

Meeting 29 June 2017
Hanover Tower Block Meeting Room

In attendance

Naima Bodleh-Hanover Block
Andrew Tallis-Hannover Block
Sara Bingley-Exeter Drive
Mick Watts-Hanover Block
Sarmad Alani-Hanover Block
Shirin Teifouri-Hanover Block
Djafar Hamroun-Crabtree Crescent
John Cawthorne-Hanover Block
Sagaal Mahamed-Exeter Drive
Mohamoud Alrewi-Hanover Block
Tarig Gamel-Hanover Block
Lovejoy Gorka-Hanover Block
Darren Macreath-Hanover Block
Ashraf Abdelrasoul- Hanover Block
Jeremy Fisher-Hanover Block
Paul Benjamin-Hanover Block

Cllr Jayne Dunn-Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety
Janet Sharpe-Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services
Jill Hurst- Head of Housing Investment and Repairs
Mark Cowley-Neighbourhood Manager City & West Neighbourhood Team
Richard Hawson-HME Manager
Chris Lake-Operations & Development Manager, Asset Management Team
Liz Sayles-Operations & Development Manager City & West Neighbourhood Team
Robert Barker-Neighbourhood Officer City & West Neighbourhood Team
Al Forster-South Yorkshire Fire Service
+ 1 Officer- South Yorkshire Fire Service

Council officers & Fire Service representatives introduced themselves to the meeting.

Cllr Jayne Dunn Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety

Cllr Jayne Dunn introduced herself and thanked people for attending the meeting. She acknowledged it must have been difficult for residents and thanked attendees for working well with housing staff and being so tolerant. She advised that everyone was surprised at the results of the tests for Hanover.

After Grenfell Local Authorities were asked to inform Central Government if they had tower blocks with aluminium composite material (ACM). Our initial records showed we had none. Jayne has been to a number of meetings at different locations and residents have been worried about their safety. Jayne

therefore committed to test the cladding to give people reassurance and make them feel safe in their homes.

The Council has also committed to fitting sprinklers in all multi storey properties. This was already planned but SCC have brought the programme of works forward.

The test results from the cladding on Hanover were received late on Sunday 25 June 2017. The results showed something unexpected about the cladding. SCC have therefore decided to remove it.

The Fire Service have confirmed that it remains safe for tenants/residents to remain in the building.

SCC have offered temporary moves for tenants who wish to move until the cladding is removed. If anyone wants this they should let us know and we can discuss this outside of the meeting.

Q. Can I record the meeting?

A. You would have to get all attendees permission to do this
Some of the attendees did not wish the meeting to be recorded

An issue was raised that people did not receive notification of the meeting. All tenants had a letter inviting them to the meeting which was hand delivered to their property.

The drop in meetings have been well attended. The invite to the meeting should have been on the front page of the information delivered and in large print. There should have been posters in the communal areas. There have been posters for drop in meetings with junior staff but not for this meeting with senior staff. The notification for this meeting has been inadequate.

The Council need to talk to tenants and provide correct information.

A proposal was made for a further meeting. Residents want information about fire safety. The information the Council has provided has not been appropriate.

Al Forster from South Yorkshire Fire Service

The Fire Service are still advocating a “stay put” policy. The fire in London was unprecedented. The materials on the Grenfell block are different to those in Sheffield including Hanover.

If there is a fire in your flat the advice is get out of the flat and shut the door behind you. If there is heavy smoke in the flat stay near to the floor as smoke rises. Use the stairs to evacuate the block.

If there is a fire in another part of the building stay put. You can call 999 for advice if you are worried. Keep the stairwells clear, this will allow the Fire

Service to access the communal areas and bring their equipment with them. There is protection around each individual flat which should protect it from fire.

The Fire Service will take control of the lifts to get equipment & people to upper floors.

Currently the Fire Service are checking the fire doors and the dry risers in all council tower blocks.

The dry risers can feed water to every floor in the block. The Fire Service are checking that the risers have adequate pressure to do this.

If there was a fire 4 fire engines and a turntable ladder would be sent to the incident. The Fire Service have attended a fire in a block this week and kept it confined.

If there is a need to evacuate the block the Fire Service will manage this in a controlled way.

Q. Tests to materials across the UK have found materials to be unsafe. Compartmental fire zones are not effective. Should the stay put policy be revised? We need to look at other options. The stairwell in Hanover block is not adequate.

When the Fire Service enters the building they use the fireman's switch to take control of the lift. This means only the person in the lift can control it. The Fire Service can then take equipment & officers to upper floors to rescue people. Other people in the communal area might cause delays. In London it is believed there was flammable material under the cladding. Our cladding has rockwool which will not burn and is safe.

In London the blocks it is believed had stud walls; Hanover tower block has solid concrete walls. It is a very different building.

Chris Lake Asset Management Team

The insulation is rockwool which is an inert product. There is a 50mm air gap between the cladding and the panel. There are fire stopping measures in place to stop any fire spreading. The cladding is not the cladding we expected to find. We are removing any risk by removing the cladding.

Q. Is there a timetable for the work?

A. We are trying to get the cladding removed more quickly. Alumet are a specialised contractor for this type of work and will be starting work on 10 July. They will have 46m "cherry pickers" to strip the building

Residents have had a lot of disruption. What communications has SCC had with the previous contractors who fitted the cladding? Leaseholders have paid money for work to their properties.

A.SCC will not be charging leaseholders for replacement cladding. Any work will be done to a specification set by SCC. We are looking at all of the information we have and will work closely with both tenants and leaseholders and the Fire Service. Within our records about the cladding that has been fitted there is a discrepancy. The panels were not the ones we wanted but do comply with building regulations and are used all over the UK

Q. There has been a breach of contract are you going to get the previous contractor to solve the problem? You need to take legal action

A. We need to assemble the facts and when we have the information will commence legal / commercial negotiations.

Q. Will there be any compensation for tenants who have faced disruption?

A. We will look into this.

Q. Is the material used different to what SCC asked for and tenants were consulted about?

A. Yes but it complied with building regulations when it was fitted and still does. There may be a reason why the cladding material was changed. Once we are clear we will take the most appropriate form of action and will give you a full explanation.

Q. You did say that everything was OK with the cladding originally

A. that was the information we had at the time. The tests provided additional information that was unexpected.

Q. Why has it taken 5 years to test the materials used?

A. There was no reason to test it until the fire raised concerns.

You should have tested it before it was fitted. SCC should have to prove that materials are what they should be.

Why didn't you test it straight away after the fire-we had letters saying the cladding was safe? Why didn't you do tests before the letter was sent? It was irresponsible to send the information out before you had the test results. No one trusts the information being given now. Me and my neighbours will not "stay put"

Al Forster South Yorkshire Fire Service

I have 23 years of experience and fires have always been contained where the compartment system is in place
There has been nothing like Grenfell before.

Q. Why did you say things were OK? You jumped the gun. You could have waited until it was certain that the information was correct. You have damaged trust in SCC.

The contractors gave us samples. They were aggressive towards us and so were the Local Authority. We feel like we were lied to

Q. There are some people here who were refugees. Can we have letters in a different language for them?

A. Some tenants have asked us not to translate but to send letters in English. We will work with people and arrange something on an individual basis if necessary. For drop in sessions staff have access to language line. We can arrange translators if necessary

Q. Can you stop using the term TARA? Some residents think it's a person

Q. Have you kept records of who you have spoken to?

A. Yes we have kept records of everyone we have seen or spoken to

People are reassured that the work has started. They will be more reassured when the new contractors arrive.

We will put posters up to keep people informed about meetings. We are listening. This is the beginning of a conversation that will continue. The priority is to keep Hanover safe.

We will get the cladding removed ASAP. We will check out all of the issues raised at this meeting. If there are any other questions or concerns please let us know. We will try and see as many people as possible.

Q. Have the press asked to attend this meeting?

A. Calendar did ask to attend the meeting. To allow this we would have had to ask all residents for their permission.

People might not have come and spoken if the press had been there

The refusal to speak to the media may have been interpreted negatively but now understand the reasons for this.

We need more meetings as people didn't know about this one.

For future meetings we could look at other venues which are bigger but further away. We can look at using the Broomspring Centre or the Vestry Hall. There might need to be more than 1 meeting especially if a larger venue cannot be found. We could hold meetings to discuss different topics.

There are 2 fire doors between the flat and the stairwell. With a previous fire in the block there was a fire door fitted and it did stop the smoke

Have you tested all of the materials? Have you tested grey materials round the roof area?

A. We have tested the green material the grey round the windows and the grey in the stairwell.

There is hard wired glass in steel frames on the stairwell. Lots of windows and plenty of natural light. There is trespa sheeting fastened to a pine frame. This wouldn't have burned but it would have fallen.

A. we can look at this

The council have welded the windows shut. We did object to this. The only ventilation is at the top of the stairwell.

A. We can have a look at this.

Q. What will the temporary accommodation be?

A. We can offer this for the duration of the work to remove the cladding. We will talk to people who want to be rehoused permanently separately. The temporary accommodation will be for a 6-8 week period and will be what we have available. It's a lot of upheaval for a short period when SCC and the Fire Service are clearly saying it's safe to remain. We will contact people individually. Residents can use the cards we have delivered for any suggestions.

Q. Is the cladding of flats nearby the same material?

Q. Following big fires in Australia and Germany why wasn't safety questioned?

A. We are focusing on the tower blocks at present. The government did not change the building regulations
We did provide some information about fire safety and properties when we fitted sprinklers at Callow.

There should have been a risk assessment.

There is a document from 1996 looking at fires at Knowsley Heights & other fires in the UK and abroad

Also there has been a Channel 4 programme about cladding. I am shocked that the fire service are unaware of issues with rainscreen cladding.

Q. Are you testing the insulation on the building?

A. This is rock wool which is inert. To reassure tenants we will test it.

You need to test it in the right conditions.

I have tested a piece of rockwool myself & it didn't burn.
It should be SCC taking responsibility for testing not residents.

Before any SCC approval is given for works plans go to be checked by the Fire Service and to check they meet the building regulations.

Q. What component of the material are you not happy with?

A. The middle bit of the external metal panel is the problem. This is combustible. We did not expect this.

The sample is fire rated.

A. The panels are different to the sample the Tenants and Residents Association hold. That's what we need to investigate. We need to look at every stage of the sign off process for the works. Once we have the information we will take action against the contractor or SCC staff.

Q. Is it the same material that was used at Grenfell?

A. No

Q. 70 blocks have failed nationally to date. Have they all been "cheated" by the contractor?

A. We don't know. John Mothersole the Chief Executive of Sheffield City Council is working with other Local Authorities to look at the building regulations. The regulations are not clear enough. It needs to be easier to understand. We feel that we did comply with the building regulations.

Q. Will the cover that will protect the building once cladding removed be tested?

A. The cover will be netting to stop the insulation material falling off and protect the inner concrete frame.

Q. We are worried that the building will be left without cladding for years and will get damaged

A. Any damage will be replaced

Q. We have heard on the news that SCC can't afford to replace the cladding on the building.

A. We will replace it but this may be to the detriment to other schemes e.g. house building in the city. We want the government to pay for this work but won't wait for this.

We want another meeting that is better organised.

We have seen sight of the planning application. The material specification was not part of the planning application. We have submitted a freedom of information request for the specification to check what materials are included. On the Alumet website it states that Hanover is protected on the outside by Alucobond (since 2012)

Feel we have been lied to
Lovell's told tenants the original material was fitted

A. Building Control application is where the materials are listed. We will get to the bottom of this and share any information. There are discrepancies.

There are concerns around trust and communication. The lack of trust is difficult.

Main risks for fire are candles, phone chargers cigarettes, and waste in communal areas.

Q. At the next meeting can staff have badges with their name & job title on?

A. Yes

Q. Lovell's left materials lying around on site during refurbishment. Why would they do this if it were not the correct material?

A. We don't know the answer yet. This will be part of our investigation. Janet is responsible for the service and will ensure the investigation is done properly. This is not just a Sheffield issue it is UK wide. The Grenfell fire has changed things completely.

The material actually used does meet the building regulations.

Q. How far can the fire fighting equipment reach?

A. The fire engines and turntable ladder can reach floor 6. The Fire Service can get water to every floor using the dry risers. In the event of a fire they would fight the fire internally.

We appreciate the work of the fire and rescue team. We were not aware of the fire break compartment.

For Grenfell House in London the "stay put" wouldn't have worked. The stairwell is lacking here, just 1 stairwell

Q. Is the block safe? Would it be built today?

A. If it were being built today it would have 2 stairwells

The building will be prioritised for the sprinklers being fitted. The sprinklers will run from the water mains, the water pressure will need to be tested and pumps provided if necessary.

Q. Will the sprinkler pipework be boxed in? Is this acceptable?

A. Yes, We will look at this on a block by block basis & look at how it looks in the property. We will work with the tenants and look at different options. We will also work in partnership with the Fire service

Q. Did the Fire Service say the block needed sprinklers?

A. No

Q. What if it's not feasible or practical to fit sprinklers?

A. We have fitted sprinklers in Callow Mount which is a tower block. Some sprinklers can be wall mounted, they are heat activated. (Jill showed some pictures of the work done at Callow) we will consult on a block by block basis. The sprinklers are an added safety precaution.

Q. I don't think SCC are doing enough to remove the cladding. The work has already been ongoing for 2 days.

A. The specialist cladding company start work on 10 July. They are aware of the urgency with this. It has taken some time to organise unfortunately. We are still unsure how long the work will take. SCC officers will continue until the contractors take over. There is 24 hour security on the block now to ensure residents safety.

The cladding contractors only worked till 3pm yesterday

A. They have had to stop because of the weather conditions. Also there may be restrictions on how long they can work with the cherry pickers due to the license conditions.

Q. What difference will 1 person walking round the building make to security?

A. They would be able to identify an external fire and report this more quickly

Chris Lake Asset Management Team

Explained fire breaking measures & compartmentalisation. A fire should be contained within flat due to this.

Q. I have reported my smoke alarm and it has been taken away
I have had to turn my alarm off as it has been going off

A. If anyone has had issues with smoke alarm give us your details & we will look into this.

Q. I have lived here 10 years and we have never had a fire drill.

A. We would advise the “stay put” policy so there would not be a full evacuation drill.

The stairwell in London was in the middle of the block with no windows

The fire engines would arrive within minutes from Sheffield central fire station. The fire brigade are testing dry risers, fire doors and lifts. There are 6 hydrants round the block.

I have seen fire before in the building. It was quite worrying but it didn't spread.

A. we don't want people running around. This could enable the smoke and fire to spread more quickly

Q. Are there other things that are going to be checked?

A. Compartmentation safety measures undertaken in 2010 were agreed with the Fire Service
Virgin putting wiring in to allow connectivity was also discussed with the Fire Service

Q. There was a problem with mice in the winter and some foam was used to stop them accessing the communal areas.

A. The foam used for this work was not flammable

The Fire Officer inspected the block last Thursday and was satisfied that the block is safe.

We are reacting to the incident in London, thinking what could happen. We need to ensure we learn from this and find out why the cladding was different to what we thought it was.

Nationally the standards will be reviewed and there are likely to be some fundamental changes

Q. I am worried that everything sent to the government has failed.

A. The government are only testing where there is composite material.

Q. Looking at the cost of work required such as sprinklers have you considered cutting your losses with the block?

A. No these are popular properties. We have demolished other multi storey properties but there were issues around demand and structural issues there. This block is in better condition and we have invested in it. Fitting sprinklers

was already planned but we have moved this programme of work forward. We are hoping to get some money from the government to help pay for this. Making the properties as safe as possible is a priority. Nothing like the Grenfell incident should happen again.

Q. When do the contractors start?

A. 10th July. Their equipment will reach 46m. SCC workers will continue the work until then.

The media should leave contractors alone and not distract them. It is impressive how tenants have handled the situation.
The media told tenants about the up to date situation.

A. Letters were hand delivered to all residents between 3 and 4 o'clock on Monday 26 June.
We also held the drop in sessions. We attempted to let people know ASAP.

I called SCC just after the incident and never got a response.

Q. How would you like us to communicate with you in future?

A. A bigger meeting room would be better, suggest Sunnybank
Different languages & plain English.

Apologies for the fact the press release was put on top of the letter inviting residents to the meeting.
Sunnybank is not in use at the moment but we can consider alternative venues such as the Vestry Hall and Broomspring Centre.

Cllr Jayne Dunn thanked attendees for attending the meeting.