



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

GRENFELL TOWER INQUIRY

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Date: 23 July 2021

Purpose of Report:

To update Members with developments in relation to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and the publication of the Government's response to recommendations.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Members:

- Note the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations; and note the contents of the report.
- Agree to receive further updates as the Service concludes the outstanding actions.

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 14 June 2017, a fire occurred at Grenfell Tower, London, which destroyed the 24-storey block of 129 residential flats. 72 people lost their lives at the incident.
- 1.2 The Right Honourable Sir Martin Moore-Bick was appointed as Chair of the public inquiry; set up to examine the circumstances leading up to, and surrounding, the fire at Grenfell Tower.
- 1.3 [The Phase One Inquiry report](#) was published on 30 October 2019, and an overview of the Service's actions and the recommendations from the inquiry was presented to the Fire Authority in December 2019.
- 1.4 On 21 January 2020, the Government published its [response](#) to the Phase One inquiry recommendations including the actions to be taken by Government to address the recommendations and these were reported to the Fire Authority in February 2020.
- 1.5 Phase Two of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry started in March 2020 and is focussed on the circumstances leading up to the fire, including the Tower's design, construction, composition, modifications and fire safety measures within the building. Progress was initially delayed due to impacts of Covid-19. The Inquiry continues and may not conclude until 2022.
- 1.6 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has highlighted that addressing the GTI recommendations will be an area of focus during their Tranche 2 inspections.
- 1.7 This report provides an overview of the activities completed to date and those which are ongoing to implement the recommendations required from the Service as a consequence of the Phase One inquiry report.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In order to effectively respond to the Grenfell Tower Phase One inquiry, the Service has allocated additional temporary resources within the Risk and Assurance Team to co-ordinate the response. This was required to manage the interdependencies both in-Service between departments and regionally with partners, and to respond to the ever-developing national picture.
- 2.2 A number of the recommendations have required a multi-disciplinary approach to resolve. Complex interdependencies exist both between internal departments and with regional fire and rescue partners, and significant collaboration has been required to get to this point. National guidance on the evacuation of buildings is yet to be fully developed, making the resolution of some recommendations more challenging.

- 2.3 Monthly oversight and scrutiny of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry action plan is in place and is undertaken by the Performance, Programme and Improvement Board chaired by the Chief Fire Officer. Of the 47 recommendations within the Phase One report, 24 have now been signed off as complete.
- 2.4 The following notable activities have been undertaken to improve the safety of firefighters, building users and the effectiveness of the firefighting response to fires in tall buildings:
- 2.4.1 **Procurement of New Equipment** – the Service has procured smoke hoods, which are now available on all front-line fire appliances and can be used by firefighters to help building occupants evacuate through smoke-filled environments. In addition, smoke curtains have been purchased to improve the effectiveness of firefighting in tall buildings by limiting the spread of smoke.
- 2.4.2 **Grenfell Infrastructure Grant** – the Service has spent £63k of the grant on the equipment in Section 2.4.1, along with other essential items to enable effective firefighting in high rise buildings. The remaining £37k will be used to purchase additional resources to facilitate the controlled evacuation of residents of high-rise buildings.
- 2.4.3 **Joint Audit and Inspection Team** – the Joint Audit and Inspection Team comprises a multidisciplinary team of Fire Safety Inspectors and Nottingham City Council Environmental Health Officers. The team has identified eight buildings which have ACM or other flammable cladding. Advice and support have been offered to responsible persons at the premises and continuing liaison has occurred between the Service’s Fire Protection Inspecting Officers. The collaborative team has audited 116 tall buildings in Nottingham City with the aim of identifying fire safety improvements required to comply with the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order and the Housing Act.
- 2.4.4 **Training for Fire Controls** – joint training has been developed and delivered to Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Joint Fire Control and Leicestershire Fire Control to provide underpinning knowledge and understanding on fire behaviour and fire development. The aim of the training is to ensure Control Room Operators are able to deliver effective fire survival guidance to persons trapped by fire and enhance the communications between Fire Control and the incident.
- 2.4.5 **Enhanced Sharing of Risk Information** – the Service’s ‘High Rise Residential Group’ is working towards a fully automated method of sharing risk information across departments. They provide scrutiny over interdepartmental understanding of risk and highlight community risks which require more attention. Twelve community engagement events and three training exercises have been delivered or are planned at high rise buildings with flammable cladding, or that are known to be a risk within Nottinghamshire. A building risk review is being carried out and reported to Government on a monthly basis.

This has ensured high rise risks are aligned between Response, Protection and Prevention departments.

- 2.4.6 **Staff Training** – all Supervisory Managers are undertaking the Fire Safety – Level Three award, to upskill front-line staff in recognising and reporting fire safety issues. Operational staff have been trained on external fire spread, with further training planned in the coming months.
 - 2.4.7 **Development of Plans to Ensure an Effective Response to a Major Incident** – the Service has worked locally to review its arrangements for responding to a major incident. In addition, work is ongoing in Control Rooms to ensure they are able to effectively respond to a major incident, including those involving fires in tall buildings.
 - 2.4.8 **HMICFRS Inspection of London Fire Brigade’s Progress Against the Grenfell Recommendations** – a gap analysis of the [subsequent report](#) has been carried out, indicating that the Service’s progress against the recommendations is consistent with the HMICFRS expectations.
- 2.5 The Service continues to monitor national development closely. A number of workstreams associated with the total evacuation of highrise buildings are currently in progress with the National Fire Chiefs Council and are due to be reported on next year.
 - 2.6 The Service has taken the opportunity to review current operational procedures relating to both partial and total evacuation of buildings and is in the process of implementing updated procedures. A range of complex interdependencies both internally and with regional partners has lengthened the timescales for these workstreams.
 - 2.7 Changes to working practices will require a comprehensive implementation programme comprising both initial training for operational crews and embedding through exercising. The Service has a programme of face-to-face learning, webinars and exercises planned to train and embed these updated ways of working which will take place throughout the remainder of this year.
 - 2.8 The Fire Safety Act 2021 has now gained Royal Assent. The Act will give Fire Safety Inspectors new powers to inspect aspects of high-rise residential buildings. In addition, the new Building Safety Bill is currently passing through the House of Commons. The Bill will provide further powers in relation to the building and maintenance of all high-rise residential blocks. It is anticipated that the Fire Safety Act will come into force in 2022, with the Building Safety Act in 2023.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are costs associated with completing a number of the recommendations within this report. Funding has been received from the Home Office which is managed through a dedicated earmarked reserve.
- 3.2 Equipment has been purchased to provide an effective response to a high-rise fire and to ensure the safe evacuation of building occupants through smoke-filled environments.
- 3.3 Further equipment will be required to embed the evacuation function with costs being met from the remaining Grenfell Infrastructure Grant.

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are a range of recommendations which have training implications for both Fire Control and Incident Commanders. Training implications can be managed within existing resources and will be completed where possible on a regional basis to share the burden of work and improve intraoperability:
 - Educating operational crews and Control staff through training packages and incident command revalidations, on the implementation of additional functions. Training will also be required on the roles and responsibilities, and how the evacuation function and control support function fits into the incident command structure.
 - Upskilling of Fire Control staff on fire behaviour and fire development, and the ongoing maintenance of competence required. This has been designed by the regional National Operational Guidance training team and supported by the Service's subject matter experts.
 - Educating operational crews and Fire Control staff on recognising external fire spread and how/ when to transition from 'stay put', to 'evacuate'.
 - Training operational crews on the use of new equipment, as highlighted within this report.
- 4.2 Assurance of training activities will be undertaken by the Operational Learning Board, with learning outcomes integrated into the exercise planner to demonstrate practical application.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

An equality impact assessment (EIA) has not been undertaken because this report is designed to provide an overview of work to date. Where recommendations require a change to product, service or policy an EIA will be completed if required.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Service has a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure the safety of employees and others affected by our activities. Implementing the recommendations will ensure the Service complies with these requirements.
- 7.2 The Fire Services Act requires the Service to resource to community risks including those associated with tall buildings and that adequate arrangements are in place to provide an effective operational response.
- 7.3 The Civil Contingencies Act requires that the Service has necessary plans in place to respond to a major incident which may include a fire in a tall building.
- 7.4 The Local Government Act 1999 places a statutory duty on Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service to 'secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised'. The reporting of progress against these matters ensures that the Service is focusing on key objectives, as set by the Fire and Rescue Authority, and continuous improvement. This ensures that Members can apply effective scrutiny to be satisfied that statutory obligations are being met.
- 7.5 The Fire Authority has a statutory duty to discharge the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, 2005.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Effectively implementing the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase One recommendations will ensure that the Service is well placed to ensure an effective operational response to a fire in a tall building. It will also go some way to ensuring an effective operational response to any type of major incident.
- 8.2 Enhanced employee training targeted at Control Operators, Incident Commanders and all operational employees will enhance the Service's ability to recognise and respond to a fire in a tall building in the most effective way. Enhancing safety for firefighters on the incident ground, and outcomes for members of the public involved in the incident.
- 8.3 Implementing updated command structures for fires in tall buildings will ensure appropriate spans of control and effective command decision making is in place at large scale incidents requiring search and rescue.
- 8.4 The Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations will be a focus for HMICFRS during the next tranche of inspections. Effective organisational response to

the Inquiry will mitigate the risk of a negative inspection result and the subsequent reputational risks that this poses to the Service.

- 8.5 Close media scrutiny of both the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and subsequent fires that have occurred in tall buildings and clad buildings elsewhere in the country, poses a significant reputational risk for the organisation were such an event to occur in Nottinghamshire.
- 8.6 Routine reporting of progress against the recommendations is required to Home Office and NFCC. The Service needs to be in a position to respond in an assured and constructive manner to these consultations.

9. COLLABORATION IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are significant collaboration implications related to the actions required for Joint Fire Control relating to policy, procedure and training for Control Operators given the tri-service fire control arrangements in place, coupled with the Joint Fire Control managed by Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service.
- 9.2 Operational policy and guidance relating to fighting fires in tall buildings has been developed regionally. A collaborative approach to implementation is required since any large-scale incident is likely to result in cross-border support being requested from neighbouring fire and rescue services. A common understanding of ways of working is required to ensure this response is effective.
- 9.3 Fall back fire control arrangements in place mean collaborative working with other service's fire control rooms is required. An MOU is awaiting approval from 'buddy Controls' and is a workstream for the Area Manager of Tri-Service Control.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 10.1 Note the actions being taken by the Service in response to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations; and,
- 10.2 Agree to receive further updates as the Service concludes the outstanding actions.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

John Buckley
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER