

## **Silver Motion:End our cladding and EWS1 scandal**

### **Council notes that:**

- a. Following the human tragedy of the [2017 Grenfell Tower fire](#) taking 72 lives blamed on Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding, this has rightfully led to a focus on fire safety in buildings across the country.
- b. The Government banned the use of all combustible materials on the walls of new high rises in November 2018 (MHCLG, Government bans combustible materials on high-rise homes, 29 November 2018) meaning the problem has now extended beyond ACM cladding to buildings decorated with other materials that could be flammable - including balconies, and wooden panels. However, it did not legislate for building owners to take action or provide sufficient compensation funds to cover all situations.
- c. In parallel, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the UK Council of Mortgage Lenders agreed the industry External Wall System fire review and certification process resulting in what is known as an EWS1 form. Only circa 300 professional fire safety engineers nationally are qualified to issue these - creating a bottleneck across the country including in Bristol.
- d. Without an EWS1 form, many lenders are now refusing to provide mortgages. As there is no Government legislation forcing owners to produce EWS1 forms or to take remedial action, many leaseholders are having to battle with owners whether their Local Authority, Housing Associations or private landlords. Remediation costs are also skyrocketing in the £100Ks and many owners are forcing this back on leaseholders via financially ruinous service charges – including impacting those in shared ownership.
- e. Subsequently, residents and leaseholders through no fault of their own are being left in potentially ruinous limbo unable to mortgage properties, re-mortgage and therefore unable to buy and sell. Additionally residents are living in fear in homes with no idea if they are safe. This is fundamentally holding up people's lives, costing our residents money they shouldn't have to pay and leaving a huge mental health impact.

### **Council therefore calls on Cabinet to:**

- a. Sign up the Council to the End Our Cladding Scandal campaign: [endourcladdingscandal@gmail.com](mailto:endourcladdingscandal@gmail.com).
- b. Support the Justice4Grenfell campaign and its efforts to hold those responsible for the approval of dangerous cladding and insulation material to account.
- c. Support the Fire Brigades' Union campaign to draw light to the issue of dangerous materials, and the work it is doing to campaign for safe building regulations.
- d. Lobby all private building owners and Housing Associations in Bristol to act immediately in remediating known issues and achieve EWS1 certification. Full Council Notes that the responsibility

for the use of unsafe building materials lies with the freeholder, and will lobby the Government for stronger regulations to hold freeholders accountable for their buildings' safety.

e. Investigate options for Bristol Council's Building Control team to upskill a dedicated team funded by freeholder applications to perform EWS1 assessments. The aim being to accelerate remediation and certification with a trusted partner. This may also have a longer term benefit to increasing job opportunities in Bristol.

f. Encourage Councillors in wards particularly affected by buildings with potentially-unsafe cladding to advocate for residents increasing pressure on freeholders to provide EWS1 forms, to avoid any cost to their leaseholders.

g. Provide a training scheme for Councillors so they can assist residents with all matters relating to EWS1 forms, such as lobbying building owners, and claiming Government funds to rectify their buildings, to the best of their abilities.

h. Explore what Bristol City Council's Planning and Building Control team can do to withhold signing off pre-occupation planning conditions where the applicant has outstanding snagging or EWS1 certification issues in Bristol.

i. Lobby and work with the MPs, MHCLG and the Mayor of Bristol to:

i. Devolve powers to Bristol Council in order to have jurisdiction over enforcing remediation of housing of all tenures and to obtain local control over the relevant compensation funds from the Government for Bristol so the Council can actively support affected residents in Bristol of all tenures.

ii. Adopt the sensible [recommendations of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee](#) that the EWS1 process could be reformed to urgently revise and implement a process (at no cost to leaseholders) that offers clarity to lenders, insurers and peace of mind for homeowners and buyers to re-instate re-mortgaging and property sales provided there is no immediate danger.

iii. Adopt the 10 asks of the [End Our Cladding Scandal campaign](#).