

Executive Summary

The following report is produced focusing on housing within the London Borough of Barnet which were identified as having similar design and material characteristics to the UPVC clad, timber-framed houses which were involved in the Moss Hall Grove fire in June 2023, during which rapid fire growth and spread occurred, caused from a fire which originated externally and resulted in combustion occurring to the external UPVC cladding and then spreading across the adjoining houses.

Surveys have identified there are 523 timber-framed houses with similar timber or UPVC cladding arrangements which is continuous across more than one unit, with a further 50 masonry cavity wall houses with timber or UPVC cladding which is continuous across more than one unit.

It should be noted that there were no fatalities or injuries resulting from the Moss Hall Grove fire meaning there was no subsequent investigation by the Fire & Rescue Service authorities, or a Coroners inquiry. Two-storey, single occupancy dwellings fall outside all current fire safety legislation and related risk assessment processes with the exception of: -

- a) Building Regulations for new houses and refurbishment of existing properties where the work is covered by the regulations, the regulation requirements cannot be retrospectively applied.
- b) The Housing Health & Safety Rating System which is a mechanism of the Housing Act.

Existing two-storey single occupancy dwellings are not covered by fire safety regulation (except HHSRS) due to the height and configuration of these types of houses, the level of risk to occupants when balanced against the opportunity for means of escape, means the overall risk to life is generally very low. There is always the possibility of instances whereby fires in these types of properties may occur and result in injuries or fatalities, however all risks can never be completely eliminated and a pragmatic view on the cost benefit of risk reduction is required.

It should be emphasised this report has analysed the risk factors associated with the design and materials of the Moss Hall fire houses and compared them with the other three main archetypes of similar properties identified. However, LB Barnet's assessment of risk to occupiers using the HHSRS risk assessment methodology, is the only assessment of the in-scope housing types which carries any legal or regulatory compliance obligation. Capital PCC's review and recommendations in relation to the design & material issues identified does not expressly state or imply that there is any failure with current building or specific fire safety legislation or regulation for the in-scope properties.