1. Summary

1.1 This report provides background on the Grenfell Tower fire on 14 June 2017 to inform the GLA Oversight Committee’s discussions about possible future work to be undertaken in the aftermath of the disaster.

2. Recommendation

2.1 That the Committee considers and comments on a cross-Assembly approach to its scrutiny work in relation to the Grenfell Tower fire.

3. Background

3.1 The fire occurred on 14 June 2017 at Grenfell Tower, a 24-storey, 220-foot high tower block of public housing flats in North Kensington, west London. At the time of writing, 80 people are presumed to have died and eighteen have been confirmed dead by the Metropolitan Police Service. This number makes Grenfell Tower the deadliest structural fire in the UK since the beginning of the 20th century, when records began. There are concerns that some who died in the fire may never be formally identified.

3.2 The local Council’s initial response to the fire has been broadly criticised as inadequate and the Chief Executive and Leader resigned. The chief executive of the tenant management organisation which managed the tower also resigned.

3.3 According to the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea (RBKC), 373 households are in temporary accommodation including 140 placements of people from Grenfell Tower and Grenfell Walk. People have been offered hotel accommodation or interim accommodation before their long-term housing needs are assessed and met. No-one has been placed outside of London.

3.4 A number of investigations into the Grenfell Tower fire have been announced:

- Coroner’s inquests into individual deaths;
- Public inquiry – on 15 June, the Prime Minister ordered a public inquiry into the causes of the fire, including whether recommendations were properly implemented following recommendations made after another tower block fire, at Lakanal House in Camberwell in 2009;
• Criminal investigation – the Metropolitan Police Service has opened a criminal investigation into the fire at Grenfell Tower. It will focus on whether any charges should be brought against those responsible for the refurbishment of the building and will focus on manslaughter, health and safety and fire safety charges;

• London Fire Brigade – the London Fire Brigade will also conduct an investigation into the causes of the fire; and

• RBKC – the leader of RBKC also announced its own internal investigation before his resignation.

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 There are a number of possible areas that, from autumn 2017, the Assembly could usefully scrutinise:

• GLA Oversight Committee – the Committee has responsibility for scrutinising the Mayor’s role in resilience. It is proposed that part of its meeting in September is dedicated to looking at the working of the London Resilience Team and its responsibilities for, and response to, the Grenfell Tower fire.

• Housing Committee
  o The Committee undertook an investigation into estate regeneration in 2015. It is proposed that this work is followed up with a focus on resident involvement; and/or
  o A review of governance models in social housing in London - with a view to ensuring clarity of oversight and responsibility in the light of an increasing range of new models of ownership, construction & management of social housing.

• Environment Committee - status of the air quality around Grenfell Tower block.

• Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee – from April 2018, this Committee will scrutinise the new London Fire Commissioner under the arrangements set out in the Police and Crime Act 2017. At that point, it is expected the committee would play a key role in looking at a range of issues relating to the Grenfell Tower fire including fire regulations and the risk assessment of tall buildings.

4.2 Previous relevant work by the Assembly includes a report published in December 2010, *Fire Safety in London: Fire risks in London’s tall and timber framed buildings* which was prompted by a series of fires in the capital including the fatal Lakanal House fire in 2009.¹

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Assembly has the power to do what is recommended in this report. Advice and guidance will be provided to Members as necessary and over time on any implications for the Assembly and individual Members arising from the various inquiries and investigations referred to above.

¹ Lakanal House in Camberwell was a 14 storey block of flats completed in 1959. A fire began on the ninth floor and cost the lives of six people – three women and three children, including a three-week old baby.
6. Financial Implications

6.1 Assuming Committees are able to build this scrutiny into existing work programmes, there will be no resource implications. If, depending on the outcomes of the other inquiries and investigations, Assembly Members wish to incorporate substantial additional investigations, there may be a requirement for additional resources within the scrutiny team.

List of appendices to this report:
None.

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