



**SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

Working together for a safer Scotland

ABERDEEN CITY LOCAL SENIOR OFFICER AREA

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE THEMATIC REPORT GRENFELL TOWER FIRE; POST-INCIDENT ACTIONS

Report Ref SFR/19/460

1 Recommendation

The Aberdeen Public Protection Committee is recommended to:

- 1.1 Consider and note the information provided in this report in relation to prevention and protection.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 The Grenfell Tower fire of 14 June 2017 saw the worst UK residential fire since the Second World War resulting in 72 deaths and more than 70 injuries.
- 2.2 This incident, understandably, resulted in heightened anxiety amongst the occupiers of residences within the 59 residential multi-storey buildings across Aberdeen City.
- 2.3 This report will summarise the actions taken by local Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) personnel, with support from The SFRS Prevention and Protection National Directorate, alongside Aberdeen City Council (ACC) to ensure that all residential multi-storey buildings in Aberdeen provided the required levels of fire safety, at the same time providing reassurance to residents.

3 Initial Actions

- 3.1 Immediately following the Grenfell Tower fire ACC co-ordinated a series of resident engagement sessions where ACC Officers and SFRS representatives were present. Each of these partner agency personnel were subject matter experts providing assurances regarding the construction of the building and the materials used, the fire safety measures inherent in buildings of this type as well as education on how to prevent fires in residences and communal areas and actions to take in the event of fire.
- 3.2 These engagement sessions commenced on the 27 June 2017 and were completed on 2 August 2017. A total of 25 sessions were organised and delivered.

- 3.2 Scottish Government established a Ministerial Working Group (MWG) in June 2017 whose initial focus was on high-rise domestic buildings (but has since been expanded). This Group provided direction for local authorities and the SFRS to prioritise actions to ensure the ongoing safety of residents of multi-storey buildings.
- 3.3 ACC Multi-Storey Building Fire Safety Group, including SFRS and other partners, developed a 54-point action plan to address issues and risks raised by the MWG.

4 SFRS HIGH-RISE INSPECTIONS

- 4.1 Prior to the Grenfell Tower fire operational SFRS personnel undertook quarterly inspections of all residential multi-storey buildings reporting any identified deficiencies back to ACC to rectify.
- 4.2 These inspections involve the assessment of 30 different fire safety measures across the entire building to ensure the safety of both residents and firefighters in the event of any fire within these buildings.
- 4.3 This inspection regime has not changed post-Grenfell Tower Fire, however, operational crews across Aberdeen City undertook immediate inspections of all residential multi-storey buildings in the 6 week period following the incident, regardless of previous visit date, to ensure all previously highlighted deficiencies along with any new deficiencies were captured as part of ongoing ACC works that would provide further assurances to all residents that inspections were taking place and repairs progressed in a timely manner.

5 SFRS RESPONSE TO INCIDENTS IN HIGH RISE BUILDINGS

- 5.1 The SFRS has a pre-determined attendance (PDA) for all incident types it may attend. This information is based on extensive historical analysis of incidents.
- 5.2 Prior to the Grenfell incident the PDA for any fire incident in a high rise building was 3 fire appliances and 1 high reach (aerial) appliance. A review of this PDA was included in the initial, national response to the incident. Subsequently this PDA was increased to 4 fire appliances and 1 aerial appliance.
- 5.3 To provide an enhanced level of incident command at the earliest stages of any fire incident in high-rise buildings the PDA was also amended to ensure the nearest senior manager is mobilised in the first instance, providing immediate support to station-based operational personnel.

6 MULTI-STOREY BUILDING FIRE SAFETY GROUP

- 6.1 As mentioned in paragraph 3.3 the above group developed a 54-action plan as a response to issues and risks highlighted by the MWG.
- 6.2 The work of this group had provided evidence where ACC have been vigilant in their undertaking of appropriate fire risk assessments across all relevant buildings including cyclical reviews and inspections. Also worth highlighting is the early work the members of the group undertook in advance of any requirements and expectations established by the MWG and SFRS Prevention and Protection Directorate, in particular the assessment of all high-rise buildings and resident engagement sessions providing reassurance.
- 6.3 The group identified all high-rise properties along with their owners and assessed the external construction of these properties. This group identified properties with external cladding, properties without external cladding and properties whose external cladding was of ACM construction (a feature of Grenfell Tower).
- 6.4 The outcome of this assessment established that, while a number of ACC residential multi-storey buildings were externally clad, none were ACM type and all had been designed and installed appropriately ensuring that external fire spread was not an issue. 2 privately owned properties (hotels) were identified as having ACM cladding, however, both were of a higher rating than that used at Grenfell Tower. All multi-storey buildings in Aberdeen City are considered low risk.
- 6.5 The work of this group has provided evidence where ACC have been vigilant in their undertaking of appropriate fire risk assessments across all relevant buildings including cyclical reviews and inspections.
- 6.6 Additionally, the group has introduced a process of resident-led inspections that will empower residents to take a level of responsibility for ensuring communal areas are maintained free of any combustible materials.
- 6.7 While the action plan has been completed the group continue to meet to ensure issues arising are discussed and addressed at an early stage. The remit of the group has also extended to look at joint actions that will reduce the number of false alarms across ACC's multi-storey portfolio. This work has seen a significant investment by ACC that has resulted in a marked decrease in unwanted fire alarm system (UFAS) activations.
- 6.8 A key element of these improvements has been the continuation of multi-agency engagement events allowing direct access to various agencies should residents have any concerns or queries.

7 MINISTERIAL WORKING GROUP

- 7.1 The actions of the MWG has resulted in a number of outcomes. The more relevant of these (relevant to high-rise domestic buildings) are;
- New legislation regarding provision of heat and smoke detection in all domestic properties from February 2021.

- A change to fire safety standards. These include the cladding requirements on high-rise buildings over 11m (reduced from 18m), improved escape provision in buildings over 18m (all new high-rise buildings will be required to have 2 independent escape stairs) and the introduction of sprinklers to a wider range of housing (from 2021). NB these changes will only apply to new high-rise buildings and will not be applied retrospectively.
- Setting up a fire safety regime review advisory group to ensure comprehensive protection to residents of high-rise domestic buildings.
- Developing an inventory of high-rise domestic buildings in Scotland.

8 FUTURE WORK

- 8.1 The recently published report of the findings from Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry includes 46 recommendations. The SFRS has a cross-directorate working group established to assess its policies, procedures and training to identify any areas that require further review and action. This group will also assess the potential impact of these 46 recommendations aimed specifically at building owners.
- 8.2 It is anticipated that a draft action plan will be completed early in 2020. Local SFRS personnel will liaise with other members of the ACC Multi-Storey Building Safety Working Group to ensure appropriate actions are taken to address any actions relevant to any, and all, agencies.