

**Report for:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 19 November 2018  
**Item number:** 12  
**Title:** Scrutiny Review of Fire Safety In High Rise Blocks - Interim Findings

**Report authorised by :** Ayshe Simsek, Acting Democratic Services Manager

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report for Key/  
Non Key Decision:** N/A

**1. Describe the issue under consideration**

1.1 This report provides the Committee with a progress report on the Scrutiny Review on Fire Safety in High Rise Blocks, which was begun by the previous Committee in 2017/18. It also brings together all the evidence that the Committee has heard to date so that it is able to consider interim findings and recommendations.

**2. Cabinet Member Introduction**

N/A

**3. Recommendations**

3.1 That the report on progress and evidence received to date be noted; and  
3.2 That the Committee consider potential interim findings and recommendations.

**4. Reasons for decision**

4.1 The Committee began a review on Fire Safety in High Rise Blocks in 2017/18 and has received evidence from a range of sources. At the last meeting, it agreed to defer consideration of final conclusions and recommendations until later in the year due to the current uncertainty about the final outcome of plans for implementation of the recommendations of the Hackitt Review.  
4.2 This report brings together all of the evidence that has been received so far to assist the Committee in considering potential interim findings

**5. Alternative options considered**

N/A

## 6. Background information

6.1 In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire, the Committee agreed at its meeting on 17 July 2017 to set up a review on the issue of fire safety in high rise blocks within the borough. The terms of reference for the review were as follows:

“Focussing on the 54 high rise blocks (over six storeys) owned by Haringey, housing association housing and privately owned homes where the Council has responsibility for building control, the review will consider the following:

- Building Safety:
  - How has the Council satisfied itself that its buildings and high-rise buildings in the Borough are safe from fire, including construction materials, containment, ventilation, evacuation routes, safety systems (e.g. sprinklers and alarms)?
  - What action has been identified and taken to date in response to Grenfell?
  - How is building safety monitored, including housing management policies and procedures?
  - How is fire safety for high rise blocks featured in the Council’s planning policy and building control responsibilities?
  - What is the Council and ALMO’s assessment of the effectiveness and application of current building regulations? Are there sufficient resources for enforcement?
- Engagement – How are residents engaged with in relation to fire safety, including awareness of procedures in the event of a fire and responding to concerns about fire safety?
- Access – Are the needs of residents with disabilities known and how are they reflected in fire safety arrangements and evacuation procedures?
- Procurement – what weight is attached to safety against other considerations in considering tenders for building works?
- Emergency Planning – how prepared is the Borough to coordinate the response to a major incident?
- Governance – are the current decision-making and accountability arrangements for the ALMO adequately considering issues of fire safety?”

6.2 Three evidence sessions of the Committee have been held so far. These were on 3 October 2017, 8 January 2018 and 14 September 2018. In addition, further evidence was received at the scheduled Committee meeting on 2 October as well as written evidence.

6.3 Whilst the review has been in progress, the Public Inquiry that was set up by the government has been progressing. It began its work on 14 September 2017 and its terms of reference are as follows:

1. “To examine the circumstances surrounding the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017, including:
  - (a) the immediate cause or causes of the fire and the means by which it spread to the whole of the building;
  - (b) the design and construction of the building and the decisions relating to its modification, refurbishment and management;
  - (c) the scope and adequacy of building regulations, fire regulations and other legislation, guidance and industry practice relating to the design,

construction, equipping and management of high-rise residential buildings;

(d) whether such regulations, legislation, guidance and industry practice were complied with in the case of Grenfell Tower and the fire safety measures adopted in relation to it;

(e) the arrangements made by the local authority or other responsible bodies for receiving and acting upon information either obtained from local residents or available from other sources (including information derived from fires in other buildings) relating to the risk of fire at Grenfell Tower, and the action taken in response to such information;

(f) the fire prevention and fire safety measures in place at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017;

(g) the response of the London Fire Brigade to the fire; and

(h) the response of central and local government in the days immediately following the fire;

and

2. To report its findings to the Prime Minister as soon as possible and to make recommendations

6.4 Phase one of the inquiry is scheduled to run until early November 2018. This will not consider decisions made about the refurbishment of the tower, Kensington and Chelsea's interaction with residents or the governance and management of the block, which are expected to be tackled in a second phase. This is expected to take the inquiry into 2020.

6.5 In addition to the Public Inquiry, the government also asked Dame Judith Hackitt to carry out a review of building regulations and fire safety. Interim findings were published in December 2017 and the final report published on 17 May 2018. This recommendations include the following:

- An "outcomes-based approach" to the regulatory approach, to be overseen by a new regulator;
- Clearer roles and responsibilities throughout the design and construction process, as well as during a building's occupation;
- Residents to be consulted over decisions affecting the safety of their home;
- A more rigorous and transparent product testing regime; and
- Industry to lead strengthening competence of those involved in building work and to establish an oversight body.

6.6 Further detail on how the recommendations within the review report will be implemented is awaited from the government. In the light of this, the Committee agreed at its meeting on 2 October to defer the consideration of final conclusions and recommendations until January 2019. There is also a strong possibility that recommendations from the Public Inquiry will have implications for Haringey if adopted by the government.

## **7. Evidence Received**

7.1 Evidence was received by the Committee from the following:

- Adreena Parkin-Coates and Rebecca Burton - London Fire Brigade;
- Chris Liffen and Kim Graves – Homes for Haringey;
- Michael Westbrook – Housing and Growth;

- Emma Williamson – Planning;
- Bob McIver – Building Control;
- Charlotte Pomery – Commissioning.

### *London Fire Brigade*

- 7.2 Adreena Parkin-Coates outlined the LFB's responsibilities in relation to fire safety and how it was organised across London and locally to fulfil those under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. 350 Fire Inspection Officers worked to give advice and undertake post-fire audits across London. These officers are regularly trained to ensure they are appraised of new issues or changes to requirements.
- 7.3 Following the Grenfell fire, high-rise buildings with the same Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding as Grenfell were identified and the cladding sent for testing. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) found that approximately two thirds of buildings were non-compliant with fire safety requirements in their second round of testing and therefore required further audits. There were 188 such buildings in London and data was gathered on the type and size of these to enable a risk assessment to be drafted before deciding which required further inspection.
- 7.4 The LFB has statutory powers to require corrective work to be undertaken if identified by fire safety audits. In the past, cladding was not something that could be included as requiring change. As an external feature, it was not within the remit of the 2005 Order but they could recommend that its removal be considered.
- 7.5 She set out what would be taken into account when considering the fire safety of a building. It included the number of means of escape, the ventilation systems (including smoke control systems) and the maintenance of corridors to ensure that they were kept clear. Sprinklers could be helpful in suppressing fire and as a mitigating measure but were not a panacea, as reflected in the different regimes across the UK in relation to requirements for sprinklers. Where a building had undergone significant refurbishment, the building controller was required to consult with the LFB.
- 7.6 Problems could arise when residents compromised the fire safety infrastructure. This could include changing fire doors, removing or damaging self-closing mechanisms or where corridors were obstructed by bikes, pushchairs or mobility scooters. The LFB did not undertake regular inspections or certify the fire safety of a building as a matter of course. The regulatory requirement was that the building manager is responsible for fire safety and the LFB decides whether a building requires inspection based on its management information and maintenance record, as provided by a qualified assessor. The provision of quality information is a statutory requirement and crucial for the LFB to be able to prioritise its work and pinpoint where inspection is required.
- 7.7 If there were significant matters to be addressed following an inspection, there could be enforcement issues or the LFB can prohibit the use of the building.

The Committee noted that the public inquiry on Grenfell and the Hackitt Review would identify any issues relating to fire safety and compliance.

- 7.8 Ms Parkin-Coates recommended that the committee consider some templates or samples of fire risk assessments. She understood the independent review would look at fire risk assessors, which may lead to there being a need for accreditation rather than the current situation where fire risk assessors were self-described.
- 7.9 On the 'stay put' policy, she thought it would inevitably be part of the consideration of the independent inquiry, and that it remained in place at present. The Committee noted that there had been six fires in Homes for Haringey stock in the past six years.
- 7.10 Ahead of its evidence session on 14 September, the Committee received a written update from Rebecca Burton of the LFB. She reported that the LFB had set up a High Risk Task Force (HRTF) following Grenfell. This was a team of dedicated Fire Safety Inspecting Officers whose role was to inspect those buildings that had either confirmed they had ACM cladding or suspected that they had it but were waiting results of testing.
- 7.11 To date, there had been three phases of HRTF and the total number of audits carried out to date was 1123. Some of these buildings had had a second visit once the ACM result had been confirmed and this was reflected in the high number of audits. There were 152 buildings that had simultaneous evacuation in place.
- 7.12 In respect of Haringey, figures were as follows;
- HRTF 1; 7 blocks inspected
  - HRTF 2; 11 blocks inspected
  - HRTF 3; 1 Block due to be inspected
- 7.13 In reference to the implementation of the recommendations of the Hackitt Review, the LFB were:
- Centrally co-ordinating fire and rescue services' fire safety auditing of ACM clad buildings, witnessing and assuring tests, and commissioning fire safety audits;
  - Reporting into government forums – Ministerial, Expert Panel, Industry Response Groups;
  - Providing advice and support to FRSs throughout the auditing process on a case by case basis where necessary;
  - Coordinating national input to implementing Dame Judith Hackitt's independent review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety; and
  - LFB has a full time officer embedded in the post Grenfell/Hackitt team working closely with MHCLG/Home Office.
- 7.14 All social housing buildings where ACM was present had been identified and, where required, interim measures put in place. Private sector buildings were still being identified and some were still sending samples for testing. Only confirmed buildings would have interim measures implemented. The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) was setting up a Joint

Investigation Team to deal with difficult owners who would not comply. This would be done under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System and additional guidance would follow. Guidance about buildings with small amounts of non-compliant ACM was to be issued. The consultation on combustible materials had finished and a statement was to be issued shortly

- 7.15 The MHCLG had finished testing composite fire doors and found there was a systemic issue of failure. It was clear most doors did not have test evidence of being tested on both sides. MHCLG were writing to owners to ask them to update their fire risk assessment and put in place a plan to replace them. Composite doors are only normally used for front doors. They were now moving on to test timber doors, which will include suppliers of staircase doors and bedroom doors. This should be to provide a possible source of replacement doors for composite doors.
- 7.16 The Hackitt Review would introduce a new regulatory framework. Work was moving forward on what a “Joint Competent Authority (JCA)” might look like. The definition of a High Risk Residential Building (HRRB) was still being looked at but the results of the listening exercise indicated that the 10 storey plus definition might be too restrictive. Work was going on to ensure that residents would get access to safety information. It would also look at how they could be educated to ensure their actions did not put others at risk e.g. changing front doors and disabling fire safety measures. There could be sanctions for those who do. There will be a clear duty holder throughout the lifecycle of a building and residents could have a named person responsible for fire safety.
- 7.17 In respect of care homes, LFB had a specific project group of five Inspecting Officers who had recently undertaken a sample of Care Homes across London, applying a more robust approach to inspection. This included scrutinising the compartmentation within buildings and how well this supported a Stay Put Strategy and Progressive Horizontal Evacuation. From 177 premises sampled, 50% had resulted in a level of enforcement action.
- 7.18 In respect of Osbourne Grove Residential Home, a recent inspection on 31st August was “Broadly Complaint”. At the time, due to limited numbers of residents and staff, all residents were housed on the ground floor and this eliminated the need for the lift to be used as part of any evacuation. Should the first floor be brought back into occupation, the Fire Risk Assessment would need to be reviewed to take account of the limitations of the lift. It could not be confirmed at that stage if the lift was an “Evacuation Lift” which had its own fire safety requirements. This would need to be reviewed if the upper floors were brought back into occupation.

#### *Homes for Haringey*

- 7.19 The Committee received evidence from Chris Liffen of Homes for Haringey (HfH) at its evidence session on 3 October 2017. He reported that there were 54 blocks in Haringey over 18 metres and 3337 dwellings. No Homes for Haringey (HfH) properties had been found to have ACM cladding.
- 7.20 26 of the 54 blocks had only a single stairwell escape route. The remainder all had at least two exits. All buildings above 18 metres had wet risers and these

were inspected every six months. The general policy was that high risk buildings were inspected on a six monthly basis, medium risk annually and low risk every two years. This was a visual inspection rather than a more disruptive type. Estate Services would be expected to sign off any works post inspection to show that the recommendations had been acted upon. HfH has an annual budget of approximately £3m for fire safety.

- 7.21 He stated that, under the 2005 Order, the onus of ensuring fire safety compliance was with the landlord. The LFB provided support where asked and often visits blocks to ensure familiarity in case of having to tackle a fire there. The LFB had undertaken one audit in the past year in a HfH building.
- 7.22 Mr Liffen stated that he was comfortable with the current division of responsibilities and was confident that HfH's internal systems, such as audit and capability of staff, meant that the many areas of compliance were managed effectively. Future challenges would be:
- Ensuring the recruitment and retention of capable staff, with growing competition for them meaning pay rates were rising in a challenging way;
  - Operating without as complete a set of records as would be desirable; and
  - The need to retain institutional knowledge – for example, if HfH's relationship with the Council changed.
- 7.23 The HfH Board was supported by an Audit and Risk Committee, which meets monthly, and the Board had a champion for Health and Safety compliance. The Homes for Haringey Residents Scrutiny Committee was a forum for residents concerns to be aired and the performance of the arm's length management organisation (ALMO) to be considered from residents' perspective.
- 7.24 Post Grenfell, risk assessments had been re-done. Homes for Haringey had bi-weekly fire safety meetings where they could look closely at issues of concern, including obstacles within evacuation routes in communal areas. Fire door repairs and accompanying fire-safety mechanisms was one of the larger maintenance demands. It could be difficult to ensure residents' support though – for example, seven fire doors were repaired in one tower block, of which four were found broken again within days.
- 7.25 HfH had considered the cost implications of various fire safety measures which might be required following the public inquiry and Hackitt review. The use of sprinklers and alarms was not without disbenefits. For example, alarms could create unnecessary panic if triggered accidentally and sprinklers could damage residents' property, often uninsured.
- 7.26 Another priority after Grenfell was ensuring the occupancy of each property was known and whether they had any vulnerabilities. This data could be shared with the LFB if needed and vulnerable residents could have personal plans for evacuation. It was sometimes difficult to reconcile residents' willingness to be forthcoming with the need to prevent fraud. HfH had held fire safety days for residents, and would look to engage with residents on the "stay put" policy if it were to be changed or needed to be communicated more clearly in the future.

- 7.27 The Committee received an update on progress at its meeting on 19 July 2018. HfH had been reviewing the safety of its buildings in line with guidance from the MHCLG and the LFB. There were a number of workstreams ongoing;
- A full survey was underway of all properties with full height window panels to establish the construction of the infill panels;
  - Work was also underway to review all stock investment work where compartmentation may have been breached when new rising services were installed. All work where HfH have complete records (since 2006) had been reviewed and HfH were now reviewing all pre 2006 investment works;
  - HfH were reviewing all composite fire door installations to ensure manufacturers fire door certification was consistent with the doors installed. There were 7000 composite front entrance doors from a range of manufacturers. The current door manufacturer (Ashford) had provided certification and on HfH's request have sent 4 door sets for further fire testing;
  - HfH had completed intrusive surveys of one of their 7 timber framed buildings and whilst they were satisfied that the building was constructed in line with building regs, it was possible that resident alterations could breach compartmentation. They were developing communications for residents and prioritising automatic fire detection in these blocks;
  - Historically landlords had only completed type 1-2 risk assessments which were non-intrusive communal area surveys. HfH was about to start type 3-4 fire risk assessments, which included intrusive surveys in communal areas and within properties. These risk assessments would help to identify breaches in compartmentation on vertical risers.
- 7.28 At the Panel's evidence session on 14 September, Mr Liffen reported surveys of all blocks with full height window frames were continuing. Two blocks still needed to be surveyed. No immediate risks had so far been found but a full report would be drafted when the work had been fully completed. All windows in Haringey properties had fire retardant material on their inside. In answer to a question, Mr Liffen stated that there was only a remote chance of fire jumping upwards between the exterior of windows. He nevertheless agreed to investigate the issue further and report back on what the specific recommendations of the LFB were.
- 7.29 The positioning of rubbish chutes and bin stores had been reviewed and remedial action taken if required. There was now a Clear Communal Area pilot scheme and any obstructions were automatically moved. Previously, warning had been given. Penalties and charges could be incurred, if appropriate.
- 7.30 The Committee raised the issue of Stokely Court, which was a large sheltered block without lifts. Residents had placed tables and chairs on walkways, which could potentially impede evacuation. Mr Liffen reported that the block would be subject to a fire risk assessment. It was, in any case, a "stay put" property. The "stay put" policy had been supported by the LFB and the government. This was based on the principle that the LFB should be able to extinguish any fire within an individual property without it spreading externally.

- 7.31 In answer to a question, Mr Liffen stated that weekly fire risk assessments were completed on all properties. Full fire safety inspections took place periodically, with their frequency dependent on the level of risk. Mr Liffen agreed to draft a briefing to all Councillors on fire risk assessments and inspections. Fire risk assessors were directly employed and reported to the Head of Health and Safety. Where necessary, issues that needed to be dealt with, such as repairs, were raised with services. There were also monthly fire safety meetings that were chaired by the Director of Homes for Haringey.
- 7.32 An action plan is maintained which is updated for fire safety meetings. The plan is updated after each meeting from the minutes. Ahead of each meeting, which takes place monthly, meetings took place with the senior managers responsible for each action who provide an update on progress. The action plan is the main audit trail and contains all the detail. For ease of reference, a highlight report of any red or amber actions is also produced and is presented to the meeting, where any outstanding issues are raised.
- 7.33 Action was being taken to employ additional fire risk assessors in order that detailed assessments could be undertaken more frequently. Such assessments were more intrusive and could involve, for example, opening ducts. There was a need to recruit two more but they were currently in high demand. It was anticipated that action would be taken to make regular detailed assessments a specific requirement. It had been identified that some refurbishments had caused the compartmentalisation of flats to be compromised and work had been undertaken to reinstate it where this had been found to have happened.
- 7.34 It was noted that, where possible, ducts were being opened up as part of assessments. It was not possible to completely sure that properties were still compartmentalised as there was a lack of comprehensive records, which was why more detailed assessments were now being undertaken. HfH had a number of timber-framed buildings and more automatic fire detection systems were to be installed with the aim of enabling a move towards an evacuation policy.
- 7.35 He reported on the outstanding issue with composite fire doors. Those used at Grenfell Tower had failed the 30 minutes test. Composite doors were not currently being produced, pending evidence that they were fire resistant on both sides. HfH currently had 6,400 of these including 2,700 produced by Ashfords. Test results were awaited but there was currently a very high demand for them. In addition, some of the manufacturers of the doors were no longer in existence. Test results were nevertheless expected soon and HfH were awaiting these before deciding what action to take. If they all failed, the cost of replacing them all would be circa £7 million and take two years to undertake.
- 7.36 HfH were in constant dialogue with the LFB, who had indicated that no immediate action was necessary on the doors. The Commercial Team were looking at possible contractual recourse if the doors failed tests. However, action by organisations that bought the doors could lead to the manufacturers becoming insolvent. Leaseholders would not be charged for replacement of the doors, if this was required.

- 7.37 In answer to a question, he stated that fitting sprinklers to blocks could compromise the compartmentalisation of flats and therefore make them more vulnerable. There was nothing in the Hackitt report that would require sprinklers to be fitted retrospectively.
- 7.38 All new tenants were given an induction that included details of fire safety issues and drills. He felt that these arrangements might need to be re-visited as well as how these were communicated to residents. All residents of blocks over six floors had been either written to or visited following the Grenfell Tower fire to outline action that was to be taken in response to it.
- 7.39 In response to a question around a lack of fire extinguishers in communal areas and of fire marshals in Council owned residential properties, the Committee noted that the Local Government Association's "Fire Safety in Purpose Built Flats" Guidance ("the LGA Guidance") states that it is not normally considered necessary to provide fire extinguishers or hose reels in the communal areas in general needs purpose built blocks of flats. Such equipment should only be used by those trained in its use. It is not considered appropriate or practicable for residents in a block of flats to receive such training.
- 7.40 In addition, if a fire occurs in a flat, the provision of fire extinguishing appliances in the communal areas might encourage the occupants of the flat to enter the common parts to obtain an appliance and return to their flat to fight the fire. LFB advice to residents is that they should not tackle fires themselves and that this should be left to the professional fire fighters. HFH have provisions in place to support fire fighting in general needs purpose built blocks of flats which include dry risers and premises information boxes in high rise blocks, fire action notices, signage etc. on all other blocks.
- 7.41 Fire drills and practice evacuations with fire marshals are normally used in buildings such as offices etc. to reinforce fire awareness training. It is neither practical nor necessary to carry them out in purpose built blocks of flats where a stay put policy is in operation of which most blocks are designed for this policy.

#### *Housing Associations and Private Blocks*

- 7.42 At its meeting on 19 July, the Committee noted that action had been taken by Housing Associations to identify any high-rise blocks owned by them which have ACM cladding. A number of blocks owned by Newlon in Tottenham had been found to have at least some ACM cladding, including Rivers Apartments, a 22 storey tower. However, Rivers was a modern building and had a number of fire safety systems including a sprinkler system, wet riser, a firefighter's lift and smoke evacuation valves. Newlon had committed to remove and replace the ACM cladding as soon as it was found to have failed safety tests and the work was expected to start shortly. A block in Hornsey owned by One Housing Group – Roden Court – was partly clad with ACM. One Housing had also committed to remove this cladding, and the works were expected to start in July 2018.
- 7.43 The position regarding private residential blocks in the borough had also been reviewed. This confirmed that there were no private blocks over 6 storeys which had ACM cladding. In July 2018, the Council was informed by MHCLG that they

had been informed by Premier Inn that their hotel in Tottenham Hale has ACM cladding. The Council had previously asked Premier Inn about this hotel and they did not declare this issue until very recently. Premier Inn consider this to be low risk on the basis that the hotel has a range of fire safety measures including 24 hour staffing, an evacuation procedure and two staircases to allow evacuation of the hotel

### *Planning and Building Control*

- 7.44 The Committee first received receive evidence from Emma Williamson, Assistant Director for Planning and Bob McIvor, Building Control Manager at its evidence session on 8 January 2018. It noted that the Council had been requested to provide information to the Government on use of cladding on private buildings and housing association buildings. As building developers can use private building control inspectors instead of the Councils, the level of information held by the Council and possible assurance was limited.
- 7.45 The privatisation of building control in the 1980s meant more choice for developers and competition for building control inspections but private operators could not undertake enforcement action and had to refer such action to the local authority. Haringey's building control mechanism was well-regarded and competitive, having won awards, though they could not generate profit from their building control services. The Council provided about half the building control services in the borough and there was rising demand for the services of the team.
- 7.46 There was a backlog in the testing of suspect cladding, meaning reassurance was taking a while to provide. A number of inspections had been requested for Haringey, including for the new Tottenham Hotspur stadium. There had been some concerns around privately owned high-rise buildings, with seven such buildings appearing to have ACM cladding. There were also some buildings operated by housing associations that had ACM cladding.
- 7.47 The issues for building control depended to some extent on the trends of building design and the risks associated with materials that were being used at the time. The specific issues arising from Grenfell were not yet known, and they were not the only issues in relation to building control that were of potential concern. Aside from the specific recommendations relating to building materials, the Grenfell fire had brought home the need to ensure transparency by developers on the buildings used.
- 7.48 There were more stringent health and safety regulations in effect in non-residential properties and so there was a lower level of concern. Sprinklers were not a panacea, given that they could be disabled and often ran from a tank, rather than the mains. The efficacy of fire safety measures needed to be balanced against their cost and there was not a straightforward response to the issues.
- 7.49 Ms Williamson reported that, under the planning process, fire safety was not a material consideration available to the Council so its ability to create planning policies that incorporated fire safety measures or collect relevant information was limited. The insulation used and fire safety measures were not necessarily

presented as part of a planning application. However, some developers were providing more information for assurance and there were regulatory requirements for buildings over 10 stories, including evacuation routes and signage. If these requirements were changed, there could be some implications for buildings given planning consent but not yet constructed.

- 7.50 A further update was provided to the Committee's evidence session on 14 September. Mr Mclver reported that details of plans for the implementation of the Hackitt review were awaited. A number of working groups had been set up to take forward the recommendations from this. The review had used a different definition of high rise to that used by HfH. Hackitt used ten storeys whilst HfH and other social housing providers used six. Ten storeys was felt by many experts to be too high.
- 7.51 The review had recommended the setting up of a new Joint Competent Authority (JCA) comprising local authority building standards, fire and rescue authorities and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to oversee management of safety risks in high-rise residential buildings. This would mean that approved inspectors could no longer be used in such instances. All changes would need to go through the JCA and approval would be necessary before work commenced. The JCA would probably need to be involved at design stage.
- 7.52 The CLG was continuing to test cladding and more had failed than anticipated. Replacement cladding also needed to be tested and there was considerable demand on testing facilities. Rockwool could be used instead but this was not as thermally efficient and thicker walls could be required to compensate. New buildings generally had sprinklers. The LFB were encouraging the fitting of sprinklers but they had their limitations and levels of retro fitting were coming down.
- 7.53 In answer to a question, Mr Mclver stated that local authorities, including Haringey, had trained inspectors in the past. The service was now down to its bare bones and it was therefore not possible to offer training to new staff. It also had an ageing workforce. Ms Williamson reported that some inspectors had been upgraded but it had been difficult to obtain approval for this. In some cases, it had been necessary to use agency staff or staff from other authorities. If there were further problems, it might be necessary to consider recruitment and retention packages. Efforts were being made to develop current staff though. If formal training was offered, those who benefitted from it could be tied to the Council for a period.
- 7.54 The Committee noted that there were currently six surveyors and five of these had trained at Haringey. There was already co-operation between boroughs and Haringey undertook some work on behalf of others. If the recommendation to establish a JCA was implemented, additional resources might be required for the service.
- 7.55 In answer to a question, Mr Mclver stated that he was unaware of any direct contact with residential care homes. However, it was possible that they would go to approved inspectors instead of the Council. In respect of the Council's Osbourne Grove care home, any contact with Building Control would have come through the Property Team. He was not aware of any recent approach

but would make enquiries to confirm that this was the case. In answer to another question, he reported that newer high rise blocks had dry risers, vented lobbies and sprinklers and were therefore safer. If the policy was to evacuate properties, wide stairs would be required to enable people to get out quickly.

#### *Emergency Planning*

- 7.56 At its meeting on 2 October, the Committee received evidence from Andrew Meek, the Head of Organisational Resilience on the preparedness of the borough to coordinate a response to a major incident and health and safety considerations for staff.
- 7.57 He stated that the Council's emergency plans were regularly reviewed and tested as part of the Haringey Resilience Forum, a statutory partnership body. Following Grenfell, the Council undertook a local review of the lessons learnt. In addition, a number of staff were deployed to assist in the response with Kensington and Chelsea. In addition, the Chief Executives of London Councils commissioned a peer review of London local authority resilience arrangements. A further multi-agency review was also undertaken following the peer review.
- 7.58 Key actions resulting from the lessons learnt were as follows:
- The Council had developed its mobilisation plan and put in place arrangements to ensure that there were enough people in Emergency Response roles in order to mobilise staff effectively;
  - A workshop was held with voluntary, community and faith groups to help them understand how the response to a major incident worked;
  - The Council had taken steps to ensure that staff would be visible in the eventuality that the Council had to respond at scale;
  - Long standing mutual aid relationships existed with other London boroughs. A piece of work was underway as part of the London-wide Resilience Forum to standardise the emergency plans for each London borough so they were structured in the same way; and
  - A London-wide Memorandum of Understanding had been put in place with the British Red Cross.
- 7.59 There were two high rise buildings used by Council staff, both of which were ten storey buildings and neither of which had combustible ACM cladding. A fire risk assessment was in place for both buildings and tests were conducted regularly on a range of fire safety equipment. An updated fire risk assessment had been commissioned for both buildings and the Head of Organisational Resilience would be working with the Council's facilities management contractor to ensure that each of the actions arising from the fire risk assessment were put in place.
- 7.60 In response to a question, Mr Meek stated that the London Resilience Forum were responsible for co-ordinating emergency planning and resilience arrangements across London. Sitting underneath this forum were a number of sector panels, one of which was the local authorities sector panel which was responsible for the standardisation of emergency plans.
- 7.61 The Committee sought assurances around whether work had been undertaken to establish exactly who was living in Council accommodation and also whether there was any capacity to house people in a major incident. In response,

officers advised that, given the housing shortage, it would not be easy to find suitable accommodation within the Borough. Officers advised that HfH were continually trying to keep up to date with whose was residing in their properties but the main issue was around identifying leaseholders and with illegally sub-let properties.

- 7.62 The Committee questioned whether any work had been undertaken across-London to establish the level of available housing in the event of a major incident. In response, officers cautioned that the number of void-properties held by any individual authority was constantly changing and that in the eventuality of an emergency the exact figure at that point in time would be required. The Head of Organisational Resilience emphasised that that having joint arrangements in place with the other London local authorities was crucial and would allow an accurate assessment to be undertaken quickly.
- 7.63 In response to a further question around the voluntary sector engagement event, the Head of Organisational Resilience advised that he had agreed to develop a voluntary sector capabilities assessment. This involved a questionnaire being sent out to each of the voluntary/community/faith, groups in order to establish their relative capabilities in being able to respond to an emergency and establish which particular group/s they had links with.
- 7.64 In response to a question around staff and their exposure to fire safety procedures, the Committee was advised that this formed part of the staff induction process. In addition, there was a fire safety awareness training video on Fuse and all of the Council's emergency planning processes were also available on the staff intranet. Weekly fire drills were a key method for ensuring that all those who regularly used the Council's buildings had a good understanding of what to do in the event of a fire.
- 7.65 Following a query around the role of Members in the response to an emergency situation, the Head of Organisational resilience undertook to share an existing briefing document with all Councillors. The Committee were also advised that there was some member training scheduled for November around what to do in an emergency incident. London-wide guidance and training was also planned through London Councils, aimed at leaders within local government. It was anticipated that this would be subsequently formalised into a training package to be delivered at a local level for all boroughs.

### *Commissioning*

- 7.66 The Committee requested a briefing on the issue of fire safety in residential care homes, sheltered accommodation and hostel accommodation commissioned by the Council. This is attached as Appendix A.

## **8 Contribution to strategic outcomes**

- 8.1 Priority 3 – Clean and Safe: A clean, well maintained and safe borough where people are proud to live and work.

## **9 Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)**

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## **Finance**

- 9.1 This report provides the Committee with a progress report on the Scrutiny Review on Fire Safety in High Rise Blocks. There are no financial implications at this stage to consider in this progress report. A capital budget of £16m has been approved in the February 2018 HRA MTFs report for costs associated with Broadwater Farm.

## **Legal**

- 9.2 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in the report

## **Equality**

- 9.3 The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not.

- 9.4 The Committee should ensure that it addresses these duties by considering them within its work plan and those of its panels, as well as individual pieces of work. This should include considering and clearly stating;

- How policy issues impact on different groups within the community, particularly those that share the nine protected characteristics;
- Whether the impact on particular groups is fair and proportionate;
- Whether there is equality of access to services and fair representation of all groups within Haringey;
- Whether any positive opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and/or good relations between people, are being realised.

- 9.5 The Committee should ensure that equalities comments are based on evidence. Wherever possible this should include demographic and service level data and evidence of residents/service-users views gathered through consultation.

## **10 Use of Appendices**

Appendix A; Briefing note for Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Action being taken in response to fire risk for vulnerable residents

## **11 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985**