



**SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

# Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 20 January 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran  
Cabinet Member for Housing

## Fire Compartmentation works update

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

To provide an update on the program of fire compartmentation work within Council's housing stock

### Recommendations

**The Committee is recommended to:**

- 1. Note the information in the report**
- 2. Receive biannual progress updates**

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Housing
Which wards are impacted?	(All Wards);

## **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 The financial considerations arising from compliance requirements have been included in the HRA budgets. Failure to maintain high standards of compliance could lead to an increased risk of safety and financial implications.

*Completed by: Paul Sutton Interim Head of Finance (Deputy s151)*

### ***Legal and Governance***

- 1.2 This compliance update provides Members with an opportunity to monitor progress in a significant compliance project. Legal implications for non-compliance are incorporated within the risk ratings.

*Completed by: Graham Watts, Monitoring Officer*

### ***Health and Safety***

- 1.3 There are legal requirements under the Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 and the Building Safety Act 2022 in relation to fire safety which the Council must meet. The project identified in this report will ensure the Council meets its legal obligations and also its moral obligations under Safety legislation.

*Completed by: Phil Swinton, Health, Safety, Compliance and Emergency Planning Manager*

## **2. Background to the Report**

- 2.1. This report provides the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update regarding the Fire Compartmentation works which the Compliance Team are in the process of completing.
- 2.2. In 2022 the Compliance Team were tasked with the review of Fire Safety provision and to implement the necessary actions to improve fire safety where gaps were identified. The initial step was to commission new fire risk assessments (FRA's) for every scheme and block which contained a communal area/shared communal space, as required by law. This required 147 new reports to be completed and reviewed, along with a review of all previous reports and fire related information.
- 2.3. Following this review the Compliance Team identified the need for more detailed investigations to be undertaken. Whilst legal compliance was present, the information and evidence provided by the previous FRA's did not identify all the fire safety improvement options available.
- 2.4. The second phase of this project was to commission the completion of both Fire Prioritisation Tool reports and a Fire Compartmentation survey for each of the blocks to identify the fire safety improvement options.
- 2.5. The Prioritisation Tool reports are designed to supplement the FRA process and provide more detailed information regarding risk which feeds into the Fire Strategy. These are not mandatory however are acknowledged as best practice by Central Government and the National Fire Chiefs Council.
- 2.6. Fire Compartmentation surveys provide information regarding the condition of compartments in buildings including walls, flooring and cavity barriers. There are no specific regulations concerning compartmentation but under the Building Safety Act 2022 there is a requirement for the maintenance and provision of fire compartmentation.
- 2.7. Compartmentation is the cornerstone of a successful passive Fire Protection Strategy. Dividing buildings into fire-resistant compartments helps suppress the spread of fire, should one occur. Compartmentation strategies are designed around safety of life requirements. They protect shared spaces, means of escape and delay/prevent the spread of fire throughout.
- 2.8. Following completion of the Compartmentation surveys, Global HSE were procured by the Council in September 2023 to undertake the identified fire safety improvement works.
- 2.9. The works are being completed on a risk-based approach and those buildings with residents which could be classified as more vulnerable/buildings requiring more

work have been prioritised and split into 3 phases. Phase 1 of the Fire Compartmentation project includes 15 schemes which are detailed in Appendix 1. Appendix 1 also provides details of the buildings included in phases 2 and 3 and information regarding the progress of the scheme.

- 2.10. The works being undertaken include: Replacement of fire doors, provision of fire breaks and fire curtains in roof voids, sealing gaps/ voids in communal spaces.
- 2.11. The compartmentation works completed to date within the roof voids have ensured sufficient flat separation and travel distances for fire have been achieved throughout. Storage cupboards and communal areas have also been sealed where improvement works were identified.
- 2.12. To date 471 fire doors have been replaced, 40 fire curtains have been fitted in ceiling breaks and individual flats across all 15 sites have also been surveyed to identify any required fire safety improvement works..
- 2.13. 11 of the first 15 sites have been completed, works are underway at the remaining 4 sites.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. This report is provided for information and Members are asked to note the progress made to date on the Fire Compartmentation works.
- 3.2. The Council meet Fire Safety compliance within every scheme and block which contains a communal area/shared communal space. The works being undertaken are to enhance fire safety.

### **4. Reason for the Recommendations**

- 4.1 This report is provided for information to ensure that Members are kept updated regarding the Fire Compartmentation works the Council are completing.

### **5. Appendices**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 - List of Schemes and status of works