

**HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION –
18 AUGUST 2022**

FIRE SAFETY POLICY FOR HOUSING (LANDLORD SERVICES)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report deals with a review of the Council's Fire Safety Policy for Housing (Landlord Services).
- 1.2 The existing Fire Safety Policy has been updated to take into account changes in national guidance, expert advice and picks up relevant staffing changes within the Councils Housing Service.
- 1.3 The updated Fire Safety Policy for Housing (Landlord Services) is attached at Appendix 1.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In November 2018 the Cabinet approved the Council's overarching Fire Safety Strategy:-
<https://democracy.newforest.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=133&MIId=6561&Ver=4>. This recognised that the Council discharges statutory fire safety duties and functions across a diverse property portfolio to ensure that those visiting, working, or living in such buildings are adequately protected from the risk of fire.
- 2.2 The overarching Fire Safety Strategy proposed that all services covering the Council's offices, depots, leisure centres and housing stock develop their own fire safety policies detailing the bespoke arrangements for fire safety across each of the respective service areas.
- 2.3 In 2019, the Council's newly created Asset Management and Compliance Team produced a new Fire Safety Policy for Housing, working closely with Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service. This document has been reviewed to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and reflects current guidance and picks up any changes internally.

3. THE FIRE SAFETY POLICY FOR HOUSING (LANDLORD SERVICES) KEY COMPONENTS

- 3.1 The policy reflects the changes to legislative and regulatory duties of the Council as Landlord and defines roles and responsibilities to align with the current structure which includes the introduction of 3 Building Safety Officers.
- 3.2 The policy sets out the responsibilities across the whole of Housing Services and also deals with the specific duties of Hampshire County Council as 'Commissioner' of extra care service activity, the Council as 'Housing Landlord' and 3rd party commissioned 'Provider of Care' within the Council's 3 Extra Care Schemes.
- 3.3 Following a review of the frequency and type of Fire Risk Assessment assisted by an external fire safety adviser, the policy sets out a revised schedule.

- 3.4 The policy sets out the close working arrangements between the Council and Hampshire and IOW Fire and Rescue Service to increase awareness of key issues and the reduction of risk in respect of fire safety management of the Council's housing stock.
- 3.5 The policy expands its scope relating to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS), to ensure that where the Council becomes aware of a tenant with a disability, or where a tenant is at increased risk due to a vulnerability, a person-centred risk assessment is carried out to ensure that the tenant is able to evacuate their property in the event of a fire, or get to a place of safety.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 This Fire Safety Policy supports the Council's commitment to ensuring that the risk of fire is kept to as low as reasonably practicable.
- 4.2 The Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team received a copy for early consultation and the new Policy was presented to the Housing and Homelessness Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 15 June 2022 and the Housing Health and Safety Panel on 12 July 2022.
- 4.3 Fire safety training of staff who have duties under the policy is underway and it is proposed that the revised Fire Safety Policy for Housing (Landlord Services) is adopted on 1 September 2022.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An annual budget funded by the HRA is required to implement and support this policy and this will be agreed as part of the Council's annual budget setting process.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There can be serious implications for housing providers not dealing with their fire safety responsibilities, including criminal sanctions in the most serious cases.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The report has positive implications for those groups suffering disabilities and/or other vulnerabilities and the Council will implement enhanced measures to undertake person centred risk assessments or PEEP's, as appropriate, for such persons.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are none directly associated with this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the revised Fire Safety Policy for Housing (Landlord Services) be approved and adopted from 1 September 2022.

10. PORTFOLIO HOLDER ENDORSEMENT

I have agreed to the recommendation of this report.

Sign: Cllr Jill Cleary

Date: 18 August 2022

For further information contact:

Richard Fudge
Service Manager – Housing Asset and
Compliance
023 8028 5136
Richard.fudge@nfdc.gov.uk

Ritchie Thomson
Service Manager – Housing Maintenance
023 8028 5137
ritchie.thomson@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Public documents

Date on which notice given of this Decision – 18 August 2022

Last date for call in – 25 August 2022