

Press statement to Newsquest published 8th March

Sandra Skeete, Executive Director of Housing at Peabody said:

We recognise that this is an extremely challenging time for residents at Strawberry Vale. The delay in restoring gas for cooking is because we are in the unusual position of being classed as a Gas Conveyer at the estate. This means that there are additional requirements and procedures that we need to undertake. On this estate we are subject to regulations that are aimed at companies such as National Grid and large gas distributors rather than housing providers. That is why we considered moving to an electric solution at the estate.

After receiving advice from a number of gas experts and listening to residents' views, we are pleased that we can now begin the process of restoring the gas for cooking at Strawberry Vale. We have also discussed our approach with the Health and Safety Executive. Restoration of the gas will need to be done in phases with the first homes being reconnected from Monday 14th March. It will take some time to reconnect the whole estate and we will continue to offer a package of support to residents in the interim. We have appointed a new dedicated Resident Liaison Officer based at the estate to lead this.

We have no reason to think that the gas supply was previously unsafe. The pipework was substantially renewed in 2008 and a full safety check of the whole system was carried out at that time. In addition all of the normal household gas safety checks that landlords are required to carry out have always been completed.