

## Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee

16 July 2025

### Part 1 - Public

#### Matters for Information



Cabinet Member	Cllr Adem Mehmet, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Tonbridge Regeneration
Responsible Officer	Eleanor Hoyle, Director for Planning, Housing & Environmental Health
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#### Grenfell Inquiry – Implications for Council Operations

##### 1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To lay out for Members the key implications for the Council from the recommendations in the final report of the Grenfell Inquiry.

##### 2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 Ensuring that the Council is responding appropriately to recommendations and potential legislative changes resulting from the Grenfell Inquiry will ensure that the organisation can operate effectively.

##### 3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The Grenfell Tower Inquiry looks at the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the Grenfell Tower disaster. Phase 1 looked at the events that led up to the fire on 14 June 2017, and the Phase 1 Report was published on 30 October 2019. In September 2024, the Inquiry published its Phase 2 report, which focusses on an analysis of the events that culminated in the tragedy at Grenfell Tower (including the regulatory regime relating to the external walls of high-rise buildings), and the Inquiry's recommendations on what should be done to prevent future similar disasters occurring in the future.
- 3.2 The Inquiry's Phase 2 Report emphasises the importance of the role that local government has to play in major disaster prevention and management, and the need for authorities to have robust levels of preparedness in relation to such matters. In the Report, the Inquiry puts forward a number of specific

recommendations that, in its view, local authorities should take to ensure that effective plans are in place for the future. These recommendations are entirely separate from the existing enforcement powers that local authorities currently have in relation to building safety under existing legislation such as the Housing Act 2004 and the Building Safety Act 2022.

- 3.3 The full Grenfell Inquiry report can be found [here](#).

## 4 Key implications

- 4.1 The implications for district Councils such as Tonbridge & Malling fall into the following main categories, which are detailed below;
- Building Safety
  - Social Housing management and regulation
  - Emergency Planning and Response
- 4.2 Each section below references the specific paragraphs of the report where relevant recommendations are made, provides commentary on the implications for the Council and also summarises the Government's response.
- 4.3 Although some steps had already been taken by Government ahead of the Grenfell Inquiry reporting, which have had a significant impact on delivery of Building Control services, the Inquiry made a number of additional recommendations. A summary of these is provided at **annex 1**.
- 4.4 The Council is not a stock holding authority and therefore a number of the recommendations from the report are not directly applicable, albeit officers have apprised themselves of these in the context of any complaints we may receive that relate to them and to ensure that the Council is well informed about additional requirements on registered providers in our borough that may have an implication on their work and task prioritisation.
- 4.5 Perhaps the most significant area of impact for this Council is in Emergency Planning and Response. The Council is embedded in the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) and accesses some of the necessary training and resources through that partnership. We also provide additional staff training through a highly experienced and reputable local trainer. Therefore some of the implications for the Council consider issues at a County wide level. A summary of these is provided at **annex 2**.
- 4.6 The Council has recently reviewed its emergency planning staff provision in light of the retirement of a significantly experienced officer and has decided to increase this provision in light of the need to ensure continuity of level of service. Although this was not directly in response to the Grenfell Inquiry, it is fair to say that the strengthening of the Emergency Planning requirements for Councils via the Civil

Contingencies Act, some of which result from the Inquiry, were a consideration in this resourcing decision.

## **5 Other Options**

- 5.1 Most of the recommendations in the Grenfell Inquiry's final report will be mandated in legislation and the Council will therefore be required to implement changes.
- 5.2 Although the Council could choose not to respond to all relevant recommendations, the potential for reputational damage to the organisation and loss of trust from the community means that this option has not been considered further.

## **6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 6.1 The Council is already required to respond to legislative and guidance changes. Where these are deemed to be significant enough to warrant it (by Government) they may come with 'new burdens' funding to support the changes being implemented and incorporated into Council functions.
- 6.2 The Council will continue to assess the value for money of support available for functions (in this case via the Kent Resilience Forum and LABC, the industry body for Building Control) to ensure that we are accessing good quality support to deliver these functions.

## **7 Risk Assessment**

- 7.1 Should the Council not implement these recommendations, there is a risk of reputational damage and loss of public trust. In addition to this, many of these requirements will be mandated in legislation and will therefore require the Council's compliance.
- 7.2 Individual service risk registers have been updated to reflect the risks associated with their operational activity.

## **8 Legal Implications**

- 8.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from the contents of this report. Where there are legislative changes, these may need to be reported back to Members if their implications are significant.

## **9 Consultation and Communications**

- 9.1 There are specific recommendations relating to the Council's communication activity, particularly during emergency responses. These are laid out in this report.
- 9.2 The Council will consider responding to any relevant Government consultations where the proposals could have a significant impact on our operations.

## 10 Implementation

- 10.1 Implementation of any legislative requirements will be carried out in services and any specific implications that require Member decisions would be reported back to the relevant committees.

## 11 Cross Cutting Issues

### 11.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 11.1.1 Adaptation and resilience have not been considered.

- 11.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

### 11.2 Equalities and Diversity

- 11.2.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and does not vary between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

### 11.3 Other If Relevant

- Business Continuity / Resilience

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 – Building Safety recommendations Annex 2 – Emergency Planning implication