

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Housing Scrutiny Panel

Date **22 November 2018**

Report of: **Managing Director of Fareham Housing**

Subject: **UPDATE ON FIRE ISSUES AND PRECAUTIONS**

SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the Panel of progress with the fire issues and precautions in Fareham Housing.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Panel Members consider the contents of the report and make any comments or raise any questions for clarification.

INTRODUCTION

1. On the 17th November 2017 an update was provided to the Housing Policy Development Review Panel on Fire Safety for Fareham Housing Properties.
2. This report provides members with a further update on matters relating to Fire Safety and Precautions.

FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS

3. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 covers the provision of Fire Risk Assessments in England to common parts of flats.
4. Fire Risk Assessments are required to be reviewed regularly. We are looking to carry out an internal review every year with a 5-yearly external review by an independent fire risk assessor. In the 2018 / 2019 financial year we have shifted our focus for the external fire risk assessments to sheltered sites rather than sticking with a rigid timescale. These assessments will include the requirements from recently published fire safety information for this type of property.
5. We are progressing well with the programme of internal reviews. For the external reviews we have now received four reports and other assessments are currently being carried out. We remain on programme to have reviewed all our sites by the end of the financial year. Further information is provided in Appendix A.
6. Both types of assessment will include a desk based review and a site inspection. The results of the assessment will generate actions which are categorised into four priority categories: immediate, within 3 months, within 6 months and at next refurbishment / modernisation. These are allocated within a given timescale. All actions are logged and progress monitored. A follow up site visit will be made within an appropriate timescale to ensure the actions have been completed and any actions that have not been resolved will be escalated.

SMOKE DETECTION ANNUAL TESTING

7. Our Fire Risk Assessor has identified a requirement to carry out an annual test of the smoke detection with our properties in blocks of flats covered by a fire risk assessment. We have implemented a programme for this to be carried out by sheltered housing officers, our gas contractor, Liberty Gas or a responsive repairs operative. For most properties the check will be carried out in conjunction with other work.
8. To ensure the safety of all our tenants we have extended this testing to all homes and not just the properties covered by Fire Risk Assessments using the same resources.
9. In addition, we continue to encourage our tenants and leaseholders to carry out their own regular checks on the smoke detection equipment in their homes.
10. The programme of testing commenced in the summer of 2017 and we have now tested 93% of our tenanted properties.
11. Of the properties not tested the majority are where we have been unable to gain access; in some cases the tenant has declined the installation of equipment, in a few cases we have incomplete data and we have a few properties that are empty.

12. Efforts continue to gain access to all our properties to ensure they have working smoke detection.

ELECTRICAL AND EMERGENCY LIGHTING

13. A programme of electrical testing is in place to ensure that all electrical installations are tested in accordance with regulation and recommendations.
14. All emergency lighting in blocks of flats have a basic monthly test with a yearly programme of 3-hour testing currently being undertaken.

FIRE SAFETY EQUIPMENT

15. We have a programme of testing and maintenance for fire alarm, fire risers, lightning protection and fire shutters in accordance with relevant standards.

FIRE DOORS

16. During the investigations into the Grenfell Tower fire, concern has been expressed into the performance of composite fire doors manufactured by certain companies. Following a supplier review, to the best of our knowledge no doors from the currently identified suppliers have been installed to any of our properties.
17. Any new composite doors are now required to be exposed to additional testing to ensure their performance in the event of a fire. Whilst we await the results of the new testing procedures we are not fitting any of this type of door. When we receive confirmation that these doors have passed the new testing regime and are again available we will look to recommence fitting this type of door.

INFORMATION

18. Early in 2018 a flyer was issued to all leaseholders and tenants with some basic fire safety advice, the importance of smoke detection and advice to keep escape stairs and routes clear of obstructions. It also provided basic instructions of what to do in the event of a fire.
19. It is planned in the first quarter of 2019 to again write to all tenants and leaseholders with further advice on fire safety in the home.

CONCLUSION

20. A group of Housing and Property officers meet on a regular basis to discuss all elements of housing fire safety to ensure we maintain standards and update our procedures as new recommendations are received.
21. We engage the services of an independent fire risk assessor to support us in the provision of fire risk assessments and provide general fire safety advice.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Ian Cousins. (Ext 4835)