



## Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

**Lee Rowley MP**

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**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and  
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Clive Betts MP  
Chair, Levelling Up, Housing and Communities  
Committee  
House of Commons

19 February 2024

Dear Clive,

### **Fire Safety oral evidence: follow-up**

Thank you for your letter of 5 February 2024 with further questions regarding the Government's response to and implementation of the Independent Review of the Construction Products Testing Regime.

I have sought to respond to the Committee's questions in the same order as your letter.

#### **Q1) Please could you confirm that the Government will publish a full response to the Independent Review?**

It is the Government's intention to respond to the Independent Review. This will be a multi-stage process, starting with a paper which draws upon the review and sets out the Government's broad approach for comment. As the committee recognised this is a complex area of reform and, as I clarified to the committee, we are keen to consult the sector as part of the process to firm up proposals to reform the sector.

I am grateful to Paul Morrell OBE and Anneliese Day KC for the extensive efforts undertaken in producing the Independent Review of Construction Products Testing Regime. Their review maps out the existing system, identifies weaknesses, and sets out recommendations for addressing these where they considered it appropriate. Their work has extensively informed how the department is developing its reform for the sector, and it will continue to do so.

#### **Q2) Can you confirm that if the Government rejects any of the Independent Review's recommendations, that the Government response will set out the reasons for this?**

The Government will outline next steps as soon as it is able to do so.

#### **Q3) Please could you clarify what the current harmonised EU standards are for (a) internal and (b) external fire doors; and how they currently apply in the UK? When was the new harmonised standard formalised, and has it been listed as a designated standard in the UK?**

The following are the prominent designated standards applicable under the CPR. But it should be noted that other standards may be relevant also:

##### Internal standards

BS EN 16034:2014 Pedestrian doorsets, industrial, commercial, garage doors and openable windows. Product standard, performance characteristics. Fire resisting and/or smoke control characteristics which was published in 2014 and is harmonised/designated.

## External standards

BS EN 16034:2014 Pedestrian doorsets, industrial, commercial, garage doors and openable windows. Product standard, performance characteristics. Fire resisting and/or smoke control characteristics which was published in 2014 and is harmonised/designated.

BS EN 14351-1:2006+A2:2016 Windows and doors. Product standard, performance characteristics. Windows and external pedestrian doorsets which was published in 2006 and amended in 2016 and is harmonised/designated.

## Use of fire door standards in the UK

Standards provide a technical basis to assess the performance of construction products.

'Designated' standards are those which are designated by the Secretary of State under Construction Product Regulations in Great Britain. These regulations set out requirements for the 'placing on the market' of a product. Where a product is partly or fully covered by a designated standard, adherence to that standard is mandatory, when 'placing the product on the market'. Alongside these regulatory mandatory standards there are a range of voluntary standards can be used, to help provide a reliable basis for people to share the same expectations about a product or service.

When products are installed in building works they are subject to the requirements set out within the Building Regulations 2010. Approved Documents provide statutory guidance as to how those requirements can be demonstrated in common building situations. As such, Approved Document B provides guidance on the minimum fire performance expectations for a building to achieve the overarching functional requirements of the Building Regulations and was referenced at the oral evidence session.

Approved Document B uses the performance classification of BS EN 13501-2 and internal and external fire doors can be tested according to BS EN 1634-1.

The classification standard BS EN 13501-2 was first published and formalised in 2003 and has been referenced and used in the statutory guidance since 2002, which was updated to introduce the EU approach.

The UK has since been operating in parallel a dual system of standards, allowing both the use of BS EN 13501-2 and the national series of fire test standards BS 476. The Department consulted in December 2022 on the removal of the BS 476 series from Approved Document B and we will set out the government's response in due course.

### **Q4) Please could you publish the research report and send a copy to us no later than 19 February 2024?**

The 2020 research report discussed at the oral evidence session will be published in the coming weeks as I committed to do.

Transparency is intrinsic to our work on construction products reform and I recognise that it is therefore important that this research, referenced in the Independent Review, is published. I can confirm that the process for taking forward publication is well underway and this should be available within the coming weeks.

### **Q5) Please could you provide a timeline for the implementation of the Independent Review? In particular, will the reformed regime be implemented during this Parliament?**

The Government will set out its approach in this area in the weeks ahead.

**Q6) Please could you clarify what the Government is doing to improve this situation [concerning challenges faced in decoupling homes with shared electrical supplies in social housing]?**

DLUHC officials have sought comment from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) as the responsible department in relation to this issue.

The Connections team within DESNZ have confirmed they are aware of the issue of 'looped' connections and the limiting factor this plays on the electrification of domestic properties and the costs involved. They have approached Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) regarding looped connections looking at:

- Scale of looped connections in their region(s)
- Ability to detect/how far their datasets go in terms of providing a real-time view
- How they are tackling the issue - proactively/reactively
- Solutions to the issues involved in unlooping (costs, access/neighbour disputes, significant physical work e.g. digging up driveways)

The team have found that there is a significant gap in data on these connections which they are working to address.

Whilst many DNOs are beginning to work proactively on unlooping properties, others are still reactive on the issue. Under the current pricing framework, RIIO-ED2, there is additional funding in place specifically for DNOs to action work on looped connections, which many have been utilising; indicated properties are being unlooped.

DESNZ are working with DNOs and analysts to understand how to drive best practice in this area and identify the most time and cost efficient way of tackling the issue.

As reflected in my comments at the oral evidence session I remain committed to transparency and to setting out our intentions as soon as possible. We will write to the Committee with further information as soon as we are able to do that.

Yours ever,



**LEE ROWLEY MP**