

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING – 6TH NOVEMBER 2019

ITEM OF BUSINESS NO. 4.3 – MEMBERS’ QUESTIONS ON THE DISCHARGE OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE SOUTH YORKSHIRE JOINT AUTHORITIES FOR FIRE & RESCUE AND PENSIONS

Question relating to the South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority to be asked at the meeting by Councillor Douglas Johnson – to be answered at the meeting by Councillor Tony Damms (Fire & Rescue Authority Spokesperson)

(provided in written form, in advance of being asked and answered at the meeting, for the benefit of attendees)

Question of Councillor Douglas Johnson

What commitments have you received from SYFR as to checking the adequacy of fire evacuation plans in the light of the recent Grenfell Tower report?

Answer of Councillor Tony Damms

Please find attached an overview of the activities undertaken by SYFR following the Grenfell Fire, which has been supplied by Alex Johnson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service.

Furthermore, upon receipt of the phase 1 report, the Service is identifying learning and will keep South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Authority updated on relevant matters.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE AUTHORITY

Meeting	FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
Meeting Date	
Report of	ASSISTANT CHIEF FIRE OFFICER / DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY
Report Sponsor(s)	CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Subject	SYFR RESPONSE TO THE GRENFELL INCIDENT

SUMMARY

Following the tragic incident at Grenfell Towers on the 14 June 2017, Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) across the Country have undertaken a significant amount of work to ensure fire safety compliance in high rise buildings where Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) cladding was found to be present.

This paper outlines the work undertaken by South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue's (SYFR) Business Fire Safety (BFS) Department and Emergency Response since the Grenfell incident.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:-

- a) Note the work undertaken by SYFR Business Fire Safety Inspectors and operational crews within Emergency Response, in regard to addressing the risk associated with high rise buildings within South Yorkshire, following the Grenfell tragedy.
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CONTENTS

Background

Following the Grenfell Tower fire, SYFR Business Fire Safety (BFS) Department and operational crews within Emergency Response undertook a significant amount of work in order to provide reassurance to the communities within South Yorkshire by inspecting all high rise residential buildings supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) activities and undertake audits at premises fitted with cladding which had been identified as failing the national testing programme which was established by British Research Establishment (BRE) post Grenfell.

Inspections

1. In line with a request from the NFCC, inspectors from within SYFR Business Safety Department carried out fire safety inspections at all high rise residential buildings along with identifying those building fitted with external cladding. High rise indicates buildings that have a floor over 18m. Across the County, inspections were carried out in both Local Authority and privately owned high rise residential buildings. Following instruction from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and through the NFCC, inspections were carried out on all of the high rise buildings that SYFR has records of, including:

- 42 Point Blocks
- 177 other high rise buildings
- High rise NHS buildings within:
 - Sheffield Children's Hospital
 - Rotherham District General Hospital
 - Montague
 - Doncaster Royal Infirmary

Outcomes and ongoing action

Of the NHS buildings that were inspected, no specific issues regarding cladding were found. Only two NHS premises within South Yorkshire have failed cladding tests, that being Montague Hospital and the Stephenson Building, Sheffield Children's Hospital. Upon inspection it was found that the Montague Hospital is a 2 storey building and therefore not deemed to be high risk in regards to its cladding. Fire safety issues arising from the inspection were dealt with through the normal enforcement channels. The Stephenson Building, SCH, failed its cladding test. The cladding, which was at 5th Floor level on the building has been removed and therefore any risk has been removed.

2. Of the 219 high rise buildings that were inspected, nine properties were identified as having external cladding which raised concerns, these buildings being:

- Copthorne Hotel – S2 4SU
- Metis Apartments – S3 7AT
- Silverwood House – DN1 3RN
- Hannover Block – S3 7UB
- Allen Court – Latimore House – S3 7HB
- Allen Court – Brightmore House – S3 7HB
- Atlantic One – S3 7AN
- Redvers Towers – S1 2FU

Below is a brief update of the work undertaken by SYFR in each of these buildings:

Metis Apartments

Cladding on the Metis Apartments is a decorative feature and is located on the external face of the stairwell for the building. Upon inspection, SYFR found that the bin store / shutes are

located within the stairwell enclosure and could potentially be a risk for a fire starting. Therefore a prohibition notice was served on the building, prohibiting the use of the bin store / shutes, until the cladding is removed. The prohibition notice is being complied with and the Local Authority are currently looking at obtaining funding from the Government to assist with the costs of having the cladding removed.

Hanover Court

Hanover Court was the only building within the County that had a significant amount of ACM cladding on the building. The Local Authority, upon finding out the cladding was ACM, promptly had it removed. They are currently in the process of installing the new rainscreen on the building.

Copthorne Hotel

Cladding on the Copthorne Hotel only covers about 30% of the building and provides a decorative feature which is interspersed across the building. The cladding does not consist of a single elevation, which might support the spread of fire. The building is a hotel, which has simultaneous evacuation and waking watch, therefore the risk to persons residing in the building is low.

Anchor Point – Bramall Lane

This building has consistently been confused by NFCC with the Copthorne Hotel, which is the hotel linked to Sheffield United Football Club. Anchor Point is a 6 storey building. Its main construction material is glass, render and steel. There is no cladding on this building.

Alan Court

Alan Court is an 8 storey building which offers student cluster flats. The building is fully sprinklered. The cladding on the building was for architectural detail only, but is being removed. Whilst the work is being done to remove the cladding, the managing agents, IQ Steel, have installed a new fire alarm system, undertaken compartmentation surveys, implemented a simultaneous evacuation and provided a waking watch to assist with evacuations. The work is still ongoing.

Atlantic One

This building is privately owned and is managed by IQ Steel. Like Alan Court, the cladding is for decorative purposes only, but is in the process of being removed. As part of this ongoing work, parts of cladding have already been removed to create fire breaks to ensure the stair can't be compromised. IQ Steel have had the fire alarm configured to support simultaneous evacuation for the duration of the works to remove the cladding. This work is still ongoing.

Redvers Tower

This building is 14 storeys tall. The building has always been clad and was initially retail on the lower 3 storeys, with office accommodation on the top storeys. The building was converted about 2 years ago with commercial businesses on the ground floor and student accommodation on the upper floors. There is extensive cladding on the upper storeys of the building, starting at the 4th storey. As part of the conversion, the accommodation part of the building is fully sprinklered. There are 2 staircases available for students to use and there is 24hr management on site. The fire alarm can be used to instigate a full simultaneous evacuation, should management confirm a fire in the building. The cladding has not been removed from the building as yet and the owners are taking advice with the intention to remove it as soon as possible. The owners have been very proactive and worked closely with SYFR in having a full compartmentation survey undertaken for the building, the findings of which have been incorporated into their risk assessment and used to update their evacuation plans. Work ongoing.

London Court

This building has been identified as having cladding, however SYFR are unsure of the type of cladding on the building. The building is 7 storeys tall. The Responsible Person (RP) has been contacted in writing on a number of occasions, and has been asked to confirm the type of cladding on the building. The RP has not responded on all occasions and made no effort to contact SYFR. Failing to respond to formal requests for information is an offence, as the individual is obstructing an inspector in carrying out their duty. Therefore advice will be taken from our legal team and a summons will be issued for the RP to attend court.

Silverwood House

Cladding on Silverwood House was a decorative feature and was located on the external face of the stairwell for the building. Upon confirmation that the cladding was ACM, Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) and St Leger had the cladding removed and replaced with a different material. The building has since been fully sprinklered, with SYFR contributing funds to the project through the Stronger, Safer Community Reserve Fund project.

In addition to Silverwood House, DMBC and St Leger have worked together, with SYFR, to install sprinklers into the rest of their high rise buildings. The buildings that have been sprinklered are:

Shaftesbury House
Cusworth House
Sandbeck House
Firbeck House
Methley House
Hatfield House
Westminster House
Lonsdale House

Partnership working

3. SYFR BFS Inspectors have worked closely with both Local Authority and private building owners in helping them identify and deal with cladding on their buildings. This has included reminding the Responsible Persons of their legal responsibilities and obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, such as the need for suitable and sufficient risk assessments which address areas such as the means of escape and suitable evacuation strategies. In addition, BFS Inspectors provided responsible persons with information and guidance to ensure that buildings which were undergoing testing through the BRE, had in place suitable and effective interim measures to minimise the risks whilst the issues associated with the external cladding were addressed. Overall, the work carried out by BFS, enabled us to reaffirm the legislative responsibilities of SYFR within the RRO, namely to ensure compliance within the relevant articles within the RRO to ensure the safety of relevant persons within a building.
4. We have provided a range of guidance material to the Councils, so that they may share it with their tenants to provide advice and guidance. In addition to this, BFS staff also attended a number of Tenants and Residents Association meetings at the request of Sheffield City Council. We attended all 10 meetings in total, with 2 separate sessions being held at each meeting to allow residents to attend at different times. These meetings were also attended by available Operational Managers.
5. SYFR are currently working with Sheffield City Council to draft a Memorandum of Understanding on how we can work more closely together to address high rise buildings in the future. This work is ongoing.

Freedom of Information Requests (FOI)

6. The total number of Freedom of Information Requests SYFR have received which relates to Grenfell Tower following the incident in London in 2017 is detailed in the table below.
7. Please note, the information collated is based on assumptions that the request has generated following the Grenfell tragedy due to information requested and the subject matter. It must be noted that the majority of requests have not made reference to Grenfell itself and some of these requests may have been requested for different reasons and we are not privy to the reason of the requestor.

Time Period:	Number of request relating to Grenfell
April – June 2017	4
July – Sept 2017	11
Oct – Dec 2017	3
2017 Total:	18
Jan – Mar 2018	2
April – June 2018	4
July – Sept 2018	1
Oct – Dec 2018	2
2018 Total:	9
Jan – Mar 2019	2
April – June 2019	4
July – Sept 2019	0
Oct – Dec 2019	3
2019 Total:	9
Overall Total:	36

8. Brief Overview of FOI Requests Received

2017

FOI 1353 22/06/17	Brief description of request: Information about the number of fire safety officers employed including Business Fire Safety and Community Fire Safety.
FOI 1354 26/06/17	Brief description of request: Information regarding the number of cases where the cladding of a building has played a contributory role to a building fire.
FOI 1355 27/06/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to the number of site inspections, fire safety inspectors, alteration notices, enforcement notices, prohibition notices, prosecutions and training of fire inspectors
FOI 1358 29/06/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to the tower blocks location, sprinkler system, fire alarm system, cladding, materials used, installation, fire test reports, reports or correspondence re cladding and fire safety inspections.
FOI 1359 05/07/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to fires caused by fridge freezers.
FOI 1362 05/07/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to fire safety officers, enforcement and prohibition notices and budget for prevention measures.

FOI 1363 09/07/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to the number and reach of aerial firefighting platforms.
FOI 1365 13/07/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to the number of pump and aerial appliances.
FOI 1366 13/07/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to number of whole time and retained firefighters, appliance unavailability, numbers of tactical response vehicles, hydraulic platforms, aerial ladder platforms and turntable ladders, number and type of incident attended.
FOI 1368 17/07/17	Brief description of request: Information regarding staff numbers related to inspecting and auditing fire safety.
FOI 1375 02/08/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to training budget, purchasing budget and immersive training tools.
FOI 1376 02/08/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to number of fires and non-related fires rescues and injuries.
FOI 1377 04/08/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to number of firefighters, fatalities and response times.
FOI 1380 07/08/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to buildings that have installed a fire sprinkler system.
FOI 1388 13/09/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to numbers of inspection officers who carry out audits of fire risk assessments of buildings.
FOI 1396 09/10/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to numbers of Fire safety Officers, onsite inspections, enforcements and prosecutions.
FOI 1395 04/10/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to operational training costs, numbers of wholetime and retained firefighters and days training.
FOI 1404 06/11/17	Brief description of request: Information relating to Number of failed safety checks on buildings and interim measures following Grenfell.
2018	
FOI 1431 05/01/18	Brief description of request: Retained vacancies, staffing levels and unavailability of fire appliances.
FOI 1455 20/03/18	Brief description of request: Outcomes of all fire safety compliance inspections on high-rise residential buildings since June 2017
FOI 1460 09/04/18	Brief description of request: Employment and headcount figures on Wholetime, Retained, Control, Support staff.
FOI 1470 02/05/2018	Brief description of request: No of buildings subject to a watching wake or fire watch.
FOI 1472 07/05/18	Brief description of request: Number of enforcement and prosecutions notices issued.
FOI 1489 06/06/18	Brief description of request: Staffing figures and costs for Fire Safety Officers and number of fire safety audits resulting in enforcement notices.
FOI 1525 29/08/2018	Brief description of request: Number of Incidents attended in 2017 without working smoking alarms fitted.

FOI 1549	Brief description of request:
19/10/18	Government funding received since 2013, amount spent on training frontline firefighters and details of attendees at training courses since 2013.

FOI 1575	Brief description of request:
28/11/18	Major incident training carried out following Lakanal house and Grenfell Tower incidents.

2019

FOI 1592	Brief description of request:
31/01/19	Fire Incidents caused by white goods - 2016/17 and 2017/18

FOI 1592	Brief description of request:
31/01/19	A list of elevator / high-rise building assets.

FOI 1628	Brief description of request:
30/04/19	Prosecutions / Convictions served under - Article 32 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

FOI 1634	Brief description of request:
28/05/19	High Rise Incidents and Pre-Determined Attendance plan.

FOI 1635	Brief description of request:
22/05/19	Hanover Tower Block – Trespa, Cladding, Stay Put

FOI 1636	Brief description of request:
20/05/19	Hanover Tower Block - Trespa, Cladding, Stay Put

FOI 1702	Brief description of request:
09/10/19	Evacuation in High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs), PDAs, Multiple FSGs

FOI 1711	Brief description of request:
28/10/19	Enforcements, Prohibitions and Prosecutions 2017

FOI 1714	Brief description of request:
29/10/19	Stay Put Strategy since June 2017, changes and differences in specific buildings

Business Fire Safety and Ops

9. BFS have continued to work closely with operational crews within Emergency Response to ensure that information obtained through the Fire Safety Audit+ (FSA+) is recorded accurately on the CFRMIS system to support operational decision making. Fire Safety Inspectors are continuing to support operational crews analyse the risks within high rise residential building and since the introduction of the FSA+ in July 2019, a total of 411 FSA+ have been completed.
10. In addition 103 point block inspections, which are undertaken by operational crews to inspect various aspect of a high rise building including means of escape, emergency lighting, internal doors and any fixed installations have been undertaken. The Operational Support Team also continue to work with crews to ensure Operational Risk Inspections are updated for all high rise buildings.
11. BFS have produced and delivered a training package to all operational crews on fire safety in high rise buildings. This was done via the Station Liaison process.
12. SYFR continue to work closely with Local Authorities and the Private sector in addressing issues with high rise buildings.
13. SYFR operate a Risk Based Audit Program which allows us to take a random sample of premises to carry out a fire safety audit. The high rise buildings that we have record of fall

within the Category B group, which looks at buildings where the residents are 'sleeping and familiar (with the building)'. It is intended that we will visit all Category B group buildings within a five year cycle.

14. Where necessary SYFR have requested compartmentation surveys be carried out in buildings to confirm that the building supports the evacuation strategy.
15. SYFR continues to support and advocate the use of sprinklers.
16. At this moment in time, SYFR continue to support the NFCC and the notion of 'stay put' policy.

NFCC

17. The Government introduced an independent review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, which was led by Dame Judith Hackitt. A draft of her report has since been published.

There have been a number of consultations issued by the NFCC and SYFR have provided a comprehensive response to all of them. This includes:

- Call for Evidence – RRO
- Building a Safer Future – including Approved Document B
- Consultation regarding changing the sprinkler threshold
- Competency Framework.

We currently have a staff member who has been seconded to the London Fire Commissioner to assist with overseeing the various consultations and is working within the NFCC Building Safety Programme Team.

18. SYFR are now in receipt of the first phase of the report, produced by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, following the Grenfell Inquiry.
19. BFS Managers are reviewing this report and its findings. A gap analysis will be completed, which will then inform any changes and enhancements that need to be made to current BFS practices, Incident Management and Learning in regards to Control and Command and Operational Learning.

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