Summary

The attached report is an update to the Fire Safety Report presented to the Living and Working Select Committee in November 2017.

In December 2017, the department for Communities and Local government published an interim report lead by Dame Judith Hackitt, “Building a Safer Future, Independent review of building Regulations and Fire Safety.

Recommendation(s)

The LWSC is asked to note the report and provide any additional observations or comments for officers to consider.

1. Introduction and Background

1.1. In the early hours of 14th June, emergency services responded to a report of a flat on fire on the 4th floor of Grenfell Tower, North Kensington.

1.2. The fire spread very rapidly and spread across 20 floors in 18 minutes. Up to 40 fire appliances and crews responded to the incident.

1.3. Grenfell Tower is a 24 storey block with 127 flats. 364 households have been placed in emergency accommodation. The current number of people who have been confirmed dead stands at 80. This figure will not be revised further until the end of the year, until a full search and recovery has been concluded.

1.4. There has been considerable speculation and focus on how the fire spread so quickly and claimed so many lives. The investigation into the cause and spread is ongoing and will take many months to conclude. This will also form
part of the coroner’s inquests into the deaths.

1.5. In addition, the Prime Minister has called for a public inquiry which be led by retired court of appeal judge Sir Martin Moore-Bick, this will take several years to conclude.

1.6. The government has also established a government fire safety expert panel, chaired by Sir Ken Knight to advise on any immediate actions that are required to ensure buildings are safe.

1.7. Barking and Dagenham council established a Strategic Operations Group to oversee the work across all departments in response to the fire, the early areas of investigation and the wider response to government departments at a regional and national level.


1.9. Living and Working Select Committee were provided with a comprehensive report and feedback session at the November meeting.

2. **Proposals and Issues**

2.1 The Fire Safety Cabinet report, adopted in October 2017 set out a series of recommendations in relation to fire safety. The recommendations were based on three broad headings:-

- Improving Fire Safety in Buildings
- Using Regulation to improve fire safety
- Protecting people from the risk of fire

2.2 **Specific update on the policy recommendations**

2.2.1 The following section provides an update on the progress with regards to the recommendations set out under the above three headings.

2.3 **Improving fire safety in Buildings**

2.3.1 The council has put in place measures to ensure that developers of council owned projects understand their responsibility to use materials that meet the standard of non-combustibility.

2.3.2 Whilst it is not a material consideration, planning officers are highlighting the need for consideration of sprinkler systems and a clear fire strategy for all high rise residential building of 18 meters and above.

2.3.3 *Sprinklers in High Risk Residential Blocks*

2.3.4 The Fire Safety Cabinet report also made a number of recommendations in relation to sprinkler systems. This includes the consideration for the installation of sprinkler systems in any new build, residential building of more than 18 metres. It also
recommended a review of the existing high rise residential buildings of 8 storeys or more, to assess the practicality for retro-fitting sprinkler systems.

2.3.5 Senior Officers in My Place have designed an assessment flow chart, to support their approach in assessing the practicality for retro-fitting sprinkler systems. The flow chart has been designed to provide a level of evaluation, ensuring that the fitting of such a system adds a further level of safety without creating detriment to the structural integrity of the building. It confirms that the cost of delivering such a system is commensurate to the risk determined and that resident opinion, through consultation, is duly considered in the decision making process.

2.3.6 This programme of assessment will be completed in the early summer 2018.

2.4 Using regulation to Improve Fire safety

2.4.1 Legal Services have been instructed to draft a contractual clause to be included in all capital procurement for high risk residential buildings, sheltered accommodation and schools, which requires contractors to allow assigned auditors access to all records and the development site itself. It is anticipated that this clause will be incorporated into council contracts from late February 2018.

2.4.2 Properties in Multiple Occupation in High Risk residential blocks

2.4.3 228 properties were identified as being private lets within high rise blocks across the borough. These were risk rated and 145 properties were visited.

2.4.4 To date 27 Unlicensed properties were identified, 7 have been brought to license via enforcement action and other findings indicated that properties were used as temporary accommodation or owner occupiers.

2.4.5 Enforcement action has been taken against 4 addresses which have been sublet and subdivided. One address was vacated and returned the council and two are proceeding to prosecution.

2.5 Protecting people from the risk of fire

2.5.1 Recommendations related to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP’s) have been progressed and will continue to be implemented as cases arise.

2.5.2 The council is hold regular meeting with senior representatives of the LfB to ensure that current information is up to date. There are no changes to fire safety advice to residents at this time.

3. Dame Judith Hackitt Report


3.2 The interim recommendations of the Dame Judith Hackitt report fall under the following 4 headings:-
The government – should review and streamline the suite of Approved Documents. In addition, the report recommends that government should restrict the use of desk top studies to approve significant changes to a high risk building.

Skills and competency – The report recommends that for all disciplines across the design, build, inspection, assessment and maintenance of high risk buildings to provide a framework for regulation, there should be suitably qualified professionals with clear roles and responsibilities.

Handover process – The report highlights that there needs to be greater clarity of roles and responsibilities at each hand over stage, including a formal review between each of the responsible persons. This includes a greater quality assurance role by building control bodies.

Consultation and transparency – The report recommends that there should be greater consultation with key bodies, through the design, building and maintenance process. This includes greater involvement of the Fire and Rescue Service. It also includes Fire Risk Assessments being undertaken annually and accessible to residents.


4. Consultation

4.1 The Policy Recommendations have been drawn together in consultation with London Fire Brigade, and senior officers across council departments.

Public Background Papers Used in the Preparation of the Report: None

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 – Table of recommendations