

Scrutiny Scoping Group - Fire Safety

Minutes - 31 October 2017

Attendance

Members of the Scrutiny Scoping Group - Fire Safety

Appleby
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Bob Deacon
Cllr Louise Miles
Sue Roberts
Ryder
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman

Employees

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **9.30 - Feedback from the previous meeting**
The Panel considered a video that had been submitted by Wolverhampton homes. The video was shown to all new tenants. Some concerns were raised in relation to the advice on opening windows as this could depend on where the windows were and how many of them there were. The group also noted that the idea that smoke always rises was not true as when it got cold the smoke would fall. Concern was also expressed regarding the advice to put wet towels against doors as not everyone could and the advice in relation to having to make a value judgement as to whether a resident felt safe.
The Chair agreed that the video was a bit simplistic but it was noted that this would depend on how it was used and the context.
- The Chair noted the good practice in Aston where they had now identified all of the vulnerable people and appointments were automatically made for the fire service to attend, these appointments could be cancelled but at least vulnerable people were initially targeted.
- The group agreed that it was important to ensure that existing and older tenants also had access to the video and fire safety information.

The Panel considered the minutes from the previous meeting and noted that if the Council only took care of its own schools then there was a weakness in the organisation and pressure needed to be put on the Academies to get them to the table and if they did not want to take part then this needed to be publicised. The Group considered that it was about safety going forward, and that if the academies did not work with the Council then it needed to be made clear that there had been opportunities but that they were turned down.

The Chair noted that private companies did not have to publicise fire safety/risk assessment results and considered that these should have to be made public.

2 **10.00 - Wolverhampton Homes**

The chair introduced all of those present and thanked everyone for attending.

It was noted that after the last meeting clear that there was some very good work going on in Wolverhampton Homes. The Group were aware that there had been a flooding incident recently which had also been dealt with very well. The Group noted that the Fire Service and the City Council had been very complimentary in relation to the relationship they had with Wolverhampton Homes.

The Chair questioned those present as to their roles and input into Fire Safety.

Mr Simon Bamfield (Head of Stock investments):

Mr Bamfield pulled together fire safety within the organisation including areas such as compliance and delivery of capital programmes and ensuring that any new works were compliant with regulations.

Mr Myk Kozuba (Stock Investment Manager):

Mr Kozuba was responsible for fire risk assessments and dealt with any issues relating to these including monitoring any actions that may have arisen. Mr Kozuba was also responsible for ensuring that all fire risk assessments were up to date.

Mr Darren Baggs (Assistant Director – Housing):

This role had grown over time and Mr Baggs was a member of the Fire Safety Committee. Mr Baggs managed the concierge service and all communications that dealt with the flats.

The Fire Safety Committee was responsible for reviewing all fire safety measures and lessons learnt, the Committee met regularly and was chaired by the Director of Operations Mr Shaun Aldis. The Committee fed back the Mrs Lesley Roberts (Chief Executive) and to the Board. .

The Chair requested an example of a change that had been made following feedback from the Fire Safety Committee. Mr Kozuba referred to the fact that cables in communal areas had now been strapped up and that work was being carried out in relation to flat entrance doors with some having now been replaced.

The Chair queried how Wolverhampton Homes would deal with a front door that opened onto a communal area?

Mr Baggs stated that the leaseholder would take on responsibility and that over time some residents had changed their doors and they had to comply with the fire regulations. When a door was found not to be compliant with regulations following a fire safety inspection then contact was made with the owner and a certificate requested. Mr Baggs stated that there had been legal challenges on this and injunctive action had been carried out. At the moment out of 70 leaseholders only one door was outstanding that required changing or a certificate of compliance.

The Panel queried whether Wolverhampton Homes also checked the door surrounds. Mr Bamfield stated that yes it would be the full door suite which included the frame. This was checked with all new installs and a form had to be filled in with photographic evidence as to the work being done. It was confirmed that leaseholders also had to prove that the work was compliant or enforcement action would be taken.

The point was raised that the full lease was still with Wolverhampton Homes and only with the leaseholder for an agreed time so why didn't Wolverhampton Homes just change the door for them. Mr Baggs stated that the leaseholder had chosen to change the door and that it was their responsibility but that to change it for them could be a last resort.

The Panel noted that injunctive action was expensive so in some cases this might be the most efficient course of action.

Mrs Roberts stated that Wolverhampton Homes had looked into this but that the recovery of money was not easy and that the leases are not explicit as to this area. The Chair agreed and stated that the format and content of leases needed to be looked into.

The Group were very impressed that there was just one door outstanding and considered that Wolverhampton Homes could do more to publicise this good news and make it clear that this was a safety issue for them and for the flats.

The Chair queried whether an Annual inspection was sufficient as someone could have a non-compliant door for a while before it was spotted. The Chair also queried whether something could be added to the lease to say if you have a non-compliant door you have a certain amount of time to sort it or Wolverhampton Homes will charge you for replacing it.

Mrs Roberts explained that the subject of leases was complicated and that at the moment there were 3 different leases in existence. Mrs Roberts stated that it would be possible to create a new lease but that it would only apply going forward and there would then be 4 leases coexisting which could lead to the Council having to pay for resident's legal costs and a situation where there were different terms and conditions for different people.

The Panel considered that there might be a possibility to help tenants understanding, that whilst consideration was given to making this a matter for the lease that a leaflet could be distributed to emphasise the importance of compliance with the fire regulations.

Mrs Roberts confirmed that this was detailed in newsletters and during the initial briefing to new leaseholders.

The Group considered that the issue around different types of leases was worrying and that there was a need for consistency and queried whether something could be phased in to help tenants understand the huge complexity of the issue.

Mr Baggs stated that at the moment there were 2200 leaseholders with some on a 125 year lease. If someone wanted to change a door regardless of what lease they were on they had to change it to meet current regulations. Mr Baggs also confirmed that concierge staff carried out daily inspections and quarterly inspections so if they picked up that a leaseholder had a new door then it could be addressed quickly.

Mrs S Roberts confirmed that she attended the leaseholders' forum and that all the issues raised here about doors were raised at the meetings too. What also needed to come from this group was a recommendation to the Government to say that when there was a new leaseholder in a low rise block checks needed to be made in relation to gas safety certificates, hard wired smoke detectors and internal compartmentation.

Mr Bamfield stated that each flat would often have a fire door within the dwelling so it was also important to ensure that this door had not been taken out and welcomed the suggestions of greater powers to check these areas.

A Group Member stated that many of the fire safety doors were not suitable for people with a disability as locks and handles were hard to use. Wolverhampton Homes did not seem to have any alternative doors to offer which would fall within the requirements of a reasonable adjustment.

Mr Bamfield stated that he could understand this and that Wolverhampton Homes were trying to get the balance right but that security and fire safety were paramount and those doors needed some physical force as that provided the security and it was hard to reduce this. In other areas, such as bungalows then there could be more options and he would look at this again.

The Group questioned what mechanisms were in place for fire safety, who was on the fire safety committee, what it did and whether there was any resident/tenant involvement? It was also considered that Wolverhampton Homes needed to look at other ways in which tenants could put their views across and participate and that the annual fire safety inspections could possibly linked with this.

Mr Bamfield confirmed that the fire Safety Committee was led by Shaun Aldis and brought together all the different facets of fire safety and ensured that they were communicated. The Committee also looked at sharing good practice amongst officers. Members of the Committee attend Wolverhampton Homes Board to feedback and people from all different sections were present (concierge, repairs, designers etc.).

The Group queried whether Mr Kazuba carried out a disability assessment as well as the risk assessment. Mr Kazuba stated that he had recently carried out an inspection in a flat and noticed that there was no evac chair or notice as to what to do and that

this was worrying for them and action would be taken and that there was disability access auditing of the fire risk assessment.

Mr Kazuba also stated that Wolverhampton Homes had a 5 year programme in place to look at access issues for disabled people but that this was not part of the fire risk assessment.

Mr Bamfield stated that he was aware that there were areas that needed to be improved in communal areas of tower blocks and that this was why Wolverhampton Homes had introduced the infrastructure programme looking to entirely replace areas in lobby areas, around lifts etc. to make them as compliant as they could given the structure of the building.

It was also confirmed that all dry risers and doors were now accessible with one key that the fire service had.

Mr Baggs stated that the second tranche of training for the concierge staff would be carried out by government approved group and would include areas such as fire doors, dry riser cupboards, combustible items and would also cover areas such as what to do with equipment left behind by contractors. Staff would also be trained to check seals around dry risers and that wheels and washers were in place.

The Chair stated that this was impressive and queried whether there was also an opportunity to check flat doors whilst doing this?

Mr Baggs stated that yes they would also check doors at this time and they would know straight away if a door had been changed and would report it along with any other areas that needed repairs.

The Group queried whether anything had changed since the last meeting the testing or cladding and the concern expressed regarding the conflicting opinions as to how the testing should be carried. The Group also queried what the latest advice was regarding sprinklers.

Mr Bamfield stated that in relation to the cladding, they had tested Graisle and Heattown which had some similarities to Grenfell as they had rainscreen cladding but that it was made out of very different materials. Graisle was pure aluminium and had a top safety rating. Heattown was meeting the building regulations and the cladding there was made from non-combustible materials. Mr Bamfield stated that there were no problems and that he was satisfied that there was no risk

The Chair queried whether during testing actual panels had been removed from the flats as he was not content with new panels being tested.

Mr Bamfield stated that yes, Panels had been removed from both blocks and confirmed that fire breaks were in place. Only difference with Graisle was that there had been no need to take a panel away for further testing as the cladding was pure aluminium with nothing inside. Other blocks with cladding were all rendered solution which was fixed directly to the wall and all the regulations and certificates confirmed that these met and exceed standards. The latest government guidance was only focused on aluminium composite materials with a polystyrene core and these would never have met building regulations in the first instance.

The Chair noted that the Government advice was not always in line with the advice from the Fire Service such as the recommendations to have sprinklers in all schools.

The Cahir made it clear that there are other cladding systems that had failed nationally including rendered systems and asked Officers to keep this in mind.

The Group requested an update on the situation with the student blocks that had been evacuated

Mrs Roberts confirmed that she had been liaising with the owners of Libertine Heights and the position had not changed and the blocks were still evacuated whilst arrangements were made for the cladding to be replaced. Mrs Roberts was confident that the tall block had no concerns and had been checked by the Fire Service. Plans would be in place for the next academic year starting in September 2018. Government were now requesting information about every private block of which we have five plus Sanctuary at Heath Town and on the Hickman Estate that the Council had disposed of which was original with no cladding. Wolverhampton Homes would continue to work with Sanctuary when they came to update their blocks and they would work together.

A group member stated that one block in Hampton View had been cladded in 1991 but that the east and west sides were done later in about 1994 and he had been informed that the same material was used but queried whether there was evidence of this.

Mr Bamfield stated that the person who designed both systems had designed them at the same time and they had just been installed at different times. And that the person now worked for Mr Bamfield.

Mr Bamfield confirmed that there would be drawings if written evidence was required but confirmed that they were constructed out of exactly the same materials.

The Chair noted the continued use of Mr Sam Bunch and queried whether we were struggling to get this expertise in house.

Mr Bamfield stated that at the moment every landlord in the country was looking to employ staff with experience in fire safety and that Wolverhampton Homes were looking to improve their levels of staff.

It was noted that the University had a fire service degree and graduate trainees already there.

3 **11.00 - Wolverhampton Homes - Concierge Service**

The Chair noted that the i10 building had got ACM cladding on it and that the Concierge staff had no training there if an alarm went off.

Mr Baggs stated that the staff have had previous training and onsite training and that he sought to constantly reinforce this.

Concerns were expressed in relation to people who had trouble walking and it was stated that extra people could be at a property within 5 minutes to help.

The Group queried whether there was a list showing which properties had people who need additional help and whether if it was known that there were a large number of people in a certain flat with extra needs would Wolverhampton Homes increase the number of concierge staff there.

The Group also queried what the role of concierge staff was in the event of a fire and how they worked with the fire service?

The Chair stated that he understood that if there was a problem they would be able to swamp the block with staff but that the Fire Service would not want concierge staff rushing in.

Mr Baggs stated that the concierge staff ensured clean, safe and secure environments for the residents. There were 48 buildings with CCTV at door entry which was monitored 24/7 centrally. Onsite checks and litter picking activities were also carried out. The role of the concierge was to prevent fire not to fight it.

In relation to the St Joseph's Court flood, the concierge service had raised the alarm through the out of hours call service and the control room had then taken over the chain of command and officers had been deployed.

Mr Baggs stated that blogs from Grenfell had shown that the firefighters had been disoriented and unaware of which floor they were going to so Wolverhampton Homes had taken steps to repaint all the floor numbers lower down so firefighters could see what floor they are on in relation to knowing who was in a property it was stated that this could never be 100% as staff might not know if a resident was on holiday or had a visitor. The Northgate system was refreshed daily to show if tenants had any mobility issues and officers had list at St Joseph's courts immediately and shared this with the Fire Service. It was then the fire services call whether to evacuate the building. The list was on a shared drive so easily accessible.

The Chair stated that the Council's resilience team were looking to get a data base together based on safe and well visits so may in the future not even require that list. Mr Baggs stated that the advantage of Northgate was that the information remained up to date with people moving as this type of information could become out of date very quickly.

The Group queried how many concierge there were and it was confirmed that there were 36 so there was not one per building. It was however confirmed that the concierge staff did 48 inspections per day and one concierge could do up to 3 blocks in the area. The concierge staff worked on a 24/7 shift pattern and there were always control room staff on duty together with a concierge supervisor who could leave the control room and travel to the required estate. The Panel queried whether it was a resource issue not to have one concierge per block. Mrs Roberts stated that the cost for the concierge service was paid for over and above peoples rent so it was a service charge and that it was important to try to keep things affordable. The Service had undergone a big reorganisation under Mr Baggs to put the bulk of staff in the central control room so people could be deployed to where they were required, it was a well-respected service and Wolverhampton Homes were not aware of any desire from residents to increase the number of concierge staff.

The Chair stated that the concierge service had been very well respected and highly regarded when it was in the blocks with staff going above and beyond and that he would like to see them back when this became possible. Mr Baggs stated that he had received conflicting information regarding this and that after a certain time at night it wasn't safe for the concierge staff to go out and they just stayed in the room. The reorganisation had improved the service and staff did not need to be at every site all the time but there were enough resources to send staff to where they needed to be when they needed to be there. The new structure showed a better use of resources than having staff sitting waiting for something to happen. It was also stated that some of the changes made by Wolverhampton Homes came from people living on the estates and they decided what level of service they wanted so it wasn't just about resource.

Mr Bamford also stated that they were now looking to use the old concierge offices to provide additional housing.

The Group were impressed by the service and noted that it probably benefited from the fact that Wolverhampton had tight boundaries so could get staff where they needed to be quickly and efficiently.

The Group referred back to the previous meeting when the issue of Corporate Manslaughter charges had been raised. It was stated that people who had the responsibility were very vulnerable in a corporate manslaughter case, they have to have the responsibility but need to ensure that they are not prohibited from doing what they want and need to do because of a lack of resources and that this needed to be made clear to the government.

The Chair agreed and stated that the Group needed to be looking at what was safe regardless of cost, as per the fire service approach. Protecting the public and those with responsibility for fire safety and paramount. It was vital to make sure that the right people were in place and to ensure that these people had a full and correct understanding of their responsibilities to the organisation they were representing.

The Group noted that when officers or councillors were sitting on a Board they had duties under the Directors Act and that it was important to ensure that the members understood the duties that they had. The first duty was to the Board and issues relating to finance and funding were very complex. The different roles an individual might have as a councillor and as a board member needed to be made clear. The Chair suggested that there should be training for members sitting on boards.

It was stated that every board member had Health & Safety training and corporate manslaughter training.

Mr Baggs stated that there had been a huge consultation exercise regarding 'Stay Safe Stay Put' which was now being reinforced further with are you ready workshops, tenants were shown the video at least twice. Once a tenant had moved in there were home checks and concierge staff would go through with them the fire safety message in their own language and also explain to them what they should do if they needed to stay or if they needed to evacuate. There was a huge focus on preventative work.

4 **13.00 - School Safety**

Officers confirmed that there were 42 schools under the control of the Local Authority.

The Chair stated that the Group were looking for reassurance regarding the building of new schools with cladding systems and seeking information in relation to what work was being done regarding the safety of these schools.

Officers stated that a key area was the way that safety was procured and that previously there had been a SLA with each school. This had created a 2-tiered health and safety system across schools if they bought into it. For example, if you worked in the Civic Centre you may have received a different level of health and safety than if you were a colleague working in a school. Officers now wanted to be able to be in the right place when needed rather than rely in a restricted bought in service which had now stopped.

Officers had looked at existing fire risk assessments and now applied the same standard in schools as across other areas of the organisation with a competent person carrying out fire risk assessments.

The Chair stated that at the previous meeting it had been stated that there were problems with previous fire risk assessments in schools that had been carried out prior to 2015. Information was requested as to what training the assessors now received and how it was monitored.

Officers confirmed that yes there were concerns prior to 2015 and that a full audit had highlighted areas of concern. Officers were now seeking to bring about one gold standard across the entire organisation. Health and Safety staff were working closely with Neale Shore in Corporate Landlord and Sam Bunch (Fire Safety consultant).

The Chair confirmed that he had met with Sam Bunch who was a very qualified officer. The Chair also confirmed that Neale Shore was a consultant.

The Chair requested information as to how many in house employees had the right level of qualifications to carry out fire risk assessments.

It was stated that Neale Shore had appointed area officers – 2 had now gone through fire risk assessment training so they had the expertise to carry out low risk, low complexity risk assessments. These employees would now advance their knowledge by shadowing Sam Bunch as far as possible and the use of CPD. There were no other officers that the Health and Safety Officer was aware of with the required expertise.

The Group questioned whether two officers were enough given the circumstances and the need to look across such a vast sector and any new builds that might be on the way.

It was stated that Neale Shore did have a team of 5 – 1 had moved on, 2 were trained and there was uncertainty at the 5th. It was considered that given the size of the organisation that there could be more expertise and there was concern regarding the extent to which the Council had to rely on Sam Bunch.

Important areas included the carrying out of risk assessments and the subsequent management processes required to pick up significant finds and address them.

The Chair stated that it appeared that the Council needed to take a step back and look at the whole structure and ensure that there was someone in charge who would manage our duty of care in relation to fire.

The Group queried whether there were any requests from academies and schools outside of Council control for fire risk assessments to be carried out. It was stated that a number of academies had bought into old SLA agreements so they received an audit.

The Group considered that 42 schools was still a lot and that there were concerns over and above the issue of cladding regarding schools such as the electrical equipment, science blocks with flammable equipment, issues regarding technology rooms arson and smoking. Schools therefore presented a very complex fire concern.

One Member also noted that the nursery where he was a governor was covered in cladding.

The Group queried how Officers were going to be able to achieve what they wanted with the limited budget and personnel that were available.

The Group questioned whether schools were asking for advice on the back of Grenfell. Officers stated that no additional calls for services from schools had been received.

It was confirmed that any residential schools had been prioritised for risk assessments and that these had been addressed by Sam Bunch.

From a Health and Safety point of view it was confirmed that the Council was resourcing – Natalie Barrow had now joined the team along with Tim Munro from Wrekin. There was a growing team from a health and safety point of view and officers now felt that they could start to move forward and be proactive. The goals were achievable but fire safety management fell outside of the health and safety team and was a different dynamic.

The Group queried the SLA the Council had with Wolverhampton Homes and sought reassurance that Sam Bunch would still have capacity to do all of the required risk assessments quickly or whether there would be a delay and whether Wolverhampton Homes would be able to carry on doing the work they were doing without so much of the Health and Safety Officers time.

It was stated that over the last year or so there had been great success with Wolverhampton Homes and that this stemmed from being proactive and that there were more changes on the way in relation to fire safety.

What was important was what happened with the fire risk assessments – who would do the review. From a health and safety perspective the Council could deliver.

The Chair queried whether the Council knew after building schools for the future what materials were on our schools and what they were built of and the situation with sprinklers. The Chair stated that over 600 new schools had been built nationally and

that only 70 had got sprinklers. It was thought that no Wolverhampton Schools had sprinklers and the Group queried why this was the case.

Officers stated that they had looked at cladding and could not be 100% sure what was where due to the fact that information from constructors was poor. The question was raised as to how a list of the schools with cladding could be obtained which detailed what the cladding was. It was thought that Facilities Management would have access to this information and that they were currently confirming the situation. It was known that one school hit the 18m height and had cladding but that this was not on the residential side. Officers were waiting for confirmation from colleagues in Facilities Management as to what the schools had regarding cladding.

The group questioned who was the officer responsible for coordinating all of these processes and it was thought that this would be the Head of Facilities Management.

The Chair queried who managed the duty of care in relation to fire safety at the Council.

The Group considered that the Council did have experienced and qualified employees but that they did not appear to be in the right areas and that there appeared to be vacuums that were being filled by bringing in consultants.

The Group considered that there were structural issues within the Council in relation to fire safety and that it was very unclear as to who was ultimately responsible for fire safety. The Chair stated that the Responsible Person as the senior person needed to be identified along with a number competent people.

The Group considered that the fundamental problem appeared to be a policy vacuum. The Group considered that if there was an emergency there would be some coordination but that tactics would not be coordinated. This was a policy area that needed drilling into by the relevant Directors and an area that needed to be resourced financially and intellectually.

The question was raised as to who carried out the day to day jobs such as PACT testing, whether there a plan for this and were there any concerns. It was stated that there was a regime for this so there was confidence.

The Chair referred to the i10 building which he had visited and stated that he was still waiting for confirmation as to what was in the cladding. The Chair conceded that this may not be a significant life risk but that there were 3 places there serving food that was cooked on gas.

5 **14.00 - Emergency Planning and Resilience**

The Chair welcomed Mr Mick Shears, Resilience Officer to the meeting.

The Emergency Planning and Resilience Team was a team of two that covered emergency planning, business continuity and priority functions in the Council.

Exercises were carried out on a weekly basis, these were desktop exercises specifically for Duty Managers to help them consider the decisions they were making. There were about 35-36 Duty Managers and they were available 24/7 during the

week they were on duty. The Duty Manager would assess and coordinate an appropriate response to a major incident, approve resource allocation and brief the Duty Director. There were about 10 Duty Directors who were ultimately responsible to the Managing Director.

Tactical Control Room was where staff would make decisions in relation to the incident. There was also a set of screens in a secondary location in the City. It was noted that the primary location down steps and was not accessible for wheelchair users at the moment and there were currently no plans at to change this. The Group noted that there was a pre-emptive responsibility to make it accessible under equalities act.

There would be 8 people in the control room to start with including representatives from public health, an intelligence officer, a control room manager (chair), Senior communications advisor, 3x functional coordinators and surge seats if required..

Mr Shears provided a presentation highlighting what would happen in an emergency situation.

The Group queried whether the staff trained to register and record evacuees into rest centres, had any specific training in relation to vulnerable people. It was stated that staff had been told to identify vulnerable people but that they would probably look to other more specialise staff to help with this. There was only one member of staff and the Red Cross would be there as well so most of the work regarding vulnerable people would be carried out by them. The Panel requested that the Council check what training the Red Cross staff have had.

There was a 24 hour contact centre with 2 staff members on each night; these staff were also dealing with care link alarms so were very busy.

The role of Rest Centre Manager carried some of the biggest responsibilities. There were 4 primary rest centres and 19-20 smaller rest centres and the required number would be opened dependent on the nature and severity of the incident. The Group queried whether the Wednesfield North Ashmore Park was on the list but it was stated that this was being refurbished at the time the list was compiled so needed to be revisited.

The question was raised as to whether there was a policy to have rest centres evenly spaced across city. The Group considered that it was important to be close to homes for school and work. It was stated that in the short term if there was a large number of people they would have to be put in transportation and moved but in the long term closer possibilities could be explored with help from local groups.

The Group noted the need to know what the accessibility was in each rest centre regarding areas such as beds and changing areas.

The Group also queried who had responsibility for medication needs and it was stated that the Council had a system with Red Cross that allowed access via local GPs groups to the records of the community and that this allowed staff to get prescriptions and medications.

The Group stated that they were very pleased to see the mental health involvement during what could be a devastating time when people needed immediate and continuing help. The Group stated that staff proficient in sign language also needed to be present.

The current model had been put together in the last 2 years but had not really been tested as a whole but parts of it had been used. There had been a recent flooding incident and there were some issues which meant that people might not have been able to get back into their flats. Some issues had also been identified following the incident around the way that the rest centres were identified.

The Group queried when the last major incident rehearsal had been carried out. Mr Shears stated that there had not been a test since he had been in post. The Group considered that there seemed to be more incidents recently and that the Council should think about testing. It was vital to know for sure that the interconnectivity worked and the IT and Communications systems worked and this could only be done through testing.

It was stated that the fire service did an exercise every weekend and the Council would attach a rest centre when the test was in Wolverhampton.

The Group also considered that it would be great to get rest centre managers and other responders trained in mental health to get issues signposted immediately.

The Group considered that it would be beneficial to meet with local faith groups regarding using their facilities as rest centres and that it would be great if the Council could get information on vulnerable people onto the emergency planning map.

The question was raised as to what access councillors could have to the map. I was confirmed that the map could be available to anyone in the Council once they had been sent the file. The Group considered that this should be available to all councillors.

The Group also considered that it would be beneficial to have the vulnerable person data from the safe and well visits added to the map and to have access to Wolverhampton Homes data.

The Group expressed concern regarding information that the service might be taken outsourced and it was resolved that the Group write to the Managing Director to request clarity on this.

Resolved: That the Chair write to the Managing Director on behalf of the Group to seek clarity as to the outsourcing of the Emergency Planning and Resilience service.

6 **15.00 - Next Steps**

The Group considered that further clarity and information was required in relation to the where the strategic responsibility for fire safety lay in the City of Wolverhampton Council.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

The Group also considered that further information was required regarding the situation with cladding and risk assessments in schools.

Resolved: That the Strategic Director for Place, the Strategic Director for People and any other relevant Directors be invited to the next meeting of the Group to be held on 17 November 2017