

21 January 2021

Cumnor House, Helmi House and Lidcote House – 6 January 2021

During the slideshow, we went through the updates on materials in the previous letter which you can read here:

<https://www.networkhomes.org.uk/media/10863/20201215-robsart-1-progress-update-and-webinar-sent.pdf>.

The Hive
22 Wembley Park Boulevard
Wembley
HA9 0HP

www.networkhomes.org.uk
customerservice@
networkhomes.org.uk
0300 373 3000

Presentation slides



Costs

Can you guarantee leaseholders won't see any costs?

We are doing everything we can to not have to pass on costs to leaseholders and this is a last resort. We're not able to provide a guarantee and we are still working on pursuing the NHBC warranty, original contractor and the government's Building Safety Fund.

How much will work cost?

We need to wait until the conversations with Higgins are finished before we speculate on how much any costs would be, should they have to be passed on.

Would you know the exact sum before work starts? If the residents need to cover costs, would we know the exact sum before work starts?

We would have a relatively good idea before the start of the work and would know where funding would come from when work begins. We would be able to share more accurate information with you at that time. If costs do have to be passed to leaseholders we will follow the statutory 'Section 20' process which outlines how we manage costs through the service charge. If it becomes apparent that leaseholders have to cover costs, we will let you know as soon as possible.

Why is there no mention of compensation for the disruption work causes?

We must rectify the issues with the buildings as a priority. The claims we are making to the relevant third parties do not include compensation as it is their duty to cover the costs for rectifying work, not compensation. We must strike a balance between minimising disruption, but also not jeopardising the progress of the project, which would also cost more in the long run. The extent of disruption experienced will be similar in scope to cyclical works or component renewal projects. We will do what we can to minimise disruption as much as possible.

Many of us will incur significantly increased mortgage costs as a result of there being no EWS1.

Who covers those costs?

We're not able to support you with any increased mortgage costs. You should speak to an Independent Financial Advisor and get in touch with your lender. You may be able to do a 'product transfer', which will allow you to move to a more favourable rate with the same lender.

Surely there should be no costs to leaseholders if the building was not completed satisfactorily in the first place?

That's our objective but we cannot guarantee that at this stage. If costs have to be passed to leaseholders, we think any costs would be low. We're still working hard to avoid any costs being passed to leaseholders.

Third party discussions

A formal agreement with Higgins won't be made until all proposals are known. Why isn't this known as the surveys were done months ago? When will the work start?

We have undertaken a survey which has thrown up some questions about the buildings and are working with Higgins and experts to come to a proposal. We are asking them to advise us on their proposals. These discussions do go back and forth as there are several parties involved and it is complex. We believe Higgins will only sign after everything is known – we are still pursuing them and working with them. Higgins continue to progress matters and are on-site this week taking samples as part of their investigations.

We're also getting new information as we go along – such as with the information on Kingspan coming from the Grenfell Inquiry – and we must react to that information when it becomes known.

We hope to be able to start in March – this is dependent on our conversations with Higgins and also the wider environment surrounding the pandemic.

Is there any update to our government fund application or work with the NHBC?

We do share your frustration at the time taken to receive notification of the outcome of our fund application and are working on your behalf to do what we can to progress the discussions. The government has had a very high number of applications and are working their way through them as fast as they can. We are still pursuing all other possible outcomes and will let you know if/when we reach an agreement!

Have Higgins confirmed they will do the work?

The contractor is indicating they want to help us resolve this situation. They may not cover the cost of the Kingspan insulation as this is new information that has arisen and would not be due to their fault.

If funding agreements are delayed, will this delay the start of the work? Does the contractor have a legal requirement to do this?

Yes, this could affect the start date. We're still doing everything we can to progress these discussions with third parties, but as we are working with outside organisations, we are not able to control this. We do need to wait for the government to make a decision on the Kingspan insulation. The conversations were progressing very well until the Kingspan issue came to light and we must now follow this discussion through. We need to get this right and sort out all issues in one go so we don't have to come back later to rectify anything. There will be a design element to any Kingspan replacement solution.

Construction project

What procedures will be put in place to assure leaseholders and tenants alike that these works will be compliant with building regs? Who will be the appointed Principal designer for the remediation works?

Yes, it will be compliant with the applicable regulations. We hope to appoint Higgins but will confirm when we know.

Rather than erecting scaffolding round all blocks, will work be phased to save on costs?

We haven't had the proposed schedule of works from the contractor yet. We will work with the contractor to ensure there is a minimum disruption as possible, while still ensuring the project moves forward efficiently.

Can you give us some kind of idea of the amount of scaffolding, if it will cover balconies and the general disruption caused?

Until we get the plan of the scaffolding, we won't be able to answer this. We don't expect the scaffolding to cover balconies at this point, but we won't be able to confirm. We'll go through this at another webinar when we have that information.

Can we prioritise the security of the scaffolding?

The scaffolding will be fitted with an alarm and it will set off if someone tries to access it who

shouldn't be. We will cover more information on security plans when we have a more detailed schedule of works.

When do we expect to receive the scope of work document?

We hope to receive it by the end of March, but will potentially receive it sooner.

Do we know how long work will take?

We still need to finalise this at the moment as part of our discussions with the original contractor. If work is required to the Kingspan insulation, this may extend the project. At the moment we expect it to take 6-12 months.

How long after completion of work would the EWS1 form process be completed allowing mortgage lending?

We would expect to have an EWS1 form within a few weeks of the project's completion and our fire engineer knows this will be expected at the end of the project.

Waking watch

Can you confirm there is no need for a waking watch?

Our fire engineers IFC have confirmed no waking watch is needed following the investigations. We have notified the fire brigade as well who have accepted this position.

Measures during the pandemic

If there are further lockdowns leading to mass working from home, will pausing works be considered during this time?

We will follow government advice on continuing work on-site. Current advice is that it can continue as it is safety related. Of course, if this changes going forward, we will have to follow that and that would obviously have an impact on the project timescales. We understand work may be disruptive if you are working from home, especially in terms of noise, but we must strike a balance so we can get you the EWS1 form as soon as possible.