# 125 Shaftesbury Avenue Construction Working Group Meeting Minutes

## 13.08.26

**Date:** 13 August 2026
**Time:** 6:00pm–7:30pm
**Venue:** The Swiss Church, 79 Endell Street, London WC2H 9DY
**Meeting:** 125 Shaftesbury Avenue Construction Working Group

- **EDGE:** Jason Evans, host and developer; Dave Barnby.
- **Sir Robert McAlpine:** Mark Leeming, Pat Kelly and Alex Ward.
- **Kanda:** Oliver Lewis and Lucas Clark, attending as note-takers.
- **Ward councillors:** Cllr Jim Monahan and Cllr James White, Holborn and Covent Garden ward councillors.
- **Construction Working Group members:** 28 CWG members attended.

## Overview

The Construction Working Group met to discuss the ongoing works at 125 Shaftesbury Avenue and was convened specifically to discuss, the mid-June gas leak incident and its impact on residents. The discussion focused on resident communications, the proposed crane lift arrangements and the steps being taken by EDGE and Sir Robert McAlpine to rebuild confidence with local residents.

The meeting was hosted by Jason Evans from EDGE, with Dave Barnby also attending from EDGE, Mark, Pat and Alex from Sir Robert McAlpine, and Oliver and Lucas from Kanda as note-takers. A total of 28 CWG members attended, with discussion contributions made both in person and online. It was noted that the acoustics in the room made parts of the discussion difficult to hear clearly.

## Introductory Presentation

Jason Evans opened the meeting on behalf of EDGE by issuing a formal apology for the gas leak incident and acknowledging the disruption caused to residents, in particular those evacuated from their homes overnight. He recognised that communications following the incident had not been good enough and explained that EDGE had not

received all relevant information immediately from Cadent and other parties. However, he stressed that, whilst the liability for this incident is unclear, the incident happened on the project's watch and that EDGE and there contracting parties are very sorry for the impact it has had. Mark Leeming from SRM added that SRM do not want to start like this and are trying to make it good and recover trust.

EDGE confirmed that a goodwill payment of £250 would be made to residences affected with overnight displacement. This will be provided through a flexible voucher, redeemable at a wide range of retailers, rather than as cash or cheque due to administrative and anti-money-laundering considerations. Residents from the relevant blocks will be asked to complete a short form confirming their name, address and eligibility. EDGE made clear that the payment is not an admission of liability and will not prevent residents from pursuing separate insurance claims once liability has been determined.

Mark from Sir Robert McAlpine then presented the technical position on the crane lift and the circumstances of the gas main failure. The previous crane set-up had placed loading near a 450mm cast iron gas main, which was found to be old and supported on brick piers. The project team explained that the revised crane strategy would avoid loading the gas main, use a repositioned outrigger arrangement and remove the need for a fly jib. The team said alternative crane locations had been reviewed, including Charing Cross Road, the Phoenix Theatre entrance and locations within the site, but that these had been discounted on technical, access and disruption grounds. Residents and councillors challenged whether all alternative options had been fully considered, particularly around Charing Cross Road, and the team agreed to explain the assessment further.

The proposed future crane works are expected to require a road closure and Section 61 approval from Camden Council. The project team indicated that the operation could take around five to six days, although councillors noted that highway approvals may take around four weeks, making the proposed September timetable ambitious. Residents strongly pressed for the works to take place during weekday working hours rather than over a weekend. EDGE and Sir Robert McAlpine agreed to take this feedback back to Camden and to seek an approach that minimises weekend disturbance.

# Q&A Discussion

- **Goodwill payment and insurance:** Residents asked whether the payment could be made in cash rather than by voucher and how quickly liability would be determined. EDGE explained that cash or cheque payments would be difficult for compliance reasons, but that the voucher would be flexible and meaningful. The liable party is still being established, and insurance details will be shared once available.

- **Communication after the gas incident:** Residents said the main issue was not only the incident itself but the lack of timely information and support afterwards. EDGE acknowledged that communication had fallen short and committed to improving

contact arrangements, including clearer points of contact and more frequent updates. It was noted by one of the residents that the responsibility in relation to the immediate aftermath was down to London Fire Brigade and Camden Council. They are looking into what went wrong.

- **On-site response and safety assurance:** Residents asked what assurance could be given that operatives would respond appropriately if a serious incident occurred again. The team said the incident response had taken place within around 20 minutes, that further safeguards would be introduced, and that the revised crane set-up would avoid loading the gas pipe.

- **Crane location and technical options:** Residents and councillors questioned whether alternatives to Stacey Street had been properly considered, including Charing Cross Road. The project team said advice had been taken from several contractors and that Stacey Street remained the only viable location but agreed to better explain the options assessment.

- **Working hours and weekend activity:** Residents and councillors pressed for crane works to take place during the working week, with minimal weekend disruption. The team agreed to raise this with Camden Council and explore whether an extended weekday closure could be secured instead of weekend working, noting that overnight working is also not acceptable to residents.

- **Access, emergency vehicles and waste collections:** Residents asked how access for emergency vehicles and rubbish collections would be maintained during the crane works. The team said these matters would be reviewed through the construction and traffic management plan and that updates would be provided where changes are needed.

- **Contingency planning and contact details:** Residents asked whether contingency plans could be shared and whether a short, clear document setting out contact routes and reporting procedures could be provided. The team agreed to take this away and confirmed that clearer contact details would be issued as soon as possible.

- **Ongoing communication:** Residents requested regular newsletters and more regular CWG meetings during this phase of construction. EDGE and Sir Robert McAlpine agreed that more frequent communication is needed and indicated that regular updates would be introduced once the site transfers fully to the Sir Robert McAlpine team.

# Agreed Actions and Next Steps

- EDGE to circulate the goodwill gesture form to affected residents.
- EDGE to confirm and share liable party insurance details once liability is established.
- EDGE and Sir Robert McAlpine to review resident feedback on weekday-only working and raise this with Camden Council.
- The project team to provide further explanation of the crane location options that had been reviewed.
- The project team to review emergency access, waste collection arrangements and contingency planning for the proposed crane works.
- EDGE and Sir Robert McAlpine to issue clearer contact details and introduce more regular project updates during this phase of works.
- The next Construction Working Group meeting is expected to return to the usual format, with Phoenix Gardens noted as the likely venue and will be arrange in at some point in September.