

## **Background information to the proposed**

### **Resident Engagement Strategy for Building Safety**

The background information provided in this document has helped to inform the proposed commitments for a city-wide resident engagement strategy for building safety. The proposed strategy commitments are relevant only to residents who live in council owned and managed high-rise residential buildings that are over 18 metres tall or seven or more storeys.

#### **Who lives in high-rise council homes?**

- Across Bristol, we are responsible for managing and maintaining 56 residential high-rise buildings, containing 4,406 homes.
- High-rise residential buildings are spread across a variety of communities and are of various construction types.
- A diverse range of residents live in these homes, ranging from single people or couples to families with children.
- Five of these buildings provide supported accommodation for older people.
- In 2024, approximately 176 residents living in high-rise homes were leaseholders.
- In 2024, the demographic profile of residents who live in high-rise residential buildings is summarised below:

#### **Age profile**

- 1.9% of residents are aged between 16-24
- 30% of residents are aged between 25-44
- 41.5% of residents are aged between 45-64
- 15.1% of residents are aged between 65-74
- 11.0% of residents are aged between 75+
- 0.48% of residents are aged is unknown

#### **Gender**

- 48.9% of residents are female

- 49.9% of residents are male

### **Ethnicity**

- 50.0% of residents are White British
- 39.1% of residents are Black, Asian or Other minority ethnic background
- 5.6% of residents are White Other
- 5.2% of residents are ethnicity is unknown

### **Disability**

- 35.4% of residents living in high-rise buildings have told us they are disabled

The type of disability or impairment is provided below:

- 2.4% Hearing Impairment
- 3.5% Learning Disability
- 16.3% Long Term Illness
- 15.7% Mental Distress
- 13.0% Mobility Impairment
- 1.7% Visual Impairment
- 0.7% Wheelchair
- 7.2% Other Disability

### **Residents voice - what you have told us about the safety of your homes**

#### **Resident Satisfaction**

During April 2023 to March 2024, over 2,000 residents took part in our resident satisfaction survey. 73% of respondents who live in high-rise residential buildings said they were satisfied that Bristol City Council provides a home that is safe, compared with 74% of residents citywide.

#### **Lessons learned**

In November 2023, the council carried out an emergency evacuation of Barton House. Residents were moved into temporary accommodation to allow structural building surveys to be undertaken. This was a distressing time for residents of Barton House who have since moved back into their building once safety works were completed and the council had confirmation that the building was safe, we have engaged with residents of Barton House on a regular basis and have taken on board learning based on residents' feedback.

The key learning from Barton House and residents' feedback is that the council should:

- communicate with residents first
- bring stakeholders and local community representatives on board early
- provide information in a transparent way so that residents, staff and other stakeholders understand what is happening, why and when.

### **Building Safety Questionnaire**

During February and March 2024, we telephoned residents living in high-rise residential buildings and asked them to complete a building safety questionnaire.

We asked residents:

- how they felt about the safety of their building
- what they wanted to know more about
- how they would like to be communicated with about building safety.

A total of 817 residents responded to the survey.

### **From the survey we learnt that:**

- 81% of respondents said they know how to report issues about building or fire safety, if they are feeling unsafe in their home, 19% do not.

- 85% of respondents said they would be able to leave their home and make their way down the stairs to the ground floor unaided if there was a fire in their home.
- 69% of residents said they are aware of what works are happening in their building to make them safer.
- Building maintenance was the most frequently mentioned comment (10% of respondents) relating to actions for Bristol City Council. 7% mentioned smoke and fire.
- The most preferred contact method was by letter, followed by email and then text message. 14% of respondents have additional requirements for information in large print and alternative languages. Top 5 translated languages requested were Arabic, Somali, Polish
- Residents felt most informed about fire safety (77%) and electrical safety (62%) and less informed about asbestos (35%) and water safety (29%).
- Around 50% of residents said they would like to receive more information about safety within their home and building.
- 8 out of 10 residents said they would like to receive information about the different safety aspect in writing; half of all residents would prefer a letter (50%) and a further 30% by email.
- 35% said they would like to attend city-wide meetings about building safety in high-rise buildings.
- 27% of residents would like a home fire safety visit from the local fire service.
- 35% of residents who responded were disabled.

When asked about possible improvements to the safety of their homes, 678 residents left comments. Residents' comments are important in helping us understand the issues within specific buildings and also how residents feel about their homes. In particular, residents highlighted the need for more targeted maintenance and wanted the council to ensure that there are sufficient smoke and fire alarms where they are needed. Residents also wanted more visibility of safety checks to help them feel safer in their home.

## **Responding to your needs**

Thank you to all residents who took part in our building safety questionnaire.

Overall, the results from the feedback questionnaire have shown that most residents feel safe and are aware of the issues associated with living in high-rise blocks, however an increased focus on safety issues, combined with better information will help residents to feel assured about the safety of their home and to be more prepared if problems were to arise.

Your continued feedback and lessons learned have helped us to develop a set of proposed commitments and priorities for the strategy. We are now consulting with residents to explore these and make sure we understand residents' specific needs in more detail.

In the meantime, during 2024-25 we have continued our work to provide more information to residents to help improve the awareness of any risks in their building and how to report building safety problems if they occur. This includes:

- developing a fire safety factsheet
- local engagement with residents in priority buildings
- providing clear contact details for reporting building safety concerns
- creating dedicated webpages for each high-rise block on the council's website
- better use of text messages to remind residents about safety inspection visits.

Please return to the consultation document to give us your views on the proposals for resident engagement on building safety.