



SOUTH  
KESTEVEN  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL

# Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

24<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Report of Councillor Virginia Moran

## Mobility Vehicle Policy

### Report Author

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### Purpose of Report

This policy is for the management of the safe storage and charging of mobility scooters and other battery powered vehicles (such as electric wheelchairs, bikes and scooters) and ensure permission is sought by tenants and leaseholders to have a mobility scooter and other battery powered vehicles.

### Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the policy
2. Recommend to Cabinet for approval

### Decision Information

Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities? (delete as appropriate)	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 Consult with Richard Wyles or Paul Sutton (Do not delete)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

### ***Procurement***

1.2 Consult with Helen Baldwin (delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

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

1.3 Consult with Graham Watts, Mandy Braithwaite or James Welbourn (Do not delete)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

### ***Risk and Mitigation***

1.4 Consult with Tracey Elliott (Delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

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

1.5 Consult with Phil Swinton (Delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

### ***Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion***

1.6 Consult with Carol Drury (Delete if not applicable)

*Reminder - Is an Equality Impact Assessment required?*

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

## **Safeguarding**

1.7 Consult with Sarah McQueen (Delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

## **Human Resources**

1.8 Consult with Fran Beckitt (Delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

## **Community Safety**

1.9 Consult with Ayeisha Kirkham (Delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

## **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

1.10 Consult with Fran Beckitt (Delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

## **Climate Change**

1.11 Consult with Serena Brown (Delete if not applicable)

*Completed by: (insert name and job title)*

# **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 sheltered housing schemes across the district has established that many scooters are being stored and charged inside schemes or externally and adjacent to buildings, potentially causing unacceptable fire and health and safety risks. The residents are using the Council's electricity supply (which is being consumed at no additional charge to the owner of the scooter). In addition, scooters are also being stored in locations which

are obstructing fire escape routes. Finally, officers report that some 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 policy (Appendix 1) sets out clearly to both Council tenants and leaseholders of both sheltered and general needs housing, the responsibilities they have as owners of the scooters. This is in regard to the storage and charging of these scooters within Council premises, and the requirement for written permission to be granted (by way of a new Mobility Vehicle Registration Scheme) by the Council for both existing owners of vehicles and those intending to acquire one.
- 2.4. The Mobility Vehicle Registration Scheme will ensure that owners of the vehicles have somewhere to safely store and charge the vehicle; that adequate insurance is in place; the owner commits to the terms and conditions of the policy and that the vehicles have regular servicing and Portable Appliance Tests (PATs) to ensure they are safe. An assessment of the property will be undertaken before permission is granted. The number of vehicles on any one site will be managed, so as not to compromise the safety of residents or anyone else visiting the site.
- 2.5. An application form for the Mobility Vehicle Registration Scheme will be made available to tenants/leaseholders. Permission will be refused where, for example, there is no safe storage arrangement in the tenant/leaseholder's home and no alternative safe storage and charging space can be provided. Permission will also be refused where a major physical alteration to the premises is required, which the Council believes to be unreasonable in terms of the structural limitations of the building(s) and/ or disruption to other service users.
- 2.6. At the sheltered housing schemes, there is a maximum capacity for the storage of vehicles due to constraints of space available for storage provision and charging points. A mobility scooter working group, attended by relevant officers such as the Health and Safety Manager; the Council's Fire Compliance Officer; Sheltered Housing Manager and Tenancy Services Manager collectively think the National Fire Chief Council guidelines should be used and 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.
- 2.7. 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.

- 2.8. Where there is not suitable storage and charging facilities, consideration to move a resident to a ground floor flat within a sheltered housing scheme or to another scheme or alternative accommodation will be considered, if a tenant wishes to do this.
- 2.9. As mobility scooters and other battery powered vehicles can pose a risk to life, the policy states how the Council reserves the right to withdraw permission to store a mobility scooter or any other battery operated vehicles at any time if any tenant/leaseholder does not adhere to this policy. They will be asked to remove it immediately, and potentially, permanently.
- 2.10. The policy also states how failure to comply with the policy is also a breach of the tenancy/lease agreement and enforcement action will be taken to remove the mobility vehicle.
- 2.11. A recent 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 mobility scooters and other battery operated vehicles such as electric wheelchairs, bikes and scooters will increase due to the increasing popularity of them.
- 2.12. To meet this demand, the use of storage 'pods' have been looked into as a solution. The installation of pods and a 'hub' to accommodate the pods would initially be where there are currently the most amount of mobility vehicles in use at sheltered housing schemes.
- 2.13. These have been identified by the working group as being Hilary Close, Emlyn Gardens and Witham Place. A procurement exercise would need to take place to determine the cost.
- 2.14. Thereafter, exact appropriate locations will be decided upon by the relevant officers within the housing and project directorate. A feasibility exercise will identify the most practical and cost-effective options.
- 2.15. In addition, garages sites could be converted but this will need to be considered via a full feasibility exercise.

### **3. Key Considerations**

- 3.1. Implement this policy, assign and implement designated storage and charging facilities at the sheltered housing schemes and commence a Mobility Scooter/Battery Operated Vehicle Registration Scheme.

## **4. Other Options Considered**

- 4.1 Option 1 – do nothing, not implement this policy and Mobility Scooter/Battery Operated Vehicle Registration Scheme. The implication of this is continued fire, safeguarding and health and safety risks.
- 4.2 Option 2 – implement this policy but not implement the outside designated storage and charging facilities at the sheltered housing schemes. 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 Mobility Scooter Policy was first developed in 2021 and a widespread consultation took place then. The report, dated November 2021 can be found at Appendix 2. The findings and conclusions of this consultation are still relevant as the main issues remain the same.
- 6.2. Tenants in both sheltered housing schemes and general needs housing were asked for their views. The report outlines further details.
- 6.3. The main concern for those without adequate storage and charging facilities is that without a mobility scooter, they would lose their independence and become housebound.
- 6.4. It is proposed that indoor designated storage and charging facilities are assigned at the sheltered housing schemes and, at some of the schemes, outdoor storage and charging facilities will be implemented. Where adequate facilities do not exist at a general needs Council property, a tenant/leaseholder may seek permission to make alterations to the property and the Council will not unreasonably withhold permission for alterations.
- 6.5. Where storage facilities do not exist and alterations cannot be made at a property, the household will be considered for a transfer to a more suitable property.

## **7. Appendices**

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