

Appendix 1

Fire safety and the Council's response to the Grenfell Tower fire disaster

Introduction

1. This report provides a progress update on Fire Safety issues in Barnet, including progress with implementing a £17.5m package of fire safety improvement works for the council properties managed by Barnet Homes which includes the replacement of cladding at Granville Road. In addition, the report includes proposals for taking forward additional works following the publication of the final review of building regulations and fire safety by Dame Judith Hackitt, and other developments, as well as information on fire safety issues for dwellings managed by Registered Providers and in the Private Sector.

Independent Review of the Building Regulations and Fire Safety

2. The final report was published on the 17th May 2018 and can be viewed at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/independent-review-of-building-regulations-and-fire-safety-final-report>. A summary of this report is given at [Appendix 2]. The report has initially focused on multi-occupancy higher risk residential buildings (HRRB's) that are 10 storeys or more in height, although within the report there is indication that this could be extended at a future point to include a wider range of residential buildings.
3. The report also proposes that there is a move "towards a system where ownership of technical guidance rests with industry as the intelligent lead in delivering building safety and providing it with flexibility to ensure that guidance keeps pace with changing practices with continuing oversight from an organisation prescribed by government". Within the report there is a continued theme of outcome based regulation rather than prescriptive based regulation.

Barnet Council Housing Stock

4. There are 26¹ blocks of flats managed by Barnet Homes which have 6 or more floors (or 5 and more floors with a retrospectively fitted cladding system). Within the 26 blocks, 12 blocks have 10 or more floors. All 26 blocks have been inspected by Barnet Homes' fire risk assessors to determine a scope of works to each block. These inspections have included a sample of flats within each block.
5. As reported to Housing Committee in October 2017, a prioritised programme of works required to move beyond legislative compliance to deliver best practice in fire safety has been developed by Barnet Homes, including consideration of sprinkler systems, improved fire and smoke alarm systems and other measures as set out in the following table:

Category (in order of priority)	Scope	Est. Cost (cumulative)
Granville Road Recladding	• Replacement cladding for 3	£8,122,900

¹ This excludes 2 blocks Grahame Park estate which have been largely vacated pending demolition

Category (in order of priority)	Scope	Est. Cost (cumulative)
	blocks with ACM panels <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compensation for additional fuel costs for residents at £15 per week per household from October to May inclusive 	
<u>Category 1</u> – High priority works. These works are required to maintain the fire integrity of the building over and above that required by the FRA and to enable an effective response to be provided in the event of a fire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works to improve the fire and smoke stopping provisions within buildings (compartmentation) • Replacement of doors to provide a higher level of fire and/or smoke resistance • Provision of increased air ventilation to gas systems in some locations • Some works to provide improved access for emergency services, particularly the LFB 	£9,220,433 (£17,343,333)
<u>Category 2</u> – These elements of work would seek to reduce the time taken to alert people at risk or to provide measures to enable residents to more effectively vacate areas at risk. These works would also enable further information to be provided to the LFB in event of a fire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade works to replace existing fire detection (alarm) systems within dwellings and linking new systems to central control panels • Some signage works • Some emergency lighting works • Some elements of smoke ventilation • Some works to provide improved access for emergency services, particularly the LFB 	£5,781,482 (£23,124,815)
<u>Category 3a</u> – These elements of works would seek to suppress fires in a more effective manner and minimise the impact of smoke.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of sprinkler systems within dwellings within blocks of flats with 10 or more storeys to reflect current building regulation requirements for new buildings. This will be applied to blocks with a single stairwell • Some emergency lighting works • Some smoke ventilation systems 	£6,937,481 (£30,062,296)
<u>Category 3b</u> – These elements of works would seek to suppress fires in a more effective manner and minimise the impact of smoke.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of sprinkler systems within dwellings within blocks of flats with 10 or more storeys and two or more stairwells to reflect current building regulation requirements for new buildings. 	£3,213,212 (£33,275,508)
<u>Category 4</u> – These works	Works included within this category	£627,576

Category (in order of priority)	Scope	Est. Cost (cumulative)
would be considered as beneficial to the block but assuming all Cat 1 and Cat 2 works are undertaken they are unlikely to add any major life preserving benefit. They would however provide further enhancements of fire safety and/or management of the block.	primarily relate to the provision of improved storage facilities for residents.	(£33,903,081)

6. The Housing Committee agreed that Barnet Homes should be instructed to proceed with high priority works (category 1) and the recladding of Granville Road, whilst a final recommendation on additional measures identified (categories 2-4) would be made to the Housing Committee in June 2018 following the anticipated publication of a review of building regulations and fire safety and by Dame Judith Hackitt this Spring.

Replacement Cladding at Granville Road

7. As reported to the Housing Committee in October 2017 the cladding system previously fitted to three tower blocks at Granville Road has been removed. Regular updates have been provided to residents within these blocks as to the progress of this and arrangements for compensating residents for additional fuel costs over the winter months associated with the removal of the cladding have been implemented.
8. A comprehensive piece of work was undertaken to determine the best replacement product. A system which had been tested to BR135 was selected. The system makes use of solid aluminium panels and is non-combustible exceeding the requirements of the current building regulations and clarifications issued by the Government following the Grenfell Tower fire. Planning consent has been received and passing of plans from Building Control. The works to install the replacement system commenced in April 2018 and are due to be completed by October 2018.
9. The Government has announced that Councils and Registered Providers will be fully reimbursed for the building costs of recladding blocks that have failed ACM tests, and the Council expects to receive £7m in due course.

Delivery of high priority (Category 1) fire safety works

10. Significant progress has been made on the delivery of the High Priority works together with a broader range of fire safety measures. A summary of the achievements to date are;
- The establishment of a dedicated fire safety team to lead on and deliver fire safety works and measures to high rise blocks
 - Other high-rise blocks. Delivery of a range of fire safety measures at other locations has commenced. This has included;

- Works above the dropped ceilings on the Grahame Park Estate and replacement of fire doors
- Works to the high-rise blocks on the Whitefields estate. These have included upgrade works to the bin chutes, installation of new fire doors and signage works
- Design works at Silk House have been undertaken and a contractor appointed to undertake the works. Works are due to commence in June 2018
- The employer's requirements for the works at Longford Court have been prepared and have been issued to the contractor who have commenced surveying and design works.
- Detailed design surveys continue to be undertaken to other high-rise blocks across the borough
- FRA's to all high-rise blocks were reviewed in light of the Grenfell Tower fire. Regular ongoing inspections of high rise blocks have continued.
- The undertaking of home visits to all residents in high rise blocks to understand their current make up and needs has commenced. This will enable better information to be shared with the LFB in the event of an emergency.
- Increased communications with residents on fire safety through regular information in At Home, targeted letters to specific locations and use of social media.

Additional Measures (Categories 2-4) following publication of Hackitt Review

11. Following the publication of the Independent Review of the Building Regulations and Fire Safety the Government are currently considering the recommendations made within the report. It will, therefore, be some time before there are any subsequent formal changes to regulation, but there is nothing to indicate that it would not be appropriate to proceed with the works identified in the table above.
12. However, taking into account the need to consider a wider programme of fire safety works on lower rise stock, as set out in paragraphs 15 – 21 below, it is proposed that Barnet Homes proceed with Category 2 and part of the Category 3 works, with the remainder to be considered alongside this wider programme and an updated HRA Business Plan by the Committee in October 2018. Priority has been given to ensuring residents have early warning of fires within their dwellings through the installation of more comprehensive fire detection and alarm systems. In addition, priority has been given to the installation of sprinklers within high rise dwellings which only have a single escape stairwell.
13. The additional Category 2 and Category 3 works would include the following:
 - I. The installation of sprinklers and LD2 fire detection systems (linked to a central control panel) to high rise blocks with a single stairwell and 10 or more floors.
 - II. The installation of LD2 fire detection systems to high rise blocks with two or more stairwells and 10 or more floors, linked to a central control panel
 - III. The installation of LD2 fire detection systems to all other tenanted high-rise flats.

14. The cost of undertaking this additional work would be £12.7m, bringing the total commitment to fire safety works to £30m, including the recladding works and Category 1 works previously agreed by the Committee
15. As stated in paragraph 9 above, it is anticipated that the Government will reimburse the Council for £7m of these costs.

Further developments – low rise blocks

16. The Hackitt Review has focused initially on multi-occupancy higher risk residential buildings (HRRB's) that are 10 storeys or more in height. However, it is important to recognise that fire safety is not just a matter limited to high rise homes. Of the 9,900 flats managed by Barnet Homes 660 are in blocks of flats with 10 or more floors.
17. Using the previous definition adopted by Barnet Homes and LBB (6 or more floors, or 5 or more floors with a retrospective cladding system) less than 1,400 homes are included.
18. In early April 2018, a serious fire occurred at a small block on the Grahame Park Estate. Although nobody was hurt, the whole block of 20 flats is now uninhabitable, and residents have been provided with alternative accommodation. Following this fire, Barnet Homes instructed an intrusive survey of the communal areas of the block which highlighted the need for some improvements to the fire separation measures within areas not generally accessible through the Fire Risk Assessment process, such as within enclosed riser ducts and suspended ceiling void spaces. Surveys were undertaken to blocks of a similar construction on the same estate, which highlighted the need for similar improvements. Arrangements have been made to implement works to address these matters.
19. Whilst the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 focuses on communal areas, Barnet Homes have piloted some surveys which go over and above these requirements and include areas within dwellings. Within some properties areas for further improvements have been identified of a similar nature to that of the high-rise properties.
20. It is therefore recommended that Barnet Homes extend its programme of fire safety works to include all blocks of flats. This would include;
 - Surveying of sample properties internally as part of an extended fire risk assessment programme
 - The installation of enhanced fire detection and alarm systems within all tenanted flats.
 - That measures identified as part of the extended fire risk assessment surveys are undertaken through a programme of works to be developed as the surveys progress.
21. Until the surveys have been undertaken to all blocks it is difficult to accurately estimate the cost of undertaking the arising works. The next fire safety update to the Housing Committee will include more a detailed and costed programme along with proposals for funding these works.

22. Barnet Homes will make use of existing capital budgets to address any urgent works identified that need to be dealt with prior to the October 2018 Housing Committee up to a value of £200,000.

Further developments – Manse Masterdoor

23. On the 15th March 2018, the Government released a statement regarding potential issues identified with door-sets produced by the company Manse Masterdoor. Further testing of these doors was undertaken and an updated statement made on the 16th May 2018. An excerpt of this statement is as follows:

“The expert panel has concluded there is a performance issue with these Manse Masterdoor fire doors, which do not consistently meet the 30-minute fire resistance standard. Nevertheless, the National Fire Chiefs Council has advised the expert panel the risk to public safety remains low”

24. The full statement can be viewed at; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/update-on-fire-doors-investigation-risk-to-public-safety-remains-low>. The statement also confirmed that the MHCLG is writing to affected customers. The affected doors were supplied between 2013 and 2014.
25. There is a total of 1,183 of these doors on Barnet Homes properties. All affected residents have been written to confirming the steps are being taken to replace the door-sets, whilst also confirming the Government's advice that the risk posed remains low.
26. In addition, Barnet Homes has arranged for the fire risk assessments to blocks containing these doors be updated in light of this matter. This will be completed by 29th June 2018. These fire risk assessments will form the basis for prioritising the door replacement programme.
27. The estimated costs for replacing these doors is in the region of £1.5m, however Barnet Homes are engaged in positive discussions with the contracted party that installed the doors in order to mitigate any cost implications to the Council.

Ongoing servicing costs

28. Annual costs for the ongoing maintenance and servicing of newly installed systems is expected to be in the region of £675k, some of which may be recoverable through service charges.

Leaseholders

29. As previously reported, Leaseholders will not be required to contribute towards the cost of the recladding at Granville Road or high priority (category 1) works to improve fire safety.
30. However, in respect of additional measures, the Council will seek to recover any contribution due under the terms of each leaseholder's lease. This will ensure that the programme remains affordable within the Housing Revenue Account. In some cases, it will not be possible to recover a contribution and ongoing maintenance costs where the terms of an individual lease preclude this.

31. Leaseholders affected by fire safety works would be able to take advantage of existing extended payment options offered by the Council.

32. Some of the proposed works will only be undertaken to tenanted homes as the responsibility for undertaking such works would fall, under the terms of the lease, to the leaseholder. Barnet Homes will continue to provide fire safety advice to leaseholders. In addition, in some instances it would be of benefit for Barnet Homes to offer to undertake such works for leaseholders at a pre-agreed sum.

Summary of proposed costs

Granville Road cladding removal, recladding and associated costs	£8,122,900
Category 1 works	£9,220,433
Additional fire safety works to high rise buildings (Category 2 and 3a works)	£12,656,667
Total	£30,000,000
Anticipated income from central Government for Granville Road cladding removal and replacement	£7,000,000
Total anticipated funding required from HRA	£23,000,000

33. In addition, it is estimated there would be an ongoing revenue cost of £675k per annum for the maintaining and servicing of equipment installed.

Registered Providers

34. As reported previously there are approximately 7,000 homes managed by RPs or Housing Associations in the borough and these are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). RPs are required to carry out fire risk assessments and operate in a similar way to Barnet Homes in managing fire safety in relation to the housing it manages.

35. The Council wrote to all Housing Associations with 10 or more units and have received responses confirming that eight have blocks of flats over 5 stories in height and that all Housing Associations all of which have up to date fire risk assessments.

36. Three of the Housing Associations confirmed that they have ACM cladding on blocks, and for all three this has been tested by the Government and failed. One of these (Origin) has received advice from the LFB that the building is safe, and the cladding is being retested in September.

37. Metropolitan Housing Trust has approved the removal of the existing cladding on a block it owns and its replacement with non-combustible terracotta tiles and render, for which planning permission and in principle building control approval have both been obtained. The remaining design process is almost complete and

the tendering process for the works is also nearing completion. Additional works being carried out include the replacement of all doors and windows and the addition of a sprinkler system.

38. Genesis has already removed the cladding from their property and have a programme to replace it with render by the end of September this year.
39. In addition, Sanctuary Housing Association has one block which they hold on a lease that has failed the testing. There is an up to date fire risk assessment for this block and Sanctuary has stated that the freeholder is responsible any work associated with replacing the cladding. Earlier this year, the owner of the building was contacted by the Council's Building Control Service and confirmed that they have submitted a fire engineer's report to the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which recommends that it is not necessary to remove the cladding and are awaiting a response. A further update is currently being sought from the owner of this building.

Private Sector buildings (residential and commercial)

40. As previously reported to the Housing Committee, in the case of privately owned high rise blocks, the Councils' power to act is limited as whilst Barnet is the planning authority for most new building works, the authority's building control service competes with the private sector for the building compliance work. Additionally, building control services operate strictly within the building regulations and cannot withhold approval on materials that have been tested as suitable, they can only advise.
41. Owners are required to carry out fire risk assessments and spot checks are carried out by the London Fire Brigade. However, these are restricted to checking that fire doors, risers, and alarms are fully functional within the fabric of the building and therefore would not pick up faults in cladding systems or fire compartmentation outside the main structure.
42. The Council has complied with a request from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to collect and submit data on the status of privately owned high rise blocks exceeding 18 metres in the borough, including whether they have ACM cladding and any actions that owners are taking to address this.
43. Following this exercise, it has been confirmed that there are 2 privately owned blocks higher than 18 meters within Barnet that have ACM cladding which has failed the Government's fire safety tests. The Council's building control team are seeking information from the owners of these buildings on remediation measures that they are taking, and this includes the building referred to in paragraph 39 above.
44. On 17 May 2018 the Secretary of State issued a direction requiring all local authorities to take particular regard of the Government's consolidated advice on the hazards associated with the use of ACM cladding on high-rise buildings, to take

appropriate steps to identify and notify the Government of all high rise residential buildings in their area with a view to identifying any action that may be required under the Housing Act 2004, and to carry out a review to consider any fire safety hazards arising out of the use of ACM cladding on these buildings. A copy of the direction is appended to this report (Appendix 3).

45. The Government has announced that it will also give local authorities further levers to speed up identification and ensure remediation of unsafe cladding in the private sector later this year.
46. To ensure that the Council is compliant with the Government's direction, the Council will carry out a review of cladding and fire safety in relation to high rise residential buildings in the borough to be completed by the end of July 2018.

Appendix - Barnet Council Fire Safety Action Plan – June 2018

Action	Status	Notes
Council Housing Stock		
Granville Road Towers – cladding removal.	Complete	Cladding was removed by early October.
Granville Road – identify solution for cladding replacement.	On going	Barnet Homes working with contractors and consultants. Consultation with residents on proposed solution February 2018.
Granville Road – installation of new cladding system.	On going	To commence spring 2018 and fully complete by October 2018 Residents to be compensated for additional fuel costs.
Complete surveys of all council tower blocks to identify best practice options.	Complete	Update to Housing Committee 23 October.
Undertake high priority works identified in surveys.	On going	Additional resources agreed by Housing Committee and Policy and Resources Committee. Programme now underway.
Finalise package of additional measures.	On going	Report to Housing Committee in June 2018 including proposals for low rise flatted dwellings.
Registered Providers (RPs)		
Contact RPs for confirmation that their Fire Risk Assessments are up to date and to identify any high rise blocks they managed within the borough	Complete	All have responded and confirmed location of building and that FRAs are up to date.
Work with Government and RPs to ensure actions to address any fire safety concerns are addressed.	On going	Update to Housing Committee June 2018.
Private Sector Residential and Non-residential		
Issue briefing note for owners and managing agents of private sector buildings.	Complete	Advice note produced and sent to owners 26 June 2017.
Publicise letter from Government for private sector owners offering assistance with cladding.	Complete	Place link on Council web site Include reference in briefing note.
Identify private dwellings in the borough potentially at risk.	Ongoing	10 sites identified– information on mitigations requested from owners.
Complete data collection exercise and submit to Government.	Ongoing	Initial returns made. Additional information being sought from owners for blocks where ACM present.
Ensure compliance with Government direction on fire safety 17 May 2018.	Ongoing	Carry out review of approach to be completed by the end of July 2018.
Council non- residential		
Barnet House -complete actions from fire risk assessment.	Complete	All actions will be completed by July 2017.
Colindale – new council headquarters – fires safety strategy.	Complete	Strategy in place.
Actions from fire risk assessments for commercial units beneath residential.	On going	All retailers have been contacted to confirm works required. Enforcement action will be taken where appropriate.