

The devastating fire at Holborough Lakes last weekend has left twenty two apartments destroyed, individuals left with nothing more than they escaped with and an entire community shaken. Thankfully no-one lost their lives. But the experience of the fire that raged through the block will haunt those who lived there for many weeks, months and years ahead. It is difficult to understand what the most affected residents will face and for how long, while they try and return to their daily lives with nothing that helps make the routine normal.

When I arrived on site on Saturday I was unsure what I would see. The frontline emergency services were, as always, amazing. At its height there were 15 fire appliances, along with the police and paramedics, on the scene. When I arrived the fire was under control and nearly out. Berkeley Homes and their management company RMG were there and had relocated many of the residents and the Council were on hand to provide extra initial support. The Red Cross had set up two stations and was dishing out hot drinks and food. The response of the community had been so generous that there was a plea from partners for no more items.

I spoke to some residents whose flats had been devastated, many of whom were off to stay with families. They were pleased with the initial response but fearful of what the future holds for them. I am working with all those involved to make sure that people's short, medium and long term needs are met. In the meantime it is important that we all try not to speculate as to the cause or control of the fire. An investigation is underway and all the issues you would expect will be covered by that. And while that happens we should reflect on how brilliant everyone was, from the emergency responders through to the community, on the day itself and thank the stars above that there were no fatalities.