

**Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore,
Executive Director of Finance and Public Protection**

Report to:	Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date:	23 January 2018
Subject:	Lessons and Actions from the Grenfell Tower Incident

Summary:

To provide an overview of the Grenfell Tower fire and to inform the Committee of lessons learnt and any potential implications for Lincolnshire County Council to consider following the Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Service (EP & BC Service) visit to site on 20th July 2017 hosted by Ealing Borough Council.

Appendices B and C of this report include information pertaining to Lincolnshire Fire & Rescue fire safety building inspections and LCC Property Services inspections and other operational activities undertaken locally since this incident.

It should be noted that official pan-London debriefs are being undertaken and wider lessons will be available in due course. The first part of this report is purely based on what we observed when we visited the site and my professional opinion.

Actions Required:

Members of the Public Protection and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to consider and comment on the contents of the report and highlight any points for further consideration.

1. Background

Grenfell Tower was a twenty four storey block of public housing in North Kensington in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, West London. The tower block consisted of 120 homes and housed approximately 350 people. Residents were mainly social tenants but also people renting from private landlords in flats previously purchased under right-to-buy schemes.

The fire took place on Wednesday 14th June 2017 with the emergency services receiving the first report at 0054 hours that morning. It is believed to have been started by an electrical fault in a fridge freezer on the 4th floor. The fire burned for 60 hours and at its height reached temperatures of 1000°C. The growth of the fire is believed to have been accelerated by the building's exterior cladding and has so

far resulted in 80 deaths and 70 injuries making it the largest mass fatality incident in the UK since the Hillsborough disaster of 1989 and the worst fire of its type since the Second World War.

More than 250 firefighters and 70 appliances from all over London responded to this incident and they were able to rescue 65 people. Over 100 London Ambulance Service staff, 20 ambulances and a Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) responded transferring casualties to 6 hospitals across London.

There are up to 250 Metropolitan police officers a day working on all aspects of the investigation. Around 255 people survived the fire but as at 8th August 2017, authorities are unable to trace any surviving occupants for 23 of the 120 flats and only 50 victims have been formally identified. The final death toll is not expected to be confirmed until 2018.

The Prime Minister has ordered a Full Public Enquiry to be chaired by an independent Judge which will include the scrutiny of both the central and local government response. The public have also been consulted on the terms of reference to be used. Central government has made a £5million fund available for those left homeless with an initial payment of £5500 for each individual.

The tower block was insured for £20million but costs are expected to reach £1billion due to a combination of litigation, compensation for deaths and injuries, rehousing and rehabilitation.

Lessons Learned.

For the purposes of this report, findings from the EP & BC Service visit to site have been broken down into six main areas of learning, those being, Command & Control, Local Authority Response from an Ealing Borough Council perspective, Rest Centre/Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HAC) Operations, Media Coverage, Volunteers and Recovery.

Command & Control

London Resilience Forum is chaired by the Mayor of London and as well as the emergency services and all other category 1 & 2 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, it comprises all 33 Borough Councils. The reality of this means that meetings tend to take place on a regional basis. Chief Executives from each Borough Council are on call for two weeks on a rotation basis. Local Authority response to any incident sits at Borough level then escalates to pan-London if mutual aid or a larger response is required.

On the day of the fire, London Fire Brigade declared a major incident early on. Multi-agency Strategic Co-ordination Group (SCG) and Tactical Co-ordination Groups (TCG) met on that first day and continued to meet during the response. SCG meetings were usually via teleconference and TCG meetings took place at the scene. Once the incident became a pan-London response, the Special Operations Room in Lambeth was opened. Cabinet Office Briefing Room (COBR) also required regular briefings. Resilience Direct is not well used by local authorities in London and not for incident response.

Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council opened its Borough Emergency Control Centre (BECC) which is a local authority control centre housed in the Council offices. On Thursday evening mutual aid was requested across London, local authorities recognising the incident required pan-London support. The BECC had to be locked down on the Friday as angry local residents tried to storm the Council building.

A London Local Authority Co-ordination Centre (LLACC) was established at Westminster. Westminster Council took the lead for all communications. Information was passed from the BECC to the LLACC regarding response and those involved, however some problems with data transfer were encountered and some information was lost.

On Saturday, a task force comprising 8 Borough Chief Executives was established led by City of London. Its role was to co-ordinate the pan-London Local Authority response and that evening the Chief Executive of Ealing Borough Council was asked to take the lead and coordinate operations at the Westway Sports Centre alongside Kensington and Chelsea and British Red Cross (BRC).

Our command and control procedures here in Lincolnshire are much different and, in my opinion, much simpler. If a similar incident were to happen here, the LRF would establish a multi-agency SCG to consider a working strategy, form a multi-agency TCG to enact that strategy by opening the County Emergency Centre (CEC) and establishing a full command support function with relevant cell structure. Our multi-agency Warn & Inform cell would then take the lead on all communications issues.

From a Local Authority perspective, EP & BC Service duty officers would have been alerted through fire & rescue or police controls and would have alerted both LCC on call strategic and tactical commanders along with elected members and relevant District Council colleagues. The team would also ensure the CEC was set up and operational. Local Authorities would then continue to provide support to the emergency services during the response and be ready to take the lead once response moved to recovery.

Local Authority Response (Ealing Borough Council)

All London Borough Councils were asked for mutual aid support on Thursday 15th June, the day after the fire broke out. This request was made for staff to assist with Local Authority Liaison Officers (LALO), BECC and rest centre manager roles. On Saturday evening, the Chief Executives task force asked the Chief Executive of Ealing Borough Council if they could take the lead in co-ordination at Westway Sports Centre with other agencies. It established its own BECC to co-ordinate operations at this centre and took this leading role for a week before handing over to Richmond and Wandsworth Borough Council.

Ealing have a team of three officers which make up its Emergency Management Service, this structure is similar across the other 32 London Boroughs. There is then a core number of Borough staff that have received mandatory annual emergency planning training. All other staff that became involved in the response

received dynamic training related to the role that they were being asked to perform at the time. This however was limited as operations were continually changing and it was difficult to specify roles and responsibilities early on. There was a general willingness of staff to do anything that was asked of them. This is likely due to the tragic nature of the incident that had occurred in close proximity to the Borough.

When Ealing took over the lead role at Westway Sports Centre there was already an atmosphere of distrust between survivors and other local residents and the Council highlighted in the national media. This in part had been due to a perceived lack of community leadership, visibility, communication and support and had been stoked up by the constant media coverage of the incident. There had also been some challenges regarding local elected members and junior Council officers speaking to the media and posting on social media and not following top lines coming out of the communications team, this took time to rectify and put more pressure on already busy communications officers. At times this became political and it also caused some friction between Boroughs.

Officers from the Emergency Management Service reported that they felt under an intense level of pressure and scrutiny when they arrived. There were lots of media representatives, angry residents and staff and routine Council functions such as waste collection had not been undertaken due to safety concerns that the tower could collapse; bins were now overflowing causing a potential health hazard. Utilities had been turned off in the surrounding area resulting in other local residents requiring assistance, some of the neighbouring properties and businesses adjacent to Grenfell Tower had also been evacuated due to the same safety concerns.

It became clear that Borough staff needed to be easily identifiable and be able to listen; Council identification and reflective surcoats were therefore provided for all responding staff to ensure visibility and personal safety on site. Welfare became especially important and as a general rule staff were only allocated two shifts then did not return.

Provision was also made to ensure that appropriate welfare in the form of emotional, psychological and counselling services were available to support staff post shift, this is something that many officers took advantage of due to the nature of the incident and the exposure to very distressed and angry survivors and local residents. It should be noted that during debriefs post event this is something that needs to be redressed; staff are still continuing to require welfare support to deal with the 1:1 aspect of the important provision of empathy to survivors and residents.

When the call goes out for large scale staff support during times of emergency, some take to it straight away and are able to adapt their existing skills to meet the needs of the emergency perfectly, others may not be able to do so and are better staying back in their day jobs to help keep the organisation functioning. This was especially true at the Westway Sports Centre; local residents responded better to some staff than others and began to insist on only dealing with a particular person. This became an issue when tired staff were sent home and needed time to rest. Ealing therefore tried not to make it about individuals but about a system,

unfortunately there was some intervention by central government and some of these officers were returned to role.

It was important for the Borough to quickly establish a logistics, finance and procurement system to ensure that proper documentation was produced and financial and procurement procedures adhered to as a large amount of staff and equipment costs were being incurred, this included catering, accommodation, transport, furniture and lighting. For example, there were so many people attending the Westway Sport Centre that it became necessary to install air conditioning units, the premises were not keen on contractors drilling into walls so other means had to be found, this cost the Borough in the region of £15,000. Equipment costs totalled around £36,000 up to Thursday 20th July. The importance of key responding Borough officers being issued with corporate credit cards also became clear. All EP & BC Service duty officers in Lincolnshire carry them.

The response from Ealing Borough Council consisted of 192 officers from across the authority working 2561 hours resulting in a total cost of £88,000 to the authority. The majority of these hours were picked up during the week from Sunday 18th June to Friday 23rd June; this caused the Borough to come to a near standstill during this time and is why it could only maintain the level of support for a week. Detailed staff statistics are attached at Appendix A.

It should be remembered here that the London Borough Councils perform what we would understand to be both County Council and District Council functions. Here in Lincolnshire we would be supporting the District so for example housing, environmental health and benefits officers would come from them, we would be concentrating our efforts around management of the CEC and the LRF response so whilst staffing would still have a significant impact, it would not be as great.

When Ealing handed over to Richmond and Wandsworth Borough Council at the end of the week, a comprehensive handover document was produced detailing standard operating procedures and roles and responsibilities to be used at Westway Sports Centre, information from this document will be incorporated into Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HAC) planning here in Lincolnshire. In total the response has cost the Borough in the region of £124,000.

Although the mass fatalities group did meet, bodies from the tower were all taken to Westminster Public Mortuary negating the need for a temporary mortuary to be established. Westminster is relatively unique in the fact that it is a Local Authority mortuary, staffed by Local Authority personnel, unlike many others which are either at hospitals or private funeral directors. The mortuary already had a number of bodies in it when it was decided that bodies from Grenfell would be taken there, these were moved to other mortuaries in London.

It should be noted that existing temporary mortuary plans had to be amended as they were found not fit for purpose and the building underwent some alterations to ensure it could adequately cope with the size of the operation. This involved a wall been taken down and the provision of additional temporary body storage areas.

This facility required a large number of staff to run the operation and additional welfare support was required.

If a similar incident were to occur here, our local mortuaries would not be able to cope with this amount of fatalities and we would have to establish one. As this is a Local Authority duty, additional and substantial staff and financial support would also be required for a considerable period of time. At the time of writing, only 50 of the 80 fatalities have been formally identified so this would still be an ongoing operation and it is expected that the mortuary at Westminster will remain operational for a year.

Rest Centre/Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HAC) Operations

In the immediate aftermath of the fire several Local Authority rest centres were established in the vicinity as part of a tri-Borough response by Kensington and Chelsea, Hammersmith and Fulham and Westminster in conjunction with BRC. These were later consolidated into one at the Westway Sports Centre to support the immediate needs of those affected by the fire. Ealing later merged the rest centre into a Humanitarian Assistance Centre (HAC) as requirements changed and longer term support was required. They then renamed it a Community Assistance Centre (CAC) as services such as bereavement counselling for example were being undertaken on an appointment only basis at separate premises managed by the police. In these early stages, the rest centre manager was being asked to provide briefings via teleconference directly to COBR.

Operations at Westway managed to rehouse 250 residents during the first 2 days. It became the location for people to bring their financial, clothing and food donations. Grenfell Tower housed an ethnically diverse range of people and it was important for this to be taken into consideration when catering and interpreting support solutions were implemented.

During the first few days, catering was supplied via a number of options, local takeaways donated food as did supermarkets but local residents also brought food, for example, the local Muslim community brought Halal food. As there were so many people, it was decided that tables and chairs would be put up outside of the rest centre to enable families and friends to meet and share meals. There were some additional considerations with providing catering however, apart from those residents from the tower that were actually involved, homeless and other local people were attending the rest centre to receive free meals. It was decided in those first few days that everyone attending should receive assistance rather than turn people away. Catering continued at the CAC for the next month.

Additionally large corporate companies were offering assistance and equipment, for example Microsoft donated laptops & mobiles, Google provided vouchers for laptops from PC World and EE shops allowed residents to access their network free. This had to be managed to ensure that only those in need had access and to stop any abuse.

BRC took over the access and registration process issuing all those attending with identification wristbands and completing the necessary documentation, this

information was then shared with the police casualty bureau. The rest centre did not require much in the way of additional IT equipment and use was made of the existing computers and printers already installed on the premises.

These were used to record personal details and other information relating to those attending the rest centre/CAC, Resilience Direct was not used at the CAC.

A huge volume of food, toiletries and clothing was being donated at the site of the rest centre/CAC. This required sorting to ensure that it was suitable for use but also into categories. This placed a huge demand on the Borough Council and BRC staff working there and it was decided that this should be taken over in the main by local volunteers. Some items being donated were found to be unsuitable for use and later along the line were sent for cleaning before being sold in BRC charity shops with proceeds going to the Grenfell Tower resident's funds.

After the CAC was established a wide range of organisations attended in support of those involved. These included social services, NHS staff, counselling services, religious groups, insurance, housing and benefits. More were added at a later date including government departments such as DCLG, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, DVLA and Royal Mail, this ensured residents could still access their mail and could apply for copies of existing driving licences and passports if required.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is thought that the Westway Sports Centre was in the wrong position for the rest centre/CAC and alternative premises further away may have been better suited. This is because the tower is clearly visible in the background and there became an element of emotional attachment. However, subsequent debriefs at Ealing have suggested that, against current emergency plans, this may have enabled the community to bond and logistically enabled all residents and survivors to attend regularly. This will be looked at in future humanitarian assistance planning. In addition, there is not always the time to plan for an appropriate venue given timely expectations from the community so logistics will have to be built quickly and dynamically.

It is also worth noting that Ealing think it unlikely that London would be granted permission from the owners to use Westway Sports Centre as a rest centre during the response to any future emergency. This is due to a number of concerns that they had including the extension of use from a rest centre to a CAC meaning it was used much longer than first anticipated, lack of communications, scale and duration of use, financial loss and staff exposure to distressed and traumatised people.

I believe that this would potentially be the case here and that we will need to consider our choice of site very carefully when the need arises. The EP & BC Service will need to ensure that we revisit our lists of local HAC centres and consider future use, depending on the scale of any future incident; it may be prudent to go for larger premises straight away if the potential for opening a HAC is there. We will also need to revisit these sites to ensure that premises know what they may be signing up for and perhaps look at some staff training and emergency planning awareness sessions.

We may need to consider invoking a process whereby we liaise with LCC Economic Development Services and Property Services to ascertain vacant LCC

managed workspace and light industrial units that could be utilised or alternatively agree Premises Licenses with our existing HAC sites.

Media Coverage

The Grenfell Tower fire received international media coverage via television, radio, newspaper, internet and social media. The communications operation therefore became a twenty four hour job requiring a large team of people to ensure that all media deadlines were met; this was co-ordinated by Westminster. It also required staff to manage it at the scene of the fire and the surrounding area. Media intrusion, especially in the immediate aftermath, became an issue and also aided the spread of misinformation, often hampering the response and sometimes causing extra and unnecessary stress and anxiety to both survivors and residents involved and to responding staff.

The Local Authorities and other responding agencies also had to cope with daily VIP visits to the scene; these included the Queen and Prince William, Prince Charles, Prime Minister, Jeremy Corbyn, Mayor of London and a host of celebrities. This required extra planning and security measures to be instigated and took staff away from other roles. DCLG were asked to provide assistance with the co-ordination and management of these visits. It also ensured that the media were never very far away. To help manage these visits, a decision was taken to not publicise them, this went some way to preventing additional crowds of people gathering at the scene to watch.

During the early stages of the incident problems were encountered when the media, eager for information, approached junior staff and elected members who had not received top line briefings and sometimes gave their own opinions, these were not always the opinions of the Council and were sometimes political statements which were then played out through their use of social media and in the media. This took a disproportionate amount of time to repair, caused reputational damage and perhaps went some way towards fuelling the distrust that existed between survivors, residents and the Council. It is important that all staff working at site are aware of the organisation's policy regarding the media.

Other problems were encountered with media misconceptions and interpretations of on scene activities. In the immediate aftermath and before a proper registration system had been implemented at the rest centre, reporters gained access and took pictures of response activities and vulnerable survivors and residents often in a state of distress. They reported a lack of attendance by local authority staff and an air of chaos. Council staff were there but had no ID and no identifiable clothing to make them visible to both those seeking assistance and the media. Whilst the EP & BC Service and highways staff here have reflective clothing appropriate for responding to incidents, this is not the case for the rest of our organisation and thought needs to be given to the purchase of reflective jackets for front line staff to wear if asked to respond to an emergency.

Pictures were taken of clothing donations being turned away from the rest centre by staff and reported as them not being good enough or not wanted. There was

some truth in this reporting but as previously stated, some items were unfit for use but a process was swiftly implemented so that receiving staff accepted all donations, they were then sorted privately and those items not suitable, sent for cleaning and then sale in BRC charity shops.

Tables and chairs being placed outside of the rest centre was misinterpreted as there not being enough space in the building to accommodate those involved and that they were forced to sit outside, as previously stated, this was not the case. In Lincolnshire our multi-agency warn and inform group would take the lead on co-ordination of the media with the support of our DCLG representative.

It is imperative that an early communications strategy is developed which will be pivotal in ensuring that both those involved as a result of the incident and the media reporting on it know where to find accurate and up to date information from trusted sources, this removes the need to go looking for it elsewhere. A clear exit strategy should also be developed for the exact same reason.

There are many lessons to be learnt around media engagement from this incident and there is already a scheduled training session planned for our senior officers and elected members later this year but thought needs to be given to more, particularly our strategic and tactical commanders who are more likely to be approached for interviews by the media.

Volunteers

During the immediate aftermath of the fire a large number of local residents and others volunteered at the rest centre and initially it was these people that staffed it. This is to be expected following any emergency where the local community will almost certainly want to assist if they are able. It is important that appropriate systems and processes are implemented as soon as possible to manage this as there are potential safeguarding, vetting and health and safety issues. In this case and following the implementation of registration procedures at the rest centre, volunteers were used to accept and sort through the donations that were being made.

In Lincolnshire we have a tried and tested MOU in place with our existing volunteer groups and have developed a policy for the co-ordination of spontaneous volunteers and their use during emergencies, these documents and groups are exercised as part of any LRF large scale exercise taking place in the county and have been successfully used operationally during both the Boston tidal surge in December 2013 and the East Coast tidal surge incident in January this year. It is unsure if London Boroughs currently have such documents, there is not a regional one; we have since shared ours with Ealing.

If a similar incident of both size and scale were to happen here, resulting in the need to engage large numbers of volunteers and the management of public donations, it would be prudent to consider their locations. It may be more suitable if volunteer reception centres and receiving and storage centres for donations are located remotely, removing the pressure from the site and allowing these activities to take place away from both the public and media gaze.

Recovery

Because of the distrust that had manifested itself between the local authority and the residents in the immediate aftermath of the fire, some local residents groups such as the Grenfell Action Group, Grenfell United and Grenfell Residents Association refused to engage or attend the rest centre/CAC. This still remains to some extent even now but the local authorities now try to involve these local groups in any decisions that need to be taken during the recovery process. For example, when we visited in July, we saw all the memorials and flowers that have been shown by the media, many of the flowers were dead and we asked when they were going to be removed, we were informed that this would only be a local resident's decision.

Another example is the involvement of the singer Adele, she attends the HAC on an almost daily basis. These visits are unannounced and there is no publicity attached to them. She has much influence and is championing the resident's plight; in turn the residents trust her and will listen to her. We saw first-hand how she meets with both Local Authority and volunteers from the CAC and then with residents acting as a sort of go between which has proved to be an extremely important role going forward.

The day before we arrived for our visit in July, the CAC at Westway Sports Centre was in the process of closing down and a new site had opened just a short distance away. This new site is a new building comprising empty office space and was chosen by the residents. The building has been leased by Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council for a period of five years, it is expected that a CAC in some form will be required for this duration. The building is currently known as The Curve but it is to be renamed by local school children through a competition and it is hoped that long term it will become a community centre.

The Curve is able to offer better more sustainable accommodation for the CAC and has the additional space to provide children's crèche, interview and meeting rooms as well as housing the organisations present in the Westway Sports Centre. The furniture, fixtures and fittings have all been donated by local businesses and it produces a regular newsletter to inform residents of the latest information, this was produced every other day when we visited.

The Bellwin Scheme was enacted for this incident and Local Authorities have been informed that their expenditure will be reimbursed by central government.

At present, those residents that lived in the Grenfell Tower have been provided with bill free accommodation for a period of one year. This will undoubtedly attract further media attention when it comes to an end as it coincides with the first anniversary of the fire but these plans may well change before that happens.

At the time of writing, Ealing and the other London Boroughs involved are undertaking their regional debriefs and it should be expected that there will be more learning that will emerge from them and the EP & BC Service will monitor and include in our future planning.

We have had previous experience of evacuating a block of flats when it became necessary to evacuate Shuttleworth House in Lincoln during the flooding of 2007 and we established a rest centre at Lincoln College. Many lessons were learned from that incident which were used to inform our current planning assumptions.

Over the past couple of months the EP & BC Service have been actively engaged with partners providing emergency planning advice and guidance to the District Councils regarding any high rise buildings that they may have. We have developed draft plans in conjunction with City of Lincoln Council for the three blocks of flats in Lincoln, Shuttleworth House, Trent View and Jarvis House and hope that in doing so, we will have developed a template for others to use if required to do so for high rise buildings in their areas.

2. Recommendations

1. Stocks of reflective tabards with LCC logo are purchased for LCC front line officers for use in the response to emergencies. These should be stored in the CEC.
2. Ensure community groups are provided with reflective tabards with LCC logo for use in emergencies when acting on the Council's behalf. These should be stored in the CEC.
3. Media awareness refresher training which includes use of social media is provided for strategic & tactical commanders and elected members.
4. EP & BC Service to revisit HAC centre lists to ensure they are still fit for purpose and consider future use including liaison with premises owners and providing any necessary staff training should they be required for extended periods during emergencies.
5. EP & BC Service to update existing HAC plan with lessons learnt from Grenfell Tower fire and include all services that were involved at Westway/Curve in our document.
6. EP & BC Service to ensure that appropriate welfare in the form of emotional, psychological and counselling services are available to support staff responding to emergencies if required.
7. EP & BC Service to assess the capability and capacity relevant to the roles provided by District Councils and provide up to date training for all response staff and voluntary organisations.
8. EP & BC Service to ensure that awareness training is provided for LCC elected members regarding emergency planning & business continuity plans and procedures
9. EP & BC Service to review and update the LCC elected members aide memoire reflecting new LGA guidance and lessons learned at Grenfell.

3. Consultation

a) Have Risks and Impact Analysis been carried out?

Not Applicable

b) Risks and Impact Analysis

Not Applicable

4. Appendices

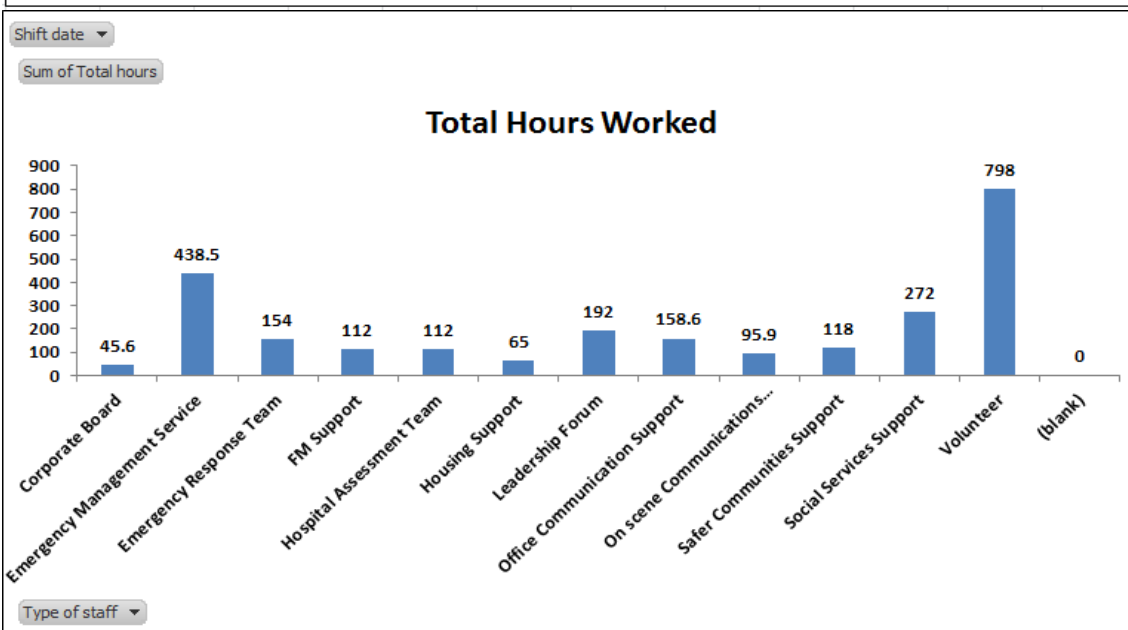
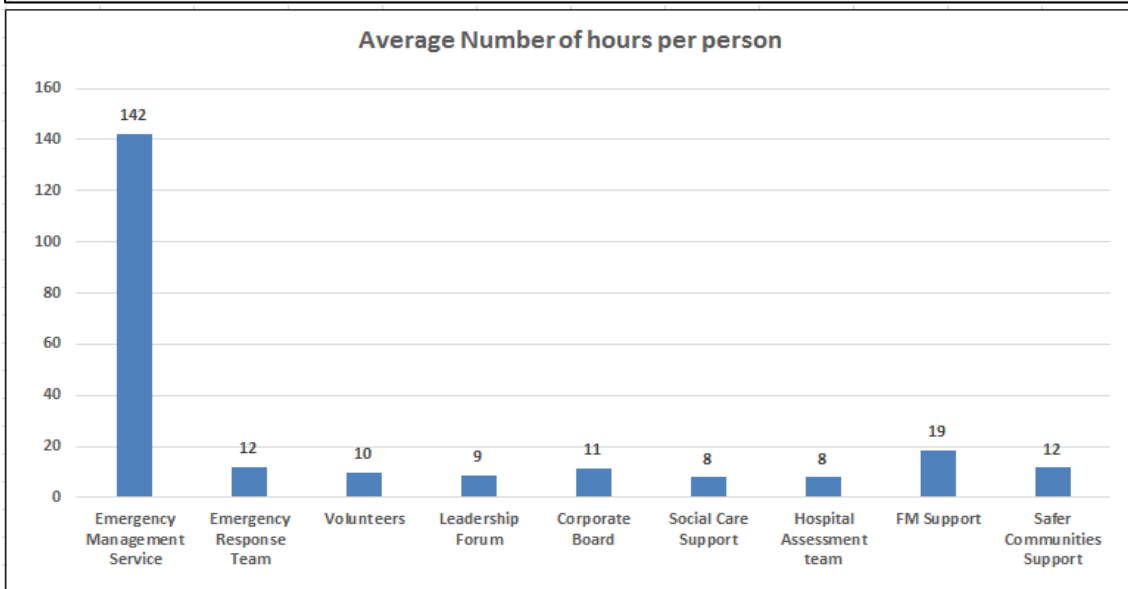
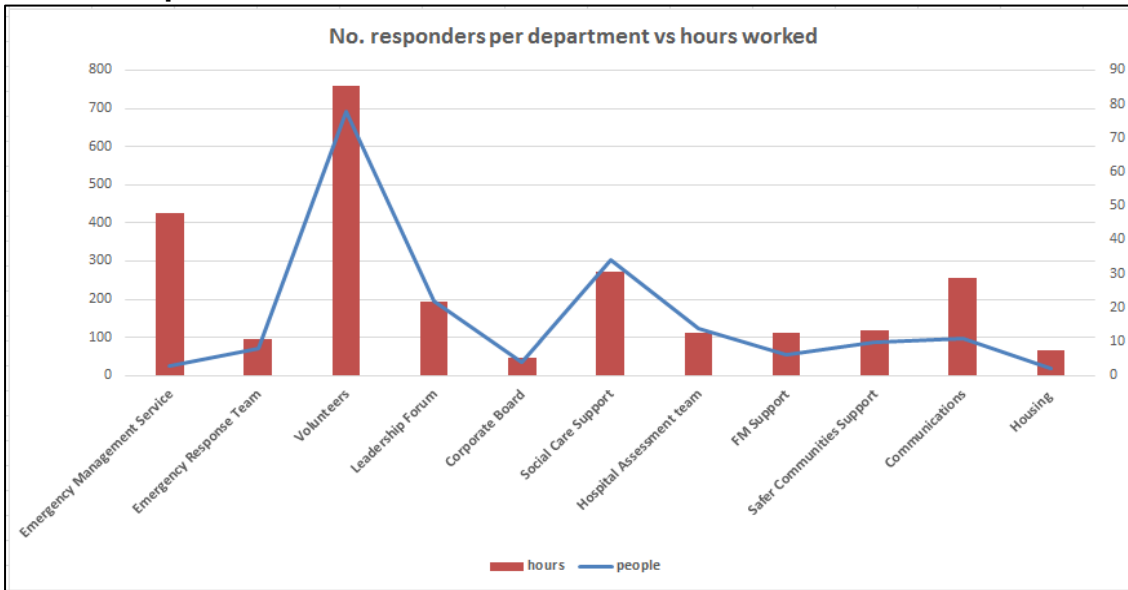
These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Breakdown of Staffing Incurred by Ealing Borough Council during Grenfell Tower Response.
Appendix B	Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) Actions Following Grenfell Tower Incident
Appendix C	LCC buildings

5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

This report was written by Ian Reed, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager, who can be contacted by e-mail at Ian.Reed@lincoln.fire-uk.org

Breakdown of Staffing Incurred by Ealing Borough Council during Grenfell Tower Response.



Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue (LFR) Actions Following Grenfell Tower Incident

Following the tragic events on Wednesday 14th June, LFR held a meeting to plan and develop a strategy to identify key areas that would need to be addressed and actioned locally as a consequence of the incident. The aim of the strategy and resulting actions were to allow assurances to be given to the communities of Lincolnshire in respect to fire safety within similar buildings.

There was an appreciation that further actions and agreed direction would need to be fluid to allow the ever developing outcomes of the incident to be fully supported by the LFR.

The National Fire Chief's Council (NFCC) set up a co-ordination cell to provide consistent information to allow Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) to take required measures to reduce the risk of a similar incident happening in their area.

The following early actions were taken by LFR:

- Offered London Fire Brigade welfare support
- Supported all NFCC requests and processes
- Provided support locally where required
- Made enquiries regarding the cladding status of all premises 6 floors and above and provided support and guidance where required
- Maintained a presence and provided community safety advice at the 3 Lincoln tower blocks
- Worked with District Councils to provide support, guidance and reassurance.
- Held drop in Sessions at the 3 Lincoln Tower Blocks where residents were able to discuss concerns with City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) & LFR
- Inspections of high rise buildings have been and will continue to be conducted as part of our risk based inspection programme, as are familiarisation/risk information gathering visits by operational crews
- A review of operational plans and risk information was conducted
- Facilitated meetings with CoLC Head of Property and Health & Safety and discussed current emergency arrangements
- Offered general Fire Safety advice to all schools across the County, with further support available if required
- Engaged with LCC Emergency Planning & Business Continuity Team (EP&BC) to develop evacuation plans for the 3 main residential tower blocks in Lincoln

Work was carried out to identify and confirm the number of High Rise premises within the County; 25 premises were identified as meeting the relevant criteria. All 25 premises were visited and checked for compliance against current Fire Safety legislation.

A number of premises over 18 metres in height were also identified at a precautionary Strategic Coordination Group meeting held by the Local Resilience Forum. Whilst these premises were deemed to be of a lower risk, further investigative work was carried out.

Of the 25 premises identified, 9 were confirmed as residential. Most of these were either not cladded or cladded with materials that were of a type which was not of concern. There were 2 premises of concern, one under construction and therefore not occupied and one where Aluminium Composite Cladding (ACM) was installed albeit only to a relatively small area of the building.

The developer of the property under construction has confirmed that the ACM cladding will be replaced before occupation and the managing organisation for the other premises is arranging to have the cladding replaced at the earliest opportunity with a more appropriate product.

A further 10 of the identified premises were Student Accommodation, LFR engaged with the University who assisted with the research required. As with the residential buildings, most were either not cladded or cladded with materials that were of a type which was not of concern. Again, there were 2 premises of concern, one under construction and therefore not occupied and one where Aluminium Composite Cladding (ACM) was installed.

The developer of the property under construction confirmed that the ACM cladding will be replaced before occupation and the managing organisation for the other premises is arranging to have the cladding tested. A full Fire Safety Audit was carried out at this premises which found the building to be well managed and compliant with current Fire Safety Legislation. LFR are still awaiting confirmation of the test result.

Hospitals accounted for a further 2 premises, one being cladded with materials that were of a type which was not of concern and the other being predominantly un clad, however a small number of panels installed were identified for testing. The small amount of potentially ACM cladding installed was not of concern.

However, following direction from the NHS at a national level, LFR were contacted by management at Skegness and Gainsborough hospitals. Both hospitals were visited by Fire Safety Inspectors with advice and assurance given on the fire safety arrangements in place.

LFR were also approached by the Health & Safety/Fire safety lead for Lincolnshire Partnership Foundation Trust and are provided advice and assurance at the secure mental health units across the County.

The remaining premises consisted of hotels & offices, none of which were fitted with ACM cladding.

Following requests for support around the safety of Lincolnshire schools and colleges, the LFR fire safety team carried out visits to schools identified as of potential concern and no issues were identified. Support was also requested from LFR around 12 identified schools, although this was not in respect to cladding.

Although LFR have worked on identified local issues, throughout the process, guidance has been given from the NFCC. Guidance has included:

- Overseeing processes and actions across UK
- Providing key messages and guidance to all Fire and Rescue Services (FRS)
- Providing regular situation reports on cladding test results progress information
- Producing a range of guidance information/documents to support building custodians and fire risk assessments
- Compiling a list of frequently asked questions
- Starting to look at wider issues

Guidance documents being updated as more information has become available. The latest suite of documents was released towards the end of September.

LFR has contributed, and continues to contribute, as part of a regional team to requests for information to support the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, being carried out by Dame Judith Hackitt.

The following areas have also been identified by LFR as arising opportunities and continue to be explored:

- Further engagement with Council Housing Officers to ensure improved collaborative working and promotion of fire safety arrangements
- Business Engagement – Opportunities will be actively sought by LFR to promote fire protection throughout the County
- Explore opportunities to enhance the interaction between our prevention and protection teams
- Support NFCC by contributing to the review of Fire Safety Legislation

LCC buildings

There was limited guidance from Government to Public Sector Landlords in the immediate aftermath of the fire and this focused on advising landlords to check for Aluminium cladding on residential buildings over 18 metres in height and school buildings over 4 storeys. There was no guidance for other building types and as a result LCC took the decision to survey all of its 900+ buildings including Academies regardless of height and building type to identify whether any ACM cladding was present.

Corporate Property instructed VINCI to mobilise resources to undertake these surveys, which started with desk top surveys from the Concerto property database and local knowledge to identify which buildings either had metal cladding or could potentially have cladding. This enabled visits to commence within a few days to priority sites and eventually a team of 25 staff were assessing buildings across the county covering 2500 miles, this involved mobile technicians, building surveyors and engineers. Within two weeks it had been established that no LCC buildings contained Aluminium cladding, however during this time a handful of schools required further investigated and Fire & Rescue provided support to these schools as necessary until it had been established that no Aluminium cladding was present. At the same time LCC checked that all schools had fire risk assessments, it is schools responsibility to ensure these are in place.

National research into the exact cause of the fire continues and it is almost certain that there will implications for Building Regulations and standards and LCC will continue to monitor the outcome of this research to identify what impact this may have on existing buildings and construction of new buildings.

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