



# Alexander House – fire safety update

25 November 2020

# Agenda



- Welcome & Introductions
- Background
- Action to date
- Planning application proposals
- Next Steps and future communications
- Homeowner only queries

# Welcome



- Rob Mills, Director of Customer Experience (South)
- Holly Sheppard, Contract Manager
- Jason Paine, Podium Surveying

## Housekeeping

- Please put yourself on mute
- Ask questions through the chat
- Opportunity for questions at the end
- General overview for all residents, then homeowner specific questions at the end

*\*Meeting will be recorded for residents unable to attend*

# Background 1



- Customer health and safety is our number 1 priority
- Grenfell Tower tragedy – 14 June 2017
- Annual Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) carried out, last one Jan 2020. All the actions identified from the FRA action plan completed
- Commissioned a specialist company to survey both buildings, including the external wall coverings, and to advise on the fire integrity, structure and construction of the buildings.

## Background 2 – Official Guidance



- Government guidance changed since Grenfell
- Dec 2018, Advice Note 14 – Guidance for building owners with non-Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) in external wall systems, including cladding and insulation. ‘Decision tree’ relating to the suitability of external wall materials of residential buildings over 18 metres (6 storeys) high.
- External Wall System (EWS1) assessment. Building owners required to appoint a competent fire safety professional to carry out a review and give the building an EWS certificate. If the building is found to have no combustible materials, this will then be reflected in the certificate, and lenders and valuers will be able to give the homes within the block a valuation. The new certificates will be accepted across the housing sector. Certificate lasts for 5 years

# Identified issues



- **External wall insulation** (blue and orange coloured wall covering)
  - Render system with an EPS (expanded polystyrene) insulation core
    - Render top-coat (3mm)
    - Plastic reinforcement mesh
    - Insulation 110mm EPS (Expanded Polystyrene)
  
- **Planning proposals**
  - To remove existing wall covering and replace with a compliant external wall insulation
  - New colour will be grey, with the top two storeys a darker grey
  - New windows to be installed
  
- Accent Housing will be meeting the cost of the fire remedial work, homeowners to contribute towards windows (excl scaffolding costs)

# Action to date 1



- FRA remedial actions previously completed
  - Reducing excessive gaps around communal doors
  - Improved fire stopping in communal electrical service cupboards
  - Updating and replacing missing fire safety signs
  - Removing waste and personal items stored in the common areas
- Fire alarm tested every week
- Emergency lighting tested monthly and serviced annually
- Weekly walk around building by Accent's Fire & Safety Assessor
- Joint inspections with Accent, Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) and Rushmoor BC
- Hampshire FRS annual inspection of the building
- Offered free testing of portable appliances in resident's flats
- Waking watch, 5pm – 8am, and 24/7 Saturday and Sunday

## Action to date 2



- Dedicated Accent Project Team inc Podium Surveying, Rushmoor BC (Building Control and Planning)
- Building Safety Manager appointed (ahead of legislation), to inform Project Team
- Dedicated e-mail address – [aldershotfiresafety@accentgroup.org](mailto:aldershotfiresafety@accentgroup.org)
- Dedicated web page – <https://www.accentgroup.org/alexander-house/>



# Timescales



- Planning application submitted – 20 Nov 2020
- Planning application reviewed by Rushmoor BC, and accepted, approx 2 weeks
  
- Works to be tendered – aiming for Dec 2020, but may be Jan 2021
  - If Dec 2020, contractor appointed end of Feb 2021
  - If Jan 2021, contractor appointed April 2021
  
- Start on site – Spring 2021
  
- Works completed – Spring 2022

*\*These are anticipated timescales, may be subject to change*

# Window replacement



- New wall covering will be a different profile and thickness to existing wall covering. Removing existing wall covering may result in damage to window frames
- Taking the opportunity to replace windows to align with new wall covering, and with improved thermal efficiency
- Cheaper to replace as part of other fire safety work whilst the scaffolding is up (Accent meeting the scaffolding cost)
- Cost c£5,000 per homeowner (compared to c£7,500 if done separately)
- All safety measures will be in place with the contractor – details and timeframes to be confirmed once contractor appointed

# Next Steps 1



- Installation of additional fire sounder and flashing alarm to bedrooms to all flats – Accent to meet these costs – Provisional start w/c 7 Dec
- Once planning approved and contractor appointed, will confirm start on site and timeframes
- Details of site working, including health & safety, hours of work, site security, etc. to be finalised as part of work specification, and once contractor appointed. Pre-start on site meeting with residents.
- Alternative parking or permits to be arranged for Alexander House
- Site office in Stafford House car park

## Next Steps 2



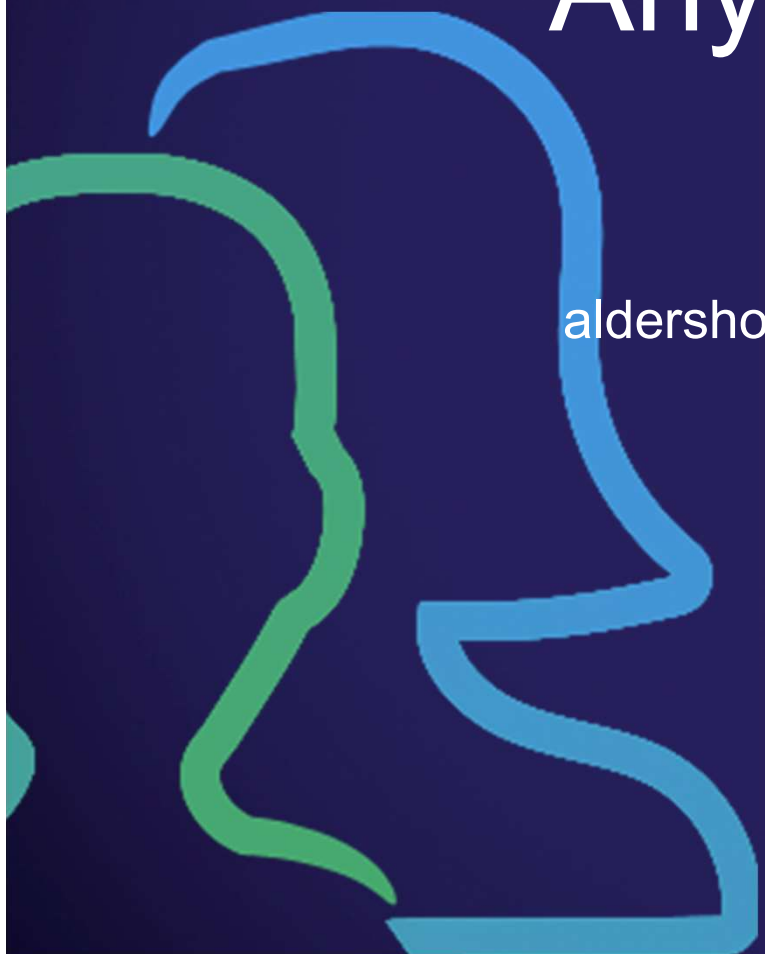
- Contractor Resident Liaison Officer to be appointed, with on site presence
- Regular updates via email and on website. Next update likely to be in new year.
- Further meetings to be arranged



# Any Questions?

[aldershotfiresafety@accentgroup.org](mailto:aldershotfiresafety@accentgroup.org)

Tel. 0345 678 0555



# Homeownership queries 1



- Recent Government announcement that homes without cladding would not longer need an EWS1 certificate
  - Advice note only, not Government regulations or legislation
  - Not all mortgage companies in agreement with proposal, and await further detail. For individual mortgage companies to decide whether or not they require a EWS1 form still
  - They may still consider Stafford and Alexander House as being classed as either partially or fully clad

## Homeownership queries 2



- 3-month nomination period for re-sales
  - Exclusive period of time for Accent to identify a potential purchaser before the property can be placed on the market with a traditional estate agent.
  - Dedicated sales team, able to sell homes during the nomination period. Use many of the tools that traditional agents use such as professional photography, floorplans and also place the properties on websites such as Rightmove
  - Able to upload properties to the relevant Government appointed Help to Buy Agent website (specifically for Low Cost Home Ownership Schemes). Not available to all estate agents.
  - Open to discussing the possibility of working alongside a traditional estate agent during the nomination period.