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SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 17 March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran
Cabinet Member for Housing

Draft Mobility Vehicle Policy

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To present the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Note the contents of the report and the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy**
- 2. Recommend the approval of the draft Mobility Vehicle Policy to Cabinet**

Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	N
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 If the policy is agreed, any fees and charges as a consequence will need to be calculated and approved.

Completed by: David Scott – Assistant Director of Finance (deputy s151 officer)

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no significant legal or governance implications arising from this report which are not already referenced elsewhere in the report, particularly in relation to health and safety and equalities, diversity and inclusion.

Completed by: Graham Watts (Monitoring Officer)

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 The Council must ensure appropriate measures are in place to reduce the risk of mobility vehicle fires which may have a significant impact on life and buildings. The Council would need to evidence these measures should an incident occur. The implementation of a Mobility Vehicle Policy is essential to reduce the risk of fire and it is essential that the owners of mobility vehicles have the appropriate insurance in place should a fire occur.

Completed by: Tracey Elliott, Governance & Risk Officer

Health and Safety

- 1.4 The Regulatory Reform Fire Safety Order 2005 places a number of duties on the authority including, General fire safety precautions, implementing necessary preventative and protective measures and monitoring for effectiveness. In order to comply with this and reduce the risk of fire, the Council must have an effective strategy to manage and control the use of, and charging of Mobility vehicles. There has been a rise in the number of e vehicle and scooter fires and without control they pose a risk to building fire safety.

Completed by: Philip Swinton Health ,Safety and Compliance Manager

Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.5 Mobility Scooters are a life-line amongst people with limited ambulatory ability. They should, therefore, be seen as a necessary tool to independent living for people of all ages who live their life with disability. The provision of storage and charging space for these vehicles needs, wherever practicably possible, to be provided for the Council's tenants and any alterations to housing stock to accommodate the needs of users of mobility scooters must be considered as reasonable adjustments (again where practicably possible) as part of the Council's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Completed by: Carol Drury, Community Engagement Manager

Safeguarding

- 1.6 South Kesteven District Council is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and/or young people and adults with care and support needs within the activities we undertake. Section 6 of this policy clearly references our Safeguarding Policy to highlight our role and responsibilities.

Completed by: Sarah McQueen, Head of Housing and Safeguarding Lead for SKDC.

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 requires that fire risks in communal areas are assessed and actions taken to reduce these risks. In residential buildings, mobility scooters and other battery operated vehicles, pose a fire risk when stored in communal areas and fire escape routes, to residents, Council employees, contractors, visitors and firefighters.
- 2.2. A review of the mobility scooter storage facilities at the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes has established:
- That scooters are being stored and charged inside schemes or externally and adjacent to buildings, potentially causing unacceptable fire and health and safety risks.
 - Residents are using the Council's electricity supply, which is being consumed at no additional cost to the owner of the scooter.
 - Scooters are being stored in locations which are obstructing fire escape routes.
 - Scooters are being charged outside via an extension lead through the window of resident accommodation, which is also a recognised fire risk.

2.3. The Council has produced a draft Mobility Vehicle Policy attached at Appendix 1 which clearly sets for Council tenants and Leaseholders of both Sheltered and General Needs Housing:

- The process to seek permission for a scooter.
- Storage and charging of scooters within Council Premises
- The use of scooters within Council Premises
- The ongoing responsibilities of scooter owners.
- Scenarios where permission for a scooter will be refused.
- The impact of failing to comply with the policy.

2.4 Due to the constraints with space and charging points there is a maximum capacity for the storage of scooters at Sheltered Housing Schemes. The Council's Mobility Scooter Group which is attended by relevant Council Officers including the Fire Compliance Officer have reviewed the National Fire Chief Council guidelines and have concluded that, based on 30-minute fire doors, a maximum of 3 mobility scooters should be allowed in a sheltered housing scheme at any one time. The mobility vehicles can only be stored and charged in designated facilities and on the ground floor only.

3. Key Considerations

3.1 Allocation of spaces will be made based upon residents' individual needs. Where adequate storage facilities do not exist, a tenant/leaseholder may seek permission to make alterations to the property. For example, for the provision of storage facilities, ramp, access path or hard standing. The Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations.

3.2 A review of the number of mobility scooters at the Council's Sheltered Housing Schemes was undertaken during October 2024 and it is projected that the number of scooters and other battery-operated vehicles such as electric wheelchairs will increase due to age demographic of tenants.

3.3 The Council is reviewing future storage options to establish how this increased demand could be met going forwards. For example, the use of storage 'pods' or underutilised garages sites.

4. Other Options Considered

4.1 The Council could choose to not implement the Mobility Vehicle Policy but the implication of this is continued fire, safeguarding and health and safety risks.

4.2 The Council could choose to implement the policy but not review alternative storage and charging facility options. The implication of this would be reliance upon indoor designated storage and charging facilities at the sheltered housing

schemes, which are insufficient for the number of mobility scooters at some schemes.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The recommended approach ensures that the Council complies with legislation regarding fire, health and safety risks and provides a clear policy framework.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. A draft Mobility Scooter Policy was first developed in 2021, and widespread consultation was undertaken. The report dated November 2021 can be found at Appendix 2. Although the findings and conclusions of this consultation are still relevant as the main issues remain the Council will repeat this consultation to ensure that the views of current tenants are taken into consideration.
- 6.2. Tenants in both sheltered housing schemes and general needs housing were asked for their views.
- 6.3. The main concern raised by tenants was that without adequate storage and charging facilities tenants would lose their independence and become housebound.

7. Appendices

- 7.1. Appendix 1 – Draft Mobility Vehicle Policy
- 7.2. Appendix 2 – Consultation Report
- 7.3. Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment