For Immediate Release

02 July 2017

**High-rise tenants to receive further reassurance messages**

SWANSEA Council is set to take further action over the coming weeks to reassure tenants in its high-rise flats following the recent Grenfell Tower fire.

Residents are being updated after aluminium cladding the council sent from Clyne Court and Jefferys Court for examination was confirmed as having fire resistant properties but has not met the new standard test being undertaken on aluminium cladding from across the UK.

Cllr Andrea Lewis, Cabinet Member for Housing, Energy and Building Services, said: “Our tenants are being reassured that the extra safety measures we’ve taken over the last few days will stay in place while we work with the Welsh Government to agree the next steps.

“Given that every local authority in England which had materials tested failed those tests we’re not surprised by this outcome.

“However, we’re still seeking information from the Welsh Government and BRE about the nature of the tests as we still don’t know what form they took. What we do know is that the materials we sent for testing meet current building regulations.

“In addition to cladding materials our systems have non-combustible insulation and metal fire breaks which are over and above building regulations requirements.”

Cllr Lewis said: “Our main concerns remain with our residents and we’ve already contacted them to update them on the latest developments.”

Cllr Lewis said that as more than 140 buildings in England had failed the test, it was likely those in Swansea would also fail. That was why the extra safety measures announced on Friday were put in place.

Despite the outcome of the tests there is no increased risk to tenants and the steps the council have taken already are supported by the Welsh Government and fire service.

Since the Grenfell Tower fire Swansea Council has acted to check its high-rise buildings to ensure all necessary actions were in place and where necessary enhanced arrangements were in place including making sure tenants are being kept properly informed.

These include:

- Annual fire safety checks and inspections have been completed
- Introduction of regular visits to all high-rise blocks by officers to ensure there are no fire safety issues.
• Regular checks of communal areas to make sure they are clear and free from combustible materials.
• Further fire safety advice for tenants
• Dry risers – special tubes which direct large quantities of water for fire-fighters use to all levels of high-rise blocks – have all been checked and are in working order.

All flats in council high-rise blocks have in-built smoke alarms while fire doors fitted to homes and in key communal areas are fire-resistant for at least an hour to prevent fire spread.

On top of these measures the council is also committed to installing sprinklers in its 11 high-rise blocks and it will now be discussing with the Welsh Government the issue of what to do about materials that have failed the tests.

Cllr Rob Stewart, Leader of the Council, said: “We do know that aluminium cladding fitted to our buildings meets existing regulations. What the Welsh Government or BRE haven’t yet done is explained why materials which meet British building regulations, failed the tests. That is unacceptable.

“I’ve asked the Welsh Government to urgently clarify these points so that everyone, particularly tenants, have the information they need and are aware of the facts and we can take any further action that’s needed.

“Welsh Government now need to be explicit in their advice and guidance to councils and other across Wales who will be going through the testing process’

“We said at the start of this process that we could not and would not be complacent and would take further steps as more information was known. The safety and wellbeing of our residents is paramount and we will continue to go above and beyond what’s required in order to reassure our tenants.”

The samples sent for testing by the British Research Establishment were from four blocks of high-rise accommodation at Clyne Court in Sketty and one block at Jeffreys Court in Penlan. These four buildings have aluminium composite materials (ACM) in its cladding. Other buildings have different cladding material and are not subject to current tests.

However, Swansea’s blocks have a mineral core as opposed to a plastic core which is recognised by fire safety experts as being much safer. Fire breaks have also been fitted which further reduces the risk of any blaze spreading.

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