

Appendix: major works defects review

Item 5: Central Residents only meeting 25/3/21

Report by Jane Thorp

(Hanover Residents Association/Leaseholders Action Group)

The attached photographic record of the failure of brand new roofs and windows installed in blocks across the city in recent years has only recently been acknowledged by the council as a problem which pertains to more than one block. The council is dealing with some of the issues but not others. Because of this failure of acknowledgement, there are numerous formal disputes, one tribunal case, and many requests for compensation now outstanding. The issue is now not just one of remedying the damaged buildings (and in certain cases this is impossible without more major works - I refer in particular to the removal of essential drip channels in the concrete on Clarendon and Ellen Estate which has not been acknowledged at all), but there are also many questions about how the council is dealing with the disputes, compensation requests, and the tribunal case in the wake of this catastrophe.

If the council had been proactive about managing the building companies on site; if the council had not signed off works which are so far below standard that it beggars belief; if the council had been proactive with the prompt repairs needed for the major works; and if the council had been proactive about setting good standards in handling compensation, disputes, and tribunals, then we would not be at this pass. This is a major failure and needs to be addressed as such. All of these works were signed off by council staff. All of these works badly affect both tenants and leaseholders.

Residents have been promised at many meetings that things will change under the new framework of contracts for major works, but we have yet to see anything definitively written down. I am asking for full written acknowledgement of the problems following major works, a programme of remedies with dates for the work to be done, and a written process for dealing with disputes and compensation which treats all applicants equally, rather than the current system of negotiating outcomes individually to the detriment of people who may not have access to the skills or advice that are needed when dealing with experienced council managers advised by an in-house legal team.

