



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**



## Cabinet

15 June 2021

**Report of:** Councillor Robert Reid

Cabinet Member for Housing and Property

# Adoption of a Housing Service Fire Safety Management Plan 2021-2024

As a social landlord, South Kesteven District Council has statutory and regulatory requirements in relation to managing its housing stock safely. The adoption of a Fire Safety Management Plan (FSMP) will provide clarity to people living in Council-owned homes and ensure South Kesteven District Council complies with statutory fire safety obligations in relation to the housing stock it has landlord responsibility for.

### Report Author

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Corporate Priority:	Decision type:	Wards:
Housing that meets the needs of all residents	Key	All Wards

<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Chris Stratford, Interim Assistant Director for Housing	2 June 2021
<b>Approved by:</b>	Andrew Cotton, Director for Housing and Property	2 June 2021
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Councillor Robert Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property	7 June 2021

### Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s)

1. That Cabinet notes the content of the report, and the Council's statutory and regulatory obligations as detailed in the Fire Safety Management Plan.
2. That Cabinet approves the Fire Safety Management Plan 2021-2024.
3. That Cabinet requires and delegates to the Director of Housing and Property:

- **To undertake a detailed review of the Fire Safety Management Plan on at least an annual basis;**
- **To make minor amendments to the Plan as needed by changes to legislation or regulation; and**
- **To provide regular reports on the implementation of the Fire Safety Management Plan to the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee through the Council's usual governance arrangements.**

## 1.0 The Background to the Report

- 1.1 South Kesteven District Council takes its health and safety responsibilities as a social landlord seriously. Following the tragic events at Grenfell Tower in 2017, there has been an increased focus on fire safety, with the Government reforming building and fire safety regulations to ensure that such a tragedy can never happen again. As such, fire safety continues to be a clear priority for the Council to ensure that people living in Council-owned homes remain as safe as possible.
- 1.2 The attached Fire Safety Management Plan (FSMP) outlines the Council's arrangements for implementing, controlling, monitoring, and reviewing fire safety standards, as well as ensuring that the necessary standards are maintained. It brings together existing good practice from within the Council and provides clear direction to deliver continuous improvement around the principles of "plan, do, check and act".
- 1.3 The FSMP will apply to single household properties, houses in multiple occupation, purpose-built flats, buildings converted into self-contained flats, and sheltered housing accommodation where personal care is not provided. As such, it takes into account the characteristics of the Council's housing stock and is sensitive to the needs of the residents of the Council's properties when considering fire safety.
- 1.4 It may be helpful to provide a brief summary of the Fire Safety Management Plan:

Section	Comment
Purpose	Provides a clear summary of the scope and purpose of the Plan
Fire Safety Management Structure	Confirms the governance arrangements in relation to Fire Safety in the Council's housing stock
Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs)	Confirms the importance of regular, detailed FRAs to minimise risk
Responsible Persons	Gives clarity to the responsibilities of key Council Officers
FRA responsibilities, processes, timescales, and audit	Confirms process and management of FRAs and actions that arise, record keeping and sample testing for quality control
Specific building types and systems	The plan confirms the Council's approach to specific technical aspects of property construction, including balconies and external wall insulation
Evacuation Policy	Confirms a "case-by-case" approach based on property types and the risks associated to residents
Residents of sheltered housing or with sight, hearing or mobility issues	The Plan confirms active scenario planning to support the safety of residents of the Council's sheltered schemes and support given to residents where required
Staff training	Confirms the requirement for relevant Council Officers to undergo regular training on fire safety

- 1.5 The plan is complemented and linked to the introduction of the new compliance system data management system (Propeller) which will enable the Council to monitor and control compliance needs and requirements and ensure that the key areas of the plan are delivered, and all works and actions arising from Fire Risk Assessment reports are completed within target date.

## **2.0 Consultation and Feedback Received, Including Overview and Scrutiny**

- 2.1 The FSMP has been drafted in accordance with latest statutory & regulatory requirements and best practice recommendations. In addition to consultation with Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service, consultation has been undertaken with various internal stakeholders, including Technical Services, Housing Management Services, the Council's Health and Safety Officer and the internal Council Compliance Group.
- 2.2 The Fire Safety Management Plan was considered by the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 29 April 2021 and, following discussion, the Committee supported the adoption of the Plan.
- 2.3 Due to the Government's ongoing reform of building and fire safety, the plan will be kept under constant review to ensure that SKDC remain compliant with any changes in statutory or regulatory requirements, or recommendations made. It is proposed the policy document is rigorously reviewed every 12 months and that this review and any recommendations for adjustments be considered and approved initially through the Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **3.0 Available Options Considered**

- 3.1 There were two options that can be considered:
  - 3.1.1 **Option 1** - Do nothing. This would mean leaving current arrangements in place and carrying on in the same way with no formally adopted FSMP in place. This is not advised as the Council should be able to demonstrate that it has an adequate plan in place, and that members can demonstrate that they have carefully considered the necessary technical and regulatory impacts in approving and adopting the necessary policy arrangements.
  - 3.1.2 **Option 2** - Approve and implement the FSMP and keep it under review. The main benefits of this option is that the FSMP will provide clear guidance on the Council's arrangements for implementing, controlling, monitoring, and reviewing fire safety standards, as well as ensuring that the standards are maintained, and residents are safe in their homes. The introduction of the new propeller Compliance system to manage our compliance processes will further enhance and cement the arrangements to manage fire safety activities.

## **4.0 Preferred Option**

Option 2 is the preferred option due to the benefits identified and especially ensuring compliance with current fire safety regulations and good practice.

## **5.0 Reasons for the Recommendation (s)**

- 5.1 The plan provides clear guidance on fire safety so that the Council's tenants, leaseholders and their households remain as safe as possible in their homes whilst significantly reducing the risk of the Council failing to meet its fire safety statutory and regulatory obligations.

## **6.0 Next Steps – Communication and Implementation of the Decision**

- 6.1 Communicate the details and relevance of the adopted plan to the necessary members of staff and to identify the necessary training needs and implement the necessary training plans to ensure the good practice and policy is fully implemented.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

7.1 The financial implications associated with the adoption of the proposed Plan are included in the 2021/22 HRA revenue and capital budgets. As further regulatory requirements emerge in relation to the management of fire safety within buildings there will be a need to adjust the plan, and where necessary amend the budgets and the HRA business plan for any significant financial implications identified.

**Financial Implications reviewed by: Richard Wyles, Interim Director of Finance**

## **8.0 Legal and Governance Implications**

8.1 The plan is being proposed to ensure good practice, statutory, and regulatory compliance is achieved and managed, as necessary. By reviewing the plan and taking account of any emerging amendments to the legal and regulatory framework will ensure that the necessary policy adjustments are made in a timely manner.

**Legal Implications reviewed by: Mandy Braithwaite, Legal Executive**

## **9.0 Equality and Safeguarding Implications**

9.1 The Fire Safety Management plan will have a positive impact in terms of equality and safeguarding issues by:

- (a) ensuring that all sheltered tenants and those living with communal facilities are aware of an alarm activation and what to do in the event of a fire,
- (b) introduce a stay put policies on a per scheme basis in relevant properties to ensure all residents irrespective of their needs and circumstances and are unable to evacuate in the event of a fire, can stay put and remain safe,
- (c) provides a requirement for information on vulnerability to be updated and made available to Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue Service in the event of a fire in accordance with the fire authorities requirements.

## **10.0 Risk and Mitigation**

10.1 The Council's non-compliance risk will be reduced through the implementation and adoption of the plan. This is very relevant at present given the current involvement of the Regulator, and the current building and fire safety reviews being undertaken by the Government.

## **11.0 Community Safety Implications**

11.1 There are no additional community safety implications. The plan is designed to minimise and mitigate risk as far as possible.

## **12.0 How will the recommendations support South Kesteven District Council's declaration of a climate emergency?**

12.1 A fire not only impacts on people and property but also the environment. The main environmental impacts of a fire are:

- (a) air pollution from smoke,
- (b) water pollution and ozone impact from extinguishing agents, accumulatively contribute to global warming.

12.2 In order to minimise any environmental impact, the FSMP contains measures to reduce the likelihood of a fire breaking out and limit the spread of a fire should it occur.

### **13.0 Other Implications (where significant)**

13.1 None

### **14.0 Background Papers**

14.1 None

### **15.0 Appendices**

15.1 Appendix 1 – The Fire Safety Management Plan 2021-2024

<b>Report Timeline:</b>	Date of Publication on Forward Plan (if required)	1 February 2021
	Previously Considered by: Rural and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee	29 April 2021
	Final Decision date	15 June 2021