

# Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety

CR5 Parliament | Wednesday 28 June 2017 @ 3pm

## Action Points and Summary

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### 1. Welcome and action points from previous meeting

Update on previously agreed action points:

1. Remit to be updated to take account of suggestions from the Working Group - COMPLETED
2. Consideration to be given as to whether to expedite the consultation on smoke detectors. – COMPLETED – To be considered as part of the work programme
3. Initial LA returns which contain some information regarding the types of cladding materials identified to be checked – Discussed under agenda item 2
4. Map out potential future requests to be made of local authorities. Including clarity of question and ensuring we are clear on the types of properties that are to be covered – COMPLETED. To be taken forward as part of the work programme.
5. Clarify the situations in which it is believed that the use of ACM for cladding could be appropriate - Discussed under agenda item 2
6. News release to be issued following the meeting. – COMPLETED

### 2. Update on the current position

The Group was updated on the latest actions being taken by the Scottish Government, local authorities, and other building owners across the country.

Checks so far by Scottish local authorities had found that:

- no Scottish local-authority owned school buildings above 18 metres have cladding systems that use aluminium composite material (ACM).
- no high rise domestic buildings owned by councils or housing associations have used ACM in cladding systems.
- 29 of 32 local authorities had reported that ACM has not been used in cladding systems on any privately owned high-rise domestic buildings. The City of Edinburgh Council and Glasgow City Council were completing their investigations and it was acknowledged this would take time due to the size of the task.
- no cladding of the type used on Grenfell Tower had been identified by any of the NHS Boards. 50 NHS properties had been identified with other types of cladding and the NHS Boards were checking to ensure they met regulations.

In addition the Group was also updated on:

- the situation regarding the ACM found in the cladding system on student accommodation at Napier University. The University was taking steps to replace this cladding as a precautionary measure and had reassured residents that robust fire safety measures – including sprinklers – were in place.

- the Scottish Funding Council were writing to all universities and colleges to ensure that the cladding systems used in their buildings were safe.
- Building Standards in Scotland were updated regularly. Guidance is updated annually and if any issues arise between regular updates the Head of Building Standards Division would issue additional guidance. There was a three year cycle for major reviews.

The Group recognised and welcomed the very significant amount of work done by local authorities and private property owners to carry out resource intensive checks of their buildings at short notice.

AP1: Officials to confirm that Scottish Funding Council letter issues promptly to universities and colleges.

AP2: A concise description to be produced of how relevant Scottish building standards compare to those in the rest of UK.

### 3. Update from the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service provided a briefing on their work:

- an additional 300 operational assurance visits had been carried out since the Grenfell Tower fire, and 230 additional home fire safety visits to residents in high-rise buildings completed. In addition SFRS had produced and issued 60,000 leaflets on fire safety to communities.
- SFRS confirmed that the 'stay put' guidance is still extant, and was in line with that in place across the rest of the UK.
- SFRS gave an overview of their liaison in the wider UK response. In particular a technical panel has been established by DCLG on which the National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) will be involved. SFRS would engage with colleagues in NFCC to ensure we are aware of the work that is being taken forward.
- SFRS had asked BRE (the organisation undertaking the testing of cladding material) to undertake some research into the increased fire risks due to technology in the home. Given BRE's current testing work this research had yet to be commenced.

AP3: Brief paper to be produced giving an overview of the role undertaken by the fire and rescue services across the UK in line with their relevant statutory and other duties.

AP4: SFRS and Building Standards Division to consider jointly whether any additional research should be recommended.

The Group briefly discussed a paper by the Wheatley Group setting out work that the Wheatley Group had undertaken with SFRS to ensure the safety of their residents. SFRS agreed that this was a very effective partnership and that they would welcome discussions with any other housing associations to work in a similar manner.

### 4. Discussion regarding wider commissions

The Group agreed to continue with the evidence led approach that had been followed since the Grenfell tragedy. The initial priority had been to focus on high-rise domestic properties, and then on other priority areas including schools and hospitals. To continue this approach it was agreed to identify evidence based criteria on which further actions should now be taken.

AP5: Evidence based criteria to be submitted to MWG along with recommended next steps.

## **5. Draft work programme**

The Group agreed a draft work programme and that this should be shared with the Local Government & Communities Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

AP6: Work programme to be shared with the Local Government & Communities Committee.

## **6. Communication**

The Group were updated on current media requests for information and agreed that a statement would be issued that afternoon.

## **7. Co-ordination**

It was agreed that a website would be created to publish relevant information including papers from the meetings of the Working Group.

It was agreed that members of Ministerial Working Group or officials should meet with relevant stakeholders to understand their views on the issues which the Group is looking into.

AP7: Initial meeting with stakeholders to be set up.

## **8. Date of future meetings**

- It was agreed that a further meeting should be held on Thursday 13 July.
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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

David McGown, SFRS Assistant Chief Officer

Iain Bushell, SFRS Deputy Chief Officer

Stuart Stevens, SFRS Area Manager

Colin Brown, Legal Directorate

Alice Robertson, Communications

Jeanette Campbell, Special Adviser

Cameron Stewart, Secretariat to Working Group