

GM High Rise Task Force Overview

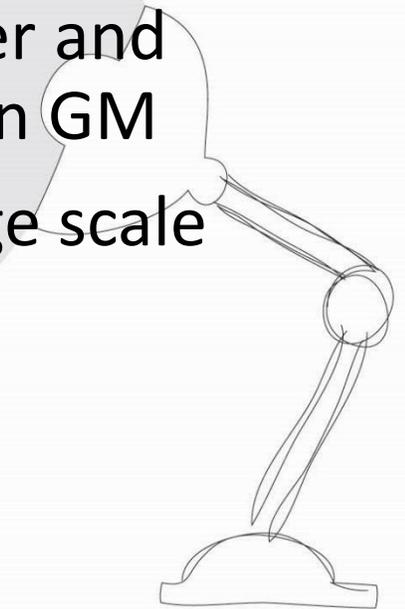
March 2020



GREATER MANCHESTER
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

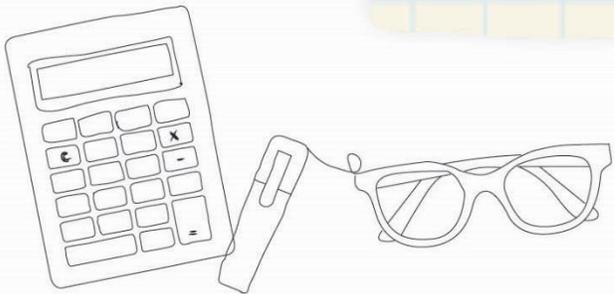
GM High Rise Task Force: Context

- Created by the Mayor following the fire at Grenfell Tower
- Chaired by Paul Dennett, City Mayor of Salford and GMCA Housing Lead
- Purpose is to oversee the response across Greater Manchester and co-ordinate activity to ensure no similar incident occurs within GM
- Ensure services are prepared to respond in the event of a large scale incidents
- Ensure the safety of residents in high rise buildings, provide reassurance and develop new ways of approaching fire safety



GM High Rise Task Force: Members

- All ten Local Authorities
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Social Housing Providers
- Representatives of Managing Agents
- Civil Contingencies Unit
- Electricity North West
- NHS & Public Health England
- Universities



GM High Rise Task Force Work

- Regular meetings
- Overseeing inspection activity and reassurance activity
- Civil Contingencies workshops for every borough
- Ensuring consistency of response – landlords sharing good practice

- Responding to Government - including lobbying for funding
- GM standards and minimising costs through procurement framework
- Working with residents - three public meetings held
- Planning for the future



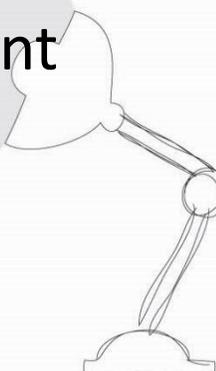
GMFRS Activity

- All high rise residential buildings were pro-actively inspected
- Full audits undertaken on 495 buildings in the months following Grenfell
- Action Plans issued where appropriate for the housing provider / managing agent to review and update the fire risk assessment and identify the nature of cladding materials
- Where notified that the cladding was ACM and / or failed a Government test or another system which posed a significant risk of external fire spread the Government required interim measures to be considered and where necessary implemented – this approach has also been applied to other non-compliant systems
- No prohibition notices to date but this cannot be ruled out



The GM Approach to inspection and regulation

- Resident safety is the primary consideration
- Focus on ensuring that where necessary immediate action is taken to mitigate the risk and longer term strategies are in place
- Monitoring of interim measures to ensure they are robustly managed
- Support and reassurance for residents – attending residents meetings, responding to complaints
- Working with housing providers to minimise costs – utilising a procurement framework for fire alarms and retrospective installation of sprinklers
- Where all work is undertaken providing written confirmation to landlords to share with residents – reassurance that their building is safe



Work with Housing Providers & Managing Agents

- Inspections of Building
- Action plans
- Interim Measures - Assurance Visits
- Enforcement as a last resort
- Fire Safety Alerts – sharing advice notes
- Supporting intervention with residents
 - Balcony Fire Safety
 - Bonfire safety
 - Closure letters
 - Flat front doors



GM High Rise Task Force: Influencing the national picture

- Supporting national workstreams looking at future standards
- Lobbying Government to make funding available - both Andy Burnham and Paul Dennett have written to Government
- Response to national consultations
- Working on the development of GM standards for fire safety that can be implemented in advance of legislative changes
- Keeping the High Rise Task Force a key priority for services



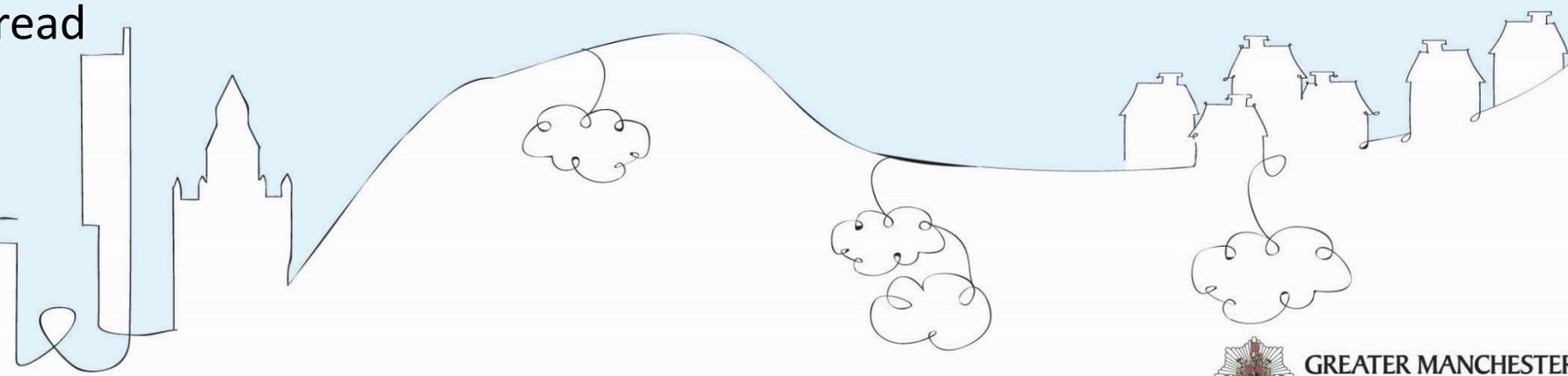
Emerging Issues

- Post Grenfell - ACM Cladding
- Grenfell Inquiry
 - Day 1: Dr Barbara Lane - Stay Put should have been abandoned at 1:42am
 - Day 96 Dr Barbara Lane – the Certificate for cladding was not valid
 - Day 96 Professor Luke Bisby
 - Stay Put not appropriate from the date cladding installed
 - “Likely” that a fire anywhere near the window would breach out and into the cladding
 - Compartmentation compromised as soon as 11 minutes after the fire started at 12:54am



Areas of uncertainty

- Changes to legislation
 - Current consultations
 - Timeframes
- Scale of work
 - MHCLG tests
 - Emerging issues
- Compartmentation
 - External Fire Spread
 - Fire Doors
- Funding
- Campaigning



Emerging Issues – Government Response

- Fire contained within flats for 60 minutes
- No external fire spread in buildings over 18 metres
- 60 minutes compartmentation internally
- Fire doors prevent spread of fire and smoke internally
- 3 routes to compliance
 - Desktop Study **X**
 - Large Scale Fire Test **?**
 - Complies with ADB – Certificate **?**
- Manse Masterdor tested by MPS – failed at 15 minutes. Further tests of composite doors 5 /6 failed
- Testing of wooden doors ongoing but so far products have passed
- Fire Stopping generally poor throughout buildings
- Structural defects – no cavity barriers

Vital for Fire Safety & Operational Fire Fighting



Impact of emerging issues

- Cannot assume that buildings which are certified as compliant with ADB will not have external fire spread
- Increased focus / concerns in relation to Stay Put
- Speed of fire spread quicker than earlier thought
- Experience of buildings in GM the risk is not related to cladding systems – widespread problems with compartmentation
- Cost of remedying construction defects is significant
- Balancing risk – likelihood vs consequence
- Poor building standards not restricted to High Rise



The Changing National Picture (1)

- Government response led by Department for Communities and Local Government – now Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- Established 'Building Safety Programme'
- Required FRS to inspect buildings
- Created Independent Expert Advisory Panel
- Implemented testing arrangements - ACM Cladding only
- Required LAs to gather data on private blocks
- Ministerial changes & changes to officials



The Changing National Picture (2)

Timeline for the Hackitt Review

14th June 2017 – Fire at Grenfell Tower

28th July 2018 – Government announcement independent review of building regulations and fire safety

30th August 2017 - Review Terms of Reference published

12th September 2017 – Call for evidence

18th December 2017 – Interim report published

22nd January 2018 – Industry Summit held & working groups established – feedback March 2018

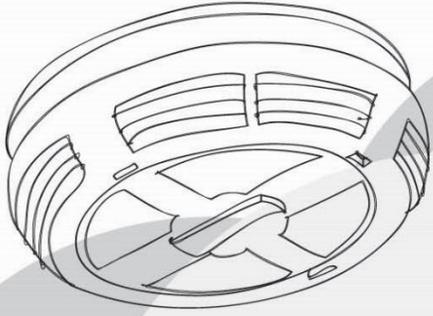
17th May 2018 Final Report published



The GM HRTF Response to Hackitt

- Welcomed the report and proposal that safety should be embedded from the Planning Stage
- Disagreed scope should be buildings >30metres – suggested starting point of 18metres & rolled out to other buildings
- Proposal for a JCA welcomed
 - Unified Regulator (of existing partners) not a further tier
 - Enhanced sanctions required
 - Should operate on full cost recovery basis
- Agreed Dutyholders should be clearly identified
 - duty to maintain and handover safety documents
 - JCA to host digital platform of accessible information





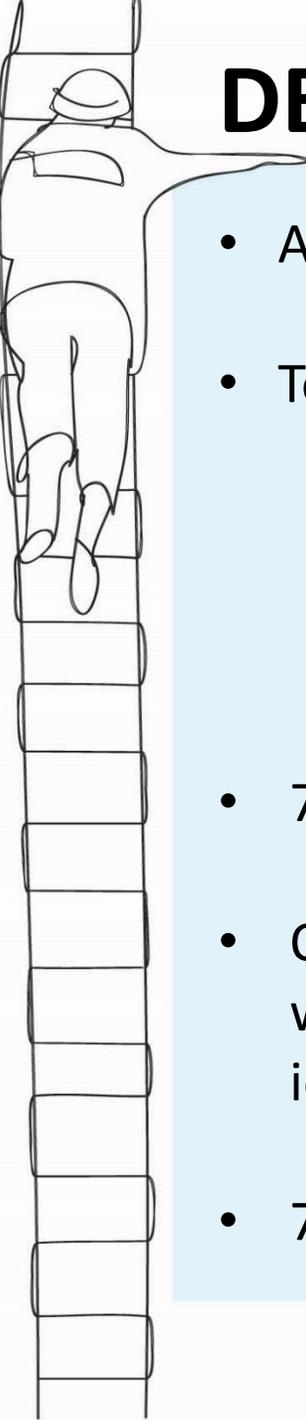
Greater Manchester High Rise Taskforce

Resident's Survey – Key Findings

December 2019



**GREATER MANCHESTER
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**



DEMOGRAPHICS

- A total of 172 responses were received to the survey
- Tenure:
 - 50% leaseholders
 - 27% renting from housing association
 - 17% renting from private landlord
 - 6% 'other' (i.e. living rent free, renting from friends and family)
- 76% of residents have lived in their flat for longer than two years
- Over 70% of residents responding to this survey said their building has cladding. Of those who said their building has cladding, approximately 70% said their cladding has been identified as a concern following a fire risk assessment
- 77% of residents responding to the survey live in high rise buildings.



FIRE SAFETY

- 65% of residents were concerned about having a fire
- 77% of residents who live in a building where cladding was identified as a risk were concerned about having a fire compared with 48% of residents living in buildings where cladding has not been identified as a risk
- 70% of residents thought they were 'not very likely' or 'not at all likely' to have a fire in their flat → residents were most concerned that other residents may not take the same precautions as them
- 98% of residents have working smoke alarms → just over a quarter said they test them either weekly or monthly. Approx. 30% do not test their smoke alarms or test them very infrequently.



EVACUATION PROCEDURES

- A third of residents did not know the evacuation procedures for their building
- Some residents said they had forgotten them; others incorrectly stated the evacuation strategy for their building → some residents thought they were to 'stay put', but they should be evacuating when the alarm sounds
- 20% of residents said they would not be able to evacuate safely and a further 20% were unsure if they could evacuate safely. Some residents said their concerns about evacuating safely have not been taken seriously by their landlord.



COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

- 40% of residents had previously sought fire safety advice. Almost all residents would trust GMFRS most to provide fire safety advice
- 30% of residents receive fire safety information from their landlord/managing agent at least every few months → 55% said they receive information very infrequently or never receive information about fire safety
- Preferred formats for receiving advice:
 - 65% like face to face visits
 - 63% like accessing advice online
 - 50% like leaflets or posters in the building
 - Social media, text messages, emails and online videos were also popular formats



FINANCIAL IMPACT

Analysis of the free text responses showed us what residents have been experiencing over the past 18 months:

“My service charge has increased from £90 per month to £480 per month to cover cladding replacement”

“We are facing £30,000 per flat costs [to have cladding removed]”

“They are saying there will be between £1,000-£2,000 added each month to our service charge to cover the work”

“Charged £10,000 for works, some not done, mostly done to a poor standard. Work has not started but management company has proposed cost of works to be added to our maintenance charge. Approximately an extra £1,000 per month.”



FINANCIAL IMPACT

Residents have also experienced problems when trying to sell or re-mortgage their flats:

“The sale fell through due to the cladding situation”

“I have been trying to sell my apartment for the past 15 months. Two buyers have backed out of the sale as there was no cladding report and no cladding test was done till April 2019. I'm still finding it hard to sell my apartment and move on”

“Could not remortgage as identified unsuitable cladding report so had to stay with current provider, meaning a worse rate”

“Only cash buyers offering 30% less than the normal price”



FINANCIAL IMPACT

“My wife and I do want to move out but due to cladding on [our building] we cannot sell or get a mortgage on a new property so are "stuck" in [our building]”

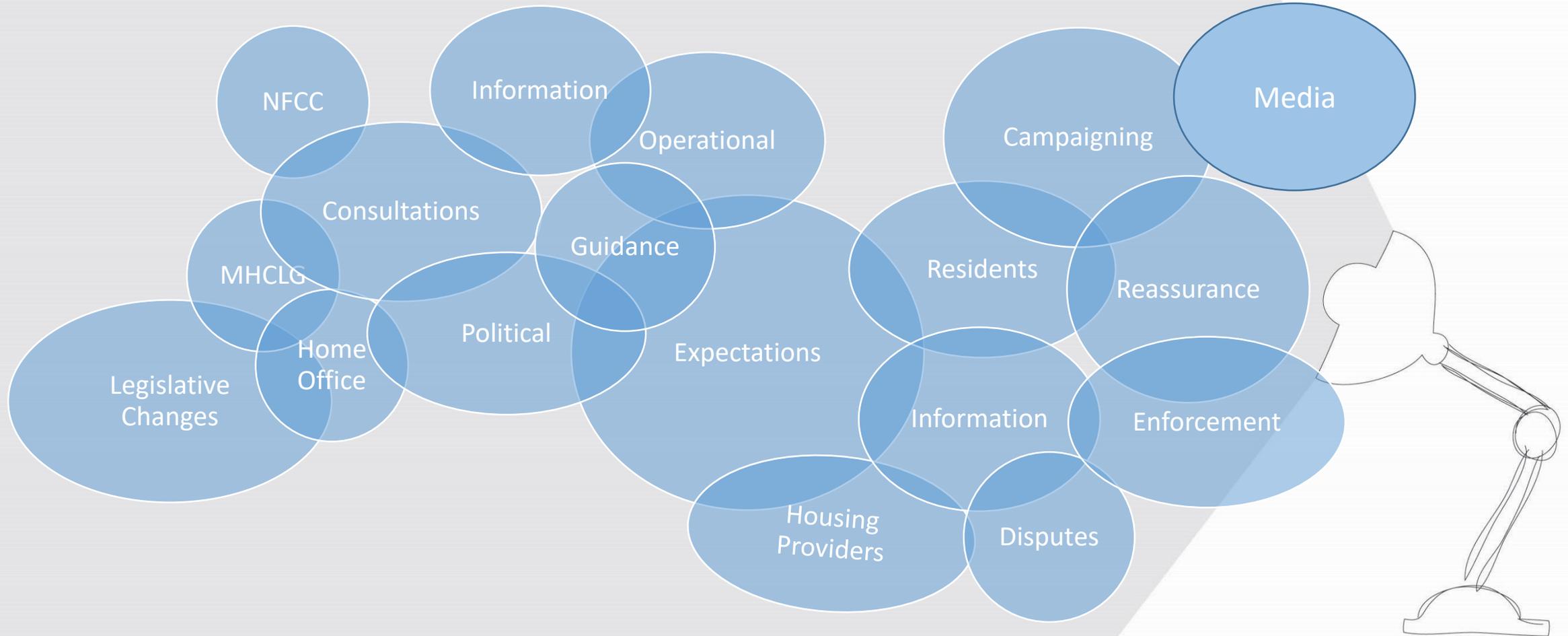
“The sale fell through as we didn't have a fire safety certificate. We have now been told that our property is worth zero which has had a very damaging affect on our relationship and mental health”

“Unable to remortgage... Our building has not had a new survey done so we cannot confirm the building meets the fire regs. This is costing me an extra £170 per month”

“Tried to sell but buyer’s mortgage lenders requested a document that [managing agent] couldn't provide... the buyer has since dropped out.”



Challenges



Next Steps

- Developing a HR Task Force Workplan
 - Expanded scope of buildings affected
 - Developing guidance and support for responsible persons
 - Providing consistent advice to developers
 - Reviewing existing approaches
 - Refreshing fire safety advice
- Ongoing support for residents
- Developing a GM Standard
- Continue to influence the national picture

