

<b>Sustainable Development Select Committee</b>		
Title	Update on Fire Safety in Lewisham	
Wards	All wards	
Contributor	Executive Director for Customer Services	Item 6
Class	Part 1 (open)	4 March 2019

## **1 Reasons for Lateness and Urgency**

- 1.1 This report is late as officers wanted to ensure that the most accurate, up to date information was available for the committee to consider.
- 1.2 The report is urgent and cannot wait until the next meeting of the Sustainable Development Select Committee as it provides key information about fire safety across Lewisham Council owned housing stock.
- 1.3 Where a report is received less than 5 clear days before the date of the meeting at which the matter is being considered, then under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100(b)(4) the Chair of the Committee can take the matter as a matter of urgency if he is satisfied that there are special circumstances requiring it to be treated as a matter of urgency. These special circumstances have to be specified in the minutes of the meeting.

## **2 Purpose**

- 2.1 This report provides Sustainable Development Select Committee with an update on fire safety in Lewisham since June 2017.

## **3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 It is recommended that Sustainable Development Select Committee note the content of this report.

## **4 Background**

- 4.1 Following the devastating events at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, officers have provided regular updates to Mayor and Cabinet, Housing Select Committee and Sustainable Development Select Committee detailing fire-safety related updates in Lewisham.
- 4.2 Since June 2017 there have been varied and significant announcements from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) relating to a number of fire safety related topics including: unsafe cladding, large scale panel constructed buildings and fire doors. These items are explored in full in section 5 of this report.
- 4.3 There has been significant and continuing work by Lewisham Council's housing management organisations, Lewisham Homes and RegenterB3 to ensure Lewisham Council buildings are safe.
- 4.4 Lewisham Council officers continue to work with key partners in the borough to remain apprised of any fire safety work being undertaken by registered providers and to be assured of the approaches being taken towards maintaining fire safe buildings.

4.5 Officers also continue to work with representative bodies including London Councils and the LGA to ensure that all changes and developments in fire safety related.

## 5 National and London context

5.1 Immediately following the Grenfell Tower fire, Government took a number of immediate actions, which are chronologically detailed below:

- An full public enquiry was announced on the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2017;
- An independent review of building regulations and fire safety commenced, led by Dame Judith Hackett. The full Hackett report was published in May 2018
- MHCLG set up the Building Safety Programme which commenced activity by testing cladding samples and leading on the collecting of information on buildings over 18m high
- A number of advice papers have been published by MHCLG including:
  - Information for building owners on action to take where a building has ACM cladding;
  - Powers Local Authorities have under the Housing Act to take legal action against private landlords of high rise buildings with suspected ACM cladding;
  - Action for owners of buildings constructed with large panel systems;
  - Advice on front entrance doors (FED)
- Government commenced a testing regime for front entrance doors (FED's), initially focussing on Manse Masterdor FEDs and expanding the test regime to a wider variety of FEDs. As a result, there has been a temporary ongoing suspension of production of composite FEDs across all manufacturers until more robust test result can be evidenced. Fire doors are slowly returning to the market as test results are completed and full results published by manufacturers.
- A ban on combustibile cladding on all buildings over 18m was announced on 1<sup>st</sup> October

5.2 Over the last 15 months officers have been regularly attending meetings with MHCLG, the GLA and London Councils related to various aspects of the above items.

## 6 Fire safety in Lewisham: ACM cladding

### Lewisham Council owned blocks

6.1 Following the Grenfell Tower incident Lewisham Homes identified three tower blocks fitted with ACM cladding: Hatfield Close 1-48, Hatfield Close 49-96, and Gerrard House 1-51. All three blocks failed the cladding test. This ACM cladding was fully removed from all three blocks by the end of 2017.

6.2 Removing the cladding revealed a number of works required to the external façade of the building, and additional fire compartmentalisation works were undertaken in all three blocks. Inspections also revealed that the roof was in need of renewing, and windows were coming to the end of their lifespan.

6.3 Lewisham Homes' Regeneration and Investment Committee has approved re-clad material and the appointment of United Living as Principal Contractor. Preparatory works including Wall ties drilling is complete with further preparatory works ongoing.

- 6.4 Lewisham Homes have run two evening resident drop in sessions where advice on the next phase of works, and the opportunity of deciding on the colour/pattern of the cladding design was discussed.
- 6.5 Until the new cladding can be applied, additional mitigation measures have been implemented including the installation of domestic smoke alarm systems and fire stopping works.
- 6.6 The current timeframe for the replacement of the cladding suggests re-cladding will commence around spring 2019, possibly earlier if there is a speedier planning process.

#### Privately owned buildings

- 6.7 Following an extensive exercise to contact all private sector tall building owners officers established that there are no privately-owned tall buildings with ACM cladding in Lewisham.

#### Housing Association owned buildings

- 6.8 There are a small number of partially clad blocks owned and managed by L&Q Housing Association, at Clyde Terrace. These blocks are currently scaffolded with works to complete replacement of the cladding due by the end of December 2018. Officers are in regular contact with L&Q to monitor progress of this work.

### **7 Fire safety in Lewisham: Fire doors**

- 7.1 Lewisham Homes embarked on a major front entrance [fire] door (FED) renewal programme following a fire that occurred in Deptford in 2011 that sadly saw the loss of two lives. This programme was delivered by MITIE Property Services Ltd in the north of the borough, Breyer Group PLC in the South of the Borough and a small number by Lewisham Homes' In-house Repairs Service.
- 7.2 Following the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, Lewisham Homes instructed contractors to intrusively inspect a sample of FED installations. As a result, installation deficiencies were discovered for the FED's that were inspected across all contractors.
- 7.3 In March 2018 MHCLG announced that doors manufactured by Manse Masterdor had failed a test commissioned specific to the Grenfell Fire disaster as they did not consistently meet the stated 30 minute fire resistance requirement. Manse Masterdor was a large manufacturer of fire resistant front entrance doors and so this is a national issue affecting property owners throughout the public and private sectors. As part of the door replacement programme, Lewisham had fitted around 3510 of these doors. A further 5,494 doors installed across Lewisham owned stock were supplied by other manufacturers using similar base components and it is unlikely that those consistently meet the required standards.
- 7.4 MHCLG advised that the risk remained low as fire protection in a building is developed using a range of measures so a failure of one protection measure – such as fire doors – should not significantly change the overall safety of residents. MHCLG advised that all building owners should consider how quickly these doors should be replaced.

- 7.5 Since the announcement, there have been further issues with fire doors across the industry resulting in a halt in the production of composite FEDs as outlined in 5.1 of this report. MHCLG have been in continuous dialogue with the industry and local authorities since the testing regime began.
- 7.6 Lewisham Homes sought advice from their Fire Risk Assessors, Frankham RSM, in June 2018 regarding their view on installed FEDs known not to offer the full 30-minute resistance. The advice confirmed that if Lewisham Homes delivered advice and education to residents on fire safety, initiated a programme of type 4 fire risk assessments, and embarked upon a programme to ultimately replace the doors that did not fully meet the standard, then the risk to residents was mitigated. All such measures have been put in place.
- 7.7 Officers continue to liaise with MHCLG on the matter and understand that test results are now coming through for certain manufacturers. Whilst some composite doors have been known to pass the time lag between the test and the published results are further delaying production. As such, there is an ongoing issue with the supply chain of composite FED that have passed the new test regime.
- 7.8 Lewisham Homes are currently in contractual discussions with the contractors who installed the Manse Masterdor and other similar doors to replace them subject to market availability of an appropriately tested product. All doors across Lewisham owned stock found to have failed testing will be replaced. The timeframe on this is currently unknown due to the ongoing challenges with the supply of FEDs that have passed testing. In the meantime MITIE have started to replace the Manse Masterdor FED that they installed using timber fire doors.
- 7.9 There are an additional 1923 doors that pre-date current building regulation standards. Lewisham Homes will also be replacing these doors.
- 7.10 Going forward, Lewisham Homes will be installing a “Lewisham Homes standard door specification”, to ensure that consistency is achieved across all future door installations. The specification has been established and a procurement route to market that allows purchase of FEDs under this specification is currently being sought.

#### Fire Risk Assessment surveys

- 7.11 Lewisham Homes are required to undertake Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) on just short of 1400 residential/public buildings. They hold suitable and sufficient FRAs as follows:
- 1 Supported Living Scheme
  - 18 Sheltered Schemes
  - 33 Hostels
  - 621 Properties Converted into Flats
  - 714 Purpose Built Blocks of Flats
  - 11 Community Facilities
- 7.12 Reviews of FRAs occur every 1, 2 or 3 years as follows:
- Every year: all Supported Living, Sheltered and Hostel schemes plus high-rise/risk Flats.
  - Every 2 years: lower rise/risk Flats.
  - Every 3 years: Community Facilities.
- 7.13 FRAs are also reviewed when there is a trigger event such as a fire, an audit by LFB, significant change in use or layout, or following serious concerns raised by occupants.

7.4 Lewisham Homes FRAs are subject to scrutiny by London Fire Brigade and have been found to be suitable and sufficient. In the past 12 months Lewisham Homes has had no enforcement action by LFB and only two Notices of Deficiencies (NoDs) making recommendations all of which were implemented within the target timeframe.

### Sprinkler retro-fitting

7.14 Lewisham Homes have retrofitted sprinkler installations to all sheltered schemes which resulted in a 'Commendation' for Lewisham Homes from the National Fire Sprinkler Network for 'promoting the wider use of sprinklers'.

7.15 Following the success of retro-fitting sprinklers in sheltered schemes, Lewisham Homes has begun installing sprinkler systems in Hostel accommodation with work underway in:

- John Baird Court
- Fleming House
- 3 Inchmerry
- 35 Sydenham Hill
- Sydenham Park Mansions

7.16 All 33 Hostels are covered with an up to date fire risk assessment resulting in fire precaution works underway to include:

- Sprinklers (as above)
- Automatic fire detection
- Fire doors
- Fire stopping

## **8 Fire safety in Lewisham: EPS insulation**

8.1 In February 2019, as part of a planned and extensive programme of works in relation to fire safety, Lewisham Homes identified possible EPS (Expanded Polystyrene) insulation used on the external façade of five blocks, three of which are only affected on a small number of floors.

8.2 Whilst this insulation was fully compliant when installed, it may not fully meet current standards.

8.3 Lewisham Homes are currently still awaiting full confirmation of the material type, with results from a larger scale test pending.

8.4 In the meantime, 24 hour fire patrol has been put in place as an additional measure, and a fire alarm system is being considered. The London Fire Brigade are fully apprised of the measures being taken.

8.5 Pending the outcome of the sample test, Lewisham Homes will undertake all necessary work to ensure that the buildings are safe.

## **9 Fire safety in Lewisham: Brockley PFI area**

- 9.1 At the time of the Grenfell fire in June 2017, Rydon's, the Repairs and Maintenance contractor for the Brockley PFI contract were concluding a full suite of FRA's on all the PFI managed properties. The FRA's were commissioned as part of the lifecycle works programme which commence in 2016.
- 9.2 The FRA's identified a number of remedial works that are required to ensure the properties in the PFI area meet current legislative standards. The identified works included the renewal of 908 tenant's FEDs, updating signage and fire notices to blocks, electrical upgrade works and compartmentation works to loft spaces.
- 9.3 To date all work in connection with the renewal of fire notices and signage has been completed.
- 9.4 Most of the electrical works identified have been completed. 62 communal spaces of which most are house conversions were identified as not having a communal electrical supply and meter. It is now a requirement to install electrical communal supplies to facilitate the hardwiring of smoke and heat detection equipment. LBL are currently working with UK Network Supplies to have the new supplies installed.
- 9.5 More intrusive surveys of identified loft spaces are currently underway to ascertain if compartmentation works will be required.
- 9.6 Following a successful tendering process Rydon's let the FED installation contract to Anglian Building Products.
- 9.7 Works were due to commence in the Summer with the first 80 doors having already been delivered to site ready for installation. As a result of the additional testing requirements for composite doors, as identified in section 5 of this report, Anglian Building Products have suspended all work on site until the results of the tests are known.
- 9.8 No further works will commence until assurances have been given that the composite doors to be installed meet the additional testing requirements. Once started it is envisaged the door installation programme will take approx. 26 weeks to complete.

## **10 Funding of fire-safety related works**

### Costs of cladding removal

- 10.1 In May 2018 MHCLG announced a cladding remediation fund to cover the removal and replacement of ACM cladding in the social housing sector.
- 10.2 LBL have submitted a request for £3 million per block, totalling £9 million. This request was approved. A report is planned to be taken to Mayor and Cabinet in December 2018 to approve this application to the fund.

### Costs of additional fire safety works, Lewisham Homes and Brockley PFI

10.3 Currently the 2018-2019 Lewisham Homes Capital Programme has 10 schemes relating to Fire Safety Works with a revised budget of £11.322m and a forecasted outturn of £10.711m. A further £14.010m spend is anticipated for 2019-2020.

10.4 Under the terms of the PFI contract RegenterB3 are not responsible for funding either the FRA's or any recommended works identified to ensure compliance. The total cost of these works are currently £1.1 million.

## **11 Legal Implications**

11.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the Fire Safety Arrangements and as such, there are no direct legal implications arising from this update.

## **12 Financial implications**

12.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the Fire Safety Arrangements and as such, there are no direct financial implications arising from this update.

12.2 However, it should be noted that MHCLG funding of £9 million has been sought for the removal of ACM cladding and re-cladding of three council owned tower blocks that failed cladding tests.

12.3 The work currently being undertaken to ensure all fire safety arrangements are up to date, including fire patrols relating to LBL owned social housing stock. This work is being covered by existing HRA management, repairs & maintenance and capital allocations.

12.4 As the situation develops, further detailed financial implications will be provided on each individual issue as they are reported on.

## **13 Crime and disorder implications**

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

## **14 Equalities implications**

14.1 There are no equalities implications arising from this report.

## **15 Environmental implications**

15.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

## **16 Background Documents and Report Originator**

16.1 If you have any queries relating to this report please contact Rachel Dunn on 020 8314 6213.