

Waverley Borough Council

Report to: Landlord Services Advisory EWG

Date: 20 July 2023

Ward(s) affected: All wards affected

Report of Director: Community Wellbeing

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Report Status: Open

Housing Service:

HOUSING FIRE SAFETY POLICY 2023

1. Executive Summary

Waverley Borough Council has statutory requirements to ensure it meets its fire safety obligations and maintain the safety of tenants and properties.

The existing policy was last reviewed in 2021 and is subject to three yearly reviews, however due to changes in legislation the review was brought forward to ensure the policy continues to be relevant to the Councils new obligations.

2. Recommendation to Executive Co Portfolio Holder for Housing

- 2.1 That the Executive Co Portfolio Holder for Housing consults with Executive Head of Housing to approve the Fire Safety Policy.

3. Reason(s) for Recommendation:

- 3.1. Waverley Borough Council has statutory requirements to ensure it meets fire safety obligations. This policy sets out the framework for decision making on fire safety matters in the Council's housing stock.
- 3.2. The existing policy does was last reviewed in 2021 and is subject to 3 yearly reviews, however due to changes in legislation the review was brought forward to ensure the policy continues to be relevant to the Councils new obligations

4. Purpose of Report

- 4.1. To approve and adopt the policy. To promote fire safety and give clear direction of the management to provide and maintain safe homes for tenants.

5. Strategic Priorities

- 5.1. The report supports the Council's Corporate commitment to promote *"Good quality housing for all income levels and age groups"* and aim to *"be the best council landlord in the South East and to be acknowledged so by our tenants."*

6. Background

- 6.1 The existing Fire Safety Policy was first published in August 2017, as a joint policy with between the Compliance Manager for housing assets and the Emergency Planning, Resilience and Safety Officer for

corporate assets. Setting a framework for managing fire safety across all Council owned buildings.

6.2 The policy has been subject to periodic review, however given the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Act 2021, which introduced new obligations for buildings owners, it was deemed prudent to complete a full review of the policy ahead of its periodic review.

6.3 Due to the additional obligations put on the Council as a landlord, which generally don't impact the corporate assets, it was deemed that splitting the policy so that the housing and corporate obligations are clearly defined. In consultation with the Emergency Planning, Resilience and Safety Officer, it was confirmed that a Corporate Fire Safety Policy was published last year.

6.4 Approval of this revised policy will also enable the revision of existing fire safety procedures, in line with the objectives outlined in section 5 of the policy.

7. Consultations

7.1.

In updating this policy, the following individuals were consulted.

- Ibiyemi Akoto, Compliance Officer
- Matt Alexander, Operations Manager
- Terry Daubney, Representative from the Tenants Panel
- Anthony James, Emergency Planning, Resilience and Safety Officer
- Councillor Paul Rivers, Co-Portfolio Holder for Housing
- Timothy Tyler, Compliance Officer
- Hugh Wagstaff, Strategic Asset Manager

- 7.2. Following approval of the policy, training will be provided to housing officers, relevant to their responsibilities.

8. Key Risks

- 8.1. The existing version of the Fire Safety Policy sets a framework for the Councils existing obligations, prior to the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 and Fire Safety Act 2021. However, it doesn't fully address the Councils new obligations introduced by these acts.
- 8.2. Processes are in place to manage new obligations, however, this new version of the policy is needed to formalise the Councils approach.

9. Financial Implications

Drafted by: Candice Keet (Senior Accountant)

- 9.1. There are no direct financial implications from this report. Any costs associated with meeting the requirements of this policy have been considered and the budgets included when setting the 2023/24 HRA and Capital budgets.

10. Legal Implications

Drafted by: Ian Hunt Interim Deputy Borough Solicitor

- 10.1 The Council has a duty as landlord and employer to ensure appropriate measures for the management and control of fire safety and associated risk of fire. The report sets out the basis of the duty. In determining a policy the council has the right to consider the risk profile of its stock and residents in order to produce a balanced response which considers the risk and mitigation. The council having adopted a framework will have to follow this approach unless it determines the policy is to be deviated from with the appropriate reasoning set out in the subsequent decision.

11. Human Resource Implications

- 11.1. There are no HR implications from this report.

12. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1. There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications in this report. Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary across the council to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. This policy is aimed at staff and contractors and does not require a full EqIA.

13. Climate Change/ Sustainability Implications

- 13.1. There are no direct negative Climate change/ sustainability implications in this report.

14. Summary of Options

- 14.1. To adopt this policy with immediate effect.

14.2. To do nothing and be at risk of breaching our statutory and regulatory obligations as a landlord, putting tenants health and lives at risk.

15. Conclusion

The policy has been updated to reflect new requirements and maintain the safety of tenants and homes.

16. Background Papers

There are no background papers, as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972).

Annexes:

Annexe 1 – Housing Service Fire Safety Policy

Please ensure the following service areas have signed off your report. Please complete this box, and do not delete.

Service	Sign off date
Finance / S.151 Officer	19/06/2023
Legal / Governance	22/06/2023
HR	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Lead Councillor	
CMB	27/06/2023
Executive Briefing/Liaison	11/07/2023
Committee Services	