

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board 17 September 2012

### Fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats

#### Report of the Housing Estates Manager

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Jean Adkins)

#### 1.0 Executive Summary

Housing Services has carried out a review of its existing fire safety procedures.

This review has led to the formulation of a new draft fire safety policy to ensure the safety of tenants and leaseholders, staff contractors and visitors (see appendix 1).

TSMB are asked to consider and support a recommendation to the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services to approve the new policy.

#### 1. Background

- 1.2 TDBC recognises its responsibility as a landlord to ensure the safety of its tenants and leaseholders, staff, contractors and visitors.
- 1.3 The new draft fire safety policy has been produced in response to the Local Government Group Fire Safety Report published in 2011 and also as a result of recent research undertaken by TDBC, the findings of which formulated a programme of inspections to address health and safety within council properties.
- 1.4 The new draft policy applies to all blocks of flats owned and or managed by TDBC irrespective of tenure.

#### 2.0 Fire Safety Policy for council housing blocks of flats

See appendix 1 for draft Fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats.

#### 3. Finance Comments

The views of the finance team were agreed that resources can be met within existing budget, and this will be monitored on a regular basis.

#### 4. Legal Comments

The view of the legal team is agreed as follows:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 applies.
- Requires Responsible person to complete a Fire Risk Assessment of Common Areas of the building and record and act on the findings to ensure that general fire precautions are provided.

**5. Links to Corporate Aims**

This policy supports the HRA business plan 2012-2042 strategic housing objectives, which reflect the council corporate priorities.

**6. Environmental Implications**

No adverse implications.

**7. Community Safety Implications**

The recommendations from this report will form part of the overall policy on security and safety in TDBC flats.

**8. Equalities Impact**

Equality impact assessment has been undertaken as part of this policy and finding recorded in appendix 2

**9. Risk Management**

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places a duty on TDBC as a landlord to take general fire precautions to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, the safety of the people on the premises and in the immediate vicinity. Therefore, the main fire risks identified in communal areas are:

- Arson;
- Faulty electrical installations;
- Accumulation of flammable rubbish;
- Mobility scooters;
- Smoking
- Failures in construction (fire doors etc).

**10. Partnership Implications**

In order to deliver the policy it is crucial that we will continue to work in partnership with key agencies including the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership.

**11. Tenants Forum comments**

On 12<sup>th</sup> September 2012 TDBC officers met with members of the tenants forum to discuss the draft fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats. And the following comments are observations made:

- the group were keen for all contractors to comply with the policy;
- fire safety awareness training to be extended to include tenant inspectors and key hall users;
- good signage to be installed in all blocks;
- If space permits, TDBC to consider storage facilities.

The tenants forum expressed their support for this policy with the few adjustment, which have been included.

**12. Recommendation**

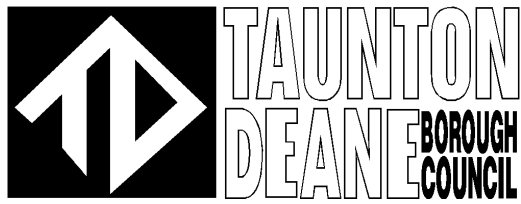
TSMB are asked to;

- Consider and comment on the draft fire safety for blocks of flats,
- support a recommendation for approval of the policy to portfolio holder.

Norah Day - Housing Estates Manager

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# FIRE SAFETY POLICY FOR COUNCIL HOUSING BLOCKS OF FLATS

SEPTEMBER 2012

<b>Policy Title:</b>	Fire Policy for Council Housing Blocks of Flats
<b>Lead Officers:</b>	
<b>Policy drafted by:</b>	Norah Day – Housing Estates Manager
<b>Date Agreed by Board:</b>	
<b>Date Equality Impact Assessment completed:</b>	
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	



## **Fire safety policy for council housing blocks of flats**

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) Housing Services aims to provide a safe environment in which tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff are assured that the risk of injury or damages to their homes caused by fire is minimised.

In aiming to deliver this environment, TDBC as a general principle, will seek to identify, assess and reduce risks to ensure compliance with Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

To encourage the assurance and confidence of our tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff regular fire safety awareness information will be made available. This will include ensuring that all are aware of their own responsibilities to themselves and towards others to ensure a safe environment.

TDBC will foster and maintain good working relationships with partner services to ensure the ongoing safety of tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff and a key relationship will be with the Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service.

In discharging TDBC's responsibilities to fire safety, TDBC will:-

- Carry out fire risk assessments in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005;
- Undertake fire risk audits with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service;
- Provide relevant employees, and relevant tenants, with fire safety training;
- Maintain and improve fire safety as required through the recommendations of the fire risk assessments and fire audits;
- Carry out joint training exercises with Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Service and other agencies as necessary to ensure readiness for emergencies;
- Carry out all necessary servicing to ensure that fire prevention equipment is in full operation at all times; and
- Consider fire safety in all improvement programmes carried out by TDBC.
- All contractors and sub-contractors to be compliant the TDBC housing service fire safety policy.

## Equality Impact Assessment – pro-forma

<b>Responsible person</b>	<i>Norah Day</i>	<b>Job Title</b> Housing Estates Manager
<b>Why are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment? (Please mark as appropriate)</b>	Proposed new policy/service	√
	Change to Policy/service	
	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable	
<b>What are you completing the Equality Impact Assessment on (which, service, MTFP proposal)</b>	<b>Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services Fire Safety Policy 2012</b>	
<b>Section One – Scope of the assessment</b>		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service?	<i>Aims to provide a safe environment in which tenants and leaseholders, contractors, visitors and staff are assured that the risk of injury or damage to their homes caused by fire are minimised.</i>	
Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service?	<i>Fire Safety Policy is targeted at all the protected groups including: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex, and Sexual Orientation; Marriage and civil partnerships.</i>	
What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used  The information can be found on....	<p>Data: Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety ) Order 2005</p> <p>Engagement: Consultation with a diverse group of tenants, staff, , senior managers within the housing services carried out since January 2012.</p>	
<b>Section two – Conclusion drawn</b> about the impact of service/policy/function/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality		
Consultation with tenants and officers concludes that it does not believe that any specific equalities impacts will arise.		

<b>I have concluded that there is/should be:</b>	
No major change - no adverse equality impact identified	√
Adjust the policy/decision/service	
Continue with the policy/decision/service	
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service	
Reasons and documentation to support conclusions <i>Consultation with tenants on 12 September 2012.</i>	
<b>Section four – Implementation – timescale for implementation</b>	
TSMB report 24 September 2012.	
<b>Section Five – Sign off</b>	
Responsible officer Norah Day Date September 2012	Management Team Housing estates Date
<b>Section six – Publication and monitoring</b>	
Published on	
Next review date  September 2015	Date logged on Covalent

## Action Planning

The table should be completed with all actions identified to mitigate the effects concluded.

Actions table						
Service area				Date		
Identified issue drawn from your conclusions	Actions needed	Who is responsible?	By when?	How will this be monitored?	Expected outcomes from carrying out actions	