

FULL COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM 19

Report title	<i>Grenfell Tower Task and Finish Group</i>
Executive Member*	<i>Lewis Young, Executive Member for Economic Development and Infrastructure</i>
Chief Executive or Director	<i>Tony Parkinson, Chief Executive</i>
Date	<i>28th March 2018</i>
Purpose of the report	<i>To update Council on the actions that have been taken in response to the Grenfell Tower incident in Kensington and Chelsea on the 14th June 2017 and is further to the report brought before Council on xx September 2017.</i>
Summary of the report	<i>The Council and its partners has assessed the implications of the Grenfell Tower incident and have put in place the necessary measures to minimise such an event happening in Middlesbrough..</i>
If this is a confidential report, which exemption(s) from the Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 applies?	<i>N/A</i>
Decision(s) asked for	<i>Report is for information only</i>
Impact of decision(s)	<i>The measures put in place by the Council and its partners should ensure that the people of Middlesbrough live and work within and safe environment, and that they have access to good quality living conditions.</i>

What is the purpose of this report?

1. Further to the report brought before Council on 6 September 2017 this report seeks to update Council on the actions that have been taken by Middlesbrough Council in response to the Grenfell Tower incident.

Why is this report necessary?

2. At its meetings on 28th June and 6th September 2017 the Council agreed a number of actions that would be undertaken in response to the Grenfell Tower incident to help ensure that a similar event could not happen in Middlesbrough. In addition to the Fire Safety Task and Finish group an internal officer group was established to oversee the tasks identified and to identify fire safety issues within the Council's own buildings and set up solutions to tackle any issues.

Assessment of tall buildings

3. After the incident Government sought information on all high rise residential tower blocks of over six storeys. At the Task and Finish Group meeting it was decided that officers should undertake a survey of all buildings in Middlesbrough over 4 storeys in height. This survey would also not be limited to residential buildings but extended to cover all uses.
4. This survey was undertaken over the summer of 2017. As a consequence some 255 buildings were identified. The vast majority were considered either through method of construction, or use not to require further investigation. A total of 29 buildings were identified as requiring further information. The information sought for each building was:
 - How many stories is the building?
 - What is the overall height of the building?
 - What is the building's current use (list uses on each floor)?
 - Number of people normally within the building (please distinguish between daytime and night time / residential use).
 - What is the buildings structural construction?
 - What is the external skin of the building made from (i.e. brick, stone, rendered blockwork, Aluminium cladding, Aluminium cladding with core material)
 - In the case of any cladding system. What is this material and does it have an insulating or other core material. If yes, what is that material?
 - Have you got an up to date fire risk assessment for the building?
 - When is the next fire risk assessment due?
5. The Council has no statutory obligations with regards to these buildings, and as such it is not in a position to enforce that the information is supplied. Owners were however made aware that where buildings are not in the ownership of the Council, then the building owner ultimately has responsibility for the building and associated safety risks. Of the 29 building owners contacted, 21 responded. None of the buildings identified were a cause for concern with regard to fire safety issues. As the Council has done all that it can within its powers it is not proposed to take any further action on this matter.

Council owned buildings

6. As part of the review all Council owned buildings were also assessed for the use of building materials and ensuring that all appropriate fire safety measures are in place including all necessary risk assessments and fire strategies. This review confirmed that all necessary assessments and strategies are in place for Council owned buildings.

Council policies and procedures

7. One of the issues arising out of the Grenfell Tower incident was the local authority's response in the recovery stage. As a consequence the Council has reviewed its own internal policies, strategies and procedures. In addition EMRT has considered how to respond to such an incident including undertaken an exercise addressing the issues. Further staff training needs will be identified through monthly EMRT meetings. All strategies when reviewed including homelessness and housing strategies, will take into consideration any appropriate issues arising out of a similar Grenfell type incident.
8. When purchasing property the Council will also take in consideration the possible risks relating to cladding/fire protection that may result in future health and safety or financial risk to the Council.

Cleveland Fire Service response/actions

9. In addition to those actions undertaken by the Council Cleveland Fire Service has undertaken the following measures:
 - provided public re-assurance regarding fire safety in purpose built flats – through local media and dealing with requests for advice;reinforced information on websites, social media platforms, FAQ, leaflet drops;
 - worked in partnership with Housing Authority/Associations and Providers to deal with all aspects of the situation;
 - site specific information has been updated by operational crews who have also conducted familiarity visits;
 - operational plans and business continuity arrangements have been reviewed
 - provided support in undertaking assessments and testing of cladding; and
 - carried out visits to purpose built high rise flats, on a risk based approach that have included
 - providing offers of general home safety checks for occupants;
 - carrying out additional operational familiarisation visits for local fire fighters; and
 - considering the need for new fire safety inspections or assurance of those recently carried out.

Thirteen response/actions

10. Thirteen have confirmed that they have inspected all relevant premises in Middlesbrough, including conducting an appraisal on fire alarm systems. None of their buildings in Middlesbrough are fitted with the cladding materials used on Grenfell Tower. In addition the use of sprinkler/suppression systems is being explored. A report is to be taken before the Board of the Thirteen Group to consider the options available. Thirteen have also been visiting tenants within their high rise buildings and providing fire safety information and answering any concerns from residents. All fire risk assessments are in place for the high rise buildings, assessments are carried out on an annual basis. Concierge teams undertake daily floor checks and report any fire safety related defects as priority

What decision(s) are being asked for?

11. This report is for information only

Why is this being recommended?

12. To update members on the work of the Fire Safety Task and Finish group.

Other potential decisions and why these have not been recommended

13. No other options were considered.

Impact(s) of recommended decision(s)

14. The work undertaken by the Fire Safety Task and Finish group should minimise the potential of an incident such as that at Grenfell Tower from happening within Middlesbrough.

Legal

15. None arising out of this report.

Financial

16. There are no additional financial costs over and above existing budgetary considerations.

The Mayor's Vision for Middlesbrough

17. The work undertaken by the Fire Safety Task and Finish group will help contribute to the delivery of the Mayor's vision through ensuring a safer environment for all, supporting vulnerable families and individuals to ensure they have access to safe and good quality homes.

Policy Framework

18. There are no direct impacts on the Council's policy framework. These will be considered as part of reviewing future strategies and policies that make up the framework.

Wards

19. The assessment and implementation of proposals/measures impacts upon all wards.

Equality and Diversity

20. A full IA is not required.

Risk

21. The risks of not undertaking the identified actions are that the Council could be unprepared for an incident similar to that at Grenfell Tower with a consequent loss of life and reputational damage to the Council.

Actions to be taken to implement the decision(s)

22. No further actions are required, the report is for information.

Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Middlesbrough Council	Response to Grenfell Tower incident	6 th September 2017