

# **Ministerial Meeting with Developers to Discuss Building Safety Issues**

**October 5<sup>th</sup> 2021, 9am-10am**

## **Minutes**

### **Attendees:**

- Julie James – Minister for Climate Change
- Ben Thomas – (Information not held) Taylor Wimpey
- Liz Reynolds – MD for South Wales, Taylor Wimpey
- Tim Stone – (Information not held) Redrow
- Nigel Palmer – (Information not held) Redrow
- Andy Edwards – MD for South Wales, Persimmon Homes
- Andy Fuller – (Information not held), Persimmon Homes
- Martin Edgley – (Information not held), Persimmon Homes
- (Darryn Parry) – (Information not held), R&M Williams
  
- Councillor Rob Stewart – Swansea Council
- Councillor Huw Thomas – Cardiff Council
- Councillor Jane Dudd – Newport Council
  
- Sara Faye – Special Advisor to the Minister for Climate Change, Welsh Government
- (Redacted information) – Private Secretary to the Minister for Climate Change, Welsh Government
- (Redacted information) – Building Safety Team Programme Manager, Welsh Government
- (Redacted information) – Head of Building Safety Remediation, Welsh Government

### **Declined to attend:**

- Laing O'Rourke

### **Invited but no response from:**

- Bovis Homes
- Charles Church
- Bellway Homes
- Westmark

## **1. Welcome and introductions**

The Minister welcomed attendees to the meeting thanking developer representatives for meeting with her again.

The Minister updated the group on recent developments with regards to building safety. Phase one of the Welsh Building Safety Fund was launched on the 30<sup>th</sup> September. This first phase will provide funding for fire safety surveys and the creation of Building Remediation Passports. These will identify what measures and actions are required to make a multi-residential building as safe as it can be and protect lives and property in the event of a fire.

The additional information from a wider assessment of buildings across Wales will assist in the development of the second phase of the fund, not just for funding but how we can identify and support the Foundational Economy supply chains to have the skills and capacity to deliver the works.

## **2. Agenda Item 1: Plans to contribute funding to remediation of buildings with known defects**

The Minister thanked those present whose organisations had taken a responsible stance with regards to the building safety crisis. The Minister also acknowledged that not all developers are acting so responsibly. The Minister highlighted the importance of addressing issues beyond cladding.

The group discussed the proposed Building Safety Developers Tax being implemented by the UK Government which is due to raise £2bn of funding over a 10 year period. This tax will be targeted towards the largest property developers to ensure they make a fair contribution to the remediation programme, reflecting the benefit they will derive from restoring confidence to the UK housing market. The UK Government have said they will consult on the policy design in due course.

Welsh Government are working on the assumption that as this is a UK wide tax there will be a consequential for Wales, this funding will help to support remediation of buildings in Wales where developers have not pledged support.

## **3. Agenda Item 2: Plans for future commitments – i.e. those buildings where defects have yet to be identified**

The Minister highlighted that Phase One of the Welsh Building Safety Fund has the potential to identify more buildings that have building safety defects. The funding will support mid and high rise buildings and therefore Welsh Government's expectations are that developers take responsibility for more than just high rise buildings.

The Group discussed current works being undertaken or considered at sites across Wales. The Group were supportive of the concept of Passports and would keep abreast of developments. Officials would share relevant information as necessary.

## **4. Agenda Item 3: Nature and extent of engagement with residents**

The Minister highlighted the importance of engaging constructively with residents. Recognition that with such an emotional issue at times this can be difficult. The

Group acknowledge the importance of working constructively with Managing Agents and the role they have in engaging with residents. Managing the expectations of residents is particularly important as this work is complex and often takes some significant time in terms of scoping, procurement and subsequent remediation.

The issue of 'as built' drawing was highlighted as an issue of concern for residents and their representatives finding it challenging to get hold of this information to support survey work and investigations.

#### **5. Agenda Item 4: Plans put in place by the organisations to respond in future to ensure quality, safe builds moving forward**

The Minister acknowledged that many of your organisations are already putting in place changes to working practices to ensure that you are responding to the reforms to design and construction set out in the UK Government's Building Safety Bill and have also been participating in working groups at a UK level.

The Group discussed their various response. The main thrust was around greater focus on compliance and governance arrangements to ensure eradication of errors from the start. Technology is a key component with photographic evidence to provide assurance.

The Minister welcomed further close working as Welsh Government develops its own legislation.

#### **6. Agenda Item 5: Challenges to delivery of remediation moving forward**

The Minister noted the challenges already being felt in the construction industry as a result of Brexit and Covid with regards to availability of skilled professionals and supply chain issues. The Group acknowledged that identifying issues and scoping remediation works takes time, that is before there are 'spades on site'. The Group acknowledged these issues will take many years to fully address.

#### **7. AOB**

The Minister and Local Authority representatives expressed their thanks for attendance at the meeting. The Minister welcomed the constructive dialogue and intended to ensure lines of communication were kept open.

Further building safety issues would continue to be raised through the Minister's Construction Forum.