

Fire safety in Croydon

Scrutiny Committee 05 09 2017

Presented by Stephen Tate

Background and context

- Since Grenfell Tower fire, CLG commissioned tests on cladding of relevant blocks/ACM panels generally. Under way but a number of tests have failed.
- Findings emerging about blocks elsewhere eg lack of fire doors
- Croydon's housing stock
 - Cladded blocks do not have ACM panels
 - Taller blocks acceptable in relation to materials and construction
 - £10m invested in fire safety measures since RRO introduced in 2005; programme agreed with LFB & completed
 - Ongoing FRAs, maintenance and newly-arising requirements
- Five private sector/RP buildings have ACM panels which will have to be replaced

Council housing - early actions and decisions

- 1,100 blocks visited in week 1 – checks and advice
- High priority blocks visited by LBC & LFB
- Cladding – checked buildings against specs, surveys of construction type, testing of cladding – all satisfactory results
- Agreed installation of sprinklers in 10+ storey blocks and 8-storey retirement housing block
- Early info & advice for residents (letters and visits)
- General info – FoI & media enquiries, FAQs, members & MPs
- Established fire safety board to provide governance

Council housing – continuing work

- Drop-ins to 39 blocks
- Other info for residents - Open House, tenancy visits, information boards, leaflets for new tenancy visits
- Enforcement of safe behaviour – new letters
- Consultation - Tenant & Leaseholder Panel & service improvement groups
- Sprinklers

Council housing - financial implications

- Initial works – sprinklers & associated works, and other fire safety measures: £5m
- Provisional works: £3.5m
- Ongoing costs - FRAs & compliance team: £300k
- Financial context
 - 1% rent cuts, rent loss from HVV sales & RTB, borrowing capped (£11.4m remaining for annual capital programme), use of RTB receipts limited to new supply
 - Fire safety costs funded from reserves
 - HRA in deficit from 2022/23
- Case put to SoS for government to meet costs
- Leaseholders?

Non-council housing

- Five private sector/ housing association blocks have failed BRE cladding tests
 - CLG discussing replacement, remediation plans and interim measures eg wardens
 - LBC role to support landlords and use enforcement action if necessary
- Leased blocks
 - No cladding
 - FRAs in place and regular inspections

Other council buildings

- Corporate estate
 - 49 FRAs undertaken: actions being progressed or meetings held with LRPs
 - 51 FRAs being procured
 - Occupants, leaseholders & tenants required to provide evidence & FRAs
 - council to ensure compliance
- Schools
 - Range of responsible bodies including council – CLG survey of buildings with 4+ storeys (no community schools)
 - Due diligence checks of community schools
 - Replacing cladding at Chestnut Park Primary School – precautionary measure to be completed by end of holidays
 - Regular FRAs