

COUNCIL

24th APRIL 2023

MOTIONS

(B) Tackling Damp and Mould

To be moved by Councillor Will Connolly and seconded by Councillor Chloe-Jane Ross:

“Council notes:

- A. There are around 18,000 people living in social housing in the borough.
- B. That during the cost-of-living crisis many local families are reducing heating costs, which is exacerbating problems with damp and mould.
- C. The tragic death of a two-year-old boy Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, where the Coroner ruled that living with prolonged exposure to toxic mould was a cause of his death, and the February 2023 Housing Ombudsman evaluation of responses to damp and mould report.
- D. The casework issues Ward Councillors and Officers have experienced trying to get landlords, including social housing providers, to take swift action to tackle damp and mould.
- E. The need to avoid blaming tenants for damp and mould problems in properties and the lack of practical support many tenants face in tackling mould.
- F. With thanks, the ongoing work carried out by officers on housing issues and the powers that the London Borough of Bromley has to issue improvement notices to landlords of properties to tackle damp problems.

Council calls for;

The Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation and Housing to review the Council’s response to tackling damp and mould, and in doing so consider aspects including:

- **Improving accountability** – by creating a log of damp and mould casework, to keep track of individual cases and require housing providers to report back on their response. To present high level statistics on damp and mould housing issues to each Scrutiny Committee meeting so accountability and responsiveness of housing providers can be monitored.
- **Improving response times** - by requiring each housing association to provide an action plan on how they resolve damp and mould problems (step by step), including service standards to the tenant and response times to the authority regarding casework.
- **Improving support for tenants** – create an information sheet, or signposting, for tenants and landlords with the information on the best approaches to preventing and tackling damp and mould and where to seek help, this sheet should be available on the Council website. Require each housing association to provide a similar factsheet for their tenants, with detailed guidance on what to do if damp or mould is found and what service standard the tenant can expect. The Council should review this information annually.
- **Use of enforcement powers** – consider how best to use Council powers under the Housing Act 2004 to act against housing providers that do not resolve damp and mould issues without delay. Report back regularly on the actual use or threat of use to the Scrutiny Committee.”