
**Health, Housing and Adult Social Care
Policy & Scrutiny Committee**

13 September 2017

Report of the Assistant Director - Housing and Community Safety

Fire Safety Actions & response following Grenfell Tower fire

Summary

1. To provide an update on verbal fire safety report previously provided to the Scrutiny Committee by the Head of Building Services on 20 June 2017.

Background

2. On 20 June 2017, the Health, Housing and Adult Social Care Policy and Scrutiny Committee asked for a verbal summary of City of York Council's (CYC) fire safety position, following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2016.

The Head of Building Services provided the following summary;

- CYC operate a fire safety management regime in line with the Regulatory Reform Order - Fire safety 2005 - (RRO) and Housing Act (2004). All social housing, general needs, sheltered housing, hostels, and older persons housing blocks and schemes have had a fire safety risk assessment.
- All blocks with communal areas are required to have a fire safety risk assessment (FRA); however there is no fixed period for reviewing that assessment. CYC aim to carry out FRA reviews annually for sheltered, hostels, Older Persons Homes (OPHs), and schools – and every 3 years for general needs stock.
- There are a total of 592 communal areas that fall under the RRO – all, bar two where we have been unable to gain access, have had a FRA. This includes 70 blocks in addition to my last report, which had not previously been flagged in our asset

management system as having communal areas. However all of these areas have now been assessed. All urgent remedial actions have been completed, and any non-urgent actions are being picked through a remedial works programme.

- Communal areas in 253 General Needs and 17 Hostel/Sheltered schemes currently meet CYCs policy cycle of reviewing assessments at 3 years and 1 year intervals respectively. However 307 (309 including the missing two) communal areas in General Needs housing and 13 in Hostel/Sheltered accommodation are currently outside this cycle. Assessment reviews on these areas will be completed by April 2018.

3. Summary of Actions following the previous committee meeting;

- Directly following the fire at Grenfell Tower the authority has completed a requested survey regarding fire safety in tower blocks from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and were able to report that CYC had no blocks over 18 metres and none of our homes had Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) type cladding. Subsequent reports to the Local Government Association (LGA) outlined the same position. Assurances have also been provided around CYC schools and office buildings. A separate response was also made in relation to buildings in, or about to go through, our planning process.
- All tenants and leaseholders have been written too providing assurance about the fire safety of their homes.
- A press release was issued regarding CYC's response to issues and concerns raised by the Grenfell Tower fire. The Director of Health, Housing and Adult Social Care was also interviewed by local radio.
- Three detailed briefings were provided for Councillors covering information across our housing stock, schools, the university, and buildings in the private sector.
- Briefings have been provided to Staff.

- Senior Managers and staff from Housing and Health and Safety departments met to formulate an action plan. The action plan will be going to the Housing & Community Safety Senior Management Team (SMT) for approval on 6 September. The action plan relates to two distinct themes; ensuring compliance with fire safety regulations; and ensuring all tenants, residents, and staff understand what to do in the event of a fire occurring.
- Fire risk assessments were commissioned and have completed on 70 blocks that had previously not been flagged as having communal areas that fell under the requirements of the RRO. These blocks were identified following a data review we carried out as part of our wider review of fire safety management.
- A schedule has been produced for the outstanding FRAs reviews which prioritises those property types most at risk; i.e. converted houses/flats; sheltered and older persons housing and hostels; and blocks where fire incidents have previously occurred. There will be more intrusive assessments to check the compartmentalisation (fire spread prevention measures) between properties where void properties become available in the blocks where reviews are due to be carried out. This work will be carried out by appropriately qualified fire risk contractors.
- With regard to outstanding reviews of fire risk assessments, a draft specification has been completed and a request for quotation for this work; and an appropriate framework contract has been identified by a procurement consortium to secure contractors to deliver this programme of assessment reviews. Initial estimates suggest the value of this work to be in the region of £100k. The initial estimate is that this will allow commencement of the review programme in November 2017 and complete by February 2018.
- A corporate fire policy (compliance note CN14) exists and, in association with Health and Safety colleagues a separate social housing specific fire safety strategy has been drafted, which along with an action plan will be submitted to the Housing and Community safety SMT on 6 Sept for approval.

- Through the modernisation programme (Tenants Choice) the council has installed hard wired detectors to approximately 5,000 of its 7,700 homes. Prior to this programme battery operated detectors were fitted to the majority of homes but records of these were not kept. To fill this gap an accelerated programme to install smoke detectors is in development to ensure the remainder of the have a detector. To assist in this process there are discussions with North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service regarding proposal to put a joint project in place to install lithium (10 year) battery operated detectors in these properties as an interim measure.
- A regular programme of scheme/block inspections will be carried out by Housing Management Officers, which whilst aimed at reviewing all aspects of the physical environment around blocks, also looks to identify any problems with obstacles or stored belongings in hallways/entrances/stairwells and other communal areas. Building Services, Health & Safety and Housing teams, will be coordinating this work alongside the FRA programme; and it will provide an important 'heads-up' function to identify any major issues that could impact on residents ability to exit blocks in the event of a fire, or on the overall fire integrity of the block.

Council Plan

4. The work that is being done to improve far safety is in accordance with the focus on frontline services to residents.

Implications

5. **Financial:** The cost of the additional work will be contained in existing budgets within the Housing Revenue Account

Human resources (HR): None

Equalities: None

Legal: None

Crime and Disorder: None

Information Technology (IT): None

Property: None

Other: None

Risk Management

6. The work that has been and is being done is intended to minimise the risk of fire and the impact of a potential fire in council owned assets.

Recommendations

7. Scrutiny committee are asked to note the update on the actions taken by the authority.

Reason: To inform Members of fire safety actions undertaken by the Council

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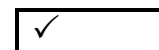
**Report
Approved**



Date 4/09/17

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Abbreviations

ACM – Aluminium Composite Material

CYC – City of York Council

DCLG – Department of Communities and Local Government

FRA – Fire Risk Assessment

LGA – Local Government Association

OPH – Older Persons Homes

RRO – Regulatory Reform Order

SMT – Senior Management Team