submit to the Committee an analysis of properties that have not reported a repair for a significant period of time to identify if there are properties/residents in the Borough that are under reporting repairs and may therefore be living in poorer conditions than expected. (Due end of next quarter). • Officers to advise on whether any similar processes of review

	and oversight are carried out by the local housing associations, and how best to keep the Committee updated on key issues and improvements for their properties.
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2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 No recommendations have been made. The Committee are therefore requested to give consideration and provide instruction.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 N/A

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Post decision implementation will depend on the decision taken by the Committee.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 As and when issues raised through a Member's Item are progressed, they will need to be evaluated against the Corporate Plan and other relevant policies.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

- 5.2.1 None in the context of this report.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

- 5.3.1 A Member (including Members appointed as substitutes by Council) will be permitted to have one matter only (with no sub-items) on the agenda for a meeting of a committee or Sub-Committee on which s/he serves. The matter must be relevant to the terms of reference of the committee.

- 5.3.2 The referral of a motion from Full Council to a committee will not count as a Member's Item for the purposes of this rule.

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 None in the context of this report.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.5.1 Members' Items allow Members of a Committee to bring a wide range of issues to the attention of a Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution. All of these

issues must be considered for their equalities and diversity implications.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 None in the context of this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Email received on the 13th January 2021 from Political Assistant.