



Corporate Fire Safety Strategy 2018

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 New Forest District Council acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities under this current fire legislation and will proceed with due diligence to address these by the provision of suitable, sufficient and risk appropriate fire precautions and management systems to enable the safe evacuation of employees and others from Council buildings and to minimise fire damage should a fire occur.

1.2 The aims and objectives of this strategy are to:

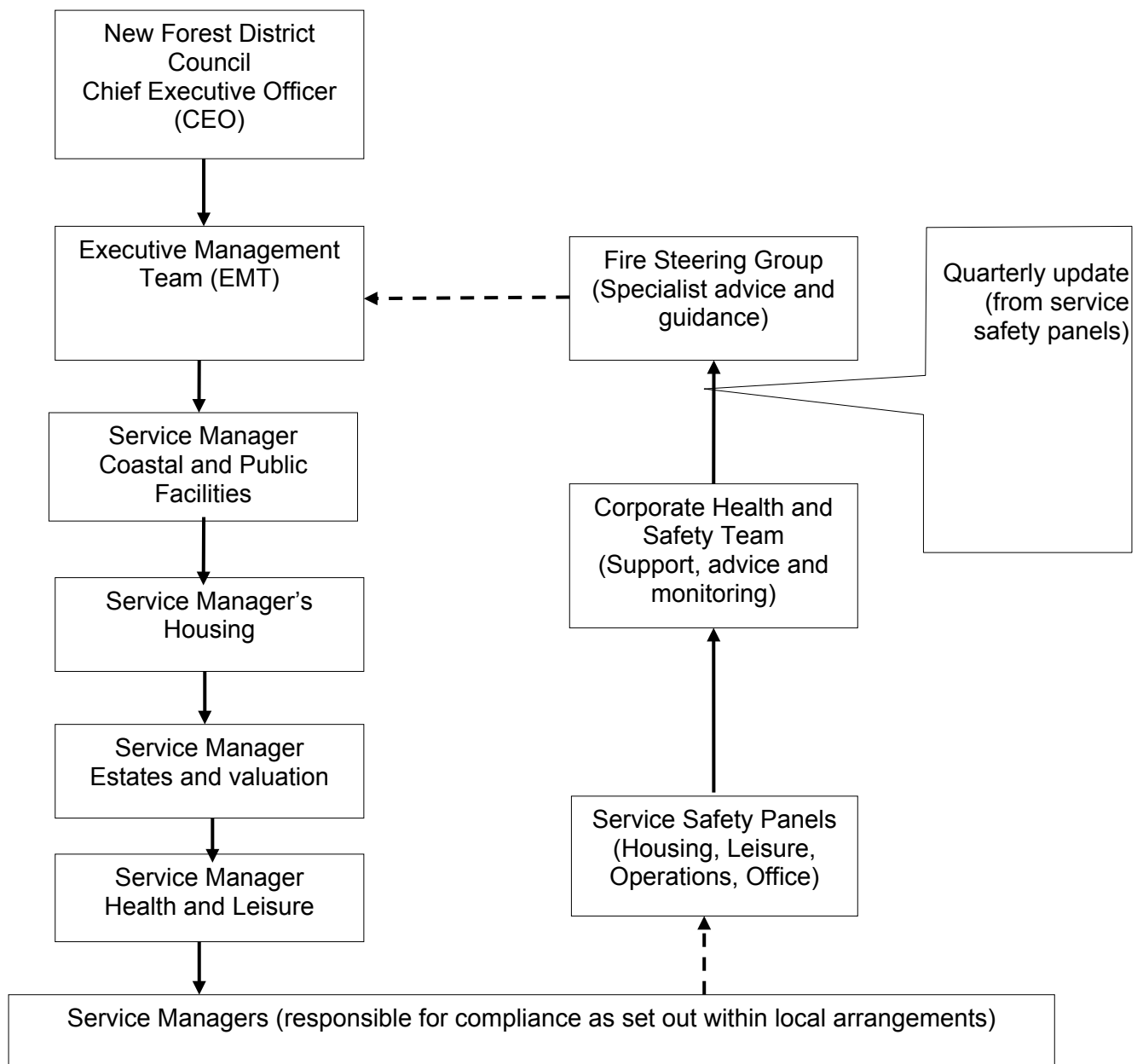
- Ensure suitable resources are in place to prevent the cause and spread of fire and if/when they occur to minimise their impact within communal areas and individual properties
- Place primary importance on the life, safety and welfare of New Forest residents, employees and persons working and visiting NFDC owned or leased properties.
- To have in place effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures.
- Protect the councils assets from the spread of fire and interruption of business and
- Fulfil our legislative duties as landlord and 'responsible person'.
- Fulfil our requirements as the enforcing agency with regards to private sector housing.

1.3 This strategy and the following fire safety plans will consider the following legislation.

- In 2006 the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (known as Fire Safety Order) was introduced, reforming all previous fire safety legislation relating to fire safety. It requires a "responsible person" to be identified to ensure that 'suitable and sufficient' fire risk assessments are carried out and also brought the common parts of blocks of flats within the scope of mainstream fire safety legislation.
- The Housing Act 2004 introduced the housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS), a risk based evaluation tool used to assess potential risks and hazards to the health and safety of occupants from deficiencies identified in residential properties. The assessment method focuses on 29 categories of hazard, including the threat of uncontrolled fire and smoke.
- Local Housing Authorities as landlords also need to comply with other statutory requirements which include; The Gas Safety (installation and use) Regulations 1998, the Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994 and the Furniture and Furnishings Act 1988 which if not complied with could give rise to an increased risk of fire.

1.4 Arrangements

Arrangements within specific services set out individual policies, implementation plans and procedures that must be followed and detail clear roles and responsibilities. Those with specific emergency evacuation plans must ensure they are made available to all 'relevant persons'. Where necessary, the method of communication must take in to account any specific individual needs. Below is a flow chart of those specific services and policies.



SECTION 2: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1 Duties and responsibilities

Responsibility for complying with the Order rests with the 'responsible person'.

In a workplace, the 'responsible person' is the employer and any other person who may have control of any part of the premises, e.g. the occupier or owner. In the case of NFDC the employer is represented by the Chief Executive together with the Executive Heads who collectively form the 'Executive Management Team' or 'EMT'.

Therefore, for the purposes of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the general duties conferred by the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 in relation to the protection of life from fire, the 'responsible person' shall be the Chief Executive together with the Executive Heads i.e. EMT.

2.1.1 Executive Management Team (EMT)

The Executive Management Team (EMT) are collectively and individually responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and its supporting regulations and approved codes of practice are applied and implemented and to nominate one or more persons to act on their behalf to discharge their responsibilities.

The Chief Executive, together with the Executive Heads, discharges their responsibilities as the 'responsible persons' to Service Managers for managing all aspects of fire compliance including preparation, maintenance and publication of the necessary records for all NFDC premises ensuring the safety of occupants within the premises they operate.

The Chief Executive, together with the Executive Heads, have nominated Service Managers to make provision for the safe evacuation of any employee with a disability or reduced mobility and to ensure that all of their employees have an awareness of fire safety.

2.1.2 Service Manager – Coastal and Public Facilities

The Service Manager of Coastal and Public Facilities is the 'responsible person' for managing and overseeing all contractual aspects of fire compliance for all NFDC premises. This includes reporting to safety panels and fire steering group on a quarterly basis on the authority's position.

2.1.3 Service Managers – Housing Maintenance; Housing Estates Management, Leisure; Coastal and Public Facilities; Estates and Valuation

These Specific Service Managers have been appointed as the 'responsible persons' for each building occupied by employees, members of public, Lease Holders or residents affected by their service undertaking. Where Council offices are in shared occupation the Service Manager of Coastal and Public Facilities has been appointed to manage that building.

The main responsibilities of the 'responsible persons' as defined by the RRFSA 2005 are outlined below:

- Producing an individual policy for their service area.
- Commissioning of the fire risk assessment for each premises and ensuring any resulting actions are addressed
- Appointing competent persons to assist with the implementation of preventative and protective measures
- Ensuring appropriate arrangements are in place for the effective planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review of the preventative and protective measures in place for each premises, to include fire evacuation drills/exercises at least once every year if required (this must be recorded)
- Ensuring all relevant information regarding fire risks, preventative and protective measures and emergency procedures have been communicated to all employees/residents
- Ensuring all premises, and any facilities or equipment provided in relation to fire safety within them, are properly maintained
- Ensuring that appropriate equipment for detecting fire, raising the alarm and fighting fire is provided and maintained and there are forward plans for replacement
- Ensuring the monitoring of all emergency routes and exits to ensure they:
 - Are kept clear at all times
 - Lead directly to a place of safety

- Are adequate for the use and size of premises and also the max number of persons who may be present at any one time
- Have doors that open in the direction of escape with no sliding or revolving doors
- Have doors that are capable of being easily and immediately opened by any person in an emergency
- Are indicated by appropriate signage
- Are provided with adequate emergency lighting
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- Ensuring that adequate fire safety training to include, where necessary, use of firefighting equipment
- Establishing appropriate procedures to be followed in the event of serious or imminent danger including competent people to implement evacuation procedures if required (incident officers and fire wardens)
- Eliminating or reducing risk from dangerous substances and ensuring that additional emergency measures are in place for dangerous substances
- Ensuring the online fire log is kept up to date for all premises and available for inspection
- Ensure service specific arrangements on fire safety are published and available to Managers and employees within their department
- Appointment of incident Officers
- Appointment of Fire Wardens
- Routine Fire Inspections
- Responsible persons are responsible for determining the appropriate system category for each Council building and, in the case of a cat L2 system, specifying the rooms or areas that need protection, over and above those protected in a cat L3 system, and the type of detector to be installed.
- Testing of the fire alarm systems will be undertaken and recorded by the responsible person or their designated officers. The Responsible person will ensure that the annual and six monthly testing, routine inspections and maintenance are carried out by an approved external contractor.
- The Responsible Person shall ensure that Fire evacuation drills or exercises will be carried out at all Council premises at least once every year to ensure the continued integrity of the agreed emergency procedures.

2.1.3 Service Managers including those identified in 2.1.2

Have a responsibility to:

- Ensure all employees under their direct control are aware of the action required of them should they discover a fire or upon hearing the fire alarm
- Ensure all employees under their direct control are aware of the preventative and protective measures in place for fire
- Ensure that a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is completed by an employee's line manager when it is known that the employee has a disability or reduced mobility that would affect their safe evacuation from the premises in the event of an emergency. This could include short-term injuries e.g. a person with a broken leg, a pregnant employee or any impairment that might affect a person's ability to safely evacuate the premises.

2.1.4 All other employees

Must:

- Cooperate with this policy and subsequent arrangements to ensure that the premises remain safe from fire and its effects, and must not do anything to place themselves or others at risk
- Read and understand the procedures and emergency arrangements within their place of work
- Ensure they complete the online fire safety awareness e-learning module on induction and every 2 years thereafter
- Promptly report any incidents, defects, unsafe conditions, or unsafe acts to their line manager
- Not misuse or interfere with the fire equipment that is provided for their safety

2.1.5 Corporate Health and Safety Unit

Will:

- Provide independent advice and support to Service Managers, Line Managers/Supervisors in relation to this policy and its applications and associated arrangements
- Provide advice and support where necessary to employees with the operation of this policy and their arrangements
- Investigate any accidents/incidents relating to fire safety
- Undertake fire risk audits as required to ensure the Authority is carrying out its duties
- Report to the Chief Exec and EMT on outstanding fire safety actions from fire steering group and fire risk audits

2.1.6 Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service

A partnership agreement exists between Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and New Forest District Council designed to ensure that both party's available resources are used to maximum effect. The desired outcome is effective risk reduction in the Council's premises and service delivery. The agreement is not intended to create a legally binding relationship.

HFRS Will:

- Provide specialist advice and guidance to assist the Council to comply with its obligations under fire safety legislation
- Provide assistance steering the Council to assess fire risk proportionately across the organisation in accordance with available resources