

## ETAP Review of Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service (FARS)

### Response to the Phase 1 Report of the Grenfell Inquiry

#### What did we review and why is this important?

The Grenfell Tower Inquiry was set up to examine the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the fire at Grenfell Tower on the night of 14 June 2017. It's Phase 1 report made many recommendations directed at FARS across the country. Here in Staffordshire our FARS reviewed the recommendations which applied locally and developed a detailed plan for implementing them.

The devastating impact of the Grenfell fire shows the importance of this work. FARS asked ETAP to undertake a review of its response to Grenfell Phase 1. ETAP's independent scrutiny supports the building of public confidence in our local service.

We wanted confidence that Staffordshire FARS had:

- Properly considered all national recommendations from the Grenfell Phase 1 Report.
- Documented reasons why some of the national recommendations are not applicable to Staffordshire.
- Ensured all recommendations from the Grenfell Phase 1 Report applicable to Staffordshire are held on a suitable action log.
- Identified a timescale and a firm date when all agreed relevant recommendations will be implemented.
- Put in place a proper control and reporting procedure to monitor progress.

#### How did we go about the review?

We read the Grenfell Tower Inquiry: Phase 1 report. We noted the inclusion of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry as an action in Staffordshire FARS current governance report. We also noted previous press releases from Staffordshire FARS detailing actions that had been taken in response to the inquiry.

The review team met with Glynn Luznyj, temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer, who was the lead officer in connection with Staffordshire FARS response to the recommendations contained in the Phase 1 report.

The aim of this meeting was to establish the approach taken by Staffordshire FARS in their response to the recommendations found in the report, and the progress that had been made.

To ensure that the meeting was as productive as possible we prepared a series of questions and requested documentation relating to Staffordshire FARS response.

We were provided with documentation including terms of reference for the Grenfell Phase 1 Task and Finish Group, a timeline of the work completed to date, and a report to the Service Management Board dated 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Following this meeting we were able to subsequently contact Glynn for any matters of clarification.

## What did we find?

- It is noted that a significant amount of work has been undertaken, both in terms of an immediate response to issues raised by Staffordshire FARS itself, and as a response to the recommendations contained in the report.
- The Phase 1 report identified 45 recommendations which were aimed at FARS nationwide and also at the owners/managers of high-rise buildings.
- A *Grenfell Task and Finish Group* was established by Staffordshire FARS with its own terms of reference. The aim of the group was to examine all of the recommendations indicated in the Phase 1 report and to determine and implement a set of actions which would improve service response to incidents which involved high-rise residential buildings. Reports on progress would go forward to the *Service Delivery Board* on a quarterly basis, to the *Service Management Board* on a 6-monthly basis and to the Staffordshire Commissioner through the *Strategic Governance Board*. One significant objective of this group was to provide assurances to the Service Management Team and the Commissioner that learning points contained within the report were identified, understood and actioned.
- Immediate responses by Staffordshire FARS following Grenfell included establishing a *Fire Safety Task Force*, managing communications, public sector briefings to include residents, and training for crew members. This was a coordinated multi-agency approach.
- Significantly, detailed scrutiny of the report by Staffordshire FARS identified a total of 97 recommendations/actions to be implemented and a progress report to the *Service Management Board* 14<sup>th</sup> April 2021 outlined progress to date. Relevant owners were allocated against each action.
- Relevant work prior to the report being published is the *Community Sprinkler Project* which started in 2015 and which targeted high-rise buildings i.e. those of 5 storeys and above. This demonstrates that risks had been identified and work undertaken to mitigate those risks prior to the publication of the Phase 1 report. Indeed, works on two of the blocks was completed in June 2017 - two weeks after the Grenfell fire.
- Subsequent sprinkler work has been completed in Lichfield, Stoke-on-Trent, and Tamworth with work committed to until 2023. No cladding risks were identified. Capital funding is identified for a ten-year period. Fire risks to both fire crew and residents have thus been reduced.
- The reporting structure put in place regarding the recommendations and their progress formed part of the governance structure used to ensure the 97 actions/recommendations were addressed. This was to provide a clear level of assurance to stakeholders that recommendations in the report were properly addressed and in a timely fashion. The approach appears to have been to tackle as many recommendations as possible at the same time, as all were deemed to be equally important and warranted swift action. Therefore, there was no formal timeline.
- We were informed that some of the recommendations in the report were not relevant to Staffordshire. This may well be because they related specifically to the London Fire Brigade and others related to the owners/managers of high-rise buildings. It is thought that the anticipated Phase 2 inquiry report will address this latter issue.
- The *Task and Finish Group* has now concluded its work. As of April 2021, of the 97 actions/recommendations identified 82 have been completed, 8 have been incorporated into other actions and 9 are identified as work in progress. Not all of the actions have completion dates or estimated dates for completion. A

further review against the recommendations contained within the report identifies 7 actions which are work in progress.

- Much work has been completed in connection with addressing recommendations in the report. Staffordshire FARS has used the report as a catalyst for change, which is to be commended. This has included complying with the recommendations in the report regarding appropriate training needs for operational staff, inspection of all tall buildings, interim policy on evacuation and occupancy management during fires. Steps have been taken to ensure that with the addition of extra fire safety officers, there is a robust approach to enforcement action where necessary.
- Progress against the 7 actions is shown in the table below;

No.	Action	Update	Status
1	That all fire and rescue services be equipped with smoke hoods to assist in evacuation.	These have been ordered but had not arrived at the time of writing.	On Track
2	That all high-rise residential buildings [both in existence and those built in the future] be equipped with facilities for use by the fire and rescue services enabling them to send an evacuation signal to the whole or selected part of the building by means of sounders or similar devices.	As of March 21, there is one premise in Stafford which has equipment to enable full or partial evacuation signal.	On Track
3	Develop a communication system to enable direct communication between the control room and the incident commander, and improve the means of communication between incident commander and the bridgehead. Training is taking place in relation to systems to share information between the incident commander and fire control in a more effective manner.	At the moment, Staffordshire FARS utilise incident command packs, decision logs and command support vehicle systems. There is an opportunity to introduce a dedicated electronic information sharing system that gives live updates on FSG information.	On Track
4	LFB investigate the use of modern communication techniques to provide direct line of communication between the control room and the bridgehead, allowing information to be transmitted directly between the control room and the bridgehead and providing an integrated system of recording FSG information and the results of deployment.	Currently, Staffordshire FARS utilise incident command packs, decision logs and command support vehicle systems. There is an opportunity to introduce a dedicated electronic information sharing system that gives live updates on FSG information	On Track
5	That urgent steps be taken to ensure that the command support system is fully operative	Command support is working, but a fuller review will take place to improve systems such	On Track

	on all command units and that crews are trained in its use.	as electronic connection with Fire Control for search, rescue and fire survival information. Briefing tools have been refreshed through IIMARCH and BA training reviews.	
6	That electronic systems be developed to record FSG information in the control room and display it simultaneously at the bridgehead and in any command units.	There is a method of utilising the FSG information and recording it at the incident and within Control. More work is being done to explore an appropriate electronic system which can make this slicker.	On Track
7	To investigate methods by which assisting control rooms can obtain access to the information available to the host control room.	This has been completed through connecting with the other emergency service control rooms and training them. Further work is going on with fall back control of fire [LFB and North West March 2021].	On Track

### What questions / recommendations do we have?

1. Phase 2 of the report is due to be issued imminently. It is therefore important to build on the work and approach developed during the response to the Phase 1 report recommendations in terms of the governance structures put in place. An exercise to evaluate the appropriateness and robustness of the existing governance structures may be helpful in terms of their suitability going forward. It is important that adequate assurance in relation to addressing the recommendations is provided as there is an implied legal duty to ensure that lessons are learned from the report and that they are implemented.
2. To consider whether an approach which prioritises some actions above others in terms of Staffordshire FARS response to the Phase 2 recommendations should be implemented. A risk-based approach to targeting recommendations and Staffordshire FARS response may be useful. Could any actions in response to recommendations in Phase 1 of the report be monitored in this way?
3. It is understood that the report and its recommendations and Staffordshire FARS response form part of the Directorates' Risk Register. Therefore, it is suggested that this item remains on the Register and the Phase 2 report and its recommendations be added. Ongoing monitoring to continue.
4. To consider whether target dates and timelines are utilised to clarify when Staffordshire FARS' response to a Phase 1 or Phase 2 report recommendation is completed and/or when likely to be completed.
5. To consider introducing an ongoing monitoring system to monitor the ongoing response to recommendations and Staffordshire FARS response with associated time lines mentioned above.

**Response**  
**From Glynn Luznyj**

1. We currently do not have a date for the sharing of the phase 2 outcomes. However, work continues in regards to this work in terms of the Fire Safety Bill becoming fully adopted as legislation and the impact of having a new Building Safety regulator. This means that SFRS is working along with the NFCC to ensure that we are appropriately resourced and governed effectively in relation to Fire safety matters. This has been considered with a restructure plan for 2022 and in terms of our work to increase the levels of competency for our staff involved with Fire safety work (including operational Station and Watch Managers).
2. Agree with this – we will seek to prioritise the work once we have sight of the phase 2 recommendations. In terms of the outstanding work associated with phase 1, we are prioritising the work around Fire Control and incident ground communications and information sharing.
3. Agree with this.
4. As 90% of the phase 1 outcomes have been completed, we would like to utilise this approach with Phase 2 and to manage the work more effectively with target dates and timelines.
5. We agree with this and we are developing a new system to monitor action plans through the Performance and Assurance team. Phase 2 action planning with fit in with this approach.

**Follow-up actions**

**ETAP team**

*ETAP members Sue Westacott, Craig Brown, and Ben Thompson worked on this review. Thanks to Glynn Luznyj of FARS for their input.*