



TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on
Wednesday, 14th February, 2018 at 1.15 pm

(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 1.00 p.m.)

MEMBERSHIP

Sallie Bannatyne

Olga Gailite

John Gittos (Chair)

Michael Healey

Maddy Hunter

Rita Ighade

Peter Middleton

Roderic Morgan

Jackie Worthington

Please note: Certain or all items on this agenda may be recorded

Agenda compiled by:
Lee Ward
Neighbourhood Services
Tel: 0113 37 83195

Scrutiny Officer: Sharon Guy
Tel: 0113 37 83194

A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">No exempt items have been identified.</p>	
2			<p>LATE ITEMS</p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)</p>	
3			<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
4			<p>MINUTES - 17TH JANUARY 2018</p> <p>To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 2018.</p>	1 - 6
5			<p>CHAIR'S UPDATE</p> <p>To receive an update from the Chair on scrutiny activity, not specifically included on this agenda, since the previous Board meeting.</p>	7 - 8
6			<p>UPDATE ON EAST LEEDS RECOMMENDATION TRACKING</p> <p>The Board is requested to receive an update on East Leeds Responsive Repairs Service recommendations and raise any questions with the Manager in attendance for this item.</p>	9 - 10
7			<p>SURVEYS UPDATE</p> <p>The Board is requested to receive an update to the survey on Anti-Social Behaviour and ask any questions as appropriate.</p>	11 - 12
8			<p>UPDATE ON LEEDS RESPONSE TO GRENFELL TOWER</p> <p>The Board has been made aware from previous meetings that Environments, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board carried out an inquiry after the Grenfell Tower fire based on a recommendation from the Council's Executive Board.</p> <p>As part of the inquiry, the Environments, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board invited the Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board to sit on the Board as part of the inquiry.</p> <p>The Board is requested to receive an update to the inquiry from the Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board and ask any questions as appropriate.</p>	13 - 32

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
9			<p>MOBILE WORKING UPDATE</p> <p>Mobile working for Housing Officers formed part of the recommendations for the Annual Home Visit inquiry carried out by the Board in 2015/16. The Board were presented with an update in December 2016, and this report gives a further update on mobile working.</p>	33 - 34
10			<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday 14th March 2018 at 1:15pm (Pre meeting for all Board members at 1:00pm)</p> <p>THIRD PARTY RECORDING</p> <p>Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts named on the front of this agenda.</p> <p>Use of Recordings by Third Parties– code of practice</p> <p>a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.</p> <p>b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.</p>	
2				
a)				
b)				

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
----------------	---------------------------------	----------------------	--	----------------

This page is intentionally left blank

TENANT SCRUTINY BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 17TH JANUARY, 2018

PRESENT: John Gittos in the Chair

Sallie Bannatyne, Michael Healey, Maddie Hunter, Rita Ighade, Roderic Morgan and Jackie Worthington

56 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

None.

57 Late Items

There were no late items.

58 Apologies for Absence

Olga Gailite, Rita Ighade, Peter Middleton

59 Minutes - 13th December 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2017 be approved as a correct record.

60 Housing Officer Discussion

In opening the discussion, the Chair went through the history of the current inquiry, listing who had already been before the Board and a brief outline of what they stated.

ASB OFFICERS

The Chair asked ASB Officers to give a brief overview of their work. They explained cases can come through Contact Centre, Housing Officers, Out of Hours Service, Councillors and Police. In dealing with a case they work with the victim initially to make sure they are safe and then carry out an investigation with the perpetrator. The Chair asked if an area such as Wetherby has ASB issues. It was noted by the ASB Officer that there is ASB there and it is often caused by youths and so is important we work together with Youth Services in order to deal with the problem. It was noted whilst an area may be seen as affluent and there are no problems, that problems do exist. The Officers noted that since budget cuts to services such as the Police, and also within the Council, that this is starting to have a knock on effect.

It was noted by ASB Officers that whilst an incident may be deemed 'low level' by some, it could have a much greater impact to someone else, but when investigating it may reveal a whole host of other issues for both the victim and perpetrator which also will need to be resolved by other agencies other than LASBT. However, it was explained these agencies are suffering from lack of resources due in part to budget cuts. The ASB Officers stressed they have to in some cases give support to the perpetrator in order to bring about a lasting solution, and whilst many ask that perpetrators be moved out, that it isn't so simple to do. The Officers also noted the issue of complainants going to Councillors about ASB but are then reluctant to give statements, which means the ASB carries on and the ASB team then get the blame for not dealing with it. It was noted where Social Services might need to intervene in a case then they require up to 30 days to do an initial assessment which adds to the time to resolve an issue.

The Chair asked if Officers are moved around if there are shortages of staff in other areas of the city. It was explained what usually happens is they take on cases, but this isn't so much of an issue because although ASB Officers have a defined area, perpetrators can come from anywhere in the City and so their work is cross city.

The Chair asked if PCSOs are being moved around regularly. The ASB Officers explained that like ASB Officers, they work best when they are known in a particular area/community. The ASB Officers also explained that they regularly meet with Housing Officers to discuss cases ongoing, or to arrange joint visits on cases.

SB gave an example about where groups or gangs congregate on public land and what would happen in these instances. The Officers explained in this instance if they become aggressive then the only option is to call the Police. If not, then this can come to the ASB team, but they have to prove that they are doing something wrong. Related to this an example was given that parades of shops attract groups to congregate which can be intimidating to people who need to go past them. SB stressed that congregation can also happen on fields. The Officers explained that in these instances they would work with youth services to try and find them something else to do and gave a recent example in Shadwell where this was successfully carried out. The Officers also noted that they work with schools and where appropriate enforce Acceptable Behaviour Contracts. The Chair asked about parents and if their children's behaviour was putting their tenancy at risk. The Officers explained that there had been an incident with motorcycles in Seacroft and the families whose children were the cause of this were visited and their behaviour was discussed with them. For the serious perpetrators of the problem, tenancy warnings were served and parents told that where their children's behaviour did not improve they would take further action against them.

HOUSING OFFICERS

The Chair asked the Housing Officers in attendance if they received training on ASB and how to deal with this effectively. They explained that they were

aware of what is in their remit and how to address expectations with tenants as to what Housing Officers can and cannot do. The Housing Officers also explained that they conduct action days and ASB questionnaires as a proactive way of finding out about ASB before it becomes more serious.

It was explained noise is a major issue and this sometimes results in the use of recording equipment and there is often a wait to be able to install noise recording equipment, but some noise is more acceptable in some types of properties than in others. The Housing Officers went on to explain the importance of the diaries which are handed out but noted there is a reluctance for some tenants to use them, but they form part of the evidence for the case. The ASB officers explained that noise equipment is only installed for a number of weeks and often noise starts and then stops and the recording equipment doesn't capture any of it.

SB asked about repeat nuisance cases and at what point the case officer would progress further on with the case. The ASB Officers explained the length of time to link a previous case to a new incident is a grey area and one which is looked at on a case by case basis. The Officers noted that they can issue Section 80 notices which are part of the Environmental Protection Act which never expire and can be used to seize equipment causing the nuisance if it continues.

A discussion was held about high rise blocks and ASB being caused in them, such as people trying to gain unauthorised entry to the block by pressing the entry buttons and hoping someone will let them in. Where a block has CCTV this can be used to identify those who do this and also it was noted by Housing Officers that some blocks now have fobs which are linked to a property and so it can be seen if their fob was used to let someone in who caused a nuisance.

The Chair asked if due to lettings changes which mean more children were being rehoused in high rise blocks had this caused of more noise incidents, especially caused because of the type of flooring in the property. The Housing Officer noted that there hasn't been a discernible difference in the number of noise nuisance cases since the changes, but there is a new management model to have family friendly blocks so that families are living together which will mean they are potentially more tolerant of noise, especially that caused by children running around.

The Chair in closing asked all Officers in attendance if there was anything they could change which would help them do their job better or more efficiently. The ASB Officers explained that the system such as the Caseworks system is clunky. It was explained that template letters from the system cannot be changed and so they have to be amended manually, an example that the letter of where the address of the office is cannot be changed and so this has to be done manually and it can be easy to forget to do this if in a rush.

Also using the system to identify private properties can be difficult. None of the systems talk to each other which means obtaining information is very difficult, for example is a property a Council one or private rented.

The ASB Officer explained it would help if there were more mental health workers available to support families of ASB and the perpetrators to try and resolve issues would improve the situation, as well as and being able to contact them better, for example where someone has a health worker it is difficult to identify them without having to go through the NHS inquiry line which takes up time. They gave an example of a Council officer who worked with them for a short period of time who had access to this system which saved a lot of time but this is no longer available to the team as the officer no longer works with them.

The Housing Officers explained having contact numbers for other agencies, such as Social Services would be helpful and knowing who to go to, as at present a lot of time is spent looking for this information. It would also allow us to see if they are engaging with other agencies.

The ASB Officers noted that they have only just received mobiles which can receive emails on them. The Chair asked if having laptops would be of assistance, but they explained that Officers would not be comfortable walking round an estate or going into perpetrators homes with them, given the information which would be contained in them.

61 ASB Officer Discussion

Both this item and the previous one were combined together.

62 ASB Survey

The Chair presented the proposed survey for Anti-Social Behaviour to the Board. The Chair asked that as wide an audience is given for this survey.

RESOLVED – The Board agreed with the proposed survey for Anti-Social Behaviour.

63 Revised Work Programme

The Chair explained that due to the cancellation of one of the previous meeting this has thrown the planned schedule out. The Chair noted that the Board are not tied to other reports like in previous years which are ongoing which the Board wanted to be part of. It was noted that this report into Anti-Social Behaviour would be unlikely to be completed before April.

RESOLVED – The Board agreed with the revised work programme for the Board.

64 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday 14th February 2018 at 1:15pm
(Pre meeting for all Board members at 1:00pm)

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 3:10 PM

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Wednesday, 14th February, 2018

This page is intentionally left blank



Report author: Sharon Guy

Tel: 07891 273581

Report of Scrutiny Officer

Report to Tenant Scrutiny Board

Date: 14 February 2018

Subject: Chair's Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on work and activity of the Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Board.

2 MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Invariably, scrutiny activity takes place outside of the formal monthly Tenant Scrutiny Board meetings. Such activity can take the form of specific activity and actions of the Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Board.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- Note the content of the verbal updates provided
 - Identify any specific matters that may require further scrutiny input/activity.

This page is intentionally left blank



Report author: Sharon Guy
Tel: 07891 273581

Report of Housing Manager

Report to Tenant Scrutiny Board

Date: 14 February 2018

Subject: Update on East Leeds Responsive Repairs Inquiry

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Boards inquiry in 2016/17 municipal year focused on East Leeds Responsive Repairs Service.
- 1.2 It was agreed regular updates would be provided by Housing Leeds on progress of recommendations made.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Board is requested to receive the update on East Leeds Responsive Repairs Service recommendations and raise any questions with the manager in attendance for this item.

3.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS¹

- 3.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

This page is intentionally left blank



Report author: Sharon Guy
Tel: 07891 273581

Report of Scrutiny Officer

Report to Tenant Scrutiny Board

Date: 14th February 2018

Subject: Survey Update

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Board has commissioned a survey to be carried out in order to gather evidence from a wide range of people around the Anti-Social Behaviour Service.
- 1.2 The survey was sent to involved tenants, which includes Tenant and Resident Associations and Service Improvement Volunteers across the City.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Board is requested to receive an update to the survey and ask any questions as appropriate.

3.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS¹

- 3.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

This page is intentionally left blank



Report author: Sharon Guy
Tel: 07891 273581

Report of **Scrutiny Officer**

Report to **Tenant Scrutiny Board**

Date: **14th February 2018**

Subject: **Leeds Response to Grenfell Towers Update to Board**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Board has been made aware from previous meetings that Environments, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board carried out an inquiry after the Grenfell Tower fire based on a recommendation from the Council’s Executive Board.

- 1.2 In responding to this recommendation, they agreed to undertake an inquiry into Leeds’ response to Grenfell insofar as the Scrutiny Board’s areas of responsibility. In order to expedite this we agreed the terms of reference of the inquiry in September 2017 and held evidence gathering sessions during October 2017.

- 1.3 As part of the inquiry, the Environments, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board invited the Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board to sit on the Board as part of the inquiry.

- 1.4 The scope of their inquiry was to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
 - The actions currently in progress or completed in ensuring compliance with fire safety standards for Council housing stock;
 - The level of engagement activity undertaken with local residents regarding fire safety and details of ongoing engagement plans
 - The role of the Council in encouraging fire safety compliance amongst other local housing providers, with particular reference to the Council’s enforcement of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

- Contingency measures for re-homing council residents in the event of a major fire.
- The medium/longer term investment strategy for Council housing stock in relation to fire safety measures, such as sprinkler systems, and associated communication methods.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Board is requested to receive an update to the inquiry from the Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board and ask any questions as appropriate.

3.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS¹

- 3.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Leeds' Response to Grenfell
Draft Scrutiny Report



Contents

	Page(s)
1. Desired Outcomes and Recommendation Summary	3-4
2. Introduction and Scope	5-7
3. Conclusions and Recommendations	8-15
4. Evidence	16-17



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – To develop an effective engagement and communications plan for Council high rise tenants.

Recommendation 1 – That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that regular updates are provided to the relevant Scrutiny Board in relation to the ongoing development of engagement and communication plans for Council high rise tenants, with an initial update provided by July 2018.

Desired Outcome – To have effective and transparent tenant engagement in the fire safety audit process across all Council high rise blocks.

Recommendation 2 - That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that work is undertaken, in conjunction with the High Rise Advisory Group, to consider the merits of all possible tenant engagement options, including the Block Champion approach, with the aim of developing a best practice model that provides effective and transparent tenant engagement in the fire safety audit process across all Council high rise blocks.

Desired Outcome – That communal noticeboards are being effectively used in all Council high rise blocks.

Recommendation 3 – That the Director of Resources and Housing:

- (a) Ensures that all Council high rise blocks have communal noticeboards in use by June 2018 to display key information, such as fire safety audit results and details of planned/completed communal repairs and maintenance work.
- (b) Develops a best practice approach to ensure that communal noticeboards within all Council high rise blocks are being managed effectively and kept up-to-date.

Desired Outcome – That there is real time recording of fire safety checks undertaken in Council high rise blocks.

Recommendation 4 – That, as a matter of urgency, the Director of Resources and Housing explores investment opportunities for handheld technology, such as smart phones, to be introduced for undertaking and recording fire safety checks in high rise blocks.



Desired Outcomes and Recommendations

Desired Outcome – That there is continued Scrutiny engagement surrounding the implications of the Grenfell national public inquiry findings.

Recommendation 5 – That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that further engagement is undertaken with Scrutiny to consider the impact on the Council's Housing Investment Plan once the Grenfell national public inquiry has concluded.

Desired Outcome – That there is scrutiny engagement surrounding fire safety standards linked to medium and low rise Council housing stock.

Recommendation 6 – That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that further engagement is undertaken with Scrutiny regarding fire safety standards linked to medium and low rise Council housing stock.



Introduction and Scope

Introduction.

1. The horrific events of 14 June 2017 in west London have resulted in continued public and media interest in the safety of high-rise blocks across the UK. This has been particularly focussed on the presence of Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) types of cladding systems that are similar to the system installed at Grenfell Towers, which fire safety experts have pointed at as a possible reason the blaze spread so quickly.
2. The immediate priority for Leeds City Council following the events of Grenfell Tower has been the assurance of Leeds citizens regarding their personal safety. Initially this was focussed particularly on the Council's 116 high rise blocks, where immediate investigations had confirmed that the 23 cladded blocks in Leeds do not have any Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) type of cladding systems. This and further safety advice and reassurance was communicated to residents directly and through media and press releases.
3. Other actions had also been taken as part of a strategic action plan to assess and respond to the impact of the Grenfell Tower fire in Leeds. This included assessing other public buildings such as schools and hospitals, controlling procedures in case of the need to evacuate properties and keeping local stakeholders up to date on all developments. A strategic task group was also established to oversee this work involving all relevant council service leads and representatives of

the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

4. At its meeting on 17th July 2017, the Executive Board received a report detailing the work undertaken to-date by Leeds City Council and partners since the events of the Grenfell fire. However, alongside the work of the strategic task group, the Executive Board also acknowledged the role of Scrutiny and agreed the following recommendation:

That in relation to the role of Scrutiny Boards, the following Scrutiny Boards be requested to pick up scrutiny of the relevant actions / emerging issues:-

- (i) *Scrutiny Board (Strategy and Resources) – emergency planning;*
 - (ii) *Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure and investment) – private sector properties and building control;*
 - (iii) *Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities) – Council housing stock safety, resident engagement and investment decisions.*
5. In responding to this recommendation, we agreed to undertake an inquiry into Leeds' response to Grenfell insofar as the Scrutiny Board's areas of responsibility. We were also keen to undertake this piece of work quickly. We therefore agreed the terms of reference of our inquiry in September 2017 and held evidence gathering sessions during October 2017.



Introduction and Scope

Scope of the inquiry.

6. The purpose of our inquiry was to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:
 - The actions currently in progress or completed in ensuring compliance with fire safety standards for Council housing stock;
 - The level of engagement activity undertaken with local residents regarding fire safety and details of ongoing engagement plans.
 - The role of the Council in encouraging fire safety compliance amongst other local housing providers, with particular reference to the Council's enforcement of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
 - Contingency measures for re-homing council residents in the event of a major fire.
 - The medium/longer term investment strategy for Council housing stock in relation to fire safety measures, such as sprinkler systems, and associated communication methods.

Best Council Plan.

7. The vision from the Best Council Plan is for Leeds to be a compassionate, caring city, where we want everyone to be safe and feel safe. In responding to the events of Grenfell Tower it is essential that as a Council we do everything possible to make sure residents in high rise buildings are safe and feel that they are safe.

Desired Outcomes, Added Value and Anticipated Service Impact.

8. In undertaking this inquiry, we set out to achieve the following key outcomes:
 - Providing reassurance that the Council is complying with current fire safety standards;
 - Instilling confidence for the Council to lead by example to other housing providers;
 - Ensuring that the Council's medium/longer term investment strategy for Council housing stock is informed by robust evidence.
9. However, it is important to stress that our inquiry findings, as set out within this report, are only reflective of the evidence presented to Scrutiny within a specific and short timeframe.
10. In undertaking this inquiry, we particularly reflected on how the Council responded immediately to the tragic events of Grenfell in relation to its own high rise blocks as well as considering how such events have since informed short and medium term actions locally. Linked to this, we also discussed the Council's medium/long term investment strategy for its social housing stock in relation to fire safety measures.
11. However, throughout our inquiry we also remained mindful of the ongoing independent public inquiry set up by Government to examine the circumstances surrounding the fire at Grenfell and to determine what, if any, further action may be needed nationally



Introduction and Scope

- to prevent a similar tragedy happening again.
12. Depending on the emerging findings of this public inquiry, there is clearly the potential for future policy changes in relation to high rise building and fire safety regulations. These could include changes to building regulations and fire safety requirements that need to be retrofitted to buildings.
 13. Whilst the Council quite rightly will always prioritise the safety of its residents, there will inevitably be resource implications to consider which may impact upon other planned improvements to council housing. This will need to be reviewed once the situation is made clearer. However, it is also vital that the Council engages proactively with Government about how such potential pressures can be effectively managed moving forward. We have addressed the issue of potential investment needs in more detail within our report (see paragraphs 64-69).
 14. It is also paramount that any future policy changes are communicated effectively, with residents being reassured of their immediate safety alongside any programme of change, especially where it is likely to take a significant amount of time and resources to implement.
 15. In undertaking this inquiry, we recognised the importance of communicating and engaging directly with tenants. We therefore welcomed the contribution made by the Chair of the Tenant Scrutiny Board and also representatives from the High Rise Advisory Group. This group is comprised of tenants and residents living in high rise accommodation and was set up in 2014 to support Housing Leeds in shaping services for high rise tenants.
 16. We equally appreciated the valuable input of representatives from the West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service and also the active contribution of the Executive Member for Communities and senior officers from Housing Leeds and Civic Enterprise Leeds.
 17. Our inquiry has very much highlighted the ongoing commitment of existing staff, key partners and tenant volunteers who are working tirelessly to actively promote the importance of fire safety. Linked to the work undertaken by fellow Scrutiny Boards, we would also like to acknowledge the positive joint working between Housing Leeds and other Council services, including Emergency Planning and the Building Control Team, in raising the profile of fire safety more widely across the private sector and in preparing for any emergency evacuation and temporary rehousing of people, should this ever become necessary.

Equality and Diversity.

18. The Equality Improvement Priorities 2016 to 2020 have been developed to ensure that the council meets its legal duties under the Equality Act 2010. The priorities will help the council to identify work and activities that help to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity to achieve its ambition to be the best city in the UK.
19. Equality and diversity issues have been considered throughout this scrutiny inquiry and the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery of the recommendations arising from this inquiry should also give due regard to equality and diversity and where appropriate, an equality impact assessment will be carried out.



Conclusions and Recommendations

A commendable immediate response.

20. Firstly, we are very proud to acknowledge the positive relationship that already exists between the Council and West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS). As a result of this, a joint Fire Safety Concordat is already in existence and allows both parties to agree on a hierarchy of risk mitigation measures for the whole Council Housing stock.
21. Since the Grenfell Tower fire, high rise blocks have clearly become an area of primary concern and focus. However, the local Fire Safety Concordat already recognises that high rise buildings should be prioritised over low and medium rise buildings in terms of risk mitigation measures.
22. As part of our inquiry, we received an overview of the actions taken by the Council within days of the Grenfell tragedy. Such actions aimed to reassure the Council and local residents that fire safety is being effectively managed in Leeds' high rise Council homes. This included a joint urgent review with WYFRS of the Council's own fire safety approach, with all 116 Council high rise blocks being visited and a full audit undertaken of all Fire Risk Assessments.
23. A dedicated team was convened to respond to fire safety related phone and email enquiries, particularly from tenants, and a Fire Action Group was also established by Housing Leeds. Whilst agreeing to meet weekly initially, this Group now continues to meet on a monthly basis.
24. The Council also actively responded to information requests made by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Linked to this, investigations had revealed that the 23 cladded blocks in Leeds do not have any Aluminium Composite Material (ACM) type of cladding systems.
25. However, we were very pleased to learn that the Council agreed to proactively undertake further investigations on all local high rise blocks with external wall insulation, despite not being required to do so by Government. The Housing Leeds Fire Safety Team arranged for a third party accredited company (FIRAS) to undertake inspections of all these blocks. At the time of writing our report, we learned that FIRAS have now provided certification confirming that all our blocks have achieved the necessary standards.
26. Overall there has been overwhelming agreement by Board Members and also those representing local high rise residents, that the Council, in collaboration with WYFRS, provided a proactive and commendable immediate response following the events of Grenfell.
27. Moving forward, we learned that a Fire Safety Action Plan has been developed to help co-ordinate all subsequent short term and medium term actions. Whilst the delivery of this Plan is being co-ordinated by the Fire Safety Team in Housing Leeds, we acknowledge that many of the actions within it also link into the Council's wider High Rise Strategy.
28. In October 2016, the Council's Executive Board agreed to implement a



Conclusions and Recommendations

new High Rise Strategy for the city. This Strategy sets out Housing Leeds' plans to address a number of issues linked to High Rise Council homes, including investment need. We therefore continue to reference the associated links made to this particular Strategy moving forward.

Proactive engagement with residents.

29. Immediately following the fire, we learned that a Resident Engagement Plan had been developed to help plan and capture the Council's approach to sharing information and supporting residents with any concerns they may have about fire safety.
30. As part of this, two letters had initially been sent to all residents living in high rise to provide updates on progress and the latest fire safety advice. A third letter was then sent to those residents living in high rise blocks with cladding in order to provide more specific information about the cladding and the actions being taken in relation to such cladding.
31. To complement the written communications, we learned that local resident engagement sessions were also held to cover all blocks across the city. We received an overview of these engagement sessions as well as receiving feedback directly from resident representatives.
32. The engagement sessions were predominantly drop in sessions at blocks which aimed to give residents the opportunity to ask any questions or raise any concerns they may have. However, this also enabled Housing Leeds to reassure residents of subsequent actions taken or being planned.
33. We understand that the resident engagement sessions on fire safety were very well received by residents and that they particularly appreciated the efforts made to undertake face-to-face engagement when providing reassurance to residents and seeking out their views on local issues.
34. Interestingly, this engagement activity had also flagged that many residents were not aware of the wider arrangements in place for managing high rise homes and for ensuring resident safety.
35. As such, we were pleased to learn that a key priority for Housing Leeds for the remainder of 2017/18 is to strengthen its resident engagement and communication plan to ensure that residents are kept informed of, and are also involved in, plans for their block. Linked to this, the outcomes arising from the recent fire safety engagement sessions are being used to inform ongoing engagement plans with residents.
36. Whilst there is to be more local resident engagement in relation to issues at a block by block level, we noted a number of other broader communication opportunities being planned as follows:
 - Website development to include a general page on high rise. This is to provide regular updates on the High Rise Strategy and more information on what is planned at a block by block level. This is to be developed during 2018;



Conclusions and Recommendations

- Pilot interactive online forums / E-Surveys, linked to the development of the website during 2018. This is to provide opportunities for ongoing feedback on issues;
- Pilot greater use of targeted emails / texts to communicate with residents of individual blocks on issues relating to the block;
- Consideration is being given to producing a one off High Rise Newsletter in autumn 2017 which provides information on the High Rise Strategy and progress made, but also more local information about what is happening in blocks;
- Communal Noticeboards – to develop a consistent approach to recording block specific information and feedback;
- Review of housing surgeries to ensure that tenants are being offered a convenient way to access services and particularly at blocks where there are management issues or low levels of satisfaction.

37. As Housing Leeds moves forward to develop its resident engagement and communication plan, we were pleased to acknowledge the key role that the High Rise Advisory Group will also have in this regard. As tenant representatives, we also recognise the importance of this Group in monitoring the wider delivery of the High Rise Strategy, acting both as critical friend and reviewing quality assurance.

38. However, we also recognise the continued role of Scrutiny in ensuring that the views of residents, particularly

following the events of Grenfell, are being captured and responded to appropriately. As such, it is important that Scrutiny also maintains a close watching brief surrounding the future development of engagement and communication plans for Council high rise tenants.

Recommendation 1
That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that regular updates are provided to the relevant Scrutiny Board in relation to the ongoing development of engagement and communication plans for Council high rise tenants, with an initial update provided by July 2018.

Fire safety awareness amongst those working in high rise blocks.

39. The resident engagement work immediately following the events of Grenfell had clearly raised the profile of fire safety and prompted many residents to familiarise themselves with the Council's fire safety measures and procedures, including the existing 'stay put' policy associated with the compartmentation work that has been invested in existing blocks to prevent the spread of fire.

40. However, during our inquiry we also stressed the importance of ensuring that non-residents and especially those contracted to undertake block maintenance works, are also familiar with such fire safety measures and procedures and have a clear understanding of how their actions might adversely affect the fire safety measures



Conclusions and Recommendations

present in the building, for example, by propping open fire doors.

41. In response, we were pleased to learn that fire safety awareness is already a fundamental element of the training provided to all contracted workers and that fire safety awareness had been stressed again with existing contractors post Grenfell, with fire safety guidance also being reissued.

Improvements to fire safety inspection checks.

42. A key area of discussion during our inquiry related to high rise fire safety checks in terms of their frequency and the procedures followed, as well as the reporting and recording processes.
43. Interestingly we learned that it is the high rise cleaning staff, who form part of Civic Enterprise Leeds, that are given the additional responsibility to undertake fire safety checks. As such, we understand that cleaning staff receive specific fire safety training which is also refreshed on a regular basis.
44. We were informed that daily Stage 1 fire safety checks take place across all high rise blocks 7 days a week, with Enhanced Management Blocks - i.e. those identified as needing a more intensive housing management approach - having two daily checks covering morning and evening.
45. We were particularly keen to learn more about the processes in place to ensure that such checks are robust, accurate

and consistent across the city. In doing so, we noted that Stage 2 checks are carried out by Housing Management on a quarterly basis (monthly in Enhanced Management Blocks) and that an audit schedule is also in place for Stage 1 checks. Such audits are also selected randomly and subjected to a 'check and challenge' process on a quarterly basis.

46. In addition to this, we also learned that the results of all fire safety checks are logged in a spreadsheet and shared during a monthly fire safety meeting with officers from Housing Management and Property and Contracts.
47. Despite such processes already being in place, a number of issues were raised during our inquiry, primarily by the tenant representatives, which highlighted some inconsistencies in the approach taken across each block. We also noted common tenant perceptions regarding the lack of visibility of cleaning staff and speculation regarding the robustness of fire safety checks.
48. In response, we learned that Housing Leeds is continuing to work closely with Civic Enterprise Leeds to ensure there is a constant and harmonised service for cleaning and fire safety standard checks at all high rise blocks across the city, with joint block audits now being undertaken.
49. However, there was also an acceptance that further work is needed to encourage greater participation, particularly from residents, in the fire safety audit process in order to capture more thoughts and ideas around improvement needs.
50. Having already acknowledged the added value of resident engagement



Conclusions and Recommendations

and insight during our own inquiry, we are fully supportive of efforts to encourage greater resident participation in the fire safety audit process.

51. Linked to this, particular reference was made to the existing Block Champion approach. However, we acknowledge that the success of this approach is heavily dependent on those individual tenant representatives having a clear understanding of the expectations placed upon them as well as having a strong commitment to undertake this role effectively on behalf of fellow residents.

52. As such, we recommend that Housing Leeds, in conjunction with the High Rise Advisory Group, consider the merits of all possible tenant engagement options, including the Block Champion approach, with the aim of developing a best practice model that provides effective and transparent tenant engagement in the fire safety audit process across all Council high rise blocks.

Recommendation 2
That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that work is undertaken, in conjunction with the High Rise Advisory Group, to consider the merits of all possible tenant engagement options, including the Block Champion approach, with the aim of developing a best practice model that provides effective and transparent tenant engagement in the fire safety audit process across all Council high rise blocks.

53. It was also evident that more still needs to be done to ensure that all residents are made aware of the fire safety audit results relating to their block.

54. We would therefore expect other communication methods, such as those mentioned earlier, being utilised effectively too. In particular, we would expect all Council high rise blocks to have communal noticeboards so that key information, such as the fire safety audit results and details of planned/completed communal repairs and maintenance work, can be clearly displayed.

Recommendation 3
That the Director of Resources and Housing:

(a) Ensures that all Council high rise blocks have communal noticeboards in use by June 2018 to display key information, such as fire safety audit results and details of planned/completed communal repairs and maintenance work.

(b) Develops a best practice approach to ensure that communal noticeboards within all Council high rise blocks are being managed effectively and kept up-to-date.

55. During our inquiry, we also discussed how fire safety checks are being reported back to Housing Management staff, particularly in terms of any action being identified.

56. In doing so, we were very concerned to learn that a paper based system is still



Conclusions and Recommendations

being utilised, with fire safety check sheets being manually scanned on a weekly basis and then emailed to the relevant Housing Offices. This current system therefore does not provide real time information to Housing Offices.

57. However, we were pleased to note that the service had already recognised the need for future investment in handheld technology, such as smart phones, so that the date, time and location of fire safety checks can be sent in real time to Housing Offices, with any flagged issues being dealt with more quickly and efficiently. In view of this, we very much recognise the urgency of such investment.

Recommendation 4
That, as a matter of urgency, the Director of Resources and Housing explores investment opportunities for handheld technology, such as smart phones, to be introduced for undertaking and recording fire safety checks in high rise blocks.

Addressing other factors relating to fire safety in high rise blocks.

58. We acknowledged that a number of other key factors raised by tenants as part of the engagement activity following the events of Grenfell are very much associated with fire prevention measures too. These related to:

- Blocked waste chutes;
- The removal of bulky waste; and

- Car parking enforcement.

59. We are therefore pleased to acknowledge that these factors have already been picked up as part of the wider High Rise Strategy, with key practices already in place and further improvement initiatives being developed.

60. In particular, we noted that joint working with Civic Enterprise Leeds and Waste Services is ongoing to improve the management of waste in high rise blocks. Linked to this, additional afternoon checks have been introduced in the Enhanced Management blocks and other blocks where there are problems with waste being left on landings and in foyers to move additional waste and bulky items which represent a fire risk.

61. We understand that a review of chutes in the most problematic blocks is also underway. This review includes a survey of the condition of chutes and an evaluation of opportunities to improve waste management within blocks. As part of this, a number of options will be piloted within different blocks. This review is happening alongside a wider review of waste management in blocks to ensure that there is adequate provision of waste and recycling facilities.

62. During our inquiry, particular reference was also made to car parking issues, where Waste Services have a problem with access due to vehicles parking in the keep clear areas in front of bin room doors. We are pleased to learn that this is now being addressed by amending existing Traffic Regulation Orders on car parks of high rise blocks to enforce the



Conclusions and Recommendations

keep clear areas for Waste Services and also emergency vehicles. Housing Leeds are also looking to introduce new Traffic Regulation Orders at other blocks where there is a particular parking problem and to introduce restricted parking on the entrance roads to high rise blocks.

63. Scrutiny continues to have a recognised role in monitoring the delivery of the wider High Rise Strategy and in doing so, particular attention will be given to the level of progress made in addressing these three key factors linked to the wider fire prevention measures for high rise blocks.

Current and future investments in fire safety measures.

64. We acknowledge that Housing Leeds has been investing in fire safety measures in its high rise blocks for several years now, spending in excess of £10m in the last three years to upgrade fire doors, deliver compartmentation, emergency signage and lighting.

65. A programme is also currently underway to fit sprinklers to 8 sheltered blocks, with 6 blocks already now been completed and the remaining two PFI blocks being due for completion during 2018/19. Further plans are also being developed to identify the next 8 priority blocks to receive additional fire safety measures, based on block height, single staircases and frequency of fires.

66. As mentioned within our introduction, we are mindful that the emerging findings of

the national public inquiry following Grenfell has the potential for future policy changes in relation to high rise building and fire safety regulations, which could include changes to building regulations and fire safety requirements that need to be retrofitted to buildings.

67. Although it is likely to be some considerable time before the findings of the national public inquiry are known, the Council is currently anticipating up to £52m of additional fire safety works being required in existing stock in total, once best practice and new requirements are factored in.

68. A large proportion of this (c£32m) is for the cost of installing sprinklers in all high rise blocks. The Council has already made £10m available to fund further sprinkler installations in high risk blocks and therefore the £22m cost of installing sprinklers in lower risk high-rise blocks is currently an unfunded pressure in the Council's housing investment plan.

69. If additional funding for these works is not made available from Government then they will have to be funded from existing resources, meaning that it will not be possible to carry out all the works currently contained in the Council's investment plan. As such, we fully support the Council's ongoing lobbying of Government to fund such works and recommend that further engagement is undertaken with Scrutiny to consider the impact on the Council's Housing Investment Plan once the Grenfell national public inquiry has concluded.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Recommendation 5

That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that further engagement is undertaken with Scrutiny to consider the impact on the Council's Housing Investment Plan once the Grenfell national public inquiry has concluded.

Future consideration of medium and low-rise Council housing stock.

70. High rise housing is a substantial part of Council Housing in Leeds, with over 7500 households in 116 blocks across the city and Housing Leeds has evidently undertaken a number of actions to assure itself and residents that fire safety is being effectively

managed in Leeds' high rise Council homes.

71. Whilst we accept the prioritisation of fire safety standards work being undertaken for Council high rise blocks, we would also welcome further scrutiny of fire safety standards linked to medium and low rise buildings too, and particularly those that have some form of cladding.

Recommendation 6

That the Director of Resources and Housing ensures that further engagement is undertaken with Scrutiny regarding fire safety standards linked to medium and low rise Council housing stock.



Evidence

Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

An overview of the engagement activity undertaken post Grenfell to residents of Council High Rise Blocks.

Scrutiny Board presentation (9th October 2017) on the key areas aligned to session 2, including the following:

- Immediate, short term and medium term actions taken with high rise blocks post Grenfell.
- High Rise Strategy Resident Engagement Plan
- High Rise Fire Safety Checks – process and performance reporting

Dates of Scrutiny

Scrutiny Board Meeting – Agreeing terms of reference – 11th September 2017

Scrutiny Working Group – Session 1 of the inquiry – 2nd October 2017

Scrutiny Board Meeting – Session 2 of the inquiry – 9th October 2017



Evidence

Witnesses Heard

- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Simon Costigan, Chief Officer Property and Contracts
- Jill Wildman, Chief Officer Housing Management
- Sarah Martin, Chief Officer, Civic Enterprise Leeds
- Richard Jackson, Head of Service, Facilities Management/Cleaning
- Dave Walton, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Nigel Charleston, Fire Protection, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service
- John Gittos, Chair of Tenant Scrutiny Board
- Sue Easton, Member of the High Rise Advisory Group
- Ted Wilson, Member of the High Rise Advisory Group and Vital

Scrutiny Board (Environment, Housing and Communities)
Leeds' response to Grenfell
December 2017
Report author: Angela Brogden



www.scrutiny.unit@leeds.gov.uk



Report author: Gerard Tinsdale
Tel: 0113 3783195

Report of **Head of Housing Management**

Report to **Tenant Scrutiny Board**

Date: **14th February 2018**

Subject: **Mobile Working Update**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

1.1 Mobile working for Housing Officers formed part of the recommendations for the Annual Home Visit inquiry carried out by the Board in 2015/16. The Board were presented with an update in December 2016 and this report gives a further update on the mobile working element.

2.0 UPDATE SINCE LAST REPORT

- 2.1 Since the last report, the Council has carried out a procurement exercise for its Housing Management system. The result of this is a new supplier, Civica, will be used by Housing Leeds, and further development on mobile working has been suspended on the current system until Civica is rolled out.

- 2.2 Civica provide a mobile solution for their system and we will be working with partners in IT and Civica to look at developing further e-forms to link to the mobile solution to ensure officers can complete Annual Home visits successfully whilst out on site and avoid double keying. This new system also has the advantage of negating problems we had with the previous system of being able to run it on tablet computers.

- 2.3 Mobile working continues to represent the future for large pockets of the workforce. With the rollout of the new Housing Management system, it is hoped we will be able to further mobile working and make it more efficient whilst continuing to provide staff with the best tools for their work. Housing Leeds have already looked at usage and benefits are realised, especially in outer areas where staff carry out remote housing surgeries.

- 2.4 The interest from other directorates in the MiFi units mentioned in the last update has given us an opportunity to recoup some of the costs involved in the project. Each staff member was originally allocated their own MiFi unit. However, looking at feedback, the current infrastructure and with an increased understanding of how teams would choose to work it was felt the number of units could be reduced by 50%.
- 2.5 Surplus units were issued to Scheme Support Officers allowing them to better deal with sheltered residents on site. Senior Officers have also been allocated devices to deal with out of hours emergencies that may arise. A further 30 units have been distributed to other departments within the Council and has produced ongoing savings to Housing Leeds in terms of data cost reductions.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Board are requested to note the update to mobile working.

4.0 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS¹

- 4.1 None.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.