

# **FOR PUBLICATION**

## **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS IN COMMUNAL AREAS – COUNCIL HOUSING (H000)**

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MEETING: 1. CABINET  
2. EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HOUSING

DATE: 1. 7<sup>th</sup> JULY 2014  
2. 27<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2014

REPORT BY: HOUSING SERVICE MANAGER – BUSINESS  
PLANNING AND STRATEGY

WARD: ALL

AREA ASSEMBLY: ALL

KEY DECISION REFERENCE  
(IF APPLICABLE): 416

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FOR PUBLICATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR PUBLIC REPORTS:

TITLE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Housing Fire Risk Assessment Report – Savills 2013/14</li><li>• Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005</li></ul>	LOCATION:	Business Planning and Strategy – Housing Services
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### 1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To advise Members of the content of the Savills Fire Risk Assessment Report for each of the Council's general needs blocks of residential flats, sheltered housing schemes and common rooms.

1.2 To advise Members of the requirement for remedial works which need to be carried out to ensure adequate fire safety within the communal areas of the Council's housing stock.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Members note the Fire Risk Assessment Report.

2.2 That Members authorise the Business Planning and Strategy Manager to action the remedial works that require attention in the report.

2.3 That the costs associated with the remedial works be met from the 2014/15 Housing Capital Programme.

2.4 That a further report be brought to Members updating the Housing Service Fire Management Policy and Procedures.

## 3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) introduced duties for landlords in relation to fire safety in the common areas of flats, maisonettes and sheltered accommodation in which personal care is not provided. These duties include the carrying out of a Fire Risk Assessment and taking specific action to minimise the risk of fire in the common parts. Whilst the FSO requirements only apply to the common parts of buildings, in practice the landlord needs to take into account the entire premises, including, to some extent, the units of accommodation themselves.

3.2 A Fire Risk Assessment is an organised and methodical look at the premises, the activities carried out there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises. The aims of a Fire Risk Assessment are to identify the fire hazards, to reduce the risk of those hazards potentially causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable and to decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the premises if a fire does start.

3.3 Housing Services, working with Savills, a firm of Chartered Surveyors with expertise in carrying out Fire Risk Assessments previously carried out Fire Risk Assessments in 2010 on all of its general needs blocks of flats and sheltered housing schemes. However these were ready for replacement following an extensive programme of remedial work in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

3.4 On the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013 Members approved the re-appointment of Savills to review these surveys on the Council's behalf.

## 4.0 **FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS**

- 4.1 The Fire Risk Assessments carried out by Savills between October 2013 and December 2013, included a comprehensive review of the previous fire risk assessments, the identification of any new or additional hazards, determination of risk and prioritisation of remedial work. It involved the assessment of the Council's entire residential stock with common parts and in total 350 fire risk assessments were completed in general needs blocks, 8 in sheltered housing schemes and 6 in common rooms. All common parts were assessed
- 4.2 As part of the fire risk assessment process, approximately 5% of the individual dwellings were accessed to properly assess the condition of fire doors and side panels, self closing devices and compartmentation.
- 4.3 Premises were sub-divided into two categories based on the level of assumed risk:

### **Higher Risk Premises**

**Sheltered Housing:** regarded as the highest risk premises type for several reasons; the elderly nature (and hence lessened awareness and mobility) of the occupants, the extent of communal areas in such premises and the open way in which the occupants interact with one another. Generally, a scheme manager is onsite office hours Monday to Friday in these premises (with mobile provision available on-call during out of hours periods).

### **Lower Risk Premises (Residential and Non Residential)**

**Residential (General Needs):** normal occupancy characteristics in residential buildings ranging mainly from 2 to 5 storeys.

**Non Residential (Common Rooms):** low rise, simple buildings, used as assembly places for local communities.

- 4.4 The actions from the fire risk assessments have been categorised into a) hard 'remedial' works and b) management / procedural issues. Where remedial work is necessary, the extent and nature of the works has been listed in Savills Report attached at **Appendix 1** and prioritised. Where management issues have been identified, recommendations for the management of fire safety, including policies and procedures are also included in Savills report.

The priorities for the higher risk premises (sheltered schemes) and common rooms are defined as:

- H – Recommendations to be completed within 3 months
- M – Recommendations to be completed within 9 months
- L – Recommendations to be completed within 19 months
- R – Recommendations deemed to be good practice

The priorities for the lower risk premises (general needs) are defined as:

- A – Recommendation to be carried out as soon as possible
- B – Recommendation to be completed within 1 year
- C – Recommendation to be completed within 2 years
- D – Recommendation deemed to be good practice and to be considered in future works programmes.
- M – Management of procedural recommendations, possibly requiring a review of policies and procedures

## 5.0 **FINDINGS**

- 5.1 It was found that since the previous fire risk assessments were carried out in 2010, a huge amount of remedial work has been completed and this is clearly noticeable on site.
- 5.2 Savills have commented that the schemes and blocks of flats in Chesterfield Borough Council's ownership and management are regarded as much safer than previously. In comparison against similar organisations for whom they complete fire risk assessments for, the current condition of the stock could be regarded as being in the top 25% nationally.
- 5.3 The main issues listed below are a summary of the main findings of the survey. They are covered in detail in Appendix 1 of Savills report, along with appropriate recommendations for remediation.

## 6.0 **IMMEDIATE ACTIONS**

- 6.1 It is possible to sub divide the recommendations to Management / Procedural and Remedial.
- 6.2 The management or procedural issues relate mainly to fire safety facilities or systems, ineffective procedures, communication and the recording of information. Remedial works are premise specific and relate to the work that is necessary onsite to particular premises.
- 6.3 It is recommended that all of the remedial works are actioned immediately, irrespective of the priority given by Savills and that the management and procedural issues are dealt with in a further report to Members. This will give Officers time to review and assess current work practices and make

recommendations as to how the requirements of the Risk Assessment Report can be met.

## 7.0 **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 Savills have identified that in order to address all of the remedial work recommendations in both the general needs flats and sheltered housing schemes it will cost in the region of £232,550.

7.2 These costs will be met from the Housing Revenue Account and a capital budget of £300,000 has already been established for this work within the Housing Capital Programme.

7.3 Remedial works to minimise fire risk will be carried out to all premises in accordance with the Action Plan supplied by Savills, irrespective of the tenant's circumstances. The work will be carried out in the premises with the higher risk first e.g. sheltered housing schemes, 5 storey blocks.

## 8.0 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

<b>Description of the Risk</b>	<b>Likelihood</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Mitigating Action</b>	<b>Resultant Likelihood</b>	<b>Resultant Impact</b>
Enforcement action under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	Medium	High	Implement the actions set out in the Fire Risk Assessment and carry out annual reviews	Low	Low
Fire Enforcement Notices being served on the Council requiring them to carry out immediate remedial work / building closure or legal action resulting in a fine	Medium	High	Implement the actions set out in the Fire Risk Assessment and carry out annual reviews	Low	Low
Fire which injures or kills residents	Medium	High	Implement the actions set out in the Fire Risk Assessment and carry out annual reviews	Low	Low
In the event of a fire resulting in death or injury	Medium	High	Implement the actions set out in the	Low	Low

the HSE could become involved and the provisions of the Corporate Manslaughter Act 2007 could be invoked against			Fire Risk Assessment and carry out annual reviews		
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## 9.0 **EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 The equalities impacts of all the proposals in this report for race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age and religion have been considered and assessed. The purpose of the policy is to minimise the risk of fire and subsequent danger to occupants of all residential premises owned and / or managed by Chesterfield Borough Council. The work schedule will be carried out in the premises with the higher risk first e.g. sheltered housing schemes, 5 storey blocks.

## 10.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 That Members note the Fire Risk Assessment Report.

10.2 That Members authorise the Business Planning and Strategy Manager to action the remedial works that require attention in the report.

10.3 That the costs associated with the remedial works be met from the 2014/15 Housing Capital Programme.

10.4 That a further report be brought to Members updating the Housing Service Fire Management Policy and Procedures.

## 11.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

11.1 To meet our statutory obligations under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

11.2 To contribute to meeting the Council's corporate priority 'To improve the quality of life for local people'.

11.3 To contribute to improved performance against our key performance indicator NI158 (% Decent Council Homes).

**ALISON CRAIG**  
**HOUSING SERVICE MANAGER – BUSINESS PLANNING AND STRATEGY**

You can get more information about this report from Alison Craig on extension 5156 or Paul Stepto on extension 5170.

Officer recommendation supported/not supported/modified as below or Executive Members' recommendation/comments if no Officer recommendation.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. McManus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a circular flourish at the end.

Executive Member

Date

27.06.14

Consultee Executive Member/Support Member comments (if applicable)