

# Environmental checks around Grenfell Tower

Update on Stage 1 of the environmental checks around the Grenfell Tower site including the initial findings

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## Environmental checks around Grenfell Tower

### **Grenfell – Stage 1 environmental checks**

Environmental checks in and around the Grenfell Tower site were announced last October and have been carried out over the spring and summer of 2019.

This is a two-stage process and the laboratory analysis of Stage 1 by the independent specialist AECOM is now complete and the preliminary data is now available. This information will let us know if the soil has been contaminated by the Grenfell Tower fire and whether there are any health risks as a result.

The initial findings are:

- At this point, the levels of substances found in samples are typical of those generally found in London and other urban areas across England.
- At the moment there is nothing to suggest anyone needs to take any immediate action or that we need to change the investigation strategy or update the existing health advice from Public Health England.
- Substances tested for in the soil do not appear to be present at high enough concentrations to lead to what is legally defined as a 'significant possibility of significant harm'.
- Some levels of substances were above what are known as 'soil screening levels'. This does not mean they necessarily pose a risk to health – the levels are similar to those found in other urban areas. If this were purely a legal and regulation matter, findings at these levels would not require any action, but we intend to continue to investigate them.
- Stage 2, which involves further sampling, will proceed as planned so we can be more certain of the findings.

There is more work we need to do to analyse the data and the full report is being worked on. This will be published in September, but we wanted to share any findings as early as possible, which is why we are updating the community today.

## **Stage 1 testing**

In total, AECOM took 93 samples from 20 areas within a 1km radius of the Tower and within the Grenfell Tower site cordon itself.

The sampling sites were decided with help from the community who identified where debris had been found and combined with scientific data from the Met Office about the smoke plume resulting from the fire.

The aim of Stage 1 was to collect background information including through research, a site walkover and exploratory samples from selected publicly accessible areas. The results from Stage 1 will help us to agree where to test and what to test for in the next stage.

Stage 2 will involve more detailed sampling and analysis leading to a report which will provide conclusions and recommendations.

We expect to receive the full Stage 1 report, including the design for Stage 2, from AECOM in September. This will be published in full online and the community will be updated on the findings.

## **Health advice**

The results of this stage did not show levels requiring any action or any change to the investigation strategy and means our health advice to the public remains the same. Until we have full results of all the testing, we should continue to take a precautionary approach.

If any members of the community around Grenfell are concerned about their health, they can contact their GP and ask about the enhanced health check available to them.

These health checks are designed to find the early signs of health problems or underlying health conditions that might have been exacerbated by the fire itself. Their GP will either do these or refer them to another GP practice which does. They are also available at various clinics in North Kensington via our community provider Enhance whom you can call on 020 3434 2500.

Further health information and advice can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/public-health-advice-following-the-grenfell-tower-fire>

## **Independent oversight of the testing**

These results are being independently reviewed by the Suitably Qualified Person (SQP), Dr Paul Nathanail of Land Quality Management Ltd, who is checking the specialists' work at each stage.

The testing process has been overseen by an independent group of scientific experts – the Science Advisory Group (SAG). They have released the following statement on the results:

Following a review of technical documents and a meeting with AECOM and the SQP, the SAG has concluded that the programme of environmental checks for Stage 1 was scientifically rigorous and that the SAG has confidence in the measurement data.

## **Next steps**

Stage 2 testing will continue as planned.

We appreciate the community's continued involvement and help as this work continues and we will communicate further details about the next stage of testing as soon as we can. As before, any decisions about the next stage of testing will be taken with the involvement of the community.

Further information about the soil and environmental checks process can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/eu-cas.ms/guidance/soil-and-environmental-checks>

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## **Brokenshire unveils new plan for building stronger communities**

Communities Secretary Rt Hon. James Brokenshire today (20 July 2019) laid out the government's vision for building a stronger sense of belonging and shared prosperity within local communities.

The new Community Framework: 'By deeds and their results: how we will strengthen our communities and nation', published today, sets out how the government will work with local and national partners such as businesses, faith institutions, local authorities and volunteer groups to help build stronger, more empowered and integrated communities across England.

'By deeds and their results' commits to:

- Holding a national conversation with communities across England after Brexit, about their view of who we are as a nation, their vision for the future of their community and our country, and what local and national government can do to support their communities to thrive.
- Establishing a series of Civic Deal pilots to test the principles of

this Framework in local areas, by putting communities more in control of decisions and by strengthening local partnerships and civic infrastructure.

- Publishing a Communities White Paper to renew the government's focus on building stronger communities across England.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon. James Brokenshire said:

We're committed to creating stronger, more confident and integrated communities, where people have a real say over the decisions that matter most to them locally.

Our new framework will help ensure that community voices are heard, valued and produce change so that no community is left behind.

Going forward, we will promote and strengthen the common themes that bind places and people together, promote opportunity and celebrate the great neighbourhoods we live and work in.

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## **DfT injects £348 million into boosting local roads quality**

- Department for Transport announces the opening of £348 million funding competition to help improve local roads over the next 4 years
- funding will be available for local authorities to bid for, allowing them to work on major maintenance projects, as well as on projects that will ease congestion on our busiest roads
- announcement follows £6.6 billion investment in local road maintenance in the last 5 years

The Department for Transport has today (20 July 2019) announced nearly £350 million is being made available for councils to improve local roads up and down the country.

Two sets of funding, totalling £348 million across 4 years, will be available for local authorities to bid for in an effort to tackle issues on major local roads, from easing congestion through to sorting out potholes.

The first pot of investment, the Challenge Fund, will be available for this year and the next, with just under £200 million on offer. Councils will be able to bid for projects that will improve the quality of roads and

surrounding infrastructure, including structures such as bridges and viaducts if necessary, to benefit the local economy and make driving safer. In particular, the funding could be put toward sorting major pothole repairs.

The second set of funding, the Pinch Point Fund, will be available in 2021/22 and 2022/23 and totals £150 million. It will go towards council projects designed to help ease congestion on some of their busiest roads. Previous examples of projects funded through Pinch Point include improving the links between the A12 and A143 to open up housing and commercial development land, new roads helping buses bypass single lane roads, and new roads to link main roads with new housing developments.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Local roads are the backbone of the transport network for drivers up and down the country, but we know that some aren't up to the standard they need to be. Whether it's congestion or quality, we need to empower local authorities to invest in these roads and make journeys safer and stress-free.

That's exactly what this funding will do – over 4 years we're providing more than a third of a billion pounds to make sure local authorities have the cash they need to make this a reality.

Today's announcement is the latest in a string of funding injections the department has made into making sure roads are fit for purpose. The department is investing over £6.6 billion between 2015 and 2021, including the £198 million funding announced today, to improve the condition of the local highway networks.

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## [DfT to revolutionise data on traffic works to improve road journeys](#)

- Department for Transport announces consultation on improving access to data on road works from 2020
- data will be on one online source, allowing apps and organisations to give real time updates on where roadworks are taking place
- move will mean drivers know the areas to avoid – improving journeys and cutting congestion

The Department for Transport has today (20 July 2019) launched a consultation on changing the law so that councils and utility companies have to share roadworks data on a new website – meaning work is co-ordinated and drivers know where to look.

The consultation will seek views on making it the law from next April (2020) for local authorities and utility companies to have to use a new digital platform, named Street Manager, to plan and manage roadworks. This will mean up to date information on live and planned works across England will be available under one source, making it easier than ever before for tech companies to map where and when road work are happening.

On top of this, the service – which the department will invest £10 million in – will require those feeding in information to provide updates within 2 hours of road works beginning and ending. This will help third parties like Waze to use data to provide real time journey updates for road users through travel apps, significantly improving travel times for people across the country.

It will also mean drivers can find out which areas to avoid due to roadworks before they leave home. It is hoped the new system will be used in this way to reduce congestion as a result of roadworks.

### [Street Manager](#)

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Everyone has experienced the annoyance of travel that is disrupted by roadworks, but the systems we currently use to help companies communicate this aren't fit for purpose, and need changing.

Street Manager will do just that, making it easier for companies to use data on roadworks to inform people of where to avoid when travelling, helping to boost the experiences for people travelling up and down the country.

The consultation will also look at removing temporary traffic lights as soon as possible after the completion of works, and a new national condition requiring companies to place roadworks underneath pavements to reduce the impact on traffic. Pilots have already been running with a small group of utility companies and councils since May (2019), with the full roll out of the new data source set for next April (2020).