

By e-mail

1 May 2024

Subject: Re Housing Minister LHHC 25 April 2024

Thank you for your prompt reply. We did point out in our last email that we are not aware of the complexities of how the LG&H Committee conducts its business. Your response explains the reason why no questions were put to the Minister on the pressing issue of building safety and the lack of remediation in the Welsh private housing sector. However, given the recent fire incident in Celestia and wider issues of public safety, we remain concerned that the Minister was not subjected to any questions on building safety.

We would ask that you put our correspondence before the Committee with a request to hold the Minister to account on the pedestrian rate of fire remediation progress in the Welsh private housing sector. We also request that the Committee question the Minister on why she continues her policy of not holding a regular communications forum with private sector victims. The current WG "newsletter" is totally inadequate in dealing with the many questions and concerns that long suffering victims have.

It is also clear that the Strategic Stakeholders Group on Future Welsh Building Safety legislation is not meeting the more pressing and urgent needs of Welsh victims.

We remain of the view that urgent legislation is required in Wales to force developers to remediation to agreed timescales. Without that action we see this crisis drifting on for many more years.

Diolch yn fawr

With regards

Mark Thomas & Robert Nichols - Welsh Cladiators

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By e-mail

30 April 2024

Subject: Re Housing Minister LHHC 25 April 2024

Dear Mark & Rob,

Thank you for your email, which I discussed with John Griffiths MS this morning.

The purpose of the Committee's session with the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning on 24 April was to take evidence in relation to the

Committee's inquiry on the private rented sector. When Welsh Ministers are invited to appear before Senedd committees it's on the basis of giving evidence as part of a particular inquiry or to scrutinise specific legislation, unless Ministers are invited to attend a 'general scrutiny session' covering their portfolio, which is agreed in advance. As the purpose of the session on 24 April was to discuss the private rented sector, it would not have been appropriate for Members to question the Cabinet Secretary on other matters.

The Chair has confirmed to me the Committee's continued interest in all matters relating to building safety, and that there will be further opportunities to continue to raise these matters with the Cabinet Secretary.

If you are content, the Committee can consider your email as a paper to note at a forthcoming meeting.

Kind regards

Clerk, Local Government and Housing Committee, Welsh Parliament

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By e-mail

29 April 2024

Subject: Re Housing Minister LHHC 25 April 2024

Dear Committee Members

You will be aware that on the 26 March Chair John Griffiths and Sam Rowlands visited the Celestia Development in Cardiff Bay to inspect the ongoing serious build and fire defects. John and Sam witnessed the apartment and met with residents where a serious fire incident took place on 29 February.

During the visit you also met with some residents representatives from Victoria Wharf . They are battling Taylor Wimpey to get their fire defective homes also remediated some two years after an announcement was made . During the meeting we advised the Committee members that there was lack of private sector remediation going on in both Cardiff Bay and Swansea despite the WG Developers Contract being signed some 12 months ago. We cited other developments such as Altamar in Swansea & Prospect Place in Cardiff. We argued that there is a significant disconnect between the continued statements of Minister Julie James and the lived experience of Welsh private sector fire cladding and build quality victims.

Now without us understanding the full complexities of the WG's LG & H committee proceedings, we were very surprised to learn that during the Minister's recent appearance before the Committee on 24 April there were no comments or

questions made to the Minister on the continuing failure of private sector developers to get on and remediate or of the Committee's visit to Celestia.

We trust that the recent changes in the Committee's composition will not result in a reduced focus on what remains a major public safety issue and social injustice in Wales. It's important to stress, as John and Sam witnessed on their recent Celestia visit, that our building and residents remain at real risk as long as this crisis is allowed to drag on.

We remain of the view that seven years on, from the horrific Grenfell Tragedy, the Welsh Government needs to introduce legal powers and sanctions to force developers to get on and remediate at pace.

We look forward to hearing from you

With regards

Mark Thomas - Rob Nichols - Welsh Cladiators