

Report to:	Cabinet	
Report of:	Corporate Director – Place	
Date of Decision:	27 June 2017	
SUBJECT:	GRENFELL TOWER FIRE – BIRMINGHAM RESPONSE	
Key Decision: Yes	Relevant Forward Plan Ref:	
If not in the Forward Plan: (please "X" box)	Chief Executive approved	✓
	O&S Chairman approved	✓
Relevant Cabinet Member(s):	Councillor Peter Griffiths, Housing and Homes	
Relevant O&S Chairman:	Councillor Victoria Quinn, Housing and Homes	
Wards affected:	All	

LATE REPORT
* To be completed for all late reports, ie. which cannot be despatched with the agenda papers ie. 5 clear working days notice before meeting.
<p>Reasons for Lateness This report provides an immediate response to the tragic fire incident at Grenfell Tower in London and could not be provided any sooner</p> <p>Reasons for Urgency To update Cabinet at the earliest opportunity on the action taken in Birmingham.</p>

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

PUBLIC REPORT

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1. Purpose of report:
1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the action taken in Birmingham following the fire incident at Grenfell Tower, London.

2. Decision(s) recommended:
That the Cabinet :-
2.1 Notes and endorses the detailed action referred to in the report.
2.2 Supports the approach to Government to help to pay for the sprinkler systems and fire suppressant measures in all of the City Council's tower blocks as appropriate.
2.3 Receives a report back on approaches to Government and the Council's proposed approach to fitting fire suppressants measures including sprinklers in residential tower blocks owned by Birmingham City Council.

Lead Contact Officer(s):	Rob James, Director Housing
Telephone No:	0121 464 7699
E-mail address:	robert.james@birmingham.gov.uk

3.	Consultation
3.1	<p><u>Internal</u></p> <p>Briefings have been shared with all elected members and members of the City Council's Leadership Team on the action taken following the news of the fire at Grenfell Tower.</p>
3.2	<p><u>External</u></p> <p>Briefings have been shared with all Birmingham MPs.</p> <p>Verbal briefing to the Birmingham Social Housing Partnership on 15th June with follow up written briefings.</p> <p>Briefing to Housing Birmingham Partnership.</p> <p>Information from briefings shared with Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH)</p> <p>Information requested by the Department of Communities and Local Government have been submitted as requested.</p> <p>Numerous media statements issued.</p>
4.	Compliance Issues:
4.1	<p><u>Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?</u></p> <p>The measures being taken to ensure the safety of tenants in the Council managed high rise accommodation are in line with the Council's vision of "Birmingham – a city of growth where every child, citizen and place matters" and support the key priority of "Housing – a great place to live".</p>
4.2	<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p><u>(Will decisions be carried out within existing finance and Resources?)</u></p>
4.2.1	<p>The proposed enhanced safety work will require additional investment estimated at £31m (approximately £3,000 per property). The work will be prioritised and completed on a phased basis following the procurement of specialist contractors.</p>
4.2.2	<p>The funding for this investment will be requested from central government in the first instance given the financial pressures on the HRA Self-Financing Business following the loss of resources from the introduction of the national rent reduction policy of -1% from 2016/17 to 2019/20 (almost 3% per annum in real terms).</p>
4.2.3	<p>If central government funding is not made available then resources will need to be identified from within the current HRA Self-Financing Plan – this may include a combination of revenue resources, use of the minimum reserve of £4m (this will need to be re-established in the future), additional self-funded prudential borrowing or capital receipts from the disposal of assets (including of non-HRA assets). These financial implications will be reflected in the current update of the HRA Self-Financing Business Plan and will be reported to City Council in March 2018.</p>
4.3	<p><u>Legal Implications</u></p> <p>In accordance with the Housing Act 1985 , Housing act 2004 and Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 the Council has the statutory obligations to maintain the housing stock . The Council working in partnership with the Fire and Rescue authority are under a duty to ensure fire safety in the housing stock pursuant to the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 .</p>

4.4 Public Sector Equality Duty

A copy of the Equality Act 2010 – Public Sector Duty statement is appended – Appendix 3A together with the initial equality assessment screening – Appendix 3B

5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:

5.1 Incident in London

Cabinet will be aware of the tragic events that occurred at a 24-storey tower block known as Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, West London.

We are aware that the fire started on the 4th floor and spread incredibly quickly throughout the block. There are multiple fatalities reported and the cause of the fire and the reasons it spread so quickly are being investigated.

Grenfell Tower was built in 1974 by Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council. A two year, £10 million refurbishment of the block as part of a wider transformation of the estate, was completed by Rydon Construction in 2016. Work included new exterior cladding, replacement windows and a communal heating system. The exterior cladding work included ACM rainscreen overclad, replacement windows, curtain walling louvres and feature metalwork.

The tower block is managed by Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation on behalf of the Council.

In 2016 the tower block was given a medium fire risk rating, defined as normal fire risk, following completion of the refurbishment by the London Fire Brigade and Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council.

5.2 Birmingham's Immediate Response

Immediate action was taken to reassure residents of the fire safety measures in Birmingham tower blocks which included the following:

- Review of all risk assessments – a desktop exercise undertaken to ensure all risk assessments are up to date and additional assessments undertaken at blocks where refurbishment work has been carried out.
- Physical checks on blocks – daily inspections of all high rise blocks are carried out and these have continued to be undertaken by Housing Management/Estate Management staff. Appendix 1 details the checks made and compliance measures.
- Where refurbishment work has been undertaken, a review of all specifications on the materials used has been carried out and we are confident that the materials used are not the same as used in London.
- A letter to tenants has been hand delivered to all 213 tower blocks in the city together with fire safety signs erected in all blocks. See Appendix 2.

- Contract Work Officers, from the Housing Service are carrying out internal visual inspection of all communal areas and stairwells.
- A door knocking exercise is being carried out to give additional reassurance to tenants, and a 'fire safety in flats' booklet will be provided to all tenants in the high rise blocks prior to the individual tenancy visit.
- Briefings have been sent to all elected members and Birmingham MPs detailing the action taken in Birmingham following the London incident, including information concerning our refurbishment works and fire prevention measures. These briefings have been shared with a range of partners including Association of Retained Council Housing and the Birmingham Social Housing Partnership. The briefings were also sent to every Housing Liaison Board (HLB) for information and key messages to be cascaded to tenants. The HLB movement has been extremely supportive in sharing the information with concerned tenants.
- Enquiries from MPs, elected members and tenants are being monitored and responded to in a speedy manner.
- Requests for information from Department of Communities and Local Government have been received and responded to.

5.3 Fire Safety Checks

Birmingham has its own in-house team of officers who are accredited fire risk assessors and who administer our fire prevention programme. All officers have formal fire risk assessment training from West Midlands Fire Service. Since 2005 and the introduction of the Regulatory Reform Order, landlords are responsible for managing fire risk assessments where communal areas exist. All Birmingham blocks have current fire risk assessments in place and are subject to a rolling 12-month programme of reassessment.

5.4 Remedial/Refurbishment Works

The following fire stopping works are provided in all Birmingham blocks:

- Half hour fire stop communal doors and screens.
- Fire stopping to ducts and cupboards on communal landings.
- Improved fire safety signage.
- Self- closing refuse chute hoppers.
- Class O fire retardant decorative coatings to communal areas
- Sprinklers installed to bin rooms.
- All flats that have given us access have had wired/battery operated smoke alarms.
- Individual flats have half hour fire stop entrance doors.
- Fire stopping to risers.
- Installation of emergency lighting/standby battery systems.
- Tower blocks have had a secure keysafe box installed which includes drop key and fob for access for the emergency services.
- We have a programme of ongoing maintenance, renewal and upgrading of communal emergency lighting.

Where refurbishment work has been undertaken through the Capital Investment Programme, some external wall insulation works have been carried out but this is different to the overcladding with ACM rainscreen and curtain walling used on Grenfell Tower.

5.5 Future Investment

In reviewing the safety of our tower blocks, we believe that the addition of water sprinkler systems would assist us in ensuring that residents of the tower blocks have the best protection in the event of fire that is currently available. It is estimated that this will cost in excess of £31m to retro-fit.

The leader of the council has written to the leaders of the core city authorities asking for their support to lobby government to pay for fire suppressant measures. Regardless of the response from government however, it is intended to prioritise the councils spending on a rolling programme of sprinkler installation and fire prevention measures from Capital receipts. A programme of works will be developed once further specifications have been agreed with West Midlands Fire Service and implemented on a rolling programme, the details of which will be reported to Cabinet as soon as possible.

We will also await the outcome of the investigation into the Grenfell Tower incident and implement any further recommendations as necessary.

5.6 Review of Policies and Procedures

5.6.1 At the Start of a Tenancy

What we do now:

There are currently 4 Letting Suites across the city where new tenants are invited for a letting interview prior to receiving keys for any City Council property.

The letting process is comprehensive and new tenants receive a range of advice and guidance to help them move in and manage and sustain a tenancy in a City Council property. At the letting interview they are presented with their conditions of tenancy booklet which provides advice and guidance on health and safety matters including those relating to fire risk and hazards such as information on smoke detectors, use of gas heaters in flats etc.

As part of this interview process every tenant is invited to complete a referral for a fire risk assessment which is sent to West Midlands Fire Service to carry out.

5.6.2 Managing the Tenancy

What we do now:

In October 2014 a programme of tenancy visits was introduced, with the focus on visiting each of our tenants and carrying out an interview with them in their home. We have currently completed over 62,000 first visits. The interview script, that is completed during each visit, covers Health and Safety issues in the property and if the tenant would benefit from a Fire Safety Check. The Officer carrying out the visit also identifies any concerns expressed by the tenant or identified by the officer.

In the case of the tenant requiring a Fire Safety Check, a referral to West Midlands Fire Service is completed and referred directly.

What we will do:

A targeted visiting programme will be undertaken to all multi storey flats focused on reminding tenants of their obligations to mitigate against fire risk i.e. use of gas heaters, smoke alarms etc. and inform tenants of what to do in the case of an incident in their block such as “stay put” advice and how they can keep the block safe such as checking alarms and reporting any risks promptly.

5.6.3 Managing the Property**What we do now:**

We have our own “in house” team of officers who are accredited fire risk assessors and administer our fire prevention programmes. All have received formal Fire Risk Assessment training and the required refresher training from West Midlands Fire Service designated training department and through the British Safety Council.

All blocks have a current fire risk assessment and are inspected on a rolling 12 month basis for a full fire risk assessment.

On a daily basis each and every block is inspected by caretaking staff which takes in all communal areas such as landings, chute and bin rooms, stairways etc. This is important to ensure there are no combustible materials left on stairways and communal areas.

On a weekly basis blocks are inspected and tests are carried out on the following:

- A visual check of dry and wet risers
- Emergency lighting/stand by battery systems are inspected quarterly
- Testing of sprinklers to bin rooms quarterly

Each member of staff is trained on these procedures in conjunction with corporate Health and Safety to ensure full compliance with the above and compliance is checked by a more senior officer.

Key safes are in place and regularly checked within the existing inspection regime, for each tower block to enable emergency services to access blocks in the event of an emergency.

In addition, West Midlands Fire Service has been given plans of the internal layout of our tower blocks.

What we will do:

We will continue to carry out our fire risk assessment programme on a rolling 12 month basis. Currently, all of our tower blocks have been inspected within the last 12 months and any urgent remedial works actioned. An escalation process is in place to remedy any repairs that have not been actioned within the requisite timeframe.

A photographic record is being compiled of each external façade of all tower blocks and will be completed by the end of June 2017. The purpose of this is to have a permanent record of the condition of each of these facades. We will continue with our regular structural abseil inspections as well as our high rise structural investment programme.

Each tower block now has its own individual profile document stored on site securely for use by the emergency services. We have also supplied electronic versions of these documents.

We will review and update our resilience management plan that details response arrangements in the event of an incident. There is already in place an effective out of hours duty system, we will ensure this review clearly establishes links to corporate resilience arrangements.

The low rise blocks with enclosed communal areas will continue to be included in the fire risk assessment process.

5.7 Sheltered Housing

For those older tenants living in sheltered high and low rise flats we provide a range of advice and guidance and property checks to reduce and manage fire risk. These include:

- Individual personal risk indicators on systems for those with mobility issues which is shared with the Fire Service
- Sheltered officers refer property risk information to caretaking and housing officer staff via a standard procedure
- Individual scheme disaster and evacuation plans.
- 'Safe and well' referral forms to West Midlands Fire Service to carry out safety inspections.
- Our customers' details in Sheltered schemes are all kept in "Emergency Operations Boxes " in the foyer of each building and this details who lives in each property and if they have any identified needs should evacuation be required.

5.8 Working in Partnership

We will continue to discuss issues with key housing provider partners and the Housing Birmingham Partnership.

Ongoing liaison is in place with West Midlands Fire Service to develop and monitor existing arrangements and ensure a joined up approach is in place.

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):

- 6.1 A review of all current processes and procedures has been undertaken. Additional fire suppressant measures are being considered and further alternative options will be considered following any recommendations for the investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower.

7. Reasons for Decision(s):

- 7.1 The measures outlined in this report ensure that residents in Birmingham City Council's tower blocks have the best possible protection in the event of a fire.

Signatures		<u>Date</u>
Cabinet Member Cllr Peter Griffiths, Housing and Homes
Chief Officer Jacqui Kennedy, Corporate Director - Place

List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:
Briefings to elected members and Birmingham MPs.

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):
1. Preventative Measures 2. Letter to Tenants 3. 3A. Public Sector Equality Duty Statement & 3B Equality Analysis

Report Version		Dated	
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PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Daily inspections of all high rise blocks include:

- Lift/Lift Doors
- Roof Area and Access
- Tank Room/ Lift Motor Room
- Landings/No Smoking/Fire signs Store cupboards
- Dry Risers visually – checked Fire hoses (where applicable)
- Doors/Door Closers/Fire Door & Partitions
- Chute Area/ Room/Hoppers
- Window Catches/Glazing
- Stairs/ Stair Rails
- Lights/Light Shades
- Communal front & rear entrance doors
- External Area
- Store sheds
- Bin Room including guillotine
- Time of inspection
- HAV equipment not used signature required
- Information displayed cupboards
- Regular fire risk assessment
- Weekly caretaker block inspections
- Testing of dry and wet risers
- Emergency lighting/stand by battery systems are inspected quarterly
- Testing of sprinklers to bin rooms quarterly
- We have regular meetings and liaise with West Midlands Fire Service and other midlands social housing providers and share good practice.
- Robust test and inspect electrical wiring programme.
- All emergencies are reported immediately and escalated to the supervisor if required.

Night inspections

- These are carried out to blocks across the city which are linked to the security service to identify any Health and Safety risks including the removal of any hazards, checking the dry/wet risers and the removal of any rubbish that can create a fire hazard.

We also have a monthly high rise audit report completed which looks at the following aspects.

External

- Litter
- Bulky rubbish
- Graffiti
- Door entry system
- Bin room
- General appearance

Internal

- Communal entrance
- Lifts
- Stairs
- Landing
- Internal glazing
- Internal graffiti
- Chute rooms
- Health and Safety/ No Smoking Signs
- Completion of HOUS1176
- Daily block inspection sheets

Compliance

- All daily block inspections are signed off by the Housing Officer and counter-signed by the Street Scene Coordinator
- Street Scene coordinators and local estate based teams have monthly tasking meetings to review trends and escalate concerns.
- Each member of staff is trained on the procedures in conjunction with corporate Health and Safety.
- Fire risers are also checked by West Midlands Fire Service as part of their measures.
- All high rise bin stores have sprinkler systems.
- Rubbish removal is also actioned.
- Tenants are provided with a set of service standards outlining BCCs responsibility and the tenant's responsibilities. Any breach of these responsibilities by the tenant will result in the necessary action as part of the enforcement of the Tenancy Conditions.



Date: 19 June 2017

Our Ref: P72.41/190617

Dear Resident

Important Fire Safety Message

You will be aware of the tragic events that took place at a London high rise on 14 June 2017. While the full reasons behind this dreadful incident have yet to be fully established, it is important that we remind you of our fire safety message.

To reassure you, all our high rise blocks have Health and Safety checks carried out on a regular basis by our local estate based teams. We have a range of safety measures in place at our tower blocks and where refurbishment works have been carried out we have used fire-resistant materials. In addition we have a team of officers who are accredited fire risk assessors and they administer our fire prevention programmes.

There has been no change in our 'Stay Put' policy following events in London. Following discussions with West Midlands Fire Service we would advise:

- When 'stay put' policies are used (sometimes called 'defend in place') they are intended to give occupiers of flats a choice to stay in their flat (protected from fire) or to leave. If they feel threatened by fire i.e. fire occurs in a flat, the occupants leave but all other occupiers of flats safely remain in their respective dwellings unless directly affected by heat and/or smoke (or directed to leave by the fire and rescue service).
- Blocks are designed to give 60 minutes of fire protection so that fire can't spread from flat to flat.
- Ventilation in the corridor gives any smoke (that escapes with the residents) a way out of the building to keep the escape route clear.
- The floors in high-rise flats are typically made of concrete to give at least 60 minutes of fire protection.
- Fire doors and wall are used inside the building to prevent the spread of fire; close doors behind you to keep the fire at bay.
- Staircases are usually protected with two fire doors (one might be the front doors to the flats) to keep the staircase available to use.
- If you live in a high rise property you are not at more risk of a fire starting. Our advice is that aside from having a smoke alarm in your flat make sure you know your escape route and what to do if there is a fire inside your home or somewhere else in the building.

The fire witnessed in London was extremely rare. We are reviewing every building individually and checking our fire safety measures. We will keep you up to date with any new information as it comes forward.

If you have any specific queries please contact my housing team on 0121 464 4700.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. James".

Robert James
Service Director – Housing
Birmingham City Council

0121 464 4700

Equality Act 2010

The Executive must have due regard to the public sector equality duty when considering Council reports for decision.

The public sector equality duty is as follows:

1	<p>The Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
2	<p>Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic; (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it; (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
3	<p>The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.</p>
4	<p>Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding.
5	<p>The relevant protected characteristics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Marriage & civil partnership (b) Age (c) Disability (d) Gender reassignment (e) Pregnancy and maternity (f) Race (g) Religion or belief (h) Sex (i) Sexual orientation

Equality Analysis

Birmingham City Council Analysis Report

EA Name	Fire Protection Measures BCC High Rise Blocks
Directorate	Place
Service Area	Place - Landlord Services
Type	New/Proposed Function
EA Summary	Equality Assessment regarding fire protection measures to BCC high rise, including a proposal to fit sprinkler systems and other suppressant measures.
Reference Number	EA002170
Task Group Manager	brenda.gallagher@birmingham.gov.uk
Task Group Member	
Date Approved	2017-06-26 00:00:00 +0100
Senior Officer	arthur.tsang@birmingham.gov.uk
Quality Control Officer	placeequalitycontrol@birmingham.gov.uk

Introduction

The report records the information that has been submitted for this equality analysis in the following format.

Initial Assessment

This section identifies the purpose of the Policy and which types of individual it affects. It also identifies which equality strands are affected by either a positive or negative differential impact.

Relevant Protected Characteristics

For each of the identified relevant protected characteristics there are three sections which will have been completed.

- Impact
- Consultation
- Additional Work

If the assessment has raised any issues to be addressed there will also be an action planning section.

The following pages record the answers to the assessment questions with optional comments included by the assessor to clarify or explain any of the answers given or relevant issues.

1 Activity Type

The activity has been identified as a New/Proposed Function.

2 Initial Assessment

2.1 Purpose and Link to Strategic Themes

What is the purpose of this Function and expected outcomes?

The management and maintenance function of Birmingham City Council's high rise blocks will include its responsibilities as a landlord, for managing fire risk assessments where communal areas exist, in compliance with the Regulatory Reform Order 2005. BCC has a range of measures including the following:

(A full description is outlined in Appendix A).

In brief:

Fire safety checks:

BCC has its own in-house team of officers who are accredited fire risk assessors and who administer our fire prevention programme.

Ongoing remedial works: Fire stopping works provided for example include half hour fire stopping communal doors and screens, fire stopping to ducts and cupboards on communal landings, self-closing refuse chute hoppers, class O fire retardant decorative coatings to communal areas, sprinklers installed to bin rooms, individual flats have half hour fire stop entrance doors, all flats where access has been given hard wired/battery operated smoke alarms.

Preventative measures: There is a daily, weekly and quarterly inspection regime of both external and internal areas undertaken by local housing management teams covering for example litter, bulky rubbish, graffiti, door entry system, bin room, general appearance, communal entrance, lifts, stairs, landing, internal glazing, internal graffiti, chute rooms, health and safety/ no smoking signs. These inspections are underpinned by management checks to ensure compliance with this inspection regime including any follow up actions.

Construction: Insulated render systems have been used to externally clad/insulate BCC tower blocks. The products that have been used are Structherm, Weber, Alumasc and all are class O or "low risk" as described in the national building regulations. They have also attained BS8414 part 1 (fire performance of external cladding systems).

Access to tower blocks: Access to tower blocks is via a door entry system and BCC have worked with emergency services to ensure that access can be gained via access to emergency keys on site.

BCC high rise blocks are designed to give 60 minutes of fire protection so that fire cannot spread from flat to flat. In consultation with the WMFS, BCC advice to tenants is that aside from having a smoke alarm in their flat, is for them to make sure they know their escape route and what to do if there is a fire inside their home or somewhere else in the building. (See Appendix 1a Advice given to Tenants)

In addition steps are taken to provide advice and guidance to tenants on health and safety matters. At the lettings interview, all BCC tenants sign a tenancy agreement, which contains clauses making it clear their responsibilities relating to health and safety, which also includes advice and guidance on fire risk and hazards, such as information on smoke detectors, use of gas heaters in flats etc. As part of this interview process every tenant is invited to complete a referral for a fire risk assessment, which is sent to West Midlands Fire Service to carry out.

BCC Landlord services have to date completed some 62,000 first tenancy visits, which includes coverage of health and safety issues in the property, including referrals for a Fire Safety Check by WMFS.

Appropriate enforcement is undertaken where a tenant breaches their tenancy conditions, which may include injunction proceedings to protect others where the tenancy breaches pose a serious risk to health and safety.

Following the tragic events that occurred at a 24-storey tower block known as Grenfell Tower in North Kensington, West London in June 2017, immediate action was taken by Birmingham City Council to reassure residents and elected members and Birmingham MPs of the fire safety measures in Birmingham tower blocks. This included a review of all specifications on materials used in high rise where refurbishment work has been undertaken, that they are not the same as those used in the London tower block.

As a matter of urgency it is proposed that the Council's residential tower blocks are to be fitted with sprinkler systems and other fire suppressant measures, which are intended to reduce the risk of fire and help BCC tenants feel safer. This will be subject to a further cabinet report and the criteria for prioritisation will be contained in that report.

Additional reassurance measures will include a current door knocking exercise to every resident in BCC high rise blocks, including technical inspections of all communal areas and stairwells.

The expected outcome is that BCC continues to be fully compliant with the Regulatory Reform Order 2005 and that tenants and leaseholders have confidence in the fire protection measures that are in place for its high rise accommodation.

For each strategy, please decide whether it is going to be significantly aided by the Function.

Children: A Safe And Secure City In Which To Learn And Grow	Yes
Health: Helping People Become More Physically Active And Well	Yes
Housing : To Meet The Needs Of All Current And Future Citizens	Yes
Jobs And Skills: For An Enterprising, Innovative And Green City	No

2.2 Individuals affected by the policy

Will the policy have an impact on service users/stakeholders?	Yes
Will the policy have an impact on employees?	Yes
Will the policy have an impact on wider community?	Yes

2.3 Relevance Test

Protected Characteristics	Relevant	Full Assessment Required
Age	Not Relevant	No
Disability	Not Relevant	No
Gender	Not Relevant	No
Gender Reassignment	Not Relevant	No

Marriage Civil Partnership	Not Relevant	No
Pregnancy And Maternity	Not Relevant	No
Race	Not Relevant	No
Religion or Belief	Not Relevant	No
Sexual Orientation	Not Relevant	No

2.4 Analysis on Initial Assessment

There are some 10,000 plus households living within Birmingham City Council's 213 high rise blocks. Some 37 of these blocks are designated sheltered accommodation providing independent living for older tenants. Within the general needs blocks there are some 3,353 plus households with dependent children. A proportion of households within all our high rise will have a physical disability (relating to mobility, sight/hearing) Through our current targeted visiting programme we are collecting more accurate information on the protected characteristic relating disability, including any other vulnerabilities.

BCC high rise blocks are designed to give 60 minutes of fire protection so that fire cannot spread from flat to flat. In consultation with the WMFS, BCC advice to tenants is that aside from having a smoke alarm in their flat, is for them to make sure they know their escape route and what to do if there is a fire inside their home or somewhere else in the building. (See Appendix 1a Advice given to Tenants)

A targeted visiting programme is being carried out to tenants and leaseholders in all high rise flats to give additional reassurance, and a 'fire safety in flats' booklet will be provided to them in advance of the visit. The visits will also include reminders of their obligations to mitigate against fire risk i.e. use of gas heaters, checking smoke alarms and reporting any risk promptly. It will also provide an opportunity to identify any tenant vulnerabilities that we need to be made aware of and ensure that tenants have the up to date information of what to do in the case of an incident in their block such as "stay put" advice.

Measures in place

Those having protected characteristics relating to age and disability have been considered and the following measures are in place:

Older People

For those older tenants living in sheltered high and low rise flats we provide a range of advice and guidance and property checks to reduce and manage fire risk. These include:

Individual personal risk indicators on systems for those with mobility issues which is shared with the Fire Service

Sheltered officers refer property risk information to caretaking and housing officer staff via a standard procedure

Individual scheme disaster and evacuation plans.

'Safe and well' referral forms to WMFS for them to carry out safety inspections.

Our customers details in Sheltered schemes are all kept in "Emergency Operations Boxes" in the foyer of each building and this details who lives in each property and if they have any identified needs should evacuation be required.

For those older people living in general needs high rise health and safety issues in the property are covered on tenancy visits, including referrals for a Fire Safety Check by WMFS.

Careline

Older or disabled people or those having a disability may opt into Landlords Service's Care line Control Service which provides support and re-assurance to callers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and peace of mind to family members or named responders. Care line are a TSA (Tele care Services Association) accredited service. Customers include owner occupiers, RSL tenants, private tenants and BCC tenants.

Disabled People

We provide special smoke alarms for people hard of hearing.

Health and safety issues in the property are covered on tenancy visits, including referrals for a Fire Safety Check by WMFS.

During the current targeted visiting programme to all tenants in high rise flats we will gather more up to date information on any disclosed tenant vulnerabilities. We will explore options to securely hold this information through Careline for use in the event of an emergency operation. We will also use the opportunity to collect current information on tenant mobility issues, so that we can update our 'person alert' system.

All staff delivering services to tenants within high rise, including management, maintenance and cleaning to common parts receive equalities and fire safety training.

Partnership working

Stock data is shared with WMFS to target properties where BCC encounter repeat incidents and undertake joint incident investigations with them where technical improvements to a building's fabric could minimise the risk of repeat occurrences.

BCC officers attend a quarterly meeting with WMFS, West Midlands Police and other surrounding social housing providers in a bench marking group in relation to Fire Safety Management, to share learning and target various initiatives as and when required.

Proposed changes:

As a matter of urgency the Council's residential tower blocks are to be fitted with sprinkler systems and other fire suppressant measures.

BCC will await the outcome of the investigation into the London high rise incident and implement any further recommendations as necessary.

In addition further assurance measures are being put in place:

A targeted visiting programme is currently being carried out to tenants and leaseholders in all high rise flats as referred to above. In addition Contract Work Officers, from the Housing Service are carrying out internal visual inspection of all communal areas and stairwells.

Appendix 1

Tower Blocks in Birmingham

Fire Safety Measures in place

Fire Safety Checks - We have our own "in house" team of officers who are accredited fire risk assessors and administer our fire prevention programmes. All have received formal Fire Risk Assessment training and the required refresher training from West Midlands Fire Service designated training department and through the British Safety Council.

- Since 2005 and the introduction of the Regulatory Reform Order, Landlord's became responsible for managing fire risk assessments where communal areas exist.

- To comply with this we undertake annual inspections city wide on approximately:-

>200 Tower Blocks

>1800 Low Rise Blocks

>500 Properties that have communal areas.

- All our blocks have a current fire risk assessment

- All are inspected on a rolling 12 month basis for a full fire risk assessment

Ongoing remedial works following checks Any subsequent remedial works identified through inspection are carried out within the appropriate time scales. As part of our programme of fire stopping works we provide the following:

- Half hour fire stops communal doors and screens.
- Fire stopping to ducts and cupboards on communal landings.
- Improved fire safety signage.
- Self-closing refuse chute hoppers.
- Class O fire retardant decorative coatings to communal areas
- Sprinklers installed to bin rooms.
- All flats that have given us access have had wired/battery operated smoke alarms.
- Individual flats have half hour fire stop entrance doors.
- Fire stopping to risers.
- Installation of emergency lighting/standby battery systems.
- Tower blocks have had a secure key safe box installed which includes drop key and fob for access for the emergency services.

We have a programme of on-going maintenance, renewal and upgrading of communal emergency lighting.

We do review the specification of the materials that we use and for approximately the last 5 years we have insisted that all trunking in communal areas is metal rather than plastic, with appropriate mounting and support that comply with current building regulations.

We have a working relationship with West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS); we share our stock data with them and target properties where we encounter repeat incidents.

We undertake joint incident investigations with WMFS where technical improvements to a buildings fabric could minimise the risk of repeat occurrences.

We are aware that local fire fighting teams are carrying out familiarisation audits of high rise blocks within their catchment areas which should help them tackle any incidents that occur in future.

We also attend a quarterly meeting with West Midlands Fire Service, West Midlands Police and other surrounding social housing providers in a bench marking group in relation to Fire Safety Management, we share our learning and target various initiatives as and when required.

Preventative measures Daily inspections of all high rise blocks include:

- Lift/Lift Doors
- Roof Area and Access
- Tank Room/ Lift Motor Room
- Landings/No Smoking/Fire signs Store cupboards
- Dry Risers visually - checked Fire hoses (where applicable)
- Doors/Door Closers/Fire Door & Partitions
- Chute Area/ Room/Hoppers
- Window Catches/Glazing
- Stairs/ Stair Rails
- Lights/Light Shades
- Communal front & rear entrance doors
- External Area
- Store sheds
- Bin Room including guillotine
- Time of inspection
- HAV equipment not used signature required
- Information displayed cupboards
- Regular fire risk assessment
- Weekly caretaker block inspections
- Testing of dry and wet risers
- Emergency lighting/stand by battery systems are inspected quarterly
- Testing of sprinklers to bin rooms quarterly
- We have regular meetings and liaise with West Midlands Fire Service and other midlands social housing providers and share good practice.
- Robust test and inspect electrical wiring programme.
- All emergencies are reported immediately and escalated to the supervisor if required.

Night inspections

- These are carried out to blocks across the city which are linked to the security service to identify any Health and Safety risks including the removal of any hazards, checking the dry/wet risers and the removal of any rubbish that can create a fire hazard.

We also have a monthly high rise audit report completed which looks at the following aspects.

External

- Litter
- Bulky rubbish
- Graffiti
- Door entry system
- Bin room
- General appearance

Internal

- Communal entrance
- Lifts
- Stairs
- Landing
- Internal glazing
- Internal graffiti
- Chute rooms
- Health and Safety/ No Smoking Signs
- Completion of HOUS1176
- Daily block inspection sheets

Compliance

- All daily block inspections are signed off by the Housing Officer and counter-signed by the Street Scene Coordinator

- Street Scene coordinators and local estate based teams have monthly tasking meetings to review trends and escalate concerns.

- Each member of staff is trained on the procedures in conjunction with corporate Health and Safety.

- Fire risers are also checked by West Midlands Fire Service as part of their measures.

- All high rise bin stores have sprinkler systems.

- Rubbish removal is also actioned.

- Tenants are provided with a set of service standards outlining BCCs responsibility and the tenants responsibilities. Any breach of these responsibilities by the tenant will result in the necessary action as part of the enforcement of the Tenancy Conditions.

Construction The current capital investment programme includes external wall insulation which is different to the over cladding with ACM cassette rain screen and curtain walling that appears to have been used on Grenfell Tower.

The City has used insulated render systems to externally clad/insulate BCC tower blocks. The products that have been used are Structherm, Weber, Alumasc and all are class O or "low risk" as described in the national building regulations. They have also attained BS8414 part 1 (fire performance of external cladding systems). It has been used on the following blocks. Ashford Tower, Chamberlain Gardens blocks, Cock Hill, Four Towers TMO, Cranleigh and Repton, New Zealand Blocks, Poets Blocks, Cricket Blocks, Lyndhurst, Barrow House, Turves Green Blocks, Civic Close. Manton and Reynolds, Bakeman House.

Below is the definition of BS 8414.

- The BS 8414 test methods provide a robust methodology for determining the fire performance characteristics of external cladding systems. The standard is divided into two parts:
- Part 1 provides a test method for assessing the fire performance of non-loadbearing external cladding systems applied to the face of the building. This can also be used to test rainscreen overcladding and external wall insulation systems.
- Part 2 provides a test method for assessing the fire performance of non-loadbearing external cladding systems fixed to and supported by a structural steel frame.
- These test methods were developed by BRE, based on over thirty years of knowledge and extensive research programmes carried out in this field, and were developed to address the challenges of testing and classifying the evolving designs and materials being brought to the market. The test methods were first published as British

Standards in 2002 and are carried out in specialist laboratories, such as the Burn Hall at BRE in Watford, where they are performed on external wall systems at full-scale incorporating joints and corner details together with fixings, insulation, fire breaks, cavities and all other elements of the system construction as appropriate. The standard evaluates whether a cladding system - when subjected to a simulated fire in a compartment, breaking out of an opening (such as a window) in an external wall - will result in excessive fire spread up the outside of the building and its potential to re-enter at a higher level

- We comply fully with manufacturer's installation instructions which have been passed by the British Board of Agrément (industry standard). Some systems include a horizontal fire break.

Birmingham City Council has taken the above approach following the change in legislative requirements and reported recommendations as a result of previous fire safety incidents such as Lakanal Tower and Shirley Towers.

Access to tower blocks Access to tower blocks is via door entry system and we have worked with emergency services to ensure that access can be gained via access to emergency keys on site

Appendix 1a

Date: 19 June 2017
Our Ref: P72.41/190617

Dear Resident

Important Fire Safety Message

You will be aware of the tragic events that took place at a London high rise on 14 June 2017. While the full reasons behind this dreadful incident have yet to be fully established, it is important that we remind you of our fire safety message.

To reassure you, all our high rise blocks have Health and Safety checks carried out on a regular basis by our local estate based teams. We have a range of safety measures in place at our tower blocks and where refurbishment works have been carried out we have used fire-resistant materials. In addition we have a team of officers who are accredited fire risk assessors and they administer our fire prevention programmes.

There has been no change in our 'Stay Put' policy following events in London. Following discussions with West Midlands Fire Service we would advise:

- . When 'stay put' policies are used (sometimes called 'defend in place') they are intended to give occupiers of flats a choice to stay in their flat (protected from fire) or to leave, if they feel threatened by fire i.e. fire occurs in a flat, the occupants leave but all other occupiers of flats safely remain in their respective dwellings unless directly affected by heat and/or smoke (or directed to leave by the fire and rescue service).
- . Blocks are designed to give 60 minutes of fire protection so that fire can't spread from flat to flat.
- . Ventilation in the corridor gives any smoke (that escapes with the residents) a way out of the building to keep the escape route clear
- . The floors in high-rise flats are typically made of concrete to give at least 60 minutes of fire protection.
- . Fire doors and wall are used inside the building to prevent the spread of fire; close doors behind you to keep the fire at bay.
- . Staircases are usually protected with two fire doors (one might be the front doors to the flats) to keep the staircase available to use.
- . If you live in a high rise property you are not at more risk of a fire starting. Our advice is that aside from having a smoke alarm in your flat make sure you know your escape route and what to do if there is a fire inside your home or somewhere else in the building.

The fire witnessed in London was extremely rare. We are reviewing every building individually and checking our fire safety measures. We will keep you up to date with any new information as it comes forward.

If you have any specific queries please contact my housing team on 0121 464 4700.

Yours sincerely
Robert James
Service Director - Housing
Birmingham City Council
72.41_June 2017

3 Full Assessment

The assessment questions below are completed for all characteristics identified for full assessment in the initial assessment phase.

3.1 Concluding Statement on Full Assessment

There have been no adverse impacts identified as part of this assessment and it is not considered therefore that a full impact assessment is required.

There have been no adverse impacts identified as part of this assessment and it is not considered therefore that a full impact assessment is required. Key points to note are:

The range of safety measures Birmingham City Council has in place for all its high rise blocks

The recent Fire Safety information given to all residents in high rise blocks to reassure them of the fire safety measures in place.

The current arrangements in place for those having protected characteristic relating to age and disability.

The targeted visiting programme to resident in all high rise flats by way of further reassurance, including issuing a Fire Safety booklet to every resident.

Contract Work Officers, from the Housing Service are carrying out internal visual Inspection of all communal areas and stairwells.

The proposal to fit all Birmingham City high rises with sprinkler systems and other fire suppressant measures. This will be subject to a further cabinet report and the criteria for prioritisation will be contained in that report.

We will continue to comply with BCC responsibilities under Regulatory Reform Order 2005 for fire and within this take account of any consideration required for any tenant falling within a protected characteristic.

3. Review Date

A review of this assessment will be undertaken again following completion of the targeted visiting programme. This will allow further account to be taken of any consideration required for any tenant falling within a protected characteristic following any updated information collected.

Review date 31 August 2017.

4 Review Date

31/08/17

5 Action Plan

There are no relevant issues, so no action plans are currently required.