



Brunel estate ventilation and fire safety work (project X253) Questions and Answers - September 2019

The questions below were raised at the residents' meeting held on 20 August

➤ Section 20 leaseholder consultation

Q: Can the s20 notice period be extended to take into account those notices that were not delivered by Royal Mail?

Yes, the Leasehold Operations Team extended the response date for observations to 30 September 2019. The team wrote to all leaseholders to advise them of this.

➤ Scope of work and reason for the work

Q: What work is being done?

- Replacing the communal ventilation extract fans, silencers, local ductwork, dampers and controls in the plantroom on the roof.
- Cleaning of ventilation ductwork.
- In-flat works to include replacement air grille, control and fire dampers in bathroom and toilets.
- Electrical works associated with the ventilation.
- Emergency lighting upgrades within the plantroom on the roof.
- Fire stopping works.
- Replacement of communal fire doors at Keyham House, Mickleton House, Sunderland House, and Riverford House (for example electrical intake cupboards and stairwell doors).
- Replacement of tenant flat entrance doors, with leaseholder opt in, at Keyham House, Mickleton House, Sunderland House, and Riverford House. The doors will be FD30 (fire rated for at least 30 minutes).

Q: What is the fire rating of the current doors installed across the estate in 1999?

We do not have a fire rating for the doors installed in 1999. However, in 2018 we undertook a series of surveys on the front doors across the estate (in those blocks above six floors). The surveys informed Westminster City Council's decision to replace the fire doors to the tenanted properties at Keyham House, Mickleton House, Sunderland House, and Riverford House.

Q: Is the ventilation work essential?

Yes. Condition surveys carried in 2017 highlighted that the systems are beyond their maximum life expectancy. The fans and extract grilles are generally in a poor condition and in need of replacement. The current condition has caused an airflow imbalance on the system with some dwellings suffering low or high air extract rates.

Q: This is now the second ventilation major works. We had the original, then a total renewal in 1995 and now another one. How long is the ventilation system due to last?

The life expectancy of different components varies, and deterioration depends on different factors such as usage and conditions they operate in. Fans, grilles and dampers would expect to last approximately 15 years while the ductwork can last longer circa 20/30 years.

Q: What other options / methods have been investigated to do the work? For example, blocking off the current ventilation and using other means to ventilate?

The condition surveys carried out in 2017, included an assessment of options and recommendation to do the work. The chosen recommendation was based on the improved efficiency of the system, effectiveness of completing the work, enhanced fire safety and cost. The condition surveys helped inform the requirements that Westminster City Council asked Axis to develop into the full project. If you would like a copy of these please e-mail

dtownsend@westminster.gov.uk

➤ **Scaffold towers**

Q: What other options for getting equipment to the roof have been considered?

Axis considered whether it would be possible to use the lifts and existing roof access for the fans. However, the weight of the fans exceeds the operating weight of the lifts. Due to restrictions in access roads it is not possible to use a crane. The only identified space that could have a crane would be the area next to Keyham House however it is not large enough to foot the size of crane needed to lift the fans to the top of Keyham House.

Q: Where will the scaffold towers be at Keyham House?

The scaffold towers will be to the rear and left side of the block. See photo to the right showing the locations.

Q: How long will the scaffold towers be up for?

The scaffold towers at Keyham House will be up for approximately four weeks. The lower blocks will have scaffold towers up for approximately two weeks.

Please note that although the Axis planning documents have costed the scaffold towers for four weeks for all blocks, Axis anticipates that for lower blocks these will be used for approximately two weeks. The cost will be adjusted to reflect the actual time used at the final account stage.

Q: There is a large sum attributed to weekly scaffold inspections, Can Axis explain this? If there is a delay, who pays for the ongoing inspections?



Inspections need to be carried out by qualified personnel in line with working at heights regulations 2005 and Construction Industry Scaffolders Record Scheme (CISRS).

Each block has been attributed costs based on the length of time that the scaffold is erected for. Under the terms of the contract between Westminster City Council and Axis there are a number of rules around how costs are attributed in the event of delay depending on the cause of the delay.

If there was a delay in taking the scaffolding down which was caused by Axis, Axis would bear this cost. However, if there is another cause, the responsibility sits with Westminster City Council to determine the cause and therefore any cost implications.

➤ **Ventilation**

Q: Are the grilles in the separate toilets being replaced as well?

Yes, all properties that have a grille in the bathroom and separate toilet will have both replaced.

Q: How much noise will the ventilation make? Does it have a fan in the grille in the bathrooms / toilet?

The fans are situated on the roof of the block and will be fitted with silencers. There are no fans situated within the grilles installed within residents' homes.

Q: How long will Axis require inside each property?

This depends if the property is due for ventilation work only or if the property front entrance door is also being replaced. In both cases, Axis will discuss this with you before work starts in your property. For properties having only the ventilation work done, Axis will require two days to complete the work. For properties where front entrance doors are also being replaced, the work will take three to four days. This only applies to Keyham House, Mickleton House, Sunderland House, and Riverford House.

Q: What work will be done in each property?

Axis has allowed two days in each property to complete the following work:

- Laying of protection—flooring protection from entrance door to working area, protection within bathroom and WC, including baths toilets and basins.
- Opening up of old grilles and access panel.
- Cleaning of ductwork and installation of new grilles and vents, installation of new access panel
- Making good finishes, clean and clear.

Q: How will properties be protected during the work?

Plastic protection (Correx) will be laid to protect flooring. Axis, will carry out a pre-condition survey before work starts in each property. When carrying out the survey, Axis will discuss any concerns around belongings in the working area and will be able to provide help moving belongings.

Q: How will properties be made good after the work?

Should any damage be made to existing finishes Axis will, where possible, replace tiles/paint on a like for like basis. Should this not be possible Axis will discuss practical alternatives with residents. On completion of the door installations, Axis will make good any plaster work disturbed and finish to match existing where possible; should this not be possible Axis will discuss practical alternatives with residents.

➤ **Fire safety**

Q: What fire safety work is included in the project?

The fire safety work includes fire stopping and the replacement of fire doors in four blocks.

Fire Stopping work is required to be done:

- Where any service pipes / trunking run through a compartment wall, ceiling or floor.
- Around any movement joint.
- Around any gaps in the building, for example, between the floor slab and external cladding.

Replacement of fire doors at Keyham, Mickleton, Sunderland and Riverford Houses.

- Replacement doors within the communal areas such as electrical intake cupboards.
- Replacement of tenants' front doors, and an opt-in for leaseholders at an additional cost.

Q: Why are front entrance doors being replaced in only four blocks?

This is based on the current Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) for each of the blocks in the project. Because of the design the blocks, including height and entrances and exits, fire doors are only required in Keyham, Mickleton, Sunderland, and Riverford Houses.

Q: Will leaseholders be given an option to have their doors replaced? When will more details, including costs, be known?

Yes, leaseholders will be given the option to opt in to the scheme to have their doors replaced at the same rate as Westminster City Council is paying for tenant doors. Leaseholders will be written to before the pre-start surveys, this will include full details of costs.

Q: Why are the communal doors being replaced in only four blocks?

This is based on the current Fire Risk Assessments (FRA) for each of the blocks in the project. Because of the design the blocks, including height and entrances and exits, fire doors are only required in Keyham, Mickleton, Sunderland, and Riverford Houses.

Q: What should residents do in the event of a fire and how is this enabled by the buildings design? How is this communicated to residents after Grenfell? And does this include signage?

In the unlikely event of fire, you should 'stay put', unless there is a fire in your flat or you are told to leave by the emergency services. There is signage to explain this within the communal areas of each block and is in accordance with current guidance from London Fire Brigade.

Q: Is there a fire alarm in the communal area on every floor? If not, why not?

No, this is not in keeping with a 'stay put' policy in event of a fire and not required under building regulations. In purpose-built flats where adequate fire separation is provided between unless the fire is within a flat, residents should remain in their flats unless told otherwise by the emergency services. There is signage to explain this within the communal areas of each block and is in accordance with current guidance from London Fire Brigade.

Q: Are the communal areas (stairwells) pressurised to prevent the build-up of the smoke?

No, there is no requirement or need to retrofit pressurisation to stairwells. Retrofitting pressure systems generally isn't done on older buildings as it's difficult and extremely expensive to achieve the appropriate enclosure. Other methods, such as certified FD30s doors provide adequate protection for residents under the current building regulations and are included within this work.

Q: Does the work include provision for fire stopping between floors of buildings?

Appropriate fire stopping is being carried out in all areas where it is required, e.g. areas where there are service penetrations between the floor slabs. Fire dampers are also being installed as part of the new grills at the point of entry to each apartment.

The ductwork within the building is contained within a purpose-built brick enclosure. To access this, large sections of wall would have to be removed in order for dampers to be installed within the main ductwork. The brickwork is a non-combustible material, so the main ductwork is protected. By

installing the fire dampers within each property, we are protecting the spread of smoke and flame should this travel through the system. The dampers proposed as part of this scheme are thermally triggered, meaning they will close automatically when it detects a temperature of 70 degrees Celsius.

Q: What is the fire rating for the replacement air grilles in each property?

The air grilles meet fire testing standard EN1366-2 and are fire classed according to EN 13501-3.

➤ **Asbestos**

Q: There are large sums attributed to asbestos surveys, can Axis explain this?

As part of the CAR2012 asbestos regulations, asbestos surveys need to take place prior to any refurbishment works where there is a risk of exposure to people who live in the building. The survey will require a sample from the area of work to be taken and analysed for a report to be issued providing recommendations where required. As it stands, the asbestos surveys carried out previously do not relate to the areas Axis will be working in.

Q: Axis documents show a cost for surveying every roof, there are new roofs that don't contain asbestos and Westminster has been working on the roofs since the estate was built. Can Axis explain this?

Axis is replacing roof-based ventilation equipment and ductwork, therefore works are being carried out on the roof. The new roofing system may not have asbestos, but it may be present in areas not previously disturbed by the roofing works / new roof.

Q: Can Axis clarify where asbestos testing will be required in residents' homes, and if this includes both tenants and leaseholders?

Asbestos surveys will be carried out in the area of work in the bathroom, and where appropriate separate toilets. This applies to both leaseholders and tenants.

Q: Does this include where walls are fully plastered and clearly no asbestos? Why should there be a survey, and costs, for surveying where there is clearly no asbestos.

As part of the CAR2012 asbestos regulations, asbestos surveys need to take place prior to any refurbishment works where there is a risk of exposure to people who live in the building. Whilst the plaster may not have an asbestos containing material there may be hidden materials within the void where the ventilation is located or behind the plaster.

Q: Can the previous surveys and records of asbestos, for example from the Decent Homes work, be used rather than doing new surveys?

No, as part of the CAR2012 asbestos regulations, asbestos surveys need to take place prior to any refurbishment works where there is a risk of exposure to people who live in the building. Axis cannot rely on previous surveys or records.

Q: How will the risers / ductwork be checked for asbestos?

The existing ducting is a complete sealed material which does not contain any asbestos substances as it is designed to ventilate properties. The ductwork is also free from any lagging which is where asbestos containing materials (ACM's) would usually be present.

Q: Are asbestos surveys rechargeable to leaseholders?

Yes, if you own the lease of a property you are required to pay your share of the landlord's costs of managing and maintaining the building.

➤ **Link to other work**

Q: There are guarantees on the roofs (previous major works). Will the guarantee remain in place and for the duration of the guarantee?

Yes. Westminster City Council and Axis will confirm this in writing

Q: Work to the lift motor rooms, what is the link to the lift replacement project? And are costs recharged across the estate?

Work to the lift motor rooms will be excluded from the ventilation and fire safety project (X253) and done under the lift replacement project (AA801). As such, the cost for the work in the lift motor rooms will be apportioned across all blocks on the estate under project AA801. There will be an adjustment at the final account stage for project X253 to reflect this.

➤ **Timetable / cost of delays**

Q: What is the overall programme for the work?

The overall programme is 62 weeks, this includes six weeks for mobilisation and site set up. The construction programme, when work will be done onsite, is 56 weeks.

Q: What penalties are there for delays to the agreed programme?

Under the terms of Westminster City Council's contract, Axis' performance is measured against a number of key performance indicators (KPIs). Four of these are project specific and have a direct impact on Axis' profit for the project:

KPI 6 – Predictability (Time) KPI 7 – Defects (Handover) KPI 8 – Predictability (Cost)

KPI 9 – Interventions (Resolution)

These are scored on a quarterly basis by Westminster City Council. The scores of these directly affect the profit received by Axis as profit is variable rather than fixed. There is also provision for general damages.

➤ **Other blocks on the estate not included in the project**

Q: What is the rationale that some of the blocks on the estate not being included in the project (i.e. those along Great Western Road)

The blocks included in the project are those that have a communal ventilation system. The fire safety works are being done at the same time at these blocks. Any fire safety works to those blocks that do not have a communal ventilation system will be picked up as a separate project.

➤ **Axis site office**

Q: How big does the site office need to be? What will it include?

The site office will contain a canteen / respite room, an office (usually two cabins stacked one above the other), site toilet, a storage container and a skip. The site cabins are 50-foot x 25 foot minimum.

Q: What options have been considered for the location of the site office and welfare facilities?

The site office and welfare facility area has not been agreed. Axis approached the housing team for their advice on suitable locations. Given the size of the area required, the need to maintain the emergency services access, and limit suspending car parking the area next to Keyham House was suggested. Axis would welcome any other suggestions from residents.

Q: How long will the site compound be there for?

Axis has a responsibility to provide welfare facilities to staff and contractors for the duration of the works, and therefore the site compound is likely to be in place for the duration of the project. The overall programme is 62 weeks, this includes six weeks for mobilisation and site set up. The construction programme is 56 weeks.

Q: Will any other equipment be needed across the estate, for example skips?

Axis will need to erect a hoist and tower for each block to gain materials access to the roof. In addition, they may need to put a skip nearer to each of the blocks they are working on. This would be enclosed by Heras fencing with a lockable gate, and the skip also has a lockable lid.

Q: Could the previous estate office be used for the project?

No, Westminster City Council is looking at options to turn the previous estate office into family sized accommodation for council tenants. The site has been handed over to the Westminster Development team.