

Report of the Portfolio Holder- Housing

Fire Risk Management Programme - Leaseholder Consultation and Future Charges1. Purpose of Report

For Cabinet to consider the next course of action regarding the utilisation of Section 20 consultation with leaseholders for remedial actions within the Fire Risk Management Programme.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the following is approved:

- **Section 20 consultation commences informally with leaseholders regarding the remaining relevant Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) actions identified within the recent batch of inspections (with no charge insisted)**
- **Section 20 consultation commences formally to coincide with the next batch of FRA inspections (with charge insisted)**

3. Detail

The Council is currently delivering a significant programme of FRA remedial works across its housing stock (under 2,000 fire safety actions to be completed). These works are essential to ensure resident safety, maintain compliance with fire safety legislation, and support the Council's wider building safety responsibilities. A significant proportion of the actions from the recent batch of FRA inspections (completed by Savills) consist of the following:

- Checking (where required):
 - external wall construction with results being shared with external consultants so that any impact on fire safety can be considered
 - compartmentation within identified roof spaces over common areas to confirm that there is adequate separation
 - that the common area fire alarm systems have been designed and installed to support the Stay Put Strategy
 - electrical intake and meter cupboards to confirm that combustible items are not being kept near ignition sources

- that identified wall and ceiling linings will achieve a surface lining classification aligned to relevant building regulations
- electrics located within identified common areas are enclosed with relevant fire resisting construction.
- Installing fire resisting glazing where required.
- Updating signs and notices.
- Sealing identified gaps with suitable fire-stopping material.

Under normal circumstances, the Council would be entitled to recover a proportion of costs from leaseholders aligned to Section 20 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985. However, the Council has experienced exceptional circumstances during the last six years related to FRA, including;

- Significant amendments to the Fire Safety Act following the Grenfell Tower tragedy in June 2017
- The accumulation of a substantial number of fire remedial actions reaching a peak of circa. 6,000
- Inadequacies with the governance, systems and management instructions of Fire management
- The tragic fire at the Lilacs in June 2025
- The ongoing scrutiny from the Regulator of Social Housing following the inspection in October 2025

Given these exceptional circumstances experienced, the remarkable pace of implementation required to reduce the number of outstanding FRA actions and the evolving nature of fire safety requirements, it is recommended that formal Section 20 consultation with leaseholders is not implemented until the next batch of FRA inspections (at an estimated unclaimed cost of £195,500). It is anticipated that the next batch of FRA inspections will commence in 12 months.

Please note:

- FRA's have only been completed in General Needs blocks within the current batch of completed assessments by Savills. Prior to this, Section 20 was not an issue because there are no leaseholders within Independent Living

- Approximately 3,000 actions have been completed within this current batch of assessments, totalling an estimated unclaimed cost from Leaseholders of £63,000
- There is the potential to claim an estimated charge of £132,500 to leaseholders for remaining actions. However, this will immediately increase the administrative burden of the FRA programme and increases the risk of delay in completing remedial actions (a typical Section 20 exercise can take between 3-6 months to complete)
- In 2021, Cabinet approved the recommendation of Section 20 exemption aligned to the replacement of entrance doors and windows.

4. Key Decision

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

5. Updates from Scrutiny

This report is not required to be considered by the Policy Overview Working Group or the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

6. Financial Implications

Finance comments will be updated at the meeting as necessary.

7. Legal Implications

Legal comments will be updated at the meeting as necessary.

8. Human Resources Implications

Human resources comments will be updated at the meeting as necessary.

9. Union Comments

Union comments will be updated at the meeting as necessary.

10. Climate Change Implications

The climate change implications are contained within the report.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is not a change to or a new policy an equality impact assessment is not required.

13. Background Papers

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