

Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Date: Friday 13th December 2024

Subject: Greater Manchester's approach to Building Safety

Report of: Kate Green, Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Lead for Safer Stronger Communities and Paul Dennett, Deputy Mayor, Portfolio Lead for Housing First.

Purpose of Report

This report provides the Committee with an overview regarding Greater Manchester's (GM) response to:

1. The publication of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report.
2. The approach taken in response to the Government's request to produce a Local Remediation Acceleration Plan for GM.

Recommendations:

The GMCA is requested to note:

1. The governance structure established to ensure the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) Phase 2 report are being implemented effectively within the city-region.
2. The contents of GM Remediation Acceleration Plan set out in appendix A.

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Equalities Impact, Carbon and Sustainability Assessment:

None.

Risk Management

There are no direct risk management measures required as a consequence of this report.

Legal Considerations

There are no direct legal considerations arising from this report, however proposals for new legislation including a potential duty to enforce may impact on the GMCA. This will be monitored as the Government proposals are developed.

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The Government has committed to making funding available for Combined Authorities to support the acceleration of remediation. An initial ask has been made for revenue funding with an indicative ask of circa £850,000 per annum. Any grant funding will come with reporting requirements.

Financial Consequences – Capital

Not applicable.

Number of attachments to the report:

Remediation Acceleration Plan – Greater Manchester's approach to Building Safety.

Comments/recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable.

Background Papers

Not applicable.

Tracking/ Process

Does this report relate to a major strategic decision, as set out in the GMCA Constitution?

No.

Exemption from call in

Are there any aspects in this report which means it should be considered to be exempt from call in by the relevant Scrutiny Committee on the grounds of urgency?

No.

Bee Network Committee

Not applicable.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Not applicable.

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report

1. Introduction

1.1 The Grenfell Tower Inquiry (GTI) was established to investigate the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June 2017, which resulted in the tragic loss of 72 lives, many people injured as well as the significant impact the fire had on the wider community which continues to this day.

1.2 Phase 1 of the GTI focused on the factual narrative of the events on the night of the fire and was published on 30th October 2019 in 4 volumes. It also provided a conclusion about the origin and development of the fire and an analysis of London Fire Brigade's (LFB) response and other emergency services which attended the incident. Phase 1 of the GTI also made recommendations arising out of the report's findings and looked ahead to identify matters of particular importance for Phase 2. It is important to recognise that there is a meaningful and purposeful relationship between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the GTI.

1.3 Phase 2 of the Inquiry examined the causes of these events, including how Grenfell Tower came to be in a condition which allowed the fire to spread in the way identified by Phase 1; this was published on 4th September 2024 in 7 volumes. As a result of his Phase 2 conclusions, the GTI Chair, The Rt Hon Sir Martin Moore-Bick, made 58 recommendations aimed at improving fire safety and emergency response in addition to the 46 recommendations made in his Phase 1 Report. These recommendations are directed at various organisations, including local authorities, fire and rescue services, local resilience forums, Government and national bodies.

1.4 It is important that appropriate governance structures are established from the outset, to ensure the recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report are being implemented effectively and in a timely manner within the city-region.

2. Responding to the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report.

2.1 A Greater Manchester Grenfell Tower Oversight Group (GM GTOG), chaired by the Chief Fire Officer, will be established to ensure a co-ordinated and joined up approach is taken to implementing the recommendations effectively. The group will ensure GM as a system remains aligned and connected, ensuring a partner-led, systems approach is taken

to developing and delivering the necessary action required to implement the recommendations.

2.2 The group will meet quarterly and provide a strategic forum through which knowledge, skills and understanding can be shared, harnessed and applied by bringing partners together from across GM to maximise the collective effort.

2.3 The group will develop a Grenfell Tower Action Plan which will clearly detail the responsible owner, action required, timescales for implementation and apply a RAG rating to each recommendation to aid future reporting.

2.4 The recommendations which are in scope are those directly assigned to 1) Fire and Rescue Services 2) Local Authorities and 3) Local Resilience Forums. Recommendations which are assigned to Government and National Bodies are out of scope albeit the group will undertake a monitoring role and report accordingly. It is important to note the inter-relatedness of the recommendations and in some cases the inter-dependencies of them and our collective ability within GM to effectively operationalise and deliver the recommendations. Furthermore, it is critical that we don't lose sight of the importance of our roles as GMCA, GMFRS, the High Rise and Building Safety Strategic Oversight Group and Grenfell Tower Oversight Group in terms of lobbying and influencing for progressive change within the 'system' in its broadest sense, outside of our direct control.

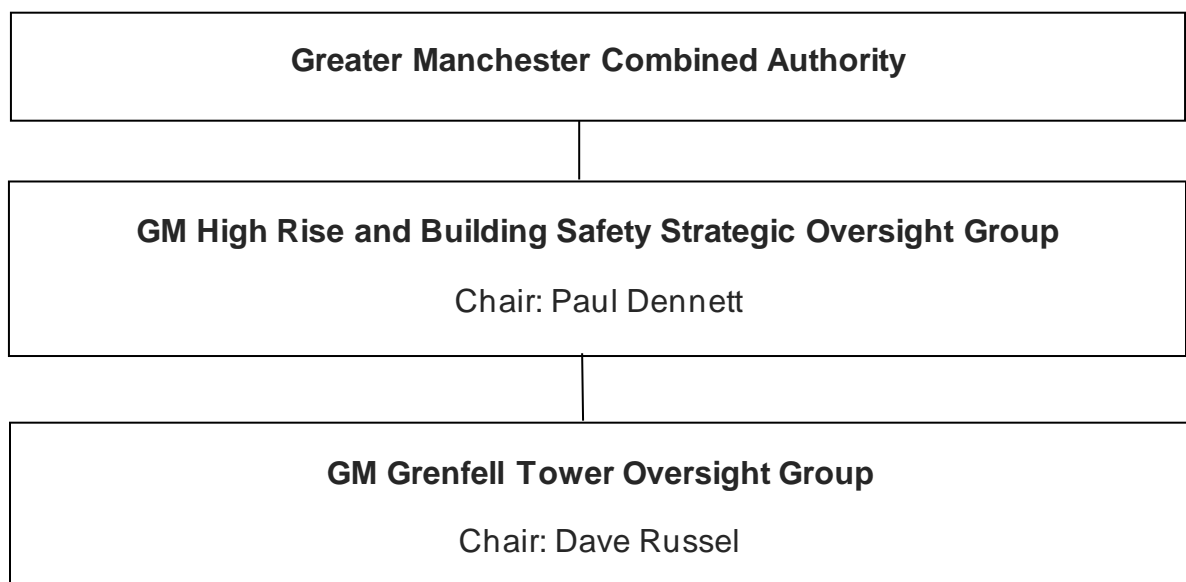
2.5 The GM GTOG will report directly into the existing GM High Rise and Building Safety Strategic Oversight Group, chaired by Deputy Mayor Paul Dennett. The Strategic Oversight Group is a long standing and established group, well placed to perform a scrutiny and oversight role in respect of how GM responds to and implements the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations.

2.6 The Chair of the GM GTOG will report progress to the Strategic Oversight Group on a quarterly basis. The Chair of the Strategic Oversight Group will report on going progress against the Grenfell Tower Phase 2 recommendations into this Committee.

2.7 The illustration below is not designed to place or position the GMCA as the responsible body for the Grenfell Tower Inquiry. The purpose of reporting progress to the GMCA, is to ensure Leaders and Chief Executives maintain a level of awareness and importantly visibility, on a matter of significant importance to our city region and the safety of residents across the built environment. Future reporting to the GMCA will happen ad hoc and as needed.

2.8 We recognise the importance of added value generated by collective partnership working in this way in GM i.e. sharing knowledge and best practice, supporting one another, influencing and lobbying, effectively supporting residents and communities, whilst ensuring any new / reformed governance builds on the work to date. This isn't about creating more bureaucracy or seeking to take control etc but to genuinely create something in GM that adds value and genuinely represents something that's greater than the sum of its parts, while ensuring we remain transparent and accountable to public, in respect of how we operational the Phase 2 recommendations within GM.

2.9 The recommendations will be 'owned' by the responsible organisation and the action plan will detail this clearly i.e. GMFRS will be the responsible body for implementing the recommendations which relate to Fire and Rescue Services and remain accountable to Deputy Mayor Kate Green through the existing 'fire' governance arrangements. The structure will ensure partners work together, avoid silo working and bring together into one place, a single method of reporting which enables GM as a 'system' to know exactly where it is, at any given point, in respect of implementation of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry recommendations.



Local Remediation Acceleration Plan

3.1 On the 13th September 2024 the RT Hon Angela Rayner MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, requesting that he convene regulators and other key partners to prepare a local remediation acceleration plan.

3.2. The letter explained the publication of the final Grenfell Tower Inquiry report represents a significant milestone, and seven years on from Grenfell, it is unacceptable that so many people are still living in buildings with unsafe cladding. The letter went on to say, everyone deserves to live in a safe home, and this new government is determined to redouble efforts to make buildings safe. This will require a collective effort, with all parts of central and local government working together.

3.3 The aim of the local remediation acceleration plan is to articulate how the pace of remediation can be increased in Greater Manchester and what support is needed to enable this, alongside a requirement to share with Government by the end of November the remediation acceleration plan for Greater Manchester which is included as appendix A.

3.4 The Deputy Prime Minister's letter placed a strong emphasis on how in Greater Manchester we will work with local partners to make sure they are all using their legal powers to increase the pace of remediation in the highest risk buildings, and that Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service are doing everything necessary in the meantime to keep people safe in their homes while they are awaiting or undergoing remediation.

3.5 In Greater Manchester we share the concerns about the pace of remediation and the need for this to be accelerated. It is not right that residents in Greater Manchester are still living in buildings that need remediating before they can be deemed safe. The barriers to fixing our unsafe buildings are multiple and complex.

3.6 Immediately after the Grenfell Tower fire, Mayor Andy Burnham established the city region's High Rise and Building Safety Task Force. Chaired by Salford City Mayor Paul Dennett, the task force has brought together Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service, local authorities, landlords and government officials to help make all our buildings safe and

lobby government. The Task Force has achieved an enormous amount in this time and its work is reflected in the remediation acceleration plan.

3.7 The remediation acceleration plan highlights a range of issues which delay the progress of remediation. It also provides an overview of the work already undertaken in Greater Manchester, identifies next steps, and looks at the barriers that need addressing. In addition to the need to investing in resources to deliver this important work, specifically, the formation of a 'GM Remediation Delivery Team', we have articulated six clear asks of Government to:

- Urgently assess the current capacity required to accelerate remediation and provide investment to build competency and capacity
- Close the regulatory gap
- Develop a single dataset
- Establish clear standards and expectations
- Provide clarity on funding
- Embed Leaseholder protections

3.8 It is important to stress the successful delivery of GMs Remediation Acceleration Plan is not within our sole control. There are several dependencies external to GM i.e. appropriate funding being available, improved data sharing etc which unless addressed and resolved they will adversely impact on our delivery. In short – GM cannot on its own accelerate the pace of remediation without the support of Government and other key stakeholders.

3.9 The six asks of Government have been arrived at through the work undertaken to date by the Strategic Oversight Group and following careful consideration. Equally, this will inevitably be an iterative process, and as we experience the operationalisation of the accelerated remediation plan in practice, and learn from it, our asks of Government may change, become further refined and potentially be added to.

4.0 As with the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, it is important that an appropriate governance structure is put in place, to ensure the remediation acceleration plan for GM is being implemented effectively and subject to scrutiny.

4.1 Rather than create a new structure with new reporting lines, in an already complex and complicated landscape, it is sensible to utilise the existing GM High Rise and Building Safety

Strategic Oversight Group as the reporting body to oversee remediation within GM. By doing so, it will ensure the knowledge, skills and understanding which already exist within the Strategic Oversight Group, built up over many years, coupled with its strong leadership can be drawn upon and maximised fully, the value of which will be significant especially given the challenges ahead.

4.2 In practical terms, the Strategic Oversight Group will oversee, albeit not exclusively, two substantive areas of work in relation to building safety 1) Responding to the Grenfell Tower Phase 2 recommendations and 2) Remediation Acceleration Plan both of which will report into this Committee going forward.