

MAYOR OF LONDON

Dame Judith Hackitt

Independent Review of Building Regulations
and Fire Safety
Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
3rd floor, Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF

Date: 22 FEB 2018

Dear Dame Judith,

I am writing to you following the publication of 'Building a Safer Future - Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety: Interim Report' in December 2017.

I welcome the review and hope it will help to restore public confidence in the safety of buildings and the systems which create them, and avoid a tragedy like that at Grenfell Tower ever being repeated.

I hope the review will result in greater clarity around technical requirements of building regulations and their implementation, and will ensure that the highest standards in fire safety are achieved in the future. I am keen to see any changes deemed necessary by the review implemented quickly.

In addition to the essential work of improving building regulations and the building control system, I am also keen for officers from my team to meet with your team to discuss the approach I have taken in my new draft London Plan, currently subject to consultation. The approved documents of the Building Regulations provide a minimum standard which can be used to demonstrate 'compliance' with the regulations, and I am keen to build on this with my draft London Plan. My draft plan therefore requires that, in the interest of fire safety and to ensure the safety of all building users, development proposals should achieve the highest standards of fire safety and ensure that they are designed to incorporate appropriate features which reduce the risk to life in the event of a fire.

It also requires that they are constructed in an appropriate way to minimise the risk of fire spread, and that they provide suitable and convenient means of escape for all building users - including the provision of fire evacuation lifts. It places emphasis on the importance of a robust strategy for evacuation which all building users can have confidence in, and requires that suitable access and equipment for firefighting is provided, which is appropriate for the size and use of the development.

The draft Plan requires all major development proposals to be submitted with a Fire Statement, which is an independent fire strategy, produced by a third party suitably qualified assessor, detailing how the development proposals will function in terms of construction, means of escape, access for fire service personnel and equipment and provision for fire appliances.

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This approach aims to:

- 'front end' the subject of fire safety in the development process, ensuring it is considered as an integral and essential part of developments at planning stage, requiring a more proactive approach leading through to the building control process;
- ensure that all development proposals achieve the highest standards in terms of fire safety via the planning definition of development, which in many cases provides more comprehensive coverage than the existing Building Regulations in their application of Part B, in particular in relation to existing buildings as opposed to new build developments; and
- bring about a culture change/ shift in the industry around how the subject of fire safety is viewed, to ensure buildings are safe, future-proofed and that residents can have confidence in them.

Specifically, the requirement for fire statements to be submitted with major development proposals aims to:

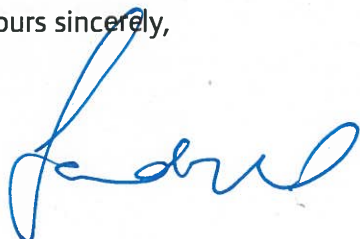
- provide a vehicle to ensure that fire safety is considered, planned and documented at the earliest possible stage;
- form a principal document throughout the design, construction and use of buildings, which could assist with the monitoring of construction, including any changes throughout the process;
- provide a vehicle to ensure vital fire safety information is documented, maintained and preserved including, where necessary, the justification for changes or amendments; and
- form the basis (if written in such a way as to be easily understood by residents) of a source of information for residents, given that it would be publicly available at the planning stage.

My policy approach in the draft London Plan does not aim to duplicate existing Building Regulations requirements but to work with and complement the building control process, whilst requiring the highest standards of fire safety.

I am keen for my officers to meet with your team to discuss the approach I am taking within my draft London Plan, as well as your interim findings, and to potentially assist with the next stage of your review.

I would be grateful if you could ask your team to contact Rachel Smalley, Principal Advisor - Access and Inclusion at the Greater London Authority (rachel.smalley@london.gov.uk), to begin these conversations.

Yours sincerely,



Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London