

To: Housing, Finance and Corporate Services Committee

From: Aaron Hardy - Policy and Scrutiny Officer

Date: 4th September 2017

Subject: Post Grenfell Inquiries

Summary

Following the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017 a number of inquiries and investigations have been initiated on a range of related matters. This briefing summarises some of these and provides an update on their progress and outcomes.

Overview

Grenfell Tower Enquiry

- Led by retired Judge Sir Martin Moore-Bick
- The consultation on the terms of reference closed on 4th August. The terms of reference are:
 - the cause and spread of the fire
 - the design, construction and refurbishment of Grenfell Tower
 - the scope and adequacy of the relevant regulations relating to high-rise buildings
 - whether the relevant legislation and guidance were complied with in the case of Grenfell Tower
 - how the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and other bodies received and acted upon information from residents and other sources relating to fire risk at Grenfell Tower
 - the fire prevention and safety measures in place at Grenfell Tower
 - the response of the London Fire Brigade to the fire and the response of central and local government in the days immediately following the fire
- The inquiry has now officially begun and will hold its first hearing on 14 September, with an initial report by Easter 2018.

National Investigation into Cladding

- The Prime Minister has said there will be a national investigation into the use of potentially flammable cladding on high-rise towers across the country over a period of decades.
- The exact nature of the investigation has not yet been determined, one option is for it to form a second phase to the judge-led inquiry into the Grenfell fire

Independent Expert Advisory Panel

- This expert panel will look at any immediate action that is required so the public can be confident everything possible is being done to make all public and private buildings safe as quickly as possible.
- Led by Sir Ken Knight

Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety

- The Government has announced an independent review of building regulations and fire safety. Led by Dame Judith Hackitt (Chair of EEF, the Manufacturers' Organisation) the review will look at current building regulations and fire safety with a particular focus on high rise residential buildings.
- It will examine:
 - the regulatory system around the design, construction and on-going management of buildings in relation to fire safety
 - related compliance and enforcement issues
 - international regulation and experience in this area
- DCLG had said that the separate work reviewing Document B (fire safety) of the Building Regulations was on-going. Recommended by coroner after Lakeland House fire in 2009. This review was expected to be completed in 2016/17, the intention was to simplify the guidance where possible and update and revise the technical content at the same time.

Mayoral Investigation

- Following the fire at Grenfell Tower there were reports that firefighters did not have the necessary equipment. Reports focused on the delay in getting an aerial ladder on scene. London Fire Brigade (LFB) has announced that in future an aerial ladder will be dispatched to high-rise fires as a matter of routine.
- The Mayor of London asked the Commissioner of LFB Dany Cotton to review the LFB's specialist equipment. The Mayor wrote to the Home Secretary (attached) detailing the findings of the review which included that an estimated £6million was required for specialist equipment.
- The Home Secretary responded that the amount of funding provided to LFB is a matter the Mayor of London in conjunction with the London Fire Commissioner and London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

Police Investigation

- Covering how the building was managed and maintained, fire safety measures in the building, the construction and the refurbishment.
- The Police are considering every criminal offence from manslaughter onwards and are reviewing every company at the moment involved in the building and refurbishment of Grenfell Tower.