



Report for:	Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	06 March 2019
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Safety in Communal Areas Policy
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Ricky Lang, Compliance and Mechanical and Electrical Contracts Team Leader
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide members with an opportunity to comment on the proposed attached Safety in Communal Areas (SICA) Policy 2. This policy will outline our approach to managing communal areas in blocks that are owned and managed by DBC's housing service
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For members to provide comments on the SICA policy 2. For members to note the growing focus on the fire safety industry following the Grenfell Tower incident 3. For members to comment on the approach set out in the proposed revised SICA policy
Period for post policy/project review:	Review of the Council's performance in relation to the SICA policy to be undertaken 12 months after implementation
Corporate objectives:	<p>Clean Safe and enjoyable environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the safety of all people living, working in or visiting properties owned by the housing service; • Ensure alignment and adherence to current legislation and government policy on fire safety; and • Provide an overview of our approach to ensuring fire safety within communal areas.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>

<p>'Value for money' implications:</p>	<p>The commitments set out in the policy to ensure compliancy will be managed in line with existing budgets and staff resourcing.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>The Council's Neighbourhood Support Officer's (NSO's) ensure landings are clear in line with the SICA policy. Where the NSO's remove items from communal areas and are able to identify whom they belong to the individual will be recharged in line with the Recharge Policy.</p>
<p>Risk implications:</p>	<p>Risk register is provided to members on a quarterly basis</p>
<p>Community Impact Assessment:</p>	<p>Community Impact Assessment carried out</p>
<p>Health and safety Implications:</p>	<p>The SICA policy is in line with the strategy set out in the Fire Safety Policy approved in November 2018</p>
<p>Consultees:</p>	<p>Alan Mortimer, Group Manager Property and Place</p> <p>Fiona Williamson, Assistant Director Housing</p> <p>Mark Gaynor, Director Housing</p> <p>Housing Senior Management Team</p> <p>Hertfordshire Fire Service</p>
<p>Background papers:</p>	<p>Fire Safety Policy</p>
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<p>SICA – Safety in Communal Areas</p> <p>NSO – Neighbourhood Support Officer</p>

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Council has always been committed to ensuring the safety of our tenants and leaseholders and the implementation of the SICA policy, in line with the previously approved Fire Safety policy, allows us to achieve this.

2. Context

- 2.1. The Grenfell Tower incident has not changed the Council's approach to fire safety, only reinforced and refocused it. The Fire Safety Policy is already approved and Fire Risk Assessments are commissioned, but the SICA policy ensures every block of flats is regularly inspected and communal areas remain clear of all items.

3. Staffing and Resourcing

- 3.1 The commitments set out in the policy to ensure communal areas remain clear will be managed in line with existing budgets and staff resourcing.

4. Legislation

- 4.1. Under the Housing Act 2004 and the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, we have a responsibility to ensure certain safety standards are met and adhered to.
- 4.2. The Grenfell Enquiry is ongoing and the Council will keep abreast of any changes and react accordingly, especially if there are modifications to The Building Regulations 2000 Approved Document Part B (Fire Safety).

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. Herts Fire Service, who also attend a quarterly fire safety group meeting hosted by the Council, has reviewed the policy. This provides additional professional support to any decision making around fire safety. The Fire Service is keen to stress the importance of clear landings, as this will benefit residents escaping a building and firefighters entering the building in the event of a fire.
- 5.2. The zero tolerance approach ensuring communal areas remain clear will need to be communicated to all staff and residents. It is key that residents understand their role and the possibility of being recharged (in line with the Recharge Policy) if they leave items in communal areas.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. The implementation of the SICA policy allows the Council to be proactive in ensuring communal areas are clear. It also clarifies our approach and confirms that we will take action against residents who risk the health and safety of themselves or other people in communal areas.