

MOBILITY SCOOTER POLICY FOR HOUSING (LANDLORD SERVICES)

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Housing and Homelessness Overview and Scrutiny Panel:-

- 1.1 Consider the proposed Mobility Scooter Policy for Housing (Landlord Services) and make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness Services.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report deals with the introduction of a new Council Mobility Scooter Policy for Housing (Landlord Services).
- 2.2 The proposed Council Mobility Scooter Policy for Housing (Landlord Services) is attached at Appendix 1.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council is committed to supporting the quality of life of its tenant's and leaseholders residing within the Council's housing stock, including supporting residents to make use of the most appropriate equipment available to enable them to live independently, including the leasing or buying of mobility scooters.
- 3.2 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that fire risks in common areas are assessed, and actions taken to reduce these risks. The Council undertakes fire risk assessments of all our blocks in accordance with our Fire Safety Policy. In residential buildings, mobility scooter fires can pose a fire safety risk to tenants, leaseholders, employees, firefighters, and others, when stored in communal areas and/or fire escape routes.
- 3.3 This Policy recognises that the Council discharges statutory fire safety duties and functions across its Housing property portfolio to ensure that those visiting, working, or living in such buildings are adequately protected from the risk posed by fire or obstruction to evacuation routes in the event of emergency.

4. THE MOBILITY SCOOTER POLICY FOR HOUSING (LANDLORD SERVICES) KEY COMPONENTS

- 4.1 The policy is designed to ensure that residents living in Council owned properties who wish to purchase or store a mobility scooter can do so safely. The aim of the policy is to bring clarity and structure to the management of mobility scooters in Council owned housing properties and supports the Council's duty to maintain

buildings in full compliance with Fire Safety duties by preventing mobility scooters being charged or stored in inappropriate areas e.g., communal hallways. To own and store a mobility scooter the Council must agree that the mobility scooter can be safely stored and charged in a resident's property or a designated storage area.

- 4.2 The policy reflects legislative and regulatory duties of the Council as Landlord and defines roles and responsibilities across the whole of Housing Services aligned with the current structure.
- 4.3 The policy introduces a Mobility Scooter Registration Scheme which sets out how the Council will consider requests from tenants and leaseholders to store mobility scooters, the factors it will consider when granting or refusing permission and highlights how mobility scooters will be stored safely in accordance with the Council's Fire Safety Policy for Housing (Landlord Services).
- 4.4 The policy will apply to all tenants and Leaseholders living or applying to live within the Council's housing stock. Where residents are considering moving into a council rented or leased housing property, or they are an existing tenant or leaseholder and already have, or require a mobility scooter, they will be required to seek permission in writing from the Council first, to agree appropriate storage of a mobility scooter.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 This Mobility Scooter Policy supports the Council's Fire Safety Policy for Housing (Landlord Services) and commitment to ensuring that the risk of fire is kept as low as reasonably practicable.
- 5.2 The Mobility Scooter Policy was presented to the Tenants Involvement Group (TIG) on 3 November 2022. Members of the TIG fed back mixed views on the policy. TIG members questioned the need for the Policy given the fact there had been no fires reported in NFDC owned accommodation. They were also concerned over the stringent rules for Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) and the requirement to register all scooters, even if they were kept inside the tenant's own property, and not in communal areas. At this time, the TIG is requesting further clarity on the justification of the proposed policy and officers will be attending a meeting with the Group to discuss this further.
- 5.3 In response, Officers are clear the Policy is designed to be pro-active, not reactive, and is designed to reduce the risk of future fires as more and more residents are procuring scooters, and maintain safe evacuation routes in the event of a fire. The safety of all residents is paramount, and the Housing Service is satisfied that a policy is both proportionate, and through co-operation with tenants, not detrimental to existing users that are known to the service. As stated above, Service Managers intend to meet again with TIG on 18 January 2023 to help further explain the need for the policy given the number of fire incidents reported around the country, as a result of battery fires, and will regularly feedback to the TIG on the implementation of the Policy.
- 5.4 The Council's Corporate Health and Safety Team received a copy for early consultation and the new Policy was presented to the Executive Management Team on 13 December 2022 and the Housing Health and Safety Panel on 17 January 2023.

5.5 It is proposed that the Mobility Scooter Policy for Housing (Landlord Services) be adopted (by way of a Portfolio Holder decision), following consultation.

6. CRIME & 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 of cases.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Council recognises that promoting equality is a fundamental part of enhancing life changes under the Equality Act 2010 and reserves the discretion to consider making reasonable adjustments to a tenant's home to facility the storage of a mobility scooter. An Equality Impact Assessment can be found at Appendix D of the Policy.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are none directly associated with this report.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are none directly arising from this report.

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Background Papers

[Fire Safety Policy for Housing \(Landlord Services\) Portfolio Holder Decision - Housing and Homelessness Service 18 August 2022](#)