



# Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority

<b>MEETING</b>	Overview and Audit Committee
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	17 March 2021
<b>OFFICER</b>	Area Commander Calum Bell – Head of Protection & Assurance
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Councillor Lesley Clarke
<b>SUBJECT OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report Update</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<p>This report (attached as Annex A) outlines the notable progress made to date by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy on 14 June 2017.</p> <p>It illustrates the work undertaken to address the improvement, learning and assurance opportunities identified by our Protection, Prevention and Response teams, both immediately after the fire, and in response to the formal recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report, published on 30 October 2019.</p> <p>The report also summarises the central support funding being made available to the Service and how this is being used to assist, develop and implement new technologies and improve our capacity and focus across the Service, to address the long term legacy of this important Inquiry.</p>
<b>ACTION</b>	Noting.
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	That the report be noted.
<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	Risks to delivery of the Grenfell project are recorded, managed and monitored at a departmental level as per the Corporate Risk Management Procedure. Risks can be escalated from the project register to the Protection and Assurance Risk Register or Corporate Risk Register if required.
<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>BFRS has received specific allocations of grant funding to address the Phase 1 recommendations and separate cost centres have been created to ensure robust monitoring of expenditure and accurate reporting back to the Home Office through the NFCC.</p> <p>Monitoring and reporting is undertaken by the Protection and Technical Group Commanders and is authorised by the Director of Finance and Assets.</p>

<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>	Any legal implications are considered as the respective strands of this project are implemented.
<b>CONSISTENCY WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DUTY TO COLLABORATE</b>	<p>Opportunities to align and collaborate are considered routinely as part of this project, with regular engagement with colleagues in Royal Berkshire and Oxfordshire fire and rescue services.</p> <p>The call management (Control Room) recommendations in particular, are being addressed and coordinated collaboratively through regular joint meetings.</p>
<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY</b>	The practical application of health and safety management policies and procedures ensures our health and safety compliance is demonstrated and evidenced as we implement the respective strands of this project.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion matters are considered routinely as each respective improvement strand is implemented. For example, the introduction of new Escape Hoods across the Thames Valley included an equality impact assessment, which is reflected within our guidance and information for their use.
<b>USE OF RESOURCES</b>	<p><b>Communication with stakeholders</b></p> <p>Regular stakeholder engagement is achieved, through a dedicated project coordinator role and active Grenfell project group.</p> <p><b>The system of internal control</b></p> <p>The project manager is responsible for daily oversight and reporting of progress to the Head of Protection and Assurance, via the Operational Assurance Group, Performance Monitoring Board, and Overview and Audit Committee.</p> <p>Monthly Grenfell project meetings are also scheduled to track and monitor progress.</p> <p><b>The medium-term financial strategy</b></p> <p>It is anticipated that the majority of improvements will be made through current existing budgetary provision and use of specific grant funding made available to BFRS for the purpose of responding to Grenfell.</p> <p>Project spends are monitored by the Finance Department through regular budget monitoring, and any additional funding requirements will be applied for through the normal growth bid process, if necessary.</p>
<b>PROVENANCE SECTION &amp;</b>	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p><a href="#">Homepage   Grenfell Tower Inquiry</a></p>

Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report Update

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>	<a href="#">Phase 1 report   Grenfell Tower Inquiry</a>
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Annex A - GTI Phase 1 Report Update
<b>TIME REQUIRED</b>	10 Minutes
<b>REPORT ORIGINATOR AND CONTACT</b>	Simon Tuffley <a href="mailto:stuffley@bucksfire.gov.uk">stuffley@bucksfire.gov.uk</a> 07766781389

# Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report



Image Source: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2019/june/government-give-update-on-grenfell-tower/>

Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service Update  
December 2020



## Contents

1. [Executive Summary](#)
2. [Introduction](#)
3. [Our initial Response Activities](#)
4. [Our initial Prevention Activities](#)
5. [Our initial Protection Activities](#)
6. [Our Operational Assurance Activities](#)
7. [The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report](#)
8. [Our Improvement plan](#)
9. [Central funding](#)
10. [New equipment and capabilities for 2020/2021](#)
11. [Future opportunities and considerations](#)
12. [Breathing Apparatus and Positive Pressure Ventilation \(PPV\) training](#)
13. [Integrated Premises Risk Management](#)
14. [Collaboration and alignment opportunities](#)
15. [Protection growth and prioritisation](#)
16. [Training and Assurance](#)
17. [Conclusion](#)

## **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report outlines the notable progress made to date by Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (BFRS) in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy on 14 June 2017 (Grenfell) and illustrates the work undertaken to address the improvement, learning and assurance opportunities identified by our Protection, Prevention and Response teams, both immediately after the fire, and in response to the formal recommendations made in the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report (Phase 1), published on 30 October 2019.
- 1.2 This report also summarises the central support funding being made available to BFRS and how this is being used to assist, develop and implement new technologies and improve our capacity and focus across the Service, to address the long term legacy of this important Inquiry.

## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1 Grenfell was the most significant fire this Country has witnessed in living memory, and the ensuing Public Inquiry which was first announced the day after the fire, is still ongoing. Phase 1 established a factual narrative of events, and highlighted key organisational learning for the London Fire Brigade (LFB) and wider fire and rescue services. But the causes of these events, including how Grenfell Tower came to be in a condition which allowed the fire to spread in a way identified in Phase 1, will not be fully understood until the Phase 2 report is published.
- 2.2 Since Grenfell, BFRS has taken a broad range of actions to enhance the way it manages the risk of large and complex residential buildings, and we continue to interpret and implement the Phase 1 findings to inform our evolving improvement plans.
- 2.3 Some actions were carried out immediately after Grenfell and before the Phase 1 publication, whilst others await the legislative, technological, or coordinated national policy changes required to facilitate the recommended improvements.
- 2.4 It is relatively straight-forward to demonstrate how we already meet the recommendations in many areas, and indeed where those recommendations which do not require external influence have been met through policy change, equipment, investing in our staff and refocussing on the inherent risks presented by modern-day complex residential buildings. However, as a forward-leaning Service with a commitment to continual improvement, BFRS will go on to address the findings through an unceasing enhancement of services, and the way in which they are delivered, for many years to come.
- 2.5 In many ways, the learning from Grenfell will stay with us forever, and cannot be viewed as a project, or task and finish requirement.

### **3. Our initial Response Activities**

- 3.1 In the immediate aftermath of Grenfell, it was apparent that the tragedy would have a profound and long-lasting impact on the UK fire & rescue services - It was no-longer foreseeable that large complex residential buildings would always behave as expected, or indeed as designed to behave, during a fire.
- 3.2 Therefore, ensuring BFRS was well-prepared for the findings in the long-term, as well as establishing any immediate actions to enhance our approach to these risks became the priority. The Senior Management Team commissioned this early work through the Head of Service Delivery, who at the time held responsibility for Response, Protection and Prevention activities.
- 3.3 The Response Policy Team, which has oversight of the Site-Specific Risk Information database, ensuring our obligations under Section 7 (2) (d) of the Fire and Rescue Services Act, 2004 (the Act), immediately set about conducting a review of all high-rise risks. The Data and Intelligence and Risk Information teams worked together, utilising mapping software to confirm every structure across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes which was over 18 metres in height (this included Church spires and large single-storey buildings, as well as other large buildings which would not normally be categorised as high-rise) and then examined this data further to establish and confirm a detailed record of every building (residential or commercial) of six floors and over, to give us the confidence that we fully understand the high-rise risks within our area.
- 3.4 Each building was automatically given a “high-risk” status, which triggers an annual review and site visit by the local fire station, as well as the production of a tactical plan to assist crews should there ever be an incident there. Once completed, the risk information and plans are made available on all frontline appliance Mobile Data Terminals, and are shared with neighbouring services up to 10km from the risk site.
- 3.5 This work identified and closed some gaps in our risk knowledge, and we are now in a stronger position in terms of our preparedness for high-rise firefighting. We were also reassured that our approach to our obligations under Section 7 (2) (d) of the Act were robust; and this was compounded some time later in Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabularies and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inaugural BFRS Inspection report, published in December 2019.
- 3.6 Whilst we awaited any further changes to national high-rise firefighting policy, we also issued interim guidance for operational considerations relating to building manager’s Stay-Put procedures and the evacuation requirements of large residential buildings. The guidance required Response and Protection teams to establish the evacuation strategy for each specific building during intelligence gathering for inclusion in the Site-Specific Risk Information. The guidance also raised awareness in considering a move from Stay-Put to Simultaneous Evacuation (Get Out) during a fire, and highlighted the foreseeable

scenarios where incidents occur in high-rise residential buildings that challenge both the structural integrity and compartmentation in the event of fire; therefore challenging the appropriateness of a ‘Stay Put’ strategy. The guidance also reiterated the Incident Commander’s authority to review the evacuation strategy for the building from an operational perspective.

3.7 The existing policy and training packages for operational staff were also reviewed, drawing attention to the need for external safety observers to monitor external fire spread from the compartment of origin, and to clarify the risks of how combustible exterior materials and poor building management can lead to accelerated fire growth.

3.8 Our Pre-determined Attendance (PDA) for high-rise buildings was reviewed and confirmed to be appropriate, and we worked with our colleagues in Thames Valley Fire Control Service (TVFCS) to be assured that the right PDA was attached to every high-rise risk in BFRS.

3.9 We had already introduced “high-rise equipment packs” to our whole-time appliances to assist in operating our specific high-rise procedures. But in response to Grenfell, we took further action to extend this provision to all frontline appliances; thereby enhancing our capability and preparedness across the whole fleet.

3.10 Once we were satisfied with our initial remedial actions, we turned attention to ensuring our preparedness for introducing any changes in National Operational Guidance (NOG), by engaging in the consultation processes, and ensuring NOG was fully implemented across the Thames Valley, through an aligned perspective.

#### **4. Our initial Prevention Activities**

4.1 Prevention team analysis confirmed the nature of the residency in our high risk residential buildings can sometimes be out of the control of the planning and emergency response. We were aware that there is a general shortage of Local Authority housing stock, leading to vulnerable adults and families being placed in some of our highest risk premises; with some residents having significant lengths of tenure.

4.2 In our experience, residents could be in private leasehold arrangements, Council or Housing Association tenants, or in emergency accommodation - both short & long term, at times with a fast turnover of residents.

4.3 A broad range of vulnerabilities are known to be present in our high risk buildings; people with a disability, UK and non-UK Nationals (presenting language barriers), overcrowded accommodation and individual vulnerabilities such as oxygen dependency, hoarding, drug and alcohol dependency and low income, high working-age benefit reciprocity.

- 4.4 Engagement sessions (post Grenfell) were organised, but poorly attended. Then, following a small fire at one of our high-rise buildings, significant further engagement was planned and delivered; again with a generally poor uptake from residents.
- 4.5 Work with the relevant Councils and agencies was enhanced and the Prevention teams developed better links with Resident Associations. Prevention teams and operational crews enhanced their engagement activity and stations planned to include regular engagement with high-rise and other high /medium risk residential buildings.
- 4.6 The Central Prevention Team used a number of additional resources that can be provided to help keep residents safe where appropriate. This includes flame retardant bedding, heat alarms, Carbon Monoxide alarms and personal suppression systems, where appropriate.
- 4.7 BFRS also wrote to every address/resident in the six highest risk buildings within our area, in an attempt to promote further engagement.
- 4.8 Building policies are developed by the Duty Holders and should capture both the building and the occupancy risk. At the time of Grenfell, Stay-Put was in place across the majority of our high-rise residential premises; and with a few exceptions this continues to be the case.

## **5. Our initial Protection Activities**

- 5.1 The Protection Team were cognisant of the range of construction types in use in modern building construction and refurbishment, and that construction methods continually evolve. In the immediate wake of Grenfell, the team established those buildings that utilised non-flammable and flammable cladding (whether that be Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) or not), and those predominantly built with traditional materials. They worked proactively alongside Duty Holders to advise and support, as well as liaising with our Response Policy and Prevention teams to ensure the wider Service Delivery were aware of any highlighted risks.
- 5.2 The team were also aware that the age of the building and the way it has been managed, maintained and/or adapted, can cause fire safety issues. Adding to that, inherent concerns that not all of the range of systems that can be put in place to detect fire and raise the alarm were guaranteed to be installed, or maintained appropriately by Duty Holders.
- 5.3 Timber framed and partially timber framed buildings also continued to be an area of concern, as they are regularly utilised as a cost effective and time efficient method of construction. The Protection team were aware that the reintroduction of the Sitesafe Scheme should ensure the FRS is notified of these risks at an appropriate stage of

development, and were engaged in ensuring that the notifications were made.

5.4 The team focused their Building Safety activity on the highest risk premises, and as the Enforcing Authority for the common areas of high-rise buildings, engaged with Duty Holders to maintain compliance in the areas where responsible, taking enforcement action wherever necessary and appropriate.

5.5 In areas confirmed that the FRS is not the Enforcing Authority. I.e. where Housing and Building Control are responsible (including the external structure and cladding), the Protection team liaised with the relevant Enforcing Authority for that area of the building.

5.6 We also continued to engage with Local Authorities, and others to promote the installation of sprinklers.

## **6. Our Operational Assurance Activities**

6.1 As we responded to the wake of Grenfell, it was necessary to assure our preparedness through thematic reviews and external audit. Our Operational Assurance Team ran a focus on high-rise incidents to assess our policy, procedure, skills, knowledge and understanding, which was consolidated within the Service-wide exercise schedule, including some practical high-rise scenarios.

6.2 Additionally, in November 2019 an external provider with independent sector competence, Operational Assurance Ltd (OAL), were commissioned to conduct an independent audit of our high-rise preparedness:

- The audit tested the management of incidents in high-rise buildings to ascertain how effectively operational staff in BFRS understand and apply operational procedures relating to fires in high-rise locations.
- OAL sought to determine how closely BFRS current high-rise policy and Tactical Operational Guidance (TOG) in accord with National Operational Guidance (NOG).
- BFRS high-rise training methodologies were also evaluated by OAL and a large-scale exercise attended to establish how effective BFRS training activities are in ensuring the competence of operational staff.
- The audit sought to determine how effectively BFRS identifies, develops, records and communicates Site Specific Risk Information (SSRI) regarding high-rise buildings to its operational staff and consequently how effectively Incident Commanders apply SSRI in their planning.
- In undertaking this element of review OAL sought to establish how effectively Thames Valley Fire Control Services (TVFCS) process and communicate risk critical information to the Incident Commanders at high-rise building fires.

- Additionally, OAL sought to establish how effective are BFRS current prevention activities in targeting matters affecting high-rise buildings

6.3 The audit findings were reported to the Senior Management Team and Operational Assurance Group, serving as a valuable benchmark and check point review to complement and assist with our improvement journey.

## **7. The Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 Report**

7.1 The Phase 1 report was published on 30 October 2019 in six parts. Part I gives a broad introduction to the events that took place and a description of Grenfell Tower itself and of the organisation of the London Fire Brigade (LFB), Part II gives a detailed narrative account of the fire and the steps taken in response to it, Part III describes Sir Martin Moore-Bick's conclusions about the origin and development of the fire and his analysis of the response of the LFB and the other emergency services which attended the incident, Part IV is a summary of the tributes paid to their loved ones by their families and friends, Part V gives recommendations arising out of the findings made earlier in the report, and Part VI looks ahead to identify some matters of particular importance on which the Inquiry will concentrate its attention in Phase 2

7.2 To build upon our previous work, the Phase 1 Report gave some clear improvement themes from the Inquiry which could be translated into an improvement plan. Notably, the report highlighted some key recommendation themes for the LFB and the wider FRs, as well as a detailed narrative section (chapter 33) with a series of recommendations and explanations as to why each recommendation is being made.

7.3 Throughout November 2019, BFRS managers extracted and considered the 46 recommendations from the narrative section within chapter 33, and it was clear that whilst there was a great deal of focus on improvements at a local level, much of the changes recommended for building safety would rely on legislative change.

7.4 It was also imperative that fire and rescue services took a coordinated approach to addressing the recommendations, which is where the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Central Programme Office (CPO) would play a significant role.

7.5 For example, the CPO reviewed and published revised National Operational Guidance (NOG) in evacuation and high-rise procedures during summer 2020. These changes fed into the Thames Valley Operational Alignment Programme's existing project to implement NOG across the Thames Valley. Through this project, we drove change to high-rise and evacuation procedure in Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire which is now aligned with national best practice. The CPO will continue to review best practice in high-rise and evacuation, and as more research and evidence is made available, BFRS will continue to evolve our methods of delivery.

## 8. Our Improvement plan

8.1 Since the Phase 1 report was published, the 46 recommendations have been incorporated into a stand-alone improvement plan, coordinated through the Technical Team and sponsored by the Head of Protection and Assurance. Oversight is managed through a Grenfell Working group, who report progress to the Overview and Audit Committee via the Performance Monitoring Board and Operational Assurance Group.

A summary table of progress is provided below as *figure 1*.

Status	Recommendation does not apply directly to BFRS	Recommendation directly applies to BFRS for action	Combined actions
BFRS has made preparations for this change and is ready to implement	13	N/A	13
Currently in progress	1	17	18
Complete	2	13	15
Total	16	30	46

Figure 1

8.2 In early 2020, an organisational restructure resulted in a project coordinator being identified, to provide support and coordination to the project team. The work commenced as a project in June 2020. BFRS is making significant progress against the actions. This is in part due to the preparatory work completed by Protection, Prevention and Response teams since 2017, but also includes new work since Phase 1, and other associated projects.

8.3 The majority of complete actions are a direct result of our approach to adopting National Operational Guidance as best practice across the Thames Valley. The introduction of revised high-rise and evacuation procedures, along with a fresh approach to all our operational guidance has ensured we continue to be well-prepared and able to meet many of the recommendations.

8.4 The majority of “in-progress” recommendations will complete once the Command and Control National Operational Guidance is published and adopted. Further progress will also be made against these actions, once testing has provided the necessary assurance that our improvements have satisfied the recommendations in practice. These are being considered through the Joint Coordination Group of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service and through our Operational Assurance team..

8.5 Fourteen of the recommendations require legislative change. BFRS has ensured it is prepared for the changes when they become Law and is monitoring the impact of any new revised legislation as it progresses through Parliament and the House of Lords.

## **9. Central funding**

- 9.1 In April 2020, Lord Greenhalgh, Minister of State for Building Safety, Fire and Communities, wrote to all fire and rescue services to announce a total combined grant of £16m to be allocated to FRSs, which would be allocated based upon the number of high-risk buildings within each area. The additional one-year central funding arrangements are intended to support and assist with implementing the Phase 1 findings.
- 9.2 As part of this initial provision, BFRS received a one-year funding payment of £123,549.85 to make a significant impact in driving improvement in Protection. Acceptable expenditure includes cost incurred to allocated workforce and/or investment in technology.
- 9.3 A further £60,000 has been allocated to facilitate a professional review of all high-rise residential buildings over 18 metres, by the end of December 2021. The review findings will report to the NFCC Fire Protection Board.
- 9.4 In July 2020, Lord Greenhalgh wrote again to all fire and rescue services to announce an additional £7m of infrastructure funding to support delivery of the lessons and relevant recommendations on the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 1 report. This funding is specifically to assist in delivering genuine change to increase resilience, with particular focus on communications infrastructure, including the management of multiple life safety calls.
- 9.5 £5.4m of the total fund has been allocated to FRSs to support local implementation of the technical changes being driven through the NFCC. The fund has provided £46,253.86 to BFRS, which is being utilised for the research, development and procurement of new operational equipment to assist in managing a major fire.
- 9.6 The remaining £1.6m will be used to support communications improvements, such as Multi-Agency Incident Transfer (MAIT), Airwave announcement talk group and updating Fire Survival Guidance, and is yet to be allocated.

## **10. New equipment and capabilities for 2020/2021**

- 10.1 There has been significant focus on improving our high-rise response capability throughout 2020, and it is important for us to introduce new technologies in a coordinated manner in harmony with Thames Valley colleagues and national policy change.

## 10.2 Escape Hoods



In 2020, Escape Hoods were introduced to all pumping appliances and Turntable Ladders in BFRS, bringing additional rescue capabilities to our operational crews. The Escape Hood is deployed to members of public who are unable to escape due to the presence of smoke or fire generated harmful gases, or for those who will be exposed to smoke or fire generated gases during the course of being rescued or evacuated. The escapes hoods can be deployed to assist the public at any fire rescue situation, and are not just limited to high-rise fire situations.

Image Source: [https://www.draeger.com/en-us\\_us/Products/PARAT-Escape-Hoods](https://www.draeger.com/en-us_us/Products/PARAT-Escape-Hoods)

## 10.3 High Rise Information Boards



BFRS Research and Development has also developed a high-rise information board to assist with the logistics of managing a simultaneous evacuation from large residential buildings. After the successful trial in Milton Keynes, these boards are being rolled out to fire appliances and our command unit, as well as some specific high-risk buildings where “waking watch” briefs are being managed by the Duty Holder.

Whilst effective, these boards will hopefully be complimented in the future by technological solutions as described in the Grenfell recommendations.

## 10.4 Smoke Curtains



The BFRS Research and Development team is also conducting a trial in the use of smoke curtains.

Image Source: <https://internationalfireandsafetyjournal.com/big-fire-ventilation-smoke-blocking-curtain/>

If proven to be effective, the smoke curtains will be utilised for protecting escape routes of large residential buildings to assist with simultaneous evacuation during firefighting operations. This could prove especially useful in premises where the single protected stairwell becomes the scene of firefighting operations, as well as the means of escape.

## 10.5 Premises Information Boxes



BFRS staff have been proactive with Duty Holders in promoting the use of Premises Information Boxes (PIBs) to assist crews when attending high-risk residential buildings. All appliances now carry a full range of master keys to enable access to the various boxes available on the market, and we are supporting Duty Holders locally and within the NFCC to develop an industry standard to the type of information held within these boxes.

Image Source: <https://www.gerdasecurity.co.uk/productsandsolutions/premises-information-box-pib-systems.aspx>

## 10.6 Fog Spikes



The Delta Fog Spike is designed to introduce water from high pressure hose reels in the form of small droplets into enclosed areas without the need for a large opening that would increase ventilation and the flow of air to the fire. The Fog Spikes were introduced to BFRS in 2020, and have multiple uses, including in some high-rise situations. Crews can utilise the new equipment to mitigate the risk of a wind-driven fire from a place of relative safety from outside the fire

compartment, as well as penetrating water into cavities and voids where there is difficult access to where fire has taken hold.

## 10.7 Wi-Fi connectivity on the incident ground – Emergency Services Network (ESN) ready



During 2020, the Technical team trialled an ESN-ready wireless modem on the Incident Command Unit, with a view to replacing the previous technology and identifying any opportunities for improving network access across the wider fleet.

Image Source: [www.cradlepoint.com](http://www.cradlepoint.com)

The successful trial has presented options to enhance remote connectivity when working in the field, potentially improving user access to premises risk management information, building safety information, mapping and weather information, and collaborative tools such as Resilience Direct and MS Teams.

The modem introduced to the Incident Command unit is a more cost-effective way of providing connectivity than the previous satellite technology and has the added benefit of being ESN ready. Further trials will include accessing the ESN network in due course.

## **11. Future opportunities and considerations**

11.1 The Technical Team continue to conduct the necessary research and development to ensure we remain equipped to implement any future changes in national best practice. This includes but is not limited to:

- Loudhailers to assist with communicating a simultaneous evacuation, prior to new building technology and legislative change
- Gas monitor provision extended to all appliances to support introduction of stairwell protection teams
- Further Wi-Fi connectivity to enhance gathering and accessing valuable risk information and other web-based software in the field
- Drone technology to provide enhanced aerial imagery, improved communication and even delivery of lifesaving equipment to remote and difficult locations
- The use of video conferencing to facilitate improved communications between the Incident Commander, Control Room and Bridgehead.
- Wide-area thermal imagery to detect unseen external fire spread
- Extended Duration Breathing Apparatus as part of the Thames Valley BA procurement project
- Updated Command Support Software and other facilities to assist Incident Commanders at large and complex incidents

## **12. Integrated Premises Risk Management System (PRMS)**

12.1 Since the procurement of the PRMS which was one of the projects facilitated under the Business and Systems Integration (BaSI) programme, Prevention, Protection and Response teams have been working with our chosen provider to develop a database to hold all premises risk information. The Protection and Prevention modules are complete and the methodology for assessing premises from an operational response perspective has been revised to incorporate all of the learning from the Phase 1 report. The new site-specific risk assessment process will capture the building fire safety strategy more easily, detailed information on the external fabric of the building and more information regarding the occupancy risk within.

## **13. Breathing Apparatus and Positive Pressure Ventilation (PPV) training**

13.1 In September and October 2020, the Training department carried out the necessary training to bring all our operational staff in line with national best practice when using PPV defensively. The revised approach to defensive PPV (where a fire remains within the building) has improved our ability to protect escape routes in complex residential buildings, whilst firefighting actions are carried out simultaneously.

13.2 We have also taken action to adapt our BA search procedures to bring in line with revised National Operational Guidance, giving us more opportunities to adopt different

search techniques at our more complex buildings, with a Thames Valley aligned approach.

#### **14. Collaboration and alignment**

14.1 Wherever possible, our Grenfell improvement activities consider collaboration and alignment across the Thames Valley. For example, the Escape Hoods purchased across the three services are exactly the same, removing the duplication of effort when producing guidance material, risk assessments and training packages etc. The Grenfell project leads from each Service meet regularly, to ensure we align our approach when developing new ideas and business rules for Thames Valley Fire Control Service to interpret and for crews to adopt on the ground.

#### **15. Protection growth and prioritisation**

15.1 In recent years the Fire Authority approved growth bids to expand and enhance the Protection function in BFRS to ensure it is ready for a post-Grenfell Protection environment. New roles include a new Enforcement and Training Manager, and an increased establishment of Inspecting Officers and Business Fire Safety Advisors and Inspectors.

15.2 There has also been significant investment in ensuring Protection staff are trained to the appropriate recognised level to ensure they can fulfil their roles effectively.

15.3 This has allowed the team to focus on key deliverables, such as the Building Risk Review Programme, new Premises Risk Management System as well as our routine regulatory and enforcement activity.

#### **16. Training and Assurance**

16.1 Multi-agency training and exercising was hampered by the Coronavirus Pandemic throughout 2020, however planning is underway for a another largescale high-rise exercise at the Fire Service College in 2021, and further exercising is scheduled with a high-rise theme, which will be critical in testing and assuring our revised approach, new equipment and future plans.

#### **17. Conclusion**

17.1 As a Service, BFRS is forward-leaning to implement the learning from Grenfell. Much has been achieved already and the mind-set change triggered by this tragedy will remain a priority for BFRS in many years to come. There are many further challenges ahead, and as we prepare for the Phase 2 report publication, the Service will maintain its preparedness to consider and implement further learning and improvement in the long term.