

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder for Property, Buildings and Housing Cllr Rosemarie Harris
May 2017

REPORT AUTHOR: Simon Inkson - Head of Housing

SUBJECT: Housing Service – Council Housing Fire Safety Policy

REPORT FOR: Decision

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for a Housing Fire Safety Policy which will apply to all homes owned and managed by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 1.2 The report is supported by the following appendices:
- A The policy
 - B Consultation response summary
 - C Impact Assessment (IA)

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council's Housing Service (the Service) is landlord of around 5,400 Council homes and, 110 leasehold flats. This policy describes how the Council will ensure it complies with fire safety legislation, including fire risk assessments in communal areas of blocks of flats and fire safety in Council homes in general.
- 2.2 The Housing Service has engaged its staff, corporate Health & Safety Advisors and the Fire Service to address the lack of clarity about fire safety. A joint working group was formed and one of the issues highlighted was the lack of a fire safety policy. The policy details responsibilities of staff and the Service's approach to ensure compliance with fire safety legislation.
- 2.3 The Service needs to ensure it is compliant with fire safety legislation and prevent fires from occurring. Where they do occur tenants need to know what to do and what not to do to minimise health risks.
- 2.3 The policy is new and has been developed in conjunction with the Council Housing Fire Safety Working Group. The Service is working with the Fire Service to minimise risks.
- 2.4 The policy's contents are as follows:
- 1 Fire Risk Assessments
 - 2 Tenants and leaseholders at risk
 - 3 Responsibilities
 - 4 Tenants and Leaseholders
 - 5 Equalities
 - 6 Reviewing decisions, complaints and compliments
 - 7 Review of this policy
- The appendix with the policy contains a detailed list of responsibilities of Housing staff.

2.5 Draft versions of the policy have been discussed with:

- Policies sub-group of the Tenants' Liaison Forum
- Legal Services
- Relevant Housing staff
- Fire Safety Working Group

2.6 A public consultation was carried out. The key findings are attached to this report.

3. Proposal

3.1 This report seeks approval for a Housing Fire Safety Policy which will apply to all homes owned and managed by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

4. One Powys Plan

4.1 When this policy is implemented the Service will be able to easily identify persons who are most at risk in Council properties and act accordingly to support and prevent harm. This enables the Service to support these people to remain safe in their home. Where necessary the Service will support tenants to move to more suitable accommodation. The majority of those at risk are vulnerable older people.

5. Preferred Choice and Reasons

5.1 The preferred choice is to approve the policy to ensure consistency across the County.

5.2 The second choice is not to approve the policy. This would mean that there is a risk that the Service is not completely compliant and preventable fires may occur.

6. Sustainability and Environmental Issues/Equalities/Crime and Disorder/Welsh Language/Other Policies etc

6.1 The policy does not have an impact.

7. Children and Young People's Impact Statement - Safeguarding and Wellbeing

7.1 The policy does not have an impact.

8. Local Member(s)

8.1 This policy applies to all HRA properties in Powys.

9. Other Front Line Services

9.1 There will be no changes for other front line services.

10. Support Services (Legal, Finance, HR, ICT, BPU)

10.1 Legal - The Professional Lead-Legal considers the recommendation in this report as one of good estate management and a necessity for Health and safety Purposes

10.2 Finance - The Finance Business Partner notes the content of the report and the policy and its implementation will ensure compliance with fire safety legislation, supports tenants to remain safe in their home and ensure consistency across the county.

10.3 There will be no changes to support services.

11. Local Service Board/Partnerships/Stakeholders etc

11.1. The following stakeholders have been invited to read the policy and provide comments as part of the public consultation.

- all Housing staff
- Heads of Service
- Tenants' Liaison Forum members
- Housing Services Group 100
- Powys Teaching Health Board
- PAVO
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority
- Disability Powys
- Age Cymru Powys
- Shelter Cymru
- Tai Pawb
- Chartered Institute of Housing Cymru

11.2. Consultation responses are detailed in the consultation report, appendix B.

11.3. The policy has been agreed by the Council Housing Fires Safety Working Group.

12. Communications

12.1 The new policy will be published on the corporate website. Individual council tenants will be informed of the policy through Open House Magazine and the Tenant Engagement Facebook page. The Tenants' Liaison Forum Members will be informed. There will be a link on the Council's Housing Service intranet page to the corporate website.

13. Statutory Officers

13.1 The Deputy Monitoring Officer notes the content of the report, the proposal and has nothing further to add.

13.2 The Strategic Director Resources (S151 Officer) notes the comments made by Finance.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
To approve the Council Housing Fire	The policy and its implementation

Safety Policy.	ensures compliance with fire safety legislation and supports tenants to remain safe in their home.
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Relevant Policy (ies):	
Within Policy:	Y
Within Budget:	Y

Relevant Local Member(s):	All
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:	Simon Inkson
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:	1 March 2017

Contact Officer Name:	Tel:	Fax:	Email:
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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

- CIH practice online
- Fire safety risk assessment: sleeping accommodation; Home Office, June 2006
- Fire safety risk assessment: means of escape for disabled people; Home Office, March 2007
- Fire safety risk assessment: small and medium places of assembly; Home Office, June 2006
- Housing – Fire Safety, Guidance on fire safety provisions for certain types of existing housing; LACORS ; August 2008
- Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats, Local Government Association; May 2012

Appendices

Appendix A: Proposed Fire Safety Policy

Appendix B: Key findings from consultation

Appendix C: Impact assessment

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