

Subject: Tall Buildings and Fire Safety

Report to: Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 18 July 2019

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report provides background information to the Fire, Resilience and Emergency Planning Committee for its meeting with invited guests on tall buildings and fire safety.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the action taken under delegated authority by the Chair, in consultation with Group party Leads, to agree the areas for consideration as set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report.**
- 2.2 **That the Committee notes the report as background to the discussion on tall buildings and fire safety with invited guests and notes the subsequent discussion.**
- 2.3 **That authority be delegated to the Chair, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, to agree any output from the meeting.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Tall buildings can pose a real challenge to firefighters, and fire safety management and prevention is key. While high-rise buildings are designed to resist fire, the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, along with other similar fires in tall buildings around the world, has highlighted the importance of fire safety practice.
- 3.2 Fire safety is the set of practices intended to reduce the destruction caused by fire. Measures can include those that are intended to prevent the ignition of an uncontrolled fire, and those that are used to limit the development of fire after it starts - either planned during the construction of a building, implemented after or taught to occupants of the building.
- 3.3 Londoners are protected from fire through a mixture of 'passive' and 'active' fire safety measures. Passive fire safety measures, such as fire doors, when combined with active fire safety measures which activate during a fire, such as fire alarms, can allow people to quickly and safely escape fires. In addition, building standards and regulations exist to ensure that fire safety is taken seriously in all

new buildings. However, as the fires at Lakanal House in 2009 and Grenfell Tower in 2017 demonstrate, fire safety measures can fail and can have devastating consequences.

- 3.4 The tragedy at Grenfell Tower, and subsequent tests on cladding on high rise blocks, has highlighted that fire safety is a significant concern for government, social landlords, private landlords, construction companies, managing agents and residents of high-rise blocks and tall buildings, and that building safety and regulation need to change.
- 3.5 Soon after the Grenfell fire, the Government commissioned the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, led by Dame Judith Hackitt DBE. Dame Judith concluded that “the current system for ensuring fire safety in high rise buildings was not fit for purpose and had lost public confidence and residents trust”. The Government accepted the recommendations made and in December 2018 published its implementation plan that committed to take forward the recommendations as part of a ‘fundamental reform of the system for higher-risk residential buildings.’ Its current consultation, ‘Building a safer future: proposals for the reform of the building safety regulatory system - a consultation’ outline how Government intends to take forward legislative reform.

4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 This meeting will be used to consider fire safety in tall buildings in London. It will hear from experts in the field on the key considerations and areas of focus, including latest developments. Discussion is likely to focus on:
 - Fire safety design and risk management;
 - Tall building fire safety management;
 - Tall building firefighting;
 - Fire protection policy and building regulatory reform; and
 - Working with the local authorities, housing providers and the private sector.
- 4.2 Invited guests include:
 - Dan Daly, Assistant Commissioner, London Fire Brigade;
 - Pat Turnball, Regional Director, London Tenants Federation;
 - Martin Boyd, Chair, Leaseholder Knowledge Partnership;
 - Martin Conlon, Chair, Building Control professional Group – Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors; and
 - Pat Hayes, Managing Director, BeFirst Regeneration;

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications to the Greater London Authority arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report: None

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: Member Delegated Authority form 1078 - Delegated authority to agree the scope for the investigation.

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