

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 19th September 2017
Report of: Director of Growth and Regulatory Services

Report Title

Fire Safety in High Rise Tower Blocks - Update

Summary

The report provides a further update on the current position in Trafford in relation to fire safety following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower.

Recommendation(s)

To note the contents of the report.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: N/A

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Further to the report to Scrutiny Committee in July 2017 this report seeks to provide Members with an update on related developments both locally and nationally.

2. CURRENT POSITION - TRAFFORD

- 2.1 All five of the Trafford Housing Trust (THT) blocks reported to have aluminium composite material (ACM) external cladding have now been visited and audited by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS). The ACM cladding on all of these buildings is of a type that will need replacement or other remedial treatment in order to reduce the risk of fire. The ACM cladding on the THT blocks accounts for approximately 15% of the total surface area..
- 2.2 The interim fire safety measures that were put in place by THT, reported in July, are still in operation to protect the residents of the flats until replacement or remedial measures are completed. THT has been implementing a wider safety review of all its blocks. This has included reviewing all compartmentalisation of blocks in communal areas and flats, undertaking Fire Risk Assessment level 4s across all blocks and installing fire alarms in all communal areas. This work within the tower blocks is planned to be completed by the end of September.
- 2.3 The high rise block owned by Irwell Valley Housing Association does not have ACM panelling, however GMFRS inspected the building on 30th August and will issue a report in September 2017; this is in line with the process for all other high rise tower blocks with cladding.
- 2.4 Since the last report a privately owned high rise development fitted with ACM cladding has been identified. The building was inspected by GMFRS and Trafford Building Control. The developer has chosen to remove all of the ACM cladding from the building. Officers from Trafford Council have attended every fortnightly meeting of the AGMA High Rise Taskforce to ensure that all current developments are subject to appropriate action by the Council.
- 2.5 As advised in the previous report the Council has also written out to the owners of private tower blocks to seek assurance with regard to up to date fire safety audits being in place, to advise of the testing facilities offered by Government for cladding and to offer the Council's support. Responses are now being received to these letters.

3.0 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTIVITY

- 3.1 The following list is a summary of national and regional activity that relates to high rise fire safety:
- Councils across the country have revealed the huge cost of improvement work to its buildings which have failed fire safety tests. A number of councils have sent letters to the Communities Secretary Sajid Javid to warn about a

lack of resources available to them to remove and replace cladding and insulation.

- Large scale testing of widely used ACM insulation products by the Government has resulted in four failures and three passes. The government will very shortly publish updated and consolidated advice for building owners about the outcomes of these tests. This advice will be sent to the owners of affected buildings. DCLG are now keen to work quickly with building owners to have remediation plans for their building developed towards the end of September, DCLG caseworkers will continue to maintain close contact with building owners to support this.
- The Government have made it clear that there will be no new funding for Social Landlords or Councils to address replacement of ACM cladding.
- Representatives of the Greater Manchester High Rise Taskforce held a teleconference with senior officials from the Department of Communities and Local Government on 23rd August 2017. A number of issues were raised including funding and officials confirmed that there were no plans for the Government to fund remedial works. Officials advised that most of the issues raised would be addressed by the Public Enquiry and the planned review of legislation.
- GMFRS will have completed the inspection of 509 high rise buildings and all buildings fitted with ACM cladding will receive a full fire safety audit.
- Paul Dennett, City Mayor of Salford and Chair of Greater Manchester High Rise Taskforce, wrote to Sir Martin Moore-Bick the chairman of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry on the 4th of August regarding the terms of reference.
- The Greater Manchester Combined Authority intend to seek core participant status for the Grenfell Tower Inquiry based on the circumstances and prevalence of high risk buildings in the City Region.
- The GM Civil Contingencies and Resilience Unit are reviewing existing arrangements around the GM response to a similar major incident at a multi storey accommodation block. It is intended that this will assist all GM boroughs and partner organisations to deliver an appropriate, cohesive and effective response to an emergency within a tower block in GM, in addition to providing a level of assurance for current emergency planning arrangements. This will facilitate the development of an action plan that will be owned by the Trafford Resilience Forum.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Although significant progress has already been made on identifying dangerous ACM cladding there is still some work to be done to establish and agree suitable remedial measures and replacement materials. The Council will continue to work with the GM Task Force and local housing providers to maintain public safety and we will continue to update members as appropriate.