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| <b>SUBJECT:</b>       | <b>FIRE SAFETY UPDATE</b>   |
| <b>DIRECTORATE:</b>   | <b>HOUSING AND INVESTMENT</b>   |
| <b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b> | <b>ANDREW MCNEIL, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR HOUSING,<br/>INVESTMENT AND STRATEGY/MARTIN RYAN (FIRE<br/>SPECIALIST)</b> |

## 1. Purpose of Report:

1.1 To update committee on CoLC's actions / progress on fire safety in light of the Hackitt review following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower.

1.2 The report will update committee on:

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) report along with the "Building a Safer Future" consultation

Recommendations taken from the Hackitt report accepted by the MHCLG

The progress made in respect of these recommendations in advance of their proposed implementation through legislation

## 2. Executive Summary

This report covers the background to consultations instigated following the Grenfell Tower fire (June 2017), it covers the main elements of the consultation process, some key findings / recommendations and CoLC's current position relating to fire safety.

Which includes:

- We have made clear improvements to fire safety process & procedure across the city with:
- Clearer timetable for fire risk assessment (FRA) implementation
- Improved safety checks & tests
- Improved auditing of those tests & checks
- Fire compartmentation improvements
- Fire alarm upgrades (sheltered schemes)
- Correlation of all recommended actions (FRA's)
- Timelines for remedial actions with on-going commentary of current position
- Improved training
- Improved physical testing & checking of all sites (including low risk)
- Recording of all required tests & checks (logbooks & tick sheets)
- Collaboration with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service

In conclusion, we have no combustible cladding on any of our buildings and we

are in a safe and organised position at this point, with a clear vision of possible future directions relating to the wider implications of the building and fire regulation changes. We are proactive in terms of fire safety with a blue print to continue the drive to delivering a portfolio that is the safest it can possibly be.

Until the white papers are published by government we cannot be absolutely sure of the direction the new building & fire regulations will take and what responsibilities / qualities the proposed Building Safety Manager will be required to attain / deliver.

The one thing for certain is that these changes will come, in one form or another, and they will have an impact on the future landscape of the housing market. With those who plan, develop, manage and live in these buildings having a much greater responsibility for ensuring its safety throughout its lifetime.

The work that CoLC is currently undertaking and its plans for the short term will ensure that it is at the forefront of these imminent changes, delivering safe properties for its residents and ensuring “a safer future” for its buildings.

### **3. Background**

Following the tragic events of June 2017, when Grenfell Tower, a high rise residential building (HRRB), was the subject of a catastrophic fire which claimed the lives of 72 men, women & children there has been a concerted effort to investigate, analyse and improve fire safety across all types of building (but specifically residential units).

The subsequent consultations “building a safer future” led by Dame Judith Hackitt and the public enquiry led by Sir Martin Moore-Bick have discovered a number of key failings relating to the following issues:

- Combustible cladding to the external faces of the building
- Regular inspection, testing and recording of all life safety infrastructure
- General maintenance of the building (more specifically life safety systems)
- Management of buildings and how residents live within them
- Key failings relating to the London fire & rescue services responses

Further consultations have taken place subsequently, relating to the regulatory reform (fire safety) order 2005 (RRO) and “raising the bar” concerning the levels of competency currently within the fire & building safety industry. Both consultations sought to gather feedback and recommendations for improvement.

These consultations are now concluded (except the public enquiry with phase 2 due to start early 2020) and improvements are being debated and discussed with proposal expected towards the autumn of 2020.

Central government’s response to the “Hackitt enquiry” is well documented with former Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government pledging to carry out 100+ changes to the Building & Fire regulations against the 62 recommended by Dame Hackitt.

The new Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Robert Jenrick has committed to go further still, with a reduction in maximum

height for HRRB's relating to installation of sprinkler systems and the inclusion of the building into scope of the new requirements, reduced from 30 meters to 18 meters.

The proposed bill is due to go through due process during 2020, and should be in place as statute during 2021.

In the meantime the Secretary of State has announced the implementation of an "interim building regulator" consisting of the Home Office and National Fire Chiefs Council, which will receive up to £10 million in annual central government funding. As part of its work, the board will carry out inspections of all high-risk residential buildings in England by 2021.

### 3.1 **Key Recommendations:**

Within the Hackitt report a recommendation was made that all new build and major refurbishment projects relating to HRRB's, complex and high risk buildings should be subject to a set of "Gateway" points which, unless fully satisfied would preclude a developer of new property from moving to the next, in brief they are:

- **Gateway point 1** – Initial plans relating to fire safety and access for emergency services
- **Gateway point 2** – Full plans submitted and the start of the "golden thread" (complete digital record of the building and its infrastructure to include life safety elements), the golden thread would then be required throughout the full lifecycle of the building with any changes / improvements made to be recorded as a matter of law
- **Gateway point 3** – Occupation, at this stage the regulator would need to see the handover of all required H&S and life safety information (through the digital platform – possibly "building information modelling" BIM) before occupation can occur

As a further recommendation a new role (amongst others) of, "**Building Safety Manager**" (BSM), with key roles likely to be (non-exhaustive):

- Appointed by the "Accountable Person" (New Role)
- Will be required to prove competency by way of a "building licence"
- Will be required to update "golden thread" with all changes & improvements
- Will be required to provide extensive resident engagement
- Will be required to gain access to all flats to carry out an annual (at least) inspection relating to safety infrastructure
- Will be required to manage all elements of inspection, repair, servicing and maintenance to the building and record within the golden thread
- Will be required to carry a "safety case" review (recommended at 5 yearly intervals)
- Will be required to maintain and update all floor and other plans both digitally and paper copies

### 4. **City of Lincoln current position:**

Over the last year we have been working proactively on the overall fire safety

elements within the housing stock across the city, an interim Fire Assurance Manager was appointed with a permanent replacement currently being recruited.

During this time we have completed the following actions & improvements:

- Instructed and carried out (competent fire risk assessment contractors) new fire risk assessments (FRA's) to all 12no. higher risk sites
- These sites consist of 3no. HRRB's, 7no. Sheltered schemes, 1no. community hub & Hamilton House
- Overall action log spreadsheet created which includes all recommendations from the completed FRA's for all sites. The actions are categorised in order of risk Red, Amber & Green. The action log also has comments of the progress along with completion dates of all required actions
- Carried out a number of compartmentation works to seal breaches in fire compartments
- Carrying out fire alarm improvements and upgrades to voice connectivity within sheltered schemes, if fire alarm activates within a flat the resident is connected directly and instantly to the control centre who can then check if it is a false alarm or a real fire. This cuts down on false fire service call outs and improves life safety with residents getting help much sooner if required
- A revision of all sites fire safety checks Implemented with new fire safety log books introduced covering daily, weekly & monthly tests and checks within the buildings which are then recorded with any actions required noted and notified
- Implemented a monthly auditing regime (carried out by the Safety Assurance Team – SAT), site log books are inspected to ensure checks are being performed as required and where any remedial works are required that they have been completed. These audits are recorded and discussed at quarterly SAT team meetings
- Process to carry out annual full FRA (to be performed by external competent contractor) to all 12no. higher risk buildings implemented with the next assessments to be carried out July 2020
- Low risk low rise housing stock (approximately 800no. buildings) to have a full FRA conducted every five years (starting early 2020) along with monthly on-going inspections carried out by RO & ROSS's on a monthly basis at all other times
- New on-line training modules created relating to the required checks mentioned above with training scheduled for January 2020
- New building checklists created ready for implementation in line with the training to be provided
- New guidance "procedures for the control of fire incidents at CoLC properties" completed and implemented – this document covers safe procedures and actions when dealing with major fires with residential properties and covers elements such as asbestos awareness and structural concerns etc.
- Cost studies and research conducted into possibility of adding sprinkler systems to our 3no. HRRB's indicative costs produced and discussed, currently assessing financial impact on HRA
- Liaison with Lincolnshire fire and rescue service (LFRS), regarding our sheltered schemes and HRRB's, who have commended CoLC on their "continued and concerted efforts to improve fire safety across its sites"

- Strategic meeting held with LFRS to discuss emergency evacuation planning for a major incident within a HRRB / complex building and the possible pitfalls / outcomes
- Continued collaboration surrounding this process is on-going with a possible desk top scenario the next likely outcome to test plans & planning

## **5. Strategic Priorities**

### **5.1 Let's deliver quality housing**

The measures we are taking aim to ensure that our tenants and leaseholders in Higher Risk Buildings have fire safety at the core of our management.

## **6. Organisational Impacts**

### **6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)**

All costs related to fire safety works are currently funded from the Housing Revenue Account

### **6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules**

As outlined in the report

### **6.3 Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

The Public Sector Equality Duty means that the Council must consider all individuals when carrying out their day-to-day work, in shaping policy, delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

It requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities

### **6.4 Human Resources**

The Safety Assurance Team, within Housing and Investment currently advises and oversees fire assurance for the department. The manager for this Team is currently being recruited. As part of the recruitment process the job description for the post has been revised with an increased emphasis on fire safety. In the interim the position is being covered by a specialist with suitable qualifications and experience.

### **6.5 Land, Property and Accommodation**

The report covers how the council is ensuring fire safety in its residential property

### **6.6 Corporate Health and Safety implications**

The proposed role of Building Safety Manager may have a wider implication for corporate Health and Safety. At present the recommendations are for High risk residential buildings.

## **7. Risk Implications**

### **7.1 (i) Options Explored**

Whilst the residential building we manage do not contain any combustible cladding the proposals explored in the MHCLG consultation shape the option we have proposed

### **7.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach**

The preferred approach will enable the council to adopt the MHCLG proposals at an early stage. Whilst there will be a transition period of up to 5 years, not looking to encompass these proposals could create a reputational issue.

## **8. Recommendation**

8.1 The committee notes the progress that the council has made in addressing the issues and proposals from the Hackitt review

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| <b>Is this a key decision?</b>   | No     |
| <b>Do the exempt information categories apply?</b>                               | Yes/No |
| <b>Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply?</b> | Yes/No |
| <b>How many appendices does the report contain?</b>                              | None   |
| <b>List of Background Papers:</b>  | None   |

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