

Building Safety Panel Meeting 9th July 2026

Homemead Communal Hall, Russell Street, Gravesend, DA12 1HQ.

Attendees

Bal Chattha –(Building Safety & Investments Manager), Jordan Vilday (Building Safety Coordinator), Tim Cross (Fire Safety Surveyor), Susan Clark (Neighbourhood Officer), Gurdeep Ghattaora (Planned & Major Works Manager) Madeline Folkard (Administration Assistant)

Roy Lovett, Graham Claricoats, Joanne Stringer, Linda Talbolt, William Henderson, Kirsty Baker, Tania Stokes, Phil Pollard, Tony Mace, Grace Rouse, Marian Gunning

1. Review of Previous minutes

Consultation and Discussion

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed by the panel.

Key Points

- No amendments were raised.
 - Members agreed the minutes accurately reflected previous discussions and actions.
-

2. Bin Chute Updates

Consultation and Discussion

The panel discussed ongoing issues surrounding misuse of bin chutes, fly-tipping and blocked waste chutes. Various options for improving waste disposal arrangements and encouraging better resident behaviour were explored.

Key Points

- JV suggested improving the presentation of waste disposal areas, including clearer signage and the introduction of smaller refuse bags.
- Smaller bags may help reduce oversized bags becoming lodged in chute systems.
- BC discussed the challenges surrounding CCTV permissions and noted that fly-tipping is not always carried out by residents.
- Residents supported increased monitoring of problem areas.
- SC advised that tenancy enforcement action could be considered where residents repeatedly fail to dispose of waste correctly.
- The possibility of combining CCTV with fob-controlled access was discussed to improve accountability and identify offenders.

Actions

- Introduce smaller refuse bags to reduce chute blockages.
- Improve waste disposal signage and resident communications.
- Install CCTV within waste chute rooms.
- Investigate fob-controlled access to chute rooms.

- Continue educating residents and consider tenancy enforcement for persistent offenders.
-

3. High Rise Improvements

Consultation and Discussion

GG provided an update on planned investment and improvement works across the Council's high-rise buildings. Residents were invited to comment on proposed works and raise concerns.

Key Points

Chantry Court

- Internal and external redecoration works were discussed.
- Residents raised concerns regarding children accessing scaffolding.
- GG confirmed contractors would implement appropriate safety measures, including netting and Heras fencing.
- Residents requested clear communication regarding work schedules, particularly where access to balconies may be required.
- Damaged and cracked glazing identified by residents will be replaced during the project.
- GG confirmed a Resident Liaison Officer would support communication and engagement throughout the works.

The Hive

- The flat roof replacement is expected to commence in mid-August and be completed before Christmas, alongside external redecoration works.
- Internal decoration works will follow completion of external projects.
- Residents were shown light and dark grey colour options for communal areas.
- Most attendees preferred the lighter option due to improved brightness, safety and contrast for visually impaired residents.
- GG confirmed the final colour selection would reflect the majority decision.
- Separate consultations will take place regarding colours for individual floors.

Gravesham Court

- Residents raised concerns regarding damage to the third-floor flooring caused by e-scooters.
- JV reminded residents that damage and safety concerns can be reported via email or the My Building Safety App.

Actions

- Maintain scaffolding safety measures throughout works.
- Improve communication and resident engagement before works commence.
- Replace cracked glazing identified during inspections.
- Progress The Hive roof replacement and redecoration programme.
- Confirm colour selections following resident consultation.

- Replace damaged flooring on the third floor of Gravesham Court.
-

4. CCTV Across High-Rise Buildings

Consultation and Discussion

Residents discussed CCTV coverage across high-rise blocks and opportunities to improve monitoring of communal areas.

Key Points

- JV suggested carrying out site visits with residents to identify the most suitable CCTV locations.
- BC explained the approval process required before CCTV installations can proceed.
- Residents were supportive of additional CCTV coverage as a deterrent against fly-tipping, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- The wider CCTV upgrade programme across all high-rise blocks was discussed.

Actions

- Undertake resident walkabouts to identify preferred CCTV locations.
 - Progress CCTV upgrades across all high-rise buildings.
 - Complete the CCTV improvement programme by year-end where possible.
-

5. Emergency Lighting & Fire Safety

Emergency Lighting & Fire Safety

Consultation and Discussion

BC and TC provided updates on emergency lighting, fire safety compliance and current performance.

Key Points

- BC explained the purpose of emergency lighting and the testing arrangements currently in place.
- Monthly functional tests and annual three-hour discharge tests are undertaken to ensure compliance.
- The potential benefits of self-testing LED emergency lighting systems were discussed, including:
 - Improved reliability.
 - Reduced maintenance visits.
 - Faster fault identification.
 - Reduced testing requirements.
- BC advised that any future improvements would be subject to the required consultation and approval processes.

Lift Works

- The panel complimented the contractor responsible for the recent Chantry Court lift works.
- Residents highlighted the positive service received throughout the project.

- Residents may be involved in future procurement exercises for major contracts.

Compliance Performance

- BC reported strong compliance performance for 2025/26.
- TC explained that Fire Risk Assessments are regularly undertaken and all identified actions are monitored through to completion.
- Only a small number of fire safety actions remain outstanding at The Hive and Chantry Court.
- Discussions also covered communal fire doors, maintenance requirements and servicing arrangements.

Smoking and Fire Safety

- Concerns were raised regarding discarded cigarette ends from balconies and communal areas.
- SC advised that tenancy enforcement action could be considered where behaviour places residents at risk.
- TC reinforced the fire safety risks associated with discarded smoking materials.

Actions

- Continue monitoring and completing outstanding fire safety actions.
- Explore opportunities for self-testing LED emergency lighting upgrades.
- Issue communications regarding smoking-related fire risks and tenancy responsibilities.
- Maintain high levels of fire safety compliance.

6. Window Restrictors

Consultation and Discussion

Residents discussed concerns regarding damaged communal window restrictors and wider window safety measures.

Key Points

- JV advised that restrictors are frequently damaged through misuse, climbing and anti-social behaviour.
- BC explained the importance of restrictors in preventing falls and protecting residents.
- Whilst acknowledging resident frustrations during hot weather, BC emphasised that safety remains the priority.
- TC advised that different window designs may require different types of restrictors.
- Installation will begin within communal areas before expanding into residential flats where appropriate.
- The discussion also considered residents who may require additional security measures due to personal circumstances, whilst balancing fire safety and means of escape requirements.

Actions

- Commence replacement and installation of communal window restrictors.
- Continue the rollout to residential properties where required.
- Consider individual circumstances when assessing requests for additional window security measures.

7. Dedicated Caretaker for High-Rise Buildings

Consultation and Discussion

The panel considered the outcome of proposals for a dedicated caretaker service for high-rise buildings.

Key Points

- Residents welcomed the introduction of a dedicated caretaker role.
- The role will focus on:
 - Building safety monitoring.
 - Identifying maintenance issues.
 - Monitoring communal areas.
 - Supporting refuse management.
 - Improving the overall condition of buildings.
- JV confirmed the role is not intended to replace existing cleaning services.
- As the role is newly created, the first year will operate as a trial period to determine responsibilities and establish the most effective service model.
- Residents highlighted the potential benefits of having a visible presence within high-rise buildings.

Actions

- Develop and refine the caretaker role during the trial period.
- Define duties and responsibilities based on operational experience.
- Consider resident involvement in the recruitment process.
- Review alternative job titles to better reflect the role's purpose.

8. Chair and Vice-Chair Arrangements

Consultation and Discussion

The future structure of the Building Safety Panel was discussed.

Key Points

- Residents were advised that nominations had been received and voting would take place via WhatsApp.
- BC explained the responsibilities of both Chair and Vice-Chair positions.
- Residents were encouraged to take an active role in setting agendas and leading discussions.

- Whilst the panel will become increasingly resident-led, officers will continue to provide administrative support, including agendas, minutes and meeting organisation.

Actions

- Arrange election of Chair and Vice-Chair through a WhatsApp vote.
- Establish a Building Safety Panel WhatsApp broadcast group.
- Provide guidance on the responsibilities of the elected positions.

9. Resident Engagement and Additional Matters

Consultation and Discussion

Several resident engagement initiatives and additional matters were discussed.

Key Points

Building Safety Event

- Residents provided positive feedback regarding the recent Building Safety Event.
- Positive comments were also received regarding the consultation exercise at Chantry Court relating to improvements to external green spaces.

Fob Access

- Concerns were raised regarding lost fobs and the possibility that old fobs remain in circulation.
- JV advised that the Council is considering a fob amnesty scheme.
- The proposal would enable residents who have genuinely lost access fobs to obtain replacements free of charge during a dedicated event.
- The need for identification checks and a review of charging arrangements was discussed.
- Consideration will also be given to future replacement policies.

Resident Information and Surveys

- Residents were invited to review a building safety leaflet and provide feedback before wider distribution.
- SC advised that resident satisfaction audits and surveys will also be issued to gather feedback and identify priorities for future improvement.

Actions

- Develop a fob amnesty initiative and resident engagement event.
- Review fob replacement policy and charging arrangements.
- Circulate building safety leaflets for panel feedback.
- Distribute resident surveys and audits to gather wider resident views.

Overall Outcomes

The panel welcomed the progress being made across high-rise buildings, particularly in relation to planned investment works, CCTV improvements, fire safety compliance and resident engagement. Residents supported the introduction of a dedicated caretaker role, enhanced CCTV coverage and continued investment in building safety measures. The meeting concluded with agreement on a number of actions aimed at improving resident safety, communication and building management across all high-rise blocks.