

# Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety

Initial Meeting | Q1.04 Parliament | Tuesday 20 June 2017 @ 1pm

## Action Points and Summary

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### 1. Welcome and Introductions

### 2. Remit of the Working Group

The Group discussed the draft remit and agreed additions to highlight on-going work with the UK Government and devolved administrations and to include reference to the Scottish Parliament.

AP1: Remit to be updated to take account of suggestions from the Working Group.
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### 3. Current Key Issues and activities

An overview of the position in Scotland was provided by officials.

#### Building Standards:

- Whilst there have been fires in high-rise buildings in the past in Scotland, there has not been anything on the scale of the Grenfell Tower tragedy.
- Fires should not get beyond the initial room or level of ignition. Whilst the cause of Grenfell is unknown at this time it is expected that it will not just relate to the cladding used but also factor issues like how it was installed.
- Regulations in Scotland have been reviewed regularly especially after an incident .
- Regulations in Scotland do not permit the use of the type of “aluminium composite material” used on the Grenfell Tower for high-rise domestic buildings.

#### Housing:

- Work already underway to develop a common standard of housing quality across both private and social rented housing, as well as to consult on and review standards for fire and smoke detectors. Consideration will be given to whether this consultation should be expedited.
- The Group agreed that, whilst we are aware there will be concerns from all tenants it is important to focus our initial response on those who live in high-rise buildings where the risks from this incident are most likely to be replicated.

#### Fire Safety:

- It was clarified that the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) provide an advisory role in relation to domestic properties.
- Since the fire at Grenfell Tower last week, SFRS has made 200 visits to high-rises for operational assurance and Home Fire Safety Visits.
- The “stay put” advice that was given to the residents in Grenfell Tower is still extant and remains our current advice for tenants in high-rise buildings.

AP2: Consideration to be given as to whether to expedite the consultation on smoke detectors.
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#### 4. Analysis of issues emerging from Information Gathering exercise

- The Group were updated with the responses received from the local authorities in relation to those who had high-rise buildings in their areas and whether those that did, had been clad using “aluminium composite material”.
- The Group were given two alternative definitions of high-rise buildings: 1. Is any building over 18m; 2. Any building over 5 storeys or more with a lift. In relation to this exercise the first definition was used to ensure consistency with the UK Government.
- Of the 32 local authorities; 18 confirmed that they had high rise domestic buildings. All 18 of those confirmed that “aluminium composite material” had **not** been used to clad any of those buildings.
- The Group agreed that local authorities had responded well to what was a complex ask in a very short timescale.
- As part of their initial response local authorities had included the types of materials that had been used for cladding. These returns will be checked by our experts to identify if there are likely to be an issues with those materials.

AP3: Initial LA returns which contain some information regarding the types of cladding materials identified to be checked.

#### 5. Options on responding to initial situation (high-rise domestic buildings)

- There was a discussion on the various issues and the options that could be considered including sprinkler systems; smoke alarms; removal of cladding; increased inspections; targeted fire safety campaigns; and additional requests from local authorities on ACM use on other public buildings.
- The Group agreed that we are confident in our regulatory regime but we are not complacent. The Group will cast a critical eye over the current position in Scotland.
- A number of actions were considered as part of this discussion. Particularly around the need to request further information related to other public buildings including schools and hospitals.
- It was agreed that this would be influenced by information that we are awaiting from colleagues in DCLG. It was also noted that we would need to be clear and purposeful when making further requests of information from local authorities.

AP4: Map out the future requests to be made to local authorities. Including clarity of question and ensuring we are clear on the types of properties that are to be covered.

AP5: Clarify the situations in which it is believed that the use of ACM for cladding is appropriate.

#### 6. Communication

- The Group were updated on the press interest in the Working Group. It was also agreed that a statement would be prepared and issued that afternoon.

AP6: News release to be issued following the meeting.

#### 7. Co-ordination

- A co-ordination team has been established to provide support to the Working Group which will be based in the Local Government and Communities Directorate.

## 8. Date of future meetings

- It was agreed that a further meeting should be held week commencing 26 June.

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### Attendees:

Cabinet Secretary for Communities, Social Security and Equalities (Chair)  
Minister for Community Safety & Legal Affairs  
Minister for Local Government & Housing

Lesley Fraser, Director Housing & Social Justice  
Kenneth Hogg, Director Local Government & Communities  
Gillian Russell, Director Safer Communities  
Bill Dodds, Head of Building Standards  
Rebekah Widdowfield, Deputy Director Better Homes  
Stephen Garland, Head of Housing Sustainability Unit  
Wendy Wilkinson, Deputy Director Safer Communities Division  
Martyn Emberson, HM Fire Service Inspectorate  
Donna Mackinnon, Deputy Director Local Government Division  
Alan Morrison, Health Finance & Infrastructure  
Imelda Giarchi, SGoRR Consequence  
Colin Brown, SGLD  
Alice Robertson, Communications  
Jeanette Campbell, Special Adviser  
Cameron Stewart, Secretariat to Working Group