



## Full Council – 18 November 2024

### Motion for Non-Cabinet Member debate

#### **Guaranteeing new builds are safe and free of dangerous defects.**

The number of new residential buildings in the borough has increased substantially in recent years. New buildings have changed the landscape of our borough, with the vast majority of large towers blocks around Wembley Stadium, Wembley Central and Alperton.

Brent's Labour Cabinet, particularly the Leader and former Cabinet Member for Regeneration, often point to significant building in the borough as their proudest achievement – but they always fail to recognise its negative impact on existing residents in Brent and those who end up living in these buildings.

A worrying number of new buildings in Brent have significant defects. The standard of some new builds is shockingly poor – issues include dangerous, faulty lifts in high-rise blocks, water and waste leaks, unsafe balconies and outdoor communal spaces.,

At the Planning stage, developers are keen to highlight how seriously they take building standards and commit to building good quality, safe new homes. Sadly, some fail to do this and very little is done to hold them to account. Brent Council has little involvement after the planning stage and Council Officers are on record as effectively stating it is not the local authority's responsibility to do anything if there are issues in new buildings once built.

All residents deserve to live in safe buildings, free of defects. When issues arise, developers, construction companies and housing management companies must do a better job of resolving these issues quickly to minimise the impact on residents.

Brent Council should have a much tougher line on developers who consistently fail residents by building unsafe buildings with significant defects and should be a leading voice in calling for better regulation and accountability from developers who are failing residents in their buildings.

#### ***This Council therefore resolves to:***

- Create a borough-wide log of issues in new builds to get a better picture of the type of problems faced and urge the Labour Government, as part of their planning reforms, to enable decisions about whether to allow developers, who

have issues in their existing stock, to continue building in our borough to be treated as a material planning consideration

- Urge the Labour Government to make it possible for local authorities to step in and act when issues in new buildings occur. Currently Brent's Building Control Team are only responsible for ensuring that the construction of any new building is undertaken in line with building regulations. This needs to be extended to when building is completed and when issues present after the construction phase. Additional costs associated with increasing responsibilities for the Council should be permitted to come directly from CIL contributions made by developers.
- Create a dedicated helpline for tenants and leaseholders in new blocks across the borough, for them to be able to report issues so that the Council can assist in guaranteeing action from the relevant bodies and when necessary to support residents in raising complaints with the Housing Ombudsman.

Cllr Anton Georgiou  
Alperton ward