

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No 6**

**MEETING: 17 JULY 2017**

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**SUBJECT: IMMEDIATE ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE FIRE AT GRENFELL  
TOWER, LONDON**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER/CHIEF EXECUTIVE (THE CLERK  
TO THE AUTHORITY) THE STRATEGIC FINANCE MANAGER AND THE  
PERSONNEL ADVISOR TO THE AUTHORITY**

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report provides members with an overview of the actions undertaken by Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service (TWFRS) because of the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, London on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At approximately 00.50 on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2017, a fire began to develop and eventually engulf the Grenfell Tower residential high rise on Latimer West estate Kensington, London. The fire resulted in significant loss of life and mass casualties.
- 2.2 Following the fire the Government announced a public enquiry that will consider the reasons why the fire occurred, how it developed so rapidly and resulted in the death and injury of so many people. Additionally, Government departments instructed local authorities and NHS trusts to confirm the use of similar building materials, thought to have contributed to the fire growth, were not present in their buildings.
- 2.3 The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has begun to co-ordinate the information provided between individual Fire and Rescue Authorities and Government. This role has involved the setting up of a central 'hub' to provide direction and information as well as aggregate responses back to Government. This hub is now the main two-way communication channel relating to this incident and has been responsible for the tasking of audit activities relating to the premises found to be clad with Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM).

## **3 ACTIONS**

- 3.1 Since the 14<sup>th</sup> June, TWFRS implemented a number of actions to reassure residents and ensure housing providers discharge their responsibilities as far as the Fire Safety Order 2005 extends. A summary of these actions is set out below.

- 3.2 The Chief Fire Officer has written to all Chief Executives of local housing providers, setting out those responsibilities and providing options for future joint engagement initiatives to continue to improve the safety of residents.
- 3.3 In support of this correspondence, fire safety officers have liaised with housing providers within the Authority's area to ensure fire safety audits of the premises notified as having ACM panels in their construction.
- 3.4 This engagement has included local authority building control and environmental health to share information and develop a more detailed picture of the extent of ACM cladding use across the high-rise estate, providing relevant information to the NFCC hub accordingly.
- 3.5 TWFRS have provided wide reaching reassurance to residents through a range of media releases; strengthened fire safety advice and interviews. In particular, officers have been working with housing providers to direct residents to information regarding home safety checks (HSC). Vulnerable residents living in high-rise have priority for HSC.
- 3.6 From the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2017, a daily programme of premises audits with a whole community safety approach begun to cover all residential dwellings in buildings six storey and above. This programme will also cover operational requirements, such as site-specific risk assessments, fire safety audits and home safety / safe and well checks. This programme of activity has the following objectives:
- Providing public re-assurance about fire safety in high rise dwellings, through a proactive communications and dealing with requests for advice;
  - Further reinforcing information on websites, social media platforms and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ);
  - Working closely with housing providers to engage further in the process of gathering information and assessing risk;
  - Carrying out visits to high rise dwellings using a targeted approach, including:
    - Providing offers of general fire safety advice and home safety / safe and well checks for occupants
    - Carrying out additional operational familiarisation visits for firefighters
    - Carrying out fire safety audits and providing assurance.
- 3.7 Further details of the programme of audits and the schedule of building visits are set out in appendix A to this report.
- 3.8 In addition to the activity set out above, the general advice 'Fire Safety in High Rise Buildings' has been updated on the TWFRS website and supported by a redesigned information leaflet provided to prevention teams to hand to residents during proactive home safety activities.

- 3.9 From an operational perspective, all relevant risk information has been collated and standard operational procedures, pre-determined attendance standards and risk information has been updated accordingly.

#### **4 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken to ensure that the risk to the Authority has been minimised as far as practicable. The assessment has considered an appropriate balance between risk and control, the realisation of efficiencies, the most appropriate use of limited resources and a comprehensive evaluation of the benefits. The risk to the authority has been assessed as medium utilising the standard risk matrix based on control measures being in place.

#### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Because of the urgent requests for inspection, there has been a requirement to commit additional resources from the Authority. This commitment will last for a number of weeks. This will have a financial impact on the Authority. Depending upon the nature and extent of the outcomes of the fire investigation and public enquiry, further resource commitments may be required.

#### **6 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no equality and fairness implications in respect of this report.

#### **7 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no health and safety implications in respect of this report.

#### **8 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Authority is recommended to:
- a) Endorse the contents of this report
  - b) Receive further reports as appropriate.

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#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

Appendix A – Programme of Reassurance Visits

Further information on sprinkler systems:

<http://www.twfire.gov.uk/community-safety/business/sprinkler-systems/>

