

 <p>Brent</p>	<p align="center">Council 10 July 2017</p> <p align="center">Report from the Director Performance, Policy & Partnerships</p>
<p align="right">Wards Affected: All</p>	
<p align="center">Report Title Fire Safety in High Rise Tower Blocks</p>	

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 This report sets out fire safety arrangements for residential accommodation in Brent and specific measures that the Council and Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) are taking in response to the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower earlier this month.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 That Full Council debate and note the contents of this report and its appendices (to follow), and in particular that all BHP tower blocks have up to date Fire Risk Assessments and comply with fire safety legislation.

3.0 Detail

3.1. This report provides an overview of the existing fire safety arrangements for high-rise buildings in Brent as well as actions taken and measures put in place by the Council and Brent Housing Partnership following the Grenfell Tower fire.

3.2 The Council and BHP take fire safety extremely seriously. Extensive measures are in place to ensure that our homes comply with fire safety regulations. Appendices detailing these measures will be sent out as a supplementary document prior to the meeting of Full Council.

3.3 BHP manages 37 tower blocks of 5 floors or more including 3 with cladding systems at Watling Gardens. However, the cladding used is completely different to the cladding used at Grenfell Tower and therefore we were not required to send a sample to the government for testing. The government testing is for cladding manufactured from Aluminum Composite Material

(ACM). We have double checked and the cladding is a non-combustible mineral wool material that would not promote the spread of flames externally. Residents from Watling Gardens had a demonstration from Rockwool, the manufacturers of the cladding, at a public meeting on Tuesday, 20 June to show the impressive fire resistance of the material.

3.4 Appendix 1 (to follow) to the report also sets out the Council's role in relation to homes in the borough which it does not own, and the actions we have taken to date to ensure that owners of high rise properties in the borough are responding appropriately following the Grenfell Tower fire, and the safety of residents prioritised.

3.5 The exact cause or causes of the spread of the fire at Grenfell Tower will not be known until an investigation has been carried out. Therefore, it is important to note that the scope of any investigations to be carried out on any fire safety risks and measures to be taken on the Council's high rise blocks may need to change as further information becomes available.

4.0 Finance

4.1 It is not possible at this stage to estimate the costs of any remedial works that the council may subsequently be advised are required or what, if any, government funding would be made available to cover any such costs

4.2 This report does not, at the date of despatch, recommend any immediate works that cannot be contained within existing budgets. An update will be provided at or before the meeting should this position change

5.0 Legal Implications

5.1 Owners and landlords of buildings have to comply with various legal obligations to ensure the safety of others and to discharge the duty of care they owe. The practical manifestations of the Council's responsibilities will be set out in the Appendices referred to in this report and which are to follow.

5.2 As a local authority, the Council also has specified statutory duties and powers to take action against those exposing others to hazardous or dangerous living conditions due to safety risks which include fire safety.

6.0 Equality Implications

6.1 There are no direct equalities implications relating to this report.

7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders

7.1 The first of two member briefing sessions took place on Tuesday 20 June 2017 with the second on Monday 3 July 2017.

7.2 In addition a series of resident briefings have taken place chaired by the relevant Member of Parliament. Barry Gardiner chaired an event Monday 19th June and Dawn Butler on Tuesday 20th June. The next one is scheduled for 4th July in South Kilburn and will be chaired by Tulip Siddiq.

8.0 Staffing/Accommodation Implications (if appropriate)

8.1 There are no direct staffing or accommodation implications relating to this report.

Background Papers

- <https://www.brent.gov.uk/services-for-residents/housing/grenfell-tower/>

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