

## **BLPP Chairman's Announcements**

**27 June 2017**

### **Grenfell Tower Fire**

I wish to inform Members of this Panel of the County Council's responses to enquiries from Government and any implications for our own estate following the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower in London.

Firstly, I am sure you would wish to join me in expressing our deepest sympathies to the victims and families of this tragic and terrible event and to congratulate the emergency services for their incredible response.

This Council has recently responded to urgent enquiries from Government Departments in relation to both residential towers and school buildings. The first was to confirm that Hampshire has no residential buildings over six storeys and, therefore, no actions are required. Members should be aware that the County Council is not a housing authority and, therefore, has no residential properties of the type impacted by the fire in London.

The school estate in Hampshire has a small number of three and four storey buildings but there are no parallels to the construction and fire safety arrangements at Grenfell Tower. Fundamentally, the strategy for life safety in schools is to evacuate first and all multi-storey buildings are fitted with modern fire alarms to facilitate this. Local managers have responsibility for fire evacuation and are encouraged to undertake regular fire safety drills. I can also confirm that the ongoing re-cladding programmes at schools do not use Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) which is now the subject of much speculation in the media and a requirement for local authorities to survey residential towers in their ownership.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind Members of the comprehensive approach the County Council takes to fire safety in our buildings:

- We understand the risk profiles of our buildings and actively audit our estate on a prioritised basis.
- We have a long-standing Partnership with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) and both organisations jointly fund an Embedded Fire Officer who is co-located in the Property Team.
- We provide fire safety guidance to all local managers including schools and proactively support them in fire safety arrangements.
- All projects are independently reviewed by an experienced panel of officers, including representation from HFRS to ensure compliance with Regulations and best practice.
- All projects have a Fire Risk Assessment undertaken to decide whether additional safety measures should be implemented and if sprinklers are recommended for additional asset protection.

Notwithstanding our strong record of managing fire safety, we do recognise that the events in London are a reminder of the potential devastating impact of fire in buildings. Officers will continue to monitor the findings of the Grenfell Tower Enquiry as it becomes public and ensure that if there are any actions or implications for the Council, these are evaluated and any recommendations for improvement made.