

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting12th July 2017

1. Title of Item/Report

Place Select Committee - Review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings (Task & Finish)

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's Task and Finish Review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings.

On the 14th June 2017, a major fire broke out at Grenfell Tower, a 24-storey 220-foot (70-metre) high tower block of public housing flats in North Kensington, west London, resulting in a high number of casualties and severe damage to the building. The cause of the fire was suspected to be a faulty fridge-freezer in a fourth floor flat, and the speed at which the fire spread was believed to have been aided by the buildings recently added exterior cladding (part of a 2016 refurbishment).

The scale of this tragedy had led the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to request that fire safety checks be urgently carried out on all tower blocks, and for Local Authorities and Housing Associations to ensure that appropriate safety and response measures were in place. Crucially, there was an immediate need to provide residents within such buildings with the appropriate reassurances.

The aim of this urgent task and finish review was to:

- Establish the residential buildings in question, and identify any areas of concern in terms of fire risk, particularly around the type of cladding used on Grenfell Tower.
- Review if robust fire risk assessments have been/are in place, and understand what these assessments entail.
- Consider the safety advice given to residents who live in tower blocks.
- Provide reassurance to residents, Ward Councillors and the DCLG.

In order to inform the review, evidence had been taken from key partner

agencies, including:

- Local Authority
- Thirteen Group
- Cleveland Fire Brigade
- Kennedy Gardens Residents Association

RESOLVED that:-

1. The Committee receives further updates from key partner agencies around the stated ongoing investigations of high rise residential buildings across the Borough.
2. The Government is strongly lobbied to improve and strengthen building control mechanisms in relation to fire safety.
3. All key partner agencies consider the outcomes from Thirteen Group's commissioned independent inquiry around the presence of Class 3 combustible cladding at Kennedy Gardens, and act where necessary.
4. Landlords ensure the maintenance and upkeep of fire risk assessments, including that the building itself meets fire risk assessment standards, and that the responsibility of tenants in maintaining robust fire safety measures and timely reporting of any areas of concern to their landlord is reinforced.
5. The Committee recommends the installation of sprinkler/misting systems in all high rise residential buildings across Stockton-on-Tees.
6. The Council writes to all landlords of high rise residential buildings in Stockton-on-Tees to ensure compliance with fire regulations, which takes into account vulnerable occupants, information on which is regularly updated.
7. Consideration be given by all key partner agencies on the outcomes from the Government's public inquiry into the Grenfell Tower, or any related, fire once available.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The report presents the findings of the scrutiny review that took place following the urgent initiation of a task and finish group in the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire in North Kensington, West London, on the 14th June 2017.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Place Select Committee - Review of Fire Safety of High Rise Residential Buildings (Task & Finish) as he was a Director of Thirteen. Councillor Steve Nelson withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 21 July 2017

Proper Officer
17 July 2017