

**Council, 11 February 2021**  
**Motion: Cladding on Buildings**

**Councillor Sinden will move and Councillor Essex will second the following Motion:**

**This Motion asks Council to note that:**

Following the Grenfell tragedy, the Government has required the removal of all cladding that presents a fire risk and remediation of unsafe wall systems on the walls of existing residential buildings of any height. This affects not only buildings with the ACM cladding used on Grenfell, but many other buildings incorporating materials which could be flammable - including balconies and wooden panels.

- Building owners are responsible for ensuring the safety of their buildings and are required to have an up-to-date fire risk assessment and understand the construction of external walls and the potential performance of those wall systems in the event of fire.
- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the UK Council of Mortgage Lenders have agreed an industry-standard External Wall System fire review process, which takes place through an EWS1 form.
- There is a lack of sufficient qualified professionals able to undertake the EWS1 process and lenders often value properties at £0 until an EWS1 form shows that the building is “safe”. This can apply even to buildings under 18 metres, following changes in government advice in January 2020.
- Where a building's EWS1 form determines a building is ‘unsafe’ leaseholders are trapped in their ‘unsafe’ homes unless they are able to pay the huge sums of money often required to address the fire safety issues highlighted in the EWS1 form. In the meantime, they are often forced to pay for a 24 hour ‘waking watch’, which can cost as much as £20,000 per week. Many people face bankruptcy by this even before remediation bills can be passed on.
- It is estimated that at the current rate it will take 150 years to complete the remediation work required to the number of known unsafe properties over 18m high.
- Whilst the Government has provided £1.6 billion in funding to support the remediation of unsafe cladding, this will only cover a quarter of the number of buildings known to require cladding remediation works over 18m high. Funds have not been provided by the Government for buildings with other fire-safety risks or for buildings under 18m tall.
- As a result of this funding shortfall the costs of remediation works are being passed on to leaseholders, who are blameless for this situation and bought their properties in good faith.
- The Government has recently announced funding for alarm systems, which aim to reduce the reliance on extortionate waking watches. However, this does not cover the cost of waking watches, only covers buildings over 18m tall, and is not retrospective.
- This affects some Reigate and Banstead residents, including those in Nobel House in Redhill, which has HPL (high pressure laminate) cladding. HPL is mentioned as a highly flammable type of cladding in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report.

**The Proposer of the Motion states:**

- That giving leaseholders loans to pay for the repairs, whatever the terms, is not an acceptable solution, as this is placing the long-term financial burden on them.

**The Motion calls for:**

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to sign up to the 'End our Cladding Scandal Campaign', which makes the following 10 demands:

1. The Government must lead an urgent national effort to remove all dangerous cladding from buildings by June 2022.
2. The Building Safety Fund must cover all buildings, regardless of height, and a range of internal and external fire safety defects, not just cladding.
3. The Government should provide the money up front and then seek to recover it from any responsible parties or via a temporary levy on development.
4. Social housing providers must have full and equal access to the fund.
5. The Government must compel building owners or managers to be honest with residents about fire safety defects.
6. The Government should cover the cost of interim safety measures.
7. The Government should act as an insurer of last resort and underwrite insurance where premiums have soared.
8. A fairer, faster process is needed to replace the EWS form and funding is necessary to ensure all buildings requiring a form are surveyed within 12 months.
9. Mental health support must be offered to affected residents.
10. Protecting residents from historic and future costs must be a key commitment of new building safety legislation.