



REPORT TITLE: FIRE COVER REVIEW FOR HIGH RISE BUILDINGS

Scrutiny meeting	Fire and Rescue Scrutiny Committee
Chair	<i>Cllr Jeremy Hilton (Chair),</i>
Presenting Officer	CFO Preece
Item Type	FIRE COVER REVIEW FOR HIGH RISE BUILDINGS
Purpose of Report	To receive a review on fire cover focusing on high rise buildings.
Recommendations/ Action sought	For Information -
Forthcoming Decisions	N/A
Background Documents	
Appendices	N/A
Contact Information	Area Manager Ian Tonner ian.tonner@glosfire.gov.uk

1. Background

In 2019 the Government (Home Office) supported all Fire and Rescue Services with a Grant fund in two parts, firstly GFRS received money to establish our High Rise Building stock, and this work was called the Building Risk Review (BRR) Project. This funding supported the increase to our Risk Intelligence team to establish our high rise risks across Gloucestershire and develop the required tactical plans to ensure a safe approach to fires in these buildings.

Secondly alongside the BRR, GFRS also received funding from the Home Office Grant under the banner Protection Policy and Reform Unit (PPRU). This funding dovetailed the BRR and enabled GFRS to increase its training and staffing around the Protection Department, which in turn enabled GFRS to move away from a cause for concern in this area. All these work streams have established a firm footing for GFRS around High Rise and Protection moving forward.

1. ORH Cover review

GFRS commissioned a report by ORH in Early 2023. The report is a detailed look at fire cover and will be published later in 2023, there were areas and questions asked about the requirement of the number of Aerial Appliances, their reach, size and specifics for GFRS to ensure that the cover and attendance is best for the building stock across the County, this work has been completed but the findings have yet to be published.

The Service current position is we need resilience in Aerial Appliances to cover if for any reason (Vehicle services or faults) that one of the appliances is off the run, therefore currently the required level of Aerial appliance required is 2. The report from ORH may give differing results supported by evidence if changes are required.

2. Current Position

In May 2023, GFRS undertook two days of exercising, a table top (Planning for High Rise event) and a live exercise at Clapham Court. This was to look at the gap between the proposed High Rise procedure within the new National Operational Guidance and the current procedure undertaken by GFRS for high rise incidents.

The learning from these two events has established that the predetermined attendance for High Rise in Gloucestershire does not fit the requirement of the new guidance. This was changed immediately. GFRS now send six (6) appliances and One Aerial Appliance to any confirmed High Rise Fire (previously two (2) and one (1) Aerial). And subsequently we now send two (2) appliances and one (1) Aerial appliance to an unconfirmed fire or automatic fire alarm actuation (AFA), previously just one (1) Appliance.

As a Service we have ten (10) high rise residential premises (Buildings over 18m or 7 floors) all premises are in Cheltenham, Gloucester and Stroud Station Grounds but all Staff are, and will continue to be trained in high rise firefighting in line with the new operational Guidance as at any time they could be one of the six (6) attending crews.

Of the ten premises we only have one (1) that has been highlighted with concerns (St James Walk Cheltenham). The Business Fire Safety team in collaboration with various departments have worked to ensure the safety of residents and Firefighters in the protection standard set. The premises within this category are listed at the end of this report.

St James Walk was identified, as the insulation between the blockwork on the main façade is not correct. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) have been engaging with the building owner and enforcement proceedings under The Housing Act were being prepared. GFRS have been informed that

following the signing of a remediation contract (approx. £8 million) enforcement action is no longer being pursued. GFRS are also working with the building owner and Cheltenham Housing to discuss the plans for work and potential interim measures.

3. High Rise Working Group

In 2023 the work to improve our approach to High Rise has continued through the High Rise Working Group, Chaired by the Group Manager in Response working closely with Protection, Learning and Development and National Operational Guidance, our next phase is to change our procedures to fall in line with the National Operational Guidance, this work started with the afore mentioned exercises in May 2023 and will continue over the coming months. Currently GFRS are in a good position around High Rise Risks, but the High Rise Working Group will continue to develop and make progress to assure the Chief Fire Officer and other key stakeholders that GFRS has an understanding of its current and future risks around High rise.

High Rise Residential Buildings Gloucestershire

Premises	Location	Storeys
Clapham Court	Gloucester	11
Cleevefont House	Cheltenham	8
Hill Paul	Stroud	8
Pridays Mill	Stroud	7
Vinings Warehouse	Gloucester	7
Albert Warehouse	Gloucester	7
Pitville Court South	Cheltenham	7
Double Reynolds Warehouse	Gloucester	7
St James Walk	Cheltenham	7
Brittania Warehouse	Gloucester	7