

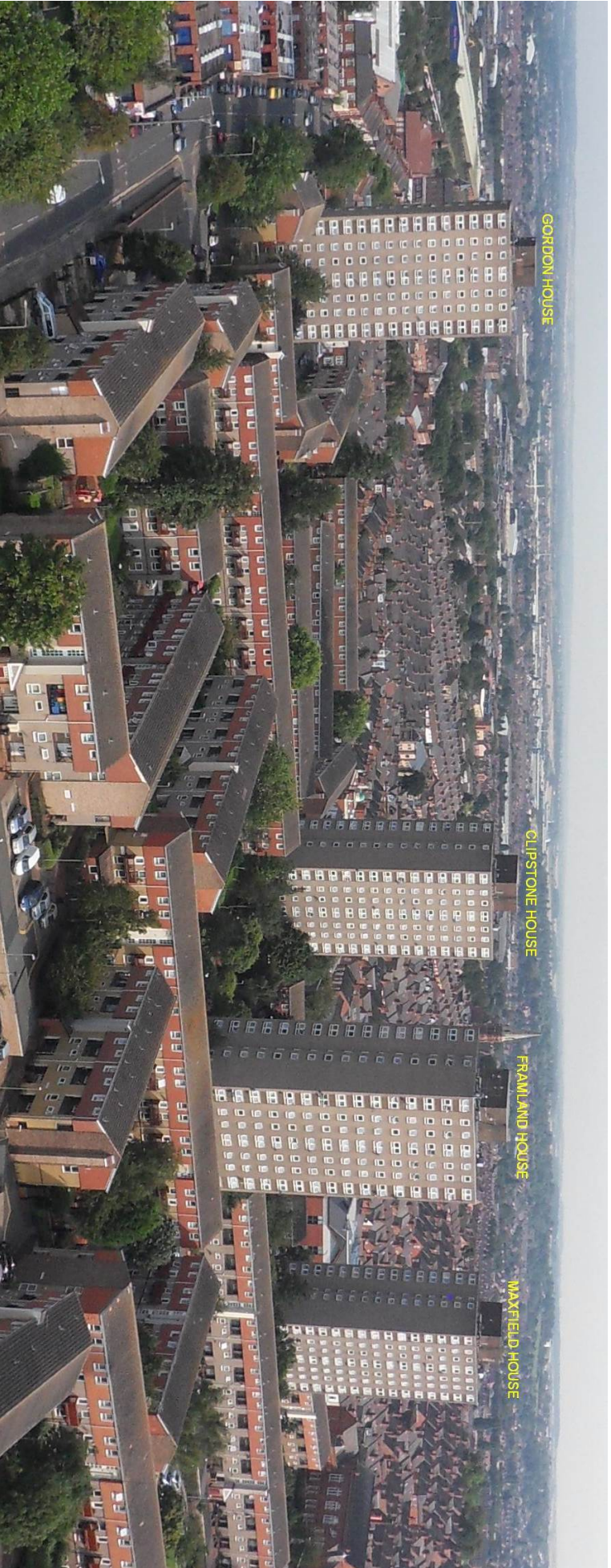
Housing Scrutiny Commission

Tower Block Fire Safety Update

Assistant Mayor for Housing Andy Connelly

Lead director: Chris Burgin

Date: 10th. July 2017



Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Castle
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- Report version number: V.2

1. Summary

The Housing Division has 6 high rise blocks of flats in the city

The ongoing tower block refurbishment project has addressed any outstanding issues relating to fire safety in the four blocks on St Peters estate. Goscote House is due to be refurbished in 2019 (it is supported by a current fire risk assessment). St Leonards Court has been recently upgraded independently of the tower block refurbishment project.

2. Recommendations

This report is for information only.

3. Supporting information including options considered:

Tower block fire safety

The 6 council owned tower blocks are:

| Block | No. of Storeys | No of flats in block | built |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------------|-------|
| Goscote House | 22 | 133 | 1973 |
| Gordon House | 17 | 87 | 1973 |
| Clipstone House | 17 | 85 | 1972 |
| Maxfield House | 17 | 85 | 1972 |
| Framland House | 17 | 85 | 1973 |
| St. Leonards Court | 11 | 31 | 1967 |

No block has external wall insulation fitted.

No block has sprinklers fitted. The decision has been made that sprinkler systems will be fitted as part of the refurbishment project to those blocks waiting for refurbishment and retro fitted in blocks that have been refurbished.

All blocks have a stay put policy. This will be reviewed in association with the Fire Service.

All blocks have a current fire risk assessment.

All blocks have weekly fire safety inspections.

There is **no** gas in the blocks.

Gordon House, Framland House and Clipstone House have all been recently refurbished which included the upgrading of the passive fire protection, for example the renewal of all the internal fire doors, bin chute doors, flat front doors and emergency lighting systems. Gordon House is currently empty waiting to be re occupied.

Maxfield House has had the passive fire protection replaced as per the other 3 blocks but we are now in the process of moving the tenants out so that the other aspects of the refurbishment can take place, e.g. the installation of new heating and hot water systems (not gas), kitchen and bathrooms etc.

Goscote House is due to be refurbished in early 2019, in the interim the decision has been taken not to offer any new lets, this will reduce occupancy, reduce the risk and help with the final decommissioning of the block prior to the start of the refurbishment/reconfiguration works. Goscote House will have a full time concierge service once refurbished.

St Leonards Court has had its communal areas refurbished which included the passive fire protection. The only item that remains outstanding is the addition of a second lift, it is hoped that this will be started during the current financial year. It is not planned to carry out a full refurbishment of the other parts.

What we have done to reassure the tenants living in the tower blocks.

As a result of the fire the Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service produced a press release to reassure the residents of high rise blocks in Leicestershire, this was hand delivered to all our tower block residents by locally based staff.

The following day a letter was delivered to our tower block residents from the Assistant Mayor for Housing offering information and guidance.

Locally based tenancy management staff have been available to answer questions and concerns that residents may have.(we have had very few)

A series of events is to be held by the LFRS at all tower blocks, the first Housing block event is on the 30th. June at Clipstone House, it will answer questions residents may have about fire safety. Housing staff will be on hand to answer any tenancy management related questions and deal proactively with concerns that individual tenants have.

Every tenant in the tower blocks will be visited individually by Housing staff to check that they know how to check their smoke alarms and help to address any concerns they have.

General fire safety

We have a number of different types of units with communal areas, these include flats, maisonettes, units in sheltered accommodation, flats in tower blocks and houses in multiple occupation. The level of fire safety works vary from unit to unit depending on the level of risk.

All of our units have inspections carried out and the frequency depends on the level of

risk, tower blocks have weekly inspections but a low level purposed built blocks are inspected every month. These inspections are undertaken by the Assistant Housing Officers.

We have a planned programme to undertake Fire Risk Assessments to all of our units with shared communal spaces. The FRA identifies the level of risk in the unit and it will also identify any fire safety works that will be required. An action plan is then developed to address any issues raised.

Fire alarms are only fitted where the Fire Risk Assessments supports this.

We have a Zero Tolerance Policy for any items that are left in the communal areas.

4. Details of Scrutiny

Report prepared at the request of the Housing Scrutiny Commission

