

Summary Report on Phase 1 of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

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1 Purpose of Report

This report provides Members with an overview and awareness of the content of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 1 report. This report also outlines initial areas for the Service to address to ensure the recommendations within the GTI report are addressed by the Service.

2 Recommendations

The Fire Authority is asked to note the contents of this report and acknowledge the capacity required across areas of the service to ensure recommendations are considered appropriately and actioned where necessary.

3 Background

In the early hours of Wednesday 14 June 2017, a fire broke out in the kitchen of Flat 16 Grenfell Tower, a high-rise residential building in North Kensington, West London. Kitchen fires are not uncommon and in terms of its origin and magnitude this was nothing out of the ordinary. However, the fire, which should have been contained within the confines of Flat 16, escaped from the kitchen into the external envelope of the building.

The building was constructed of reinforced concrete, to which there had recently been added a cladding system comprising of insulation boards attached to the outside concrete structure and protected from the weather by aluminium composite material rainscreen panels. The rainscreen panels contained a polyethylene core. Polythene is a highly combustible substance. The material from which most of the insulation boards were made, polyisocyanurate foam, is also combustible.

London Fire Brigade (LFB) attended the fire and within minutes of their arrival had extinguished the fire within Flat 16, but by that time the fire had already escaped the room of origin and into the external cladding system. Once the fire was established it spread rapidly up the outside of the building. Within 20 minutes, a vertical column flame had reached the top of the building on the east side from where it progressed around the remainder of the structure. Almost all of the building was engulfed within 2 hours.

The fire claimed the lives of 71 people, with a 72nd who suffered significant smoke inhalation dying seven months later. Her death was not directly caused by the fire, but she is mourned by her family as a further victim of the tragedy. A total of 227 people in total (residents and visitors) escaped from the tower.

4 The Phase 1 Report

On the morning after the fire the Prime Minister announced that there would be a public inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the fire and on 28 June 2017, The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick was appointed as Chairman. The inquiry is running concurrently with an investigation by the Metropolitan Police Service who will determine if any criminal offences have been committed by (among others) those responsible for the design, maintenance or construction of the building.

Phase 1 of the report was released on 30 October 2019 and is made up of four volumes, focussing on six parts:

- **Part 1** contains a broad introduction to the events that took place, including a description of Grenfell Tower and the organisation of LFB.
- **Part 2** contains a detailed narrative account of the fire and the steps taken in response to it.
- **Part 3** contains the Chairman's conclusions about the origin and development of the fire and analysis of the response from LFB and other emergency services.
- **Part 4** contains a summary of the tributes paid to loved ones by their families and friends.
- **Part 5** contains recommendations arising out of the findings.
- **Part 6** identifies matters of particular importance on which the inquiry will concentrate its attention in Phase 2.

This report will concentrate primarily on part 5, with a focus on recommendations for consideration and implementation. Further information regarding parts 1,2,3,4 and 6 can be found within the executive summary document following the link below:

<https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-1-report>

5 Recommendations

Part 5 of the report concentrates on the recommendations of Phase 1, which have been generated from investigating the course of events and further work remains to be done, however, it is clear that important steps need to be taken to improve fire safety, including the response of the LFB and other fire and rescue services to major incidents.

It was felt inappropriate to make recommendations at this stage in relation testing and certification of building materials as these matters have not yet been subject to an investigation.

A summary of recommendations can be found below:

- 5.1** The information made available to fire and rescue about materials and methods of construction used in external walls of high-rise residential buildings.
- 5.2** The arrangements made by the LFB to discharge its duties under section 7(2)(d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.
- 5.3** The availability of plans of high-rise residential buildings to local fire and rescue services and the provision of premises information boxes in high-rise residential buildings.
- 5.4** The regular inspection and testing of lifts designed for use by firefighters.
- 5.5** Communication between the LFB control room and the incident commander.
- 5.6** The way in which fire and rescue services handle emergency calls.
- 5.7** The LFB's command and control procedures and use of resources, in particular, the capture of information from crews returning from deployments and the sharing of information between the LFB control room, the incident commander and bridgehead.
- 5.8** The communication equipment available to the LFB for use by crews deployed in firefighting and rescue operations in high-rise buildings.
- 5.9** The evacuation of high-rise residential buildings, including the provision of equipment enabling firefighters to send an evacuation signal to the whole or a selected part of the building.
- 5.10** The provision of fire safety information to residents of high-rise residential buildings and the marking of floor levels in lobbies and staircase landings.
- 5.11** The inspection of fire doors and self-closing devices
- 5.12** Aspects of co-operation between the emergency services

The 12 areas identified above are generic headings with detailed findings and further recommendations captured within each area. Full details can be sourced within Chapter 33 of the Phase 1 report.

6 Other areas where identified learning can be found

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report has made recommendations into the response of LFB and other emergency services. Whilst seeking to understand the impacts of the report on Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), it is key that all information sources are explored to ensure best practice across the areas are developed and implemented.

It would be remiss at this stage to discount other sources including National Operational Learning (NOL), whereby 1 learning case resulting in 57 recommendations has been created (NOLUG update to NOEWG May 2019). Therefore, any analysis should consider this alongside the learning from the Phase 1 report.

7 Impact upon Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service

Based on the recommendations outlined within Phase 1, it is clear that to ensure we as a Service pay due diligence to all areas, we should seek to understand what areas of the Service are affected. Upon initial reading, the recommendations encompass all functions and departments in some way.

As can be appreciated with a report of this magnitude, the Service should expect a level of scrutiny to ensure recommendations are being applied where appropriate.

Through identifying the affected departments, we should seek to identify key stakeholders with the knowledge, experience and expertise to progress recommendations within their department, whilst also being cognisant of the need to share information and progress across all areas of the Service.

This approach will mean that capacity will be an issue that we need to consider and resolve to ensure the work is delivered effectively and in a timely fashion. It is clear that the expertise will sit across several functions and all Departmental Heads should be aware that time for staff within their teams should be allocated to this critical activity.

To ensure the recommendations are progressed, it is key to ensure a single individual or team are appointed to undertake this work and the proposal is that the Operations Team are ideally suited to engage all stakeholders and develop and implement improvements to satisfy the recommendations, however, this will mean that a review of current work is undertaken to create capacity. An alternative to this approach would be to identify a Service Lead, however this thinking would need to be developed further to identify where the resource could be released, causing the least impact upon the Service.

As we progress towards phase 2 of the inquiry, this will undoubtedly have further requirements and impacts placed upon the Service and will be considered upon conclusion of Phase 2. It is anticipated that this will focus attention towards delivery of protection and regulatory services as part of building regulations. This will also impact upon other sectors such as construction and design, whereby areas of collaboration may be identified in terms of future working arrangements.

8 Next Steps

The initial steps taken to produce this summary report have been to read the available material and identify viable approaches for SFRS to ensure we are in a position to consider and implement the recommendations where appropriate.

The next steps should be to agree a way forward that will concentrate and specialise in ensuring we undertake the appropriate analysis of current practices and seek opportunity to improve in line with the report.

9 Identified Revenue Funding

There is no additional revenue funding attached to this report at this time, however this may need to be reviewed regarding capacity within Service to deliver the recommendations.

10 Capacity

There are capacity issues linked to this work due to analysis, delivery and overarching project management methodology, which are outlined within the main body of this report.

11 Collaboration / Partnership Working

The contents of this report relate to a report that is of national significance and opportunity is being explored to undertake analysis with Hereford and Worcester FRS. This will also support the current Fire Control project as part of the Strategic Alliance.

12 Community Safety

There are no community safety issues as a direct result of this report, however, implementation of the recommendations will enhance community safety long term.

13 Environmental

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

14 Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is not required as part of this report.

15 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications within this report, however, any issues linked to capacity will impact upon revenue budget and also the introduction of new kit and equipment if found to be necessary.

16 Health and Safety

There are no immediate health and safety impacts arising from this report, however, the introduction of the recommendations of the phase 1 report, will result in amendments to SIPS and SOPS and GRA's/ ARA's.

17 Human Rights (including Data Protection)

There are no human rights impacts arising from this report.

18 ICT

There will be an ICT requirement as part of the recommendations outlined within the phase 1 report. Further analysis will identify the extent of this work.

19 Legal Comment

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

20 Public Value / Service Delivery

The actions outlined within this report support:

Strategic Aim 1- To be there when you need us in an emergency with a professional and well-equipped team

Strategic Aim 4- To deliver a fire and rescue service, which provides value for money for our community now and into the future.

21 Reputation

There are no reputational impacts arising from this report locally, however, due regard should be given to the level of press inquiry and scrutiny attached to Grenfell.

22 Security

There are no security impacts arising from this report.

23 Training

There will be training implications linked to the recommendations of the Phase 1 report and further analysis will identify the extent of work involved.

24 Appendices

There are no appendices attached to this report.

25 Background Papers

Link to Grenfell inquiry website:

<https://www.grenfelltowerinquiry.org.uk/phase-1-report>