

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny Committee
Date: October 3rd, 2018
Report of: Corporate Director, Place

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 in high rise housing 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 reports to Scrutiny Committee in July and September 2017, and 14th March 2018, this report seeks to provide Members with a further update on related developments both locally and nationally.

2. CURRENT POSITION - TRAFFORD

- 2.1 As previously reported all five of the Trafford Housing Trust (THT) blocks with aluminium composite material (ACM) external cladding have been visited and audited by Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS). The ACM cladding on all of these buildings was identified as a type that would need replacement or other remedial treatment in order to reduce the risk of fire. The ACM cladding on the THT blocks accounted 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 2017, are still in operation to protect the residents of the flats until the planned replacement 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. There has been a delay in the panel remedial works commencing, which has been due to sourcing funding for the significant works required. However, the plans for the proposed panel replacement works to the tower blocks have now been submitted to Trafford Council's Building Control for review, and installation is anticipated to commence before Christmas 2018 and will be completed during 2019.
- 2.3 The high rise block owned by Irwell Valley Housing Association did not have ACM panelling. GMFRS confirmed that following inspection and tests no remedial work was required on this block.
- 2.4 A previous report identified a privately owned high rise development within Trafford fitted with ACM cladding. The building was inspected by GMFRS and Trafford Building Control. The developer removed all of the ACM cladding from the building and replaced it with an approved safe material.
- 2.5 The previous report also referred to another privately owned high rise building which required investigation to assess the presence of ACM cladding. Following further investigation it was established that the building did not have ACM cladding present. However, works required on fire compartmentalisation of the building were identified during building inspections and the property owners are taking action on this. The ongoing works are being monitored by GMFRS.
- 2.6 The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have established a database for privately owned high rise dwellings to provide a national record of buildings with ACM cladding and the necessary interim and remedial measures required to make them safe. The database has been

updated using information provided by GMFRS. There are no other privately owned high rise buildings in the borough that require investigation to establish what remedial measures are required.

- 2.7 Officers from Trafford Council have attended meetings of the GM High Rise Taskforce to ensure that all current developments are subject to appropriate action by the Council.

3. NATIONAL ACTIVITY

- 3.1 The following list is a summary of recent national activity relating to high-rise fire safety:

- The Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, Chaired by Dame Judith Hackitt, has produced the report “Building a Safer Future - Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety”. The report was published on 17 May 2018 and is available [here](#).
- The report recommends a new regulatory regime for tower blocks to create a strong focus on creating and maintaining safe buildings. To enable positive changes the report requires government to develop a joined-up implementation plan to provide a coherent approach to delivering the recommendations of the Hackitt Report.
- The Government announced on 16 May 2018 that it will fully fund the removal and replacement of unsafe cladding by councils and housing associations, estimated at £400 million. Local authorities and housing associations, which are non-profit making, will be given access to the money to help with reasonable costs of removing and replacing unsafe cladding from buildings which they own to ensure people are safe in their homes.
- The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has established the Building Safety Programme to cover high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres, including hotels, to make sure that residents of high rise buildings are safe - and feel safe - now, and in the future.
- The ACM screening and large-scale tests that took place were the first phase of work to find other buildings of concern following the Grenfell Tower fire. Where buildings have been identified as having ACM, the Government is working closely with building owners to ensure those buildings are made safe.
- The Government also required local housing authorities to ensure that all (social and private sector) residential blocks over 18m in their local areas with ACM have been identified and that any necessary remedial action is being taken, and is working with those local authorities, FRS and others to support and monitor this.

- Following the large-scale national tests, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) developed guidance on waking watch and common fire alarms. This guidance was published in May 2018.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Within Trafford, significant work has been done on identifying high rise buildings with ACM cladding. There are no private owned buildings with ACM cladding present. Properties belonging to Trafford Housing Trust with ACM cladding are to have this cladding removed and replaced in 2019, and in the meantime interim fire safety measures are in place. 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. The Council will also monitor the implementation of the Hackitt report recommendations, including any changes to Building Control and Housing legislation.