

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 3rd July 2019
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, March 2018 and 3rd October 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. Panel replacement works to the tower blocks has now commenced and is expected to be completed in February 2020. During the course of the programme, Trafford Housing Trust staff will be based on site to help and support local residents.
- 2.3 The previous report referred to a 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.

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.
 - In December 2018 the Government published the document '[Building A Safer Future-An Implementation Plan](#)'. This document confirms how the recommendations of the Independent Review will be implemented.

- The Government has now published a consultation paper on its proposals to implement the recommendations of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety which can be found [here](#)
- In addition, on the 6th June 2019, the Home Office issued a parallel [call for evidence](#) on the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005 (the 'Fire Safety Order'). This seeks views from the fire safety sector, those it regulates and enforcing authorities on the current effectiveness and application of the Fire Safety Order to provide a regulatory framework for the ongoing management of fire safety in non-domestic premises and the common parts of multi-occupied residential buildings.
- GM High Rise Task Force events are being held to consider the proposals and agree a response to these consultations on areas where there is a consensus.
- 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.
- 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 privately owned buildings with ACM cladding present. Properties belonging to Trafford Housing Trust with ACM cladding have begun to have the cladding removed and replaced in 2019/20, and interim fire safety measures will remain 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.