

Report on	Fire Safety in Housing Executive Tower Blocks
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Is this report restricted for confidential business?	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To advise Members on the findings of a report on Fire Safety in Housing Executive Tower Blocks (See Appendix 1).
2.0	Background
2.1	<p>Firstly, it should be noted that there are currently no buildings of this nature identified in the Mid-Ulster area which required investigation.</p> <p>Following the recent tragedy at Grenfell Towers, London which resulted in the deaths of 71 occupants, an "Independent Reference Group" was set up to identify issues regarding "Fire Safety in Housing Executive Tower Blocks".</p> <p>The membership of the group was drawn from various relevant organisations and bodies across Northern Ireland including NIHE, NIFRS, Building Control NI, Department of Finance – Building Standards Branch, Department for Communities as well as other relevant organisations.</p>
3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p>The primary focus of the group was on the cladding systems currently in place on NIHE tower blocks, combustibility of materials, structural design, installation and associated works relating to fire safety within the buildings.</p> <p>In addition, issues relating to effective fire prevention and fire safety measures in high rise residential buildings were to be considered.</p> <p>There were four main objectives of the Independent Reference Group as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The make-up of the cladding systems, along with the robust and stringent testing of those systems <p><u>Findings:</u> No NIHE tower blocks were found to have used Aluminium Composite Material rain screening cladding similar to that used in the Grenfell Tower.</p> <p>The Claddings Systems in place in the NIHE tower blocks were tested and found to be broadly compliant with the current legislative requirements.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Provide assurance that systems installed in tower blocks were in accordance with Building Regulations and best practice within the industry.

	<p><u>Findings:</u> Following assessment of the cladding systems in place on the tower blocks, site specific issues were identified which required further action to be taken and as detailed in the attached report, these actions are nearing completion.</p> <p>3. Identify learning outcomes from Grenfell and identify appropriate actions required to NIHE tower blocks where appropriate.</p> <p><u>Findings:</u> A number of issues have been highlighted in relation to the testing of the cladding/rain screening systems as well as provision of fire protection measures which would provide additional protection to the residents.</p> <p>4. Discuss potential consequences which may arise from the findings of Grenfell in terms of legislative changes etc.</p> <p><u>Findings:</u> Initial findings would indicate that the current regulatory system for ensuring that fire safety in high rise and complex buildings will require additional amendments to further enhance fire safety within those buildings.</p> <p>In general, the initial work which has been carried out to date by the “Independent Reference Group” would indicate improvements are required to the regulatory requirements for buildings of this nature as well as additional fire safety measures leading to enhanced protection of its occupants.</p>
4.0	Other Considerations
4.1	<p><u>Financial & Human Resources Implications</u></p> <p>Financial: None Human: None</p>
4.2	<p><u>Equality and Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None</p>
4.3	<p><u>Risk Management Implications</u></p> <p>No addition issues identified</p>
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Members note the content of this report.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Appendix 1 – Report on Fire Safety in Housing Executive Tower Blocks