

Status of Report: Public

Meeting: Corporate Governance Committee

Date: 23 November 2022

Subject: Grenfell Action Plan

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For: Information

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to inform the Corporate Governance Committee (CGC) of the progress on the actions arising from phase 1 of the Grenfell inquiry.

Recommendation

2. The Corporate Governance Committee is asked to note the progress made against the actions.

Executive Summary

3. This report sets out the progress, or otherwise, in respect of the actions against the Grenfell action plan, including:
 - Recommendations;
 - The Building Risk Review;
 - Evacuation;
 - Fire Survival Guidance;
 - Equipment.

Background

4. In the early hours of 14 June 2017, a high-rise fire broke out in a 24-storey Grenfell Tower block of flats in North Kensington, West London. The fire claimed the lives of 72 people, including two who later died in hospital, with more than 70 others being injured and 223 people escaping.
5. The fire is believed to have started by an electrical fault in a refrigerator on the fourth floor. It spread rapidly up the building's exterior, bringing fire and smoke to all the residential floors. This was due to the building's new cladding and the external insulation.
6. The fire burned for about 60 hours before finally being extinguished. More than 250 London Fire Brigade firefighters and 70 fire engines from stations across London were involved in efforts to control the fire and rescue residents. It was the deadliest structural fire in the United Kingdom since the 1988 Piper Alpha oil-platform disaster and the worst UK residential fire since World War II.

7. An inquiry into the incident, led by The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick was launched on 14 September 2017 to investigate the causes of the fire and other related issues. The findings from the first report of the inquiry were released in October 2019 and addressed the events of the night.
8. Phase 1 of the inquiry published 46 recommendations that impacted Fire and Rescue Services Nationally in 14 key areas:
 - a) Fire and rescue services: knowledge and understanding of materials used in high-rise buildings;
 - b) Plans;
 - c) Section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004;
 - d) Lifts;
 - e) Communication between the control room and the incident commander;
 - f) Emergency calls;
 - g) Command and control;
 - h) Equipment;
 - i) Evacuation;
 - j) Personal fire protection;
 - k) Sprinkler systems;
 - l) Internal signage;
 - m) Fire Doors;
 - n) Co-operation between emergency services.
9. Of the 46 recommendations, the Service has completed 31 areas, as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report, with a further two planned for completion by December 2022. Key Areas include:
 - Building Risk Review;
 - Evacuation;
 - Fire Survival Guidance;
 - Equipment.
10. Work on the remaining thirteen areas is on-going with the Organisational Learning Board (OLB) monitoring progress and escalating issues to the Senior Management Team (SMT) where appropriate.

Building Risk Review

11. A total of 109 'in-scope' buildings were identified by the National Fire Chief's Council Protection, Policy and Reform Unit (PPRU) requiring triage. Through local intelligence and knowledge, the Service informed the PPRU of the need to increase the list to 155 'in scope' premises. In scope is classed as six floors or 18 metres in height.
12. All buildings were triaged by the Fire Protection team by December 2021; this identified thirteen high risk premises (non-compliant building materials and/or construction). Fire Protection has worked with the owners and/or the responsible person(s) to reduce the risk or implement interim measures.

Evacuation

13. The Service has developed procedures and guidance to support differing evacuation strategies, ranging from 'stay put' to 'simultaneous evacuation'. This includes the training of dedicated officers located at Fire Control and the incident ground to provide specialist support.
14. Evacuation training has been completed via tabletop exercises and 'live' training scenarios involving the local resilience forum. Tall building exercises are now planned on an annual basis.

Fire Survival Guidance

15. The National Fire Survival Guidance has now been developed and Control Room staff have been trained in its contents. The Service has also delivered the training package to East Midlands Ambulance Service and Leicestershire Police to ensure there is a standard message to prevent confusion.
16. Management of Fire Survival Guidance is being coordinated through failover arrangements with Derby and Nottinghamshire joint fire control. The testing and exercising on fire survival guidance has also been completed both locally and from a regional perspective.

Equipment

17. The Service has purchased 'smoke hoods' to support members of the public who may require supported evacuation in the event of an incident. Once again, these have been tested during the 'live' tall buildings exercise. These are provided on all appliances.
18. To support the communications on the incident ground, the Service has procured new digital fireground radios, which supports the recommendation of ensuring effective communications by firefighters in tall buildings with the bridgehead.
19. Additionally, the Service has invested in 'smoke curtains' which provide essential compartmentation, containment, and channelling from the effects of a fire. They can be installed on a temporary basis during an incident to support the safe evacuation in the event of a fire.

Report Implications/Impact

20. Legal (including crime and disorder)

Failure to address the recommendations arising from the inquiry expose the Service to potential breaches of legislation, including but not limited to:

- Health and Safety at Work Act;
- Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004;
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Act 2015;
- Building Safety Act 2022.

21. Financial (including value for money, benefits and efficiencies)

The Service has received a number of grants from Central Government to support the delivery of the building risk review and procurement of new equipment.

22. Risk (including corporate and operational, health and safety and any impact on the continuity of Service delivery)

The risk of not addressing the recommendations made within the inquiry exposes the Combined Fire Authority to legal challenges in the event of a similar event occurring within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

23. Staff, Service Users and Stakeholders (including the Equality Impact Assessment)

Staff and stakeholders have been fully engaged whilst addressing the recommendations; these will also support the Service's aim of Safer People, Safer Places. Equality Impact Assessments have been completed where appropriate.

24. Environmental

None identified at this time.

25. Impact upon "Our Plan" Objectives

The actions taken from the Grenfell Phase 1 inquiry recommendations support the aim of Safer People, Safer Places.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Grenfell Action Plan

Officers to Contact

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