

The Bishop of St Albans, Alan Smith, together with the Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally, and Bishop of Kensington, Graham Tomlin, have spoken of their regret at the vote in the Commons tonight removing an amendment to the Fire Safety Bill to protect leaseholders from the cost of replacing dangerous cladding.

Bishop Alan was a co-sponsor of the amendment when it passed the House of Lords last week with support from Bishop Sarah. Bishop Graham played a key role in the response to the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 and was a Vice-Chair of the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community.

They said: "We are disappointed that the Government defeated the McPartland-Smith amendment in the House of Commons.

"Leaseholders face crippling bills of astronomical proportions for a problem they had no hand in creating. They neither sold nor fitted defective cladding and yet they are still liable to pay the costs of making their own homes safe. This amendment would have given them protection from having to pay those costs.

"It is a source of regret that the Government has dismissed proposed solutions to the cladding scandal without bringing forward its own solution to sufficiently deal with this injustice.

"Without a genuine solution, there is a real risk of bankruptcies, homelessness and possibly worse.

"Leaseholders should not pay for problems created by developers and cladding providers, all of whom have profited in the preceding years.

"We urge the government to bring forward a fair resolution to protect innocent leaseholders without delay."

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