

## **'CALL IN' OF DECISIONS OF THE CABINET**

This form is to be used for the 'calling in' of decisions of the above bodies, in accordance with the procedure set out in Part 4 Section H.2 of the Constitution.

<b>TITLE OF MEETING</b>	Cabinet
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
<b>MINUTE No. AND TITLE OF ITEM</b>	9. Alterations policy for leaseholders

### **1. Reason for Call-In/Is it claimed to be outside the policy or budget framework?**

a)

Given the paramount importance of the safety of leaseholders and tenants, we are concerned that this decision is counter to that objective. Para 6.4 of the report notes that officers had observed potentially hazardous alterations. However, there is no attempt to establish, or evidence provided in the report, that external installations carried out by Homes for Haringey (HfH) are more likely to be manufactured and fitted correctly and less likely to compromise fire safety than those done by a contractor chosen by a leaseholder.

During the 10th November meeting, both Ms Van Den Bergh and Cllr Cawley-Harrison noted cases of doors and windows installed by HfH having safety issues. Concerns were also raised during the meeting about cases where, following unsafe work, no follow up inspections took place to review the work, and when residents raised the failings with local ward councillors having already done so to HfH without remedial action, works to rectify outstanding problems was not carried out for over 12 months. Furthermore, the Managing Director of Homes for Haringey stated during the Cabinet meeting that the number of complaints made by residents following works carried out by HfH was *"higher than we would want it to be"*.

Therefore, it appears untenable to assume that the work being done by HfH in and of itself guarantees its safety.

b)

Given the issues raised in point a), we believe that until HfH is able to improve on its processes, has sufficient quality control in terms of an independent building control sign-off process, and can evidence that all work is being carried out to a standard required for the safety of residents, that this decision will not positively contribute towards the discharge of the Council's legal responsibility to ensure it has robust processes in place to ensure doors and windows are installed to current regulatory standards in the event of a fire.

c)

Given the position in Appendix 3 of the proposed revised "Alterations Policy for Leaseholders" that *"[i]t is not appropriate for independent contractors to carry out alterations to our buildings"*, it is necessary to consider the impact of mandating that leaseholders rely on a monopoly supplier, and the impact this may have on the cost and quality of work they can expect. We do not consider that their right to appeal unreasonable costs to the First Tier Tribunal provides this, as this is an inherently confrontational and technical process and many leaseholders may be reluctant to engage with it.

## 2. Variation of Action Proposed

a)

This decision going to Overview and Scrutiny Committee will provide a chance for fresh evidence about the relative safety of HfH and open market installations of doors and windows to be presented. If such evidence is not forthcoming, then the existing 'Alterations Police for Leaseholders' should remain in place.

b)

Fresh provisions should be made to guarantee the cost and quality of work on leaseholder properties does not fall below the standard they could have obtained on the open market and which is not dependent on them taking cases to the First Tier Tribunal.

c)

HfH to set out an additional QA process that includes an independent building control survey of the installation of doors and windows following the completion of the works and closure of the job in the works list, or instances where the job is not marked as completed, within 5 working days of any replacement or installation works carried out, irrespective of if the work is carried out by HfH or an external contractor, to ensure the work meets the safety standards expected by the Council, and for this report to be sent to the leaseholder of the property without request.


d)

HfH to offer a market comparison document with all S20 notices, or notices of works to leaseholders comparing their costs (presented as a complete, itemised breakdown) with alternative suppliers that may have been available on the open-market as is now standard practise in other industries such as utilities.

**Signed:**

Councillor:  Dawn Barnes

**Countersigned:**

1. Councillor:  Luke Cawley-Harrison

2. Councillor:  Tammy Palmer

3. Councillor:  Nick da Costa

4. Councillor:  Julia Ogiehor

**Date Submitted:** 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**Date Received :**

(to be completed by the Democratic Services Manager)

Notes:

1. Please send this completed form by email :  
Ayshe Simsek (on behalf of the Proper Officer)  
Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager  
Tel: 8489 2929

This form must be received by the Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager by 10.00 a.m. on the fifth working day following publication of the minutes.

2. The proper officer will forward all timely and proper call-in requests to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and notify the decision taker and the relevant Director.
3. A decision will be implemented after the expiry of ten working days following the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee's receipt of a call-in request, unless a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee takes place during the 10 day period.
4. If a call-in request claims that a decision is contrary to the policy or budget framework, the Proper Officer will forward the call-in requests to the Monitoring Officer and /or Chief Financial Officer for a report to be prepared for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee advising whether the decision does fall outside the policy or budget framework.