



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22 January 2024

Report of: Councillor Phil Dilks
Cabinet Member for Housing and
Planning

Total Housing Compliance Policy

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To inform the Committee of the new Total Housing Compliance Policy which sets a framework for the monitoring of key consumer standards. To advise members on key responsibilities and the process of achieving compliance with the standards and regulations.

Recommendations

That the Committee:

- 1. Comment on the content of the Policy and recommend its approval to Cabinet.**
- 2. Recommend the scrutiny of the procedures and management plans associated with the Total Housing Compliance Policy as part of its ongoing work programme.**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing that meets the needs of all residents
Which wards are impacted?	All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 There is provision in both the HRA revenue and capital approved budgets for compliance related expenditure to ensure that the stock meets current regulatory standards.
- 1.2 Any financial implications of the policy will be contained within the existing budget.

Completed by: Alison Hall-Wright, Deputy Director (Finance and ICT) and Deputy S151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.3 A failure to effectively repair and maintain properties can be subject to legal challenge with a resulting negative impact upon the finances, reputation and image of the Council, leading in turn to a loss of public confidence.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.4 The Audit carried out in July 2023 to ratify the work undertaken by the Council facilitate the removal of the Regulatory Notice contained recommendations regarding the implementation of key policies relating to compliance activity.
- 1.5 This Policy addresses all recommendations for the creation of new, and for the review of existing policies.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.6 The recording of compliance data and the production of performance reports is reliant on the development and maintenance of both the Integrated Housing Management System and Asset Management Data Systems.

Completed by: Phil Swinton,

Human Resources

- 1.7 The Council needs to ensure that adequate resources and its staffing levels are sufficient to implement the Council's policy effectively.

Completed by: Jane Jenkinson, Senior HR Officer

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1 The Total Housing Compliance Policy aims to define, at a strategic level, the intent and arrangements for ensuring that each of the key risks meet the required standards.
- 2.2 Previous policy and guidance have taken the form of a series of management plans and protocols. The Total Housing Compliance Policy has incorporated these elements into a transparent policy framework, complemented by current legislation and best practice. It is proposed that these be submitted for review by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee every two years.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1 The Total Housing Compliance Policy is a critical policy which sets the intent and delivery framework for the Council to meet the legislative and regulatory requirements required by the Social Housing Regulator.

- 3.2 The Policy framework is supported by a set of detailed management plans and protocols which set out how each of the areas will be managed and who is responsible for elements of delivery.
- 3.3 Access to property to carry out essential maintenance and health and safety checks is a fundamental aspect of achieving compliance in the Council's activities. The Policy provides a clear path of managing access and the legal implications where the Council is not able to secure this.
- 3.4 The process the Council will follow is attached as an appendix to the Policy and applies to all elements of compliance activity where access to tenanted properties is required.
- 3.5 Compliance Policy can be delivered through the creation of individual Policies covering each area of risk.
- 3.6 Some of the risk areas, for example asbestos, consist of very detailed documents covering process and guidance for staff. Many details which cover access procedures are duplicated in each process and there is risk that Policies may not be updated consistently.
- 3.7 The creation of the Total Housing Compliance Policy aims to combine the common elements of Policy and provide strategic direction for each of the risks, ensuring that all risks are considered and updated with a consistent approach.
- 3.8 The procedural and working documents are key to managing compliance and they are required to be detailed to cover all aspects of managing the key risks. These documents form the basis on which Officers manage the service. It is proposed to bring these detailed documents individually to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the ongoing work plan.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1 Do nothing.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1 The clarity provided by The Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, enables staff working in the service to make operational decisions efficiently and consistently. This in turn provides greater transparency and understanding for tenants of the standards and activities the repairs and maintenance service will deliver.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken within the wider teams in the Housing Directorate.
- 6.2 Officers who are required to deliver services which impact this Policy have contributed to the technical aspects of the document.

7. Appendices

- 7.1 List any Appendices.
 - 1. Total Housing Compliance Policy
 - 2. Access Procedure
 - 3. Equality Impact Assessment