

## **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **FIRE SAFETY AND RESPONSE TO THE GRENFELL TOWER TRAGEDY**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide the County Council with an initial update on actions taken to assess and provide assurance of fire safety in County Council owned properties. It is proposed that a further comprehensive report is brought to the Council in the future.

#### **Background and context**

2. Nottinghamshire County Council has always taken fire safety very seriously, with a rigorous process of risk assessment embedded throughout our property estate. In view of the tragedy at Grenfell Tower the County Council, like all public bodies, has undertaken a review to assess and provide assurance of fire safety in Council owned properties. The Council has also engaged proactively in the national investigations and requests for information, including from Government.
3. To ensure our review and assessment work is coordinated and embedded across the Council, the Service Director for South Nottinghamshire and Public Protection chairs a specially convened weekly 'Risk, Safety and Emergency Management Board'. This Board produce regular briefings for both the Leader of the Council and Corporate Leadership Team as well as preparing our responses to requests for information.
4. On the 20 June 2017, the Department of Local Government and Communities issued a letter requesting that Local Authorities check all residential buildings higher than six stories or 18 metres high with aluminium composite material cladding. Nottinghamshire County Council has no buildings that fall into this category. Nevertheless, a fire risk assessment review of the Council's property portfolio took place at this time, which has provided significant reassurance that NCC assets represent a low risk.
5. A further request was received from the Department of Education asking all authorities to complete a survey on school buildings which are four or more stories high. The survey was completed and submitted on the 30 June. Nottinghamshire County Council has two establishments which fall into this category, Fountaindale and Clayfields (although Clayfields is a secure establishment it is being treated as a school as learning takes place there).

6. There are other buildings within the Councils' portfolio that we have classified as representing a higher risk due to the fact that they involve residential occupancy. These include Care Homes for example, of which there are around 20 establishments in the County. For buildings that present a higher risk, a more detail site review has been commissioned. This will be completed over the coming weeks.
7. All properties managed and controlled by the County Council, and that fall within the scope of the statutory fire regulations order, have a fire risk assessment in place. Our more detailed and in depth review will involve the compliance team visiting each site to review these assessments and any necessary actions required to make our buildings safe for those who use them. The review will also assess any external work or refurbishment that may have taken place including panelling. The resulting information will be formulated into a risk rated report and action plan.

### **Additional activities**

8. Renewed consideration has been given to fire safety at Trent Bridge House. The design, fire alarm systems and evacuation procedures of the building are significantly different from those that existed for Grenfell Tower. Trent Bridge House is a nine storey building and operates a phased evacuation procedure. Naturally, there have been some concerns regarding the planned time delay to evacuate individual floors. This is operated on a message prompt system with approximately ninety seconds between floors being prompted to evacuate. The fire protection design of the building ensures that fire spread would be contained to allow adequate time for all to evacuate. Refresher training will be provided in the form of briefing sessions to staff to raise awareness of the process on how to respond to a fire alarm.
9. As a precautionary measure, the Property Group has put on hold any works that involve cladding to our buildings with an instruction issued that no installation of cladding to properties can be made without authorisation from Property Group.
10. The County Council also owns a range of other properties outside our direct use and under management or occupation by third parties. We are taking steps to ensure that these properties are also safe with appropriate risk assessments. Similarly, appropriate enquiries are being made with the providers of commissioned services in children's and adult's care. The County Council has also been in contact with the major sporting venues in the County to ensure that they are all following guidance issued by the Sports Grounds Safety Authority.
11. In case of any emergency affecting Nottinghamshire communities, the County Council has developed and maintains a comprehensive set of emergency management arrangements. These include emergency response plans and control facilities, plus staff training and exercises to rehearse the County Council's response. The plans include an Elected Members Emergency Plan which has been revised very recently and approved by the Communities and Place Committee on 22 June. Training to accompany this plan will follow later in the year.
12. The incident in London has raised a number of other issues for consideration. In particular, the Council will investigate implications for our governance and any other area of the Council's work as part of the wider review we will conduct across the summer.

## **Other Options Considered**

13. No other options.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

14. To provide an update about work underway to assure County Council of safety and fire risk in Council owned properties.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that:

- 1) County Council note the steps taken so far to assess and review fire risk safety.
- 2) County Council agree to receive a further report in future when review work is complete.

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

**Adrian Smith  
Corporate Director - Place**

## **Constitutional Comments (SLB 04/07/2017)**

16. County Council is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

## **Financial Comments (SES 04/07/17)**

17. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **Human Resources Comments (GME 04/07/2017)**

18. The HR implications are contained in the body of the report and are in line with our requirements in terms of risk assessment and fire safety including personal emergency evacuation plans for employees with access issues.

## **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All