

**TWO COUNCILS
ONE TEAM**



Fire Management Policy

Housing Department

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1. Introduction

As a landlord, Brentwood Borough Council (BBC) considers the safety of everyone living, working in, or visiting our properties as a priority.

This policy aims to ensure that we have relevant measures in place to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Fire Safety Act 2021, the Building Safety Act 2022, the Building Act 1984, the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 (Consumer Standards), the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, The Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025, and other relevant legislation and guidance.

This policy will also outline our approach to managing fire safety in all housing properties which are owned or managed by BBC.

2. Policy Statement

We ensure that all relevant properties have a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment carried out at the appropriate intervals.

We will carry out all servicing and required maintenance on equipment related to fire safety in all housing blocks under BBC management.

We will ensure all housing blocks adhere to the appropriate levels of fire safety internally and externally in communal areas.

We will ensure all housing blocks under BBC management have appropriate fire safety information and guidance displayed for occupants.

We will ensure that where requested by residents, the Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025 are complied with in the relevant buildings under BBC management.

We will ensure we provide the appropriate level of information to all employees, tenants, leaseholders, or users of our buildings.

We ensure that employees are trained to the required levels for the tasks they carry out.

We will liaise regularly with all departments of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to ensure communication relating to building works, procedures, and other fire safety matters are shared.

We will ensure all roles and responsibilities for fire safety in our properties are properly detailed.

This is a continuous process which can be affected by things such as legislation changes, building management changes, organisational arrangements, and equipment breakages.

3. Overall Aims

The aims of this policy are:

Ensure the safety of all people living, working in, or visiting properties owned by BBC.

Ensure compliance with current legislation and government policy on fire safety in all our owned properties; and

Provide an overview of our approach to ensuring fire safety within our properties.

4. Overview of relevant legislation

4.1 Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (the FSO)

As the Responsible Person under the FSO (BBC) must:

- Carry out a fire risk assessment (FRA) in all workplaces, commercial buildings, and non-domestic parts of multi-occupied residential buildings.
- The FRA should identify general fire precautions and other measures needed to comply with the FSO. Although under the FSO this requirement only applies to common parts of premises, in practice the responsible person will need to consider the entire premises, including units of residential accommodation.
- Consider who may be especially at risk.
- Implement all necessary general fire precautions and any other necessary measures identified by an FRA to remove or reduce any risks.
- Implement a suitable system of maintenance and appoint competent persons to carry out any procedures that have been adopted.
- Periodically review FRAs in a timescale appropriate to the premises and/or occupation fire risk level. This timescale is determined by the fire risk assessor carrying out the FRA.

4.2 Fire Safety Act 2021

The Act amends the FSO by clarifying that in buildings with two or more sets of domestic premises, the FSO applies to:

- The structure and external walls of the building, including cladding, balconies, and windows.
- All doors between the domestic premises and the common parts, for example, entrance doors to individual flats which open on to common parts.

4.3 Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022

BBC is required to carry out the following under these regulations:

- **All buildings with two or more sets of domestic premises:** provide residents with fire safety instructions and information on fire doors.
- **Buildings over 11 metres in height:** undertake quarterly checks of communal fire doors and annual checks of flat entrance doors.
- **Buildings over 18 metres in height:** provide the fire and rescue service with building plans and external wall information, install, and maintain secure information boxes, install wayfinding signage, and undertake checks on lifts for use by firefighters and other key pieces of firefighting equipment.

4.4 Building Safety Act 2022 – section 156

Section 156 of the Building Safety Act amends the FSO and requires the Responsible Persons to do the following:

- Record FRAs in full and record fire safety arrangements.
- Record the name of the individual and/or organisation undertaking the FRA and share with residents.
- Identify other Responsible Persons/Accountable Persons and cooperate with them.
- Share relevant fire safety information with other Responsible Persons and residents.
- Provide residents with easy to understand, relevant fire safety information.
- Set up and maintain a system to report building safety incidents and risk.

5. Management and Responsibilities

The Council recognises its responsibility to implement in full its duties in respect of the fire safety of its estate and to ensure that all its employees understand their role regarding fire prevention and fire safety management.

The Chief Executive is the Responsible Person under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO).

To assist the Chief Executive in managing fire safety within the Borough, Council Officers will provide day to day assistance by performing certain roles. These officers include, but are not limited to:

- Director of Housing
- Corporate Manager – Property Services
- Corporate Manager – Housing Estates
- Estates Manager
- Independent Living Manager
- Repairs and Maintenance Contract Manager
- Compliance Manager
- Compliance Officer
- Housing Administrator
- Housing Support Officers (Sheltered Housing)

- Estate Officers (Estates Management)
- Caretakers
- Fire Risk Assessor
- External consultants – Fire Engineer
- Corporate Health & Safety Advisor

Director of Housing shall ensure the following:

- That the Fire Safety Policy is implemented in buildings under the control of the Housing Service.
- The appointment of nominated persons in those buildings to carry out the statutory fire safety checks/tests and the recordings of all such actions in the Fire Safety Logbook.
- That nominated persons undertake any training deemed necessary to ensure they are competent to carry out their duties regarding fire safety.
- The correct implementation and monitoring of the fire safety management system for those buildings, including the Fire Risk Assessments and Fire Action Plans.
- The appointment of nominated persons in each building and to ensure that staff know and understand their duties in relation to fire safety.

Corporate Manager – Property Services and Corporate Manager - Housing Estates

- Implement the fire safety management system and ensure its effectiveness.
- Advise on the implementation of fire safety legislation and other guidance relevant to premises and building management.
- Ensure that notices and advice issued by the Fire Service are complied with in a timely manner.
- Ensure that staff under their control are adequately trained and competent to carry out their duties regarding fire safety.
- Liaise with the Fire Service on repair and maintenance matters relevant to fire safety.
- Seek advice from the Specialist Fire Risk Assessor or other competent persons.
- Receive reports from contractors and consultants and report the significant findings of such to relevant persons.
- Advise on the implementation of fire safety legislation and other guidance relevant to premises and building maintenance issues.
- Provide report on compliance and partnering contractor's health & safety report to the Wellbeing, Health, and Safety Committee.

Estates Manager / Independent Living Manager

- Monitor the statutory fire safety checks, tests, and logbooks on a 3 monthly basis and report deviations to the Compliance Manager.
- Ensure that staff under their control are trained and competent to carry out their duties regarding fire safety.

- Enable Housing Officers to undertake monitoring of CAMP and follow up actions as required, to maintain compliance with Council policies and procedures, and statutory duties.
- Co-ordinate such work with the Scheme Managers/Caretakers or other authorised person.
- Co-ordinate the maintenance of the fire safety logbooks for all relevant buildings.

Repairs and Maintenance Contracts Manager

- Ensuring any faults found with fire safety equipment is rectified and documented on the Council's compliance system.
- Ensure that notices and advice issued by the Fire Service are complied with in a timely manner.
- Ensure that staff under their control are adequately trained and competent to carry out their duties regarding fire safety.
- Seek advice from the Specialist Fire Risk Assessor or other competent persons.
- Receive reports from contractors and consultants and report the significant findings of such to relevant persons.

Compliance Manager

- First point of contact for the Fire Service and Building Safety Regulator High Rise Task Force.
- Review risk assessments received from the Specialist Fire Risk Assessor and ensure the actions have been recorded, updated on the master tracker held on Microsoft Teams.
- Ensuring any faults found with fire safety equipment is rectified and documented on the Council's compliance system.
- Ensuring areas of non-compliance are investigated, rectified, and implement a process preventing non-compliance failures.
- Ensure that notices and advice issued by the Fire Service are complied with in a timely manner.
- Ensure that staff under their control are adequately trained and competent to carry out their duties regarding fire safety.
- Seek advice from the Specialist Fire Risk Assessor or other competent persons.
- Receive reports from contractors and consultants and report the significant findings of such to relevant persons.

Compliance Officer and Housing Administrator

- Ensuring Compliance Monitoring System is updated with current Fire Risk Assessments
- Monitor that fire risk assessment actions are being completed and updating these actions on the master tracker held on Microsoft Teams
- Provide statistics of compliance to the Compliance Manager and use these to

report on at the Fire Safety Actions meeting.

Housing Support Officers (Sheltered Housing)

- Ensure that fire safety devices and systems are in place and that all the statutory safety checks are carried out and recorded in the Fire Safety Logbook.
- Carry out fire safety checks and tests and record the results in the Fire Safety Logbook on a weekly basis and ensure that any deviations are dealt with in the appropriate manner.

Housing Officers (Estates Management)

- Monitor the outside and surrounding areas of Housing properties as well as communal areas for fire safety issues and inform the Estates Manager/ Independent Living Manager of any arising issues.

Caretakers

- Monitor the outside and surrounding areas of Housing properties as well as communal areas for fire safety issues and inform the Estates Manager / Independent Living Manager of any arising issues.

Fire Risk Assessor

- Carry out a suitable and sufficient type 1 fire risk assessment as required for any building identified as requiring one under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, and follow the methodology provided in BS 9792:2025 for housing.

External consultants – Fire Engineer

- An external consultant will be used to provide fire safety advice and guidance for managers where expert advice is required beyond their knowledge level.

Corporate Health & Safety Advisor

- Work with the Housing Services Team to provide support and advice when required.
- To discuss with the Compliance Manager dash incident reports to gain a better understanding of what has happened.

6. Governance

The Landlord, as owner of the premises, is responsible for compliance with all statutory health and safety requirements regarding fire. This landlord *responsibility* cannot be delegated and rests with the Local Authority.

This is because under legislation, the legal person or entity that has control of the premises for the purposes of a business or undertaking (such as social housing) is responsible for fire safety. In law they are known as the Responsible Person.

Specifically, BBC will ensure:

Clearly defined managerial responsibilities for fire safety exist within the Authority.

That nominated persons have the necessary skills and training to undertake their duties competently.

The provision of compulsory training for all employees, relevant to their fire safety duties.

The provision of adequate fire warning systems means of escape, and fire-fighting equipment (together with good housekeeping practices) to minimise the risk of fire.

That all fire safety equipment and systems are tested in accordance with statutory and applicable standards.

That sufficient records are kept and audited at appropriate intervals.

That a system is in place for assessing structural, fire protection and management of needs in premises, determining fire safety priorities, and that funds are allocated for the completion of any such works identified.

Leaseholders

The Lease agreement will always take precedent over this policy unless there is an over-riding legal or regulatory requirement.

7. Building Categories for Fire Risk Assessment

Caveat – there are several cross-over buildings where residential buildings fall under corporate management, and several smaller non- residential buildings which fall under Housing.

The Housing stock comprises of a mix of buildings spilt into six main categories. The category grouping has been created using information in the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022.

- Category 01 – Single detached buildings
- Category 02 – Buildings containing 2 or 3 dwellings with no communal areas.
- Category 03 – Buildings containing 4 or more dwellings with no communal areas.
- Category 04 – Buildings containing 4 or more dwellings where access to the dwellings is via a shared common area.
- Category 05 – High rise blocks of over four storeys where access is via a shared common area.
- Category 06 – Sheltered housing, where there is a mix of types of dwellings, but communal facilities are provided and a higher level of staff provision.

7.1 Fire Risk Assessments (FRA)

All buildings where people work, even briefly, must have a fire risk assessment. This includes all common areas of residential buildings where cleaners or service engineer's work.

Individual dwellings are not generally fire risk assessed but have compliance checks under the Housing Act to ensure the appropriate housing standards are provided for tenants.

Where vulnerable or disabled people are identified in a relevant building under the Fire Safety (Residential Evacuation Plans) (England) Regulations 2025, and request assistance, a person centric fire risk assessment (PCFRA) will be carried out who may face challenges when evacuating during a fire.

- Category 01 buildings will not be risk assessed.
- Category 02 buildings will have an FRA carried out on them when requested.
- Category 03 buildings will have an FRA carried out on them every 5 years.
- Category 04 buildings will have an FRA carried out on them every 2 years.
- Category 05 and 06 buildings will have an FRA carried out on them every year.

Where identified as being required, a type 4 FRA will be carried out on a building which is a more intrusive survey than a type 1, as per BS9792:2025.

Caveat: There are several low-rise blocks that will be risk assessed on an annual basis until building works are completed on them.

Competency of FRA assessors

BBC will ensure suitably trained fire risk assessors are employed either internally or using an external consultancy, based on the competency standard BS8674 shortly to be published.

FRA methodology

All FRAs will follow the nine steps to risk assessment published in BS9792:2025 and shown in figure 01 below and use the guidance in the document to formulate a report for BBC complete with action plan.

7.2 Fire evacuation procedures – stay or leave

Stay safe, or Stay put, defend in place (different terms used for the same method)

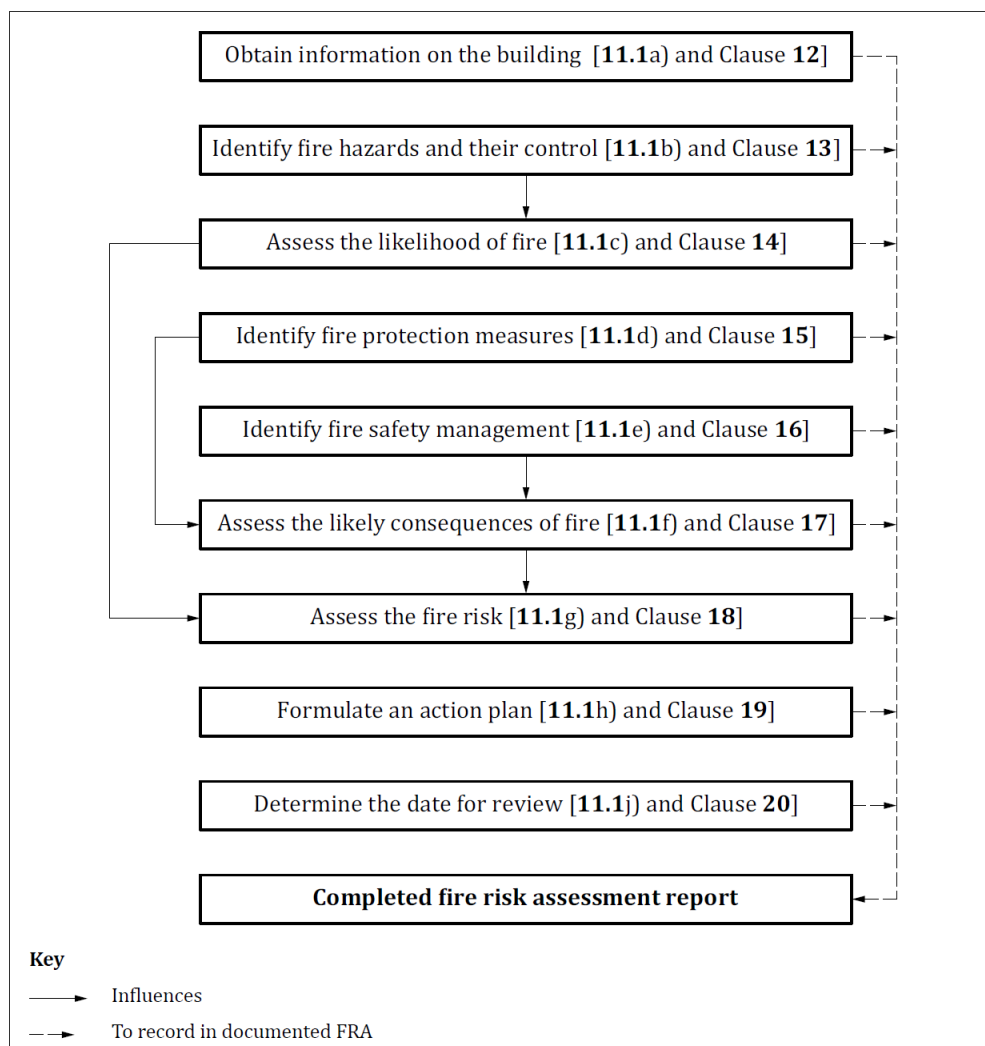
Based on the building regulations, all flat blocks are designed for residents to be safe to stay in their properties if a fire occurs in another part of the building. The construction of these buildings is such, a fire will not spread through the structure. This is an initial evacuation procedure and once the Fire and Rescue Service are on site, they take over the site and can decide whether this is suitable, or they need to decant the building.

A Stay Put procedure is one where the occupants of the room or dwelling on fire evacuate and raise the alarm, but the occupants of all other dwellings stay in place unless they feel in danger, or until they are told otherwise.

There will be circumstances based on the fire risk assessment where a stay put procedure is not suitable and provision will be put in place for simultaneous evacuation or phased evacuation from a building. This will be identified on evacuation notices in the building as required, as well given individually to residents in that building.

Where a Stay Put evacuation strategy has been introduced, this must be communicated clearly with the residents and their representatives to ensure they understand this advice in the event of an emergency.

Figure 1 — *The nine steps to fire risk assessment*



7.3 Fire extinguisher provision

Current guidance regarding fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats including sheltered housing schemes discusses the need for fire extinguishing equipment. It states there is no longer a need for equipment to be provided for residents in these areas as it can endanger their lives.

Fire extinguishing equipment is provided for the use of housing officers and other employees of Brentwood Borough Council or the Fire and Rescue Service on attendance.

No general needs blocks of flats will have any fire extinguishers installed the building.

Sheltered Schemes

Based on National Fire Chiefs Council guidance and the guidance for purpose built blocks of flats, the following equipment will be installed in sheltered housing.

- Communal halls and entrance foyers – 9 or 6 litre Water or Water additive and a 2kg Carbon Dioxide.
- Kitchens – Fire Blanket and 2kg Carbon Dioxide.
- Laundry – 2kg Carbon Dioxide
- Housing Support Officers Office – may have 9 or 6 litre Water or Water additive and a 2kg Carbon Dioxide depending on size.
- Plant rooms and areas of specific hazard – Appropriate fire extinguishers for the hazards internally, based on BS5306-8:2023 and guidance from the servicing company.

No dry powders are to be in resident areas due to the potential for discharge affecting breathing.

No extinguishers are to be in communal corridors.

8. Communal Area Management Procedure (CAMP)

There is currently a separate Communal Area Management Procedure which sets out management arrangements for the monitoring of common areas of blocks of flats and sheltered housing ensuring they are clear of objects and items that not permitted.

Based on guidance that was published in 2012 for purpose-built blocks of flats, currently under review, it was identified that in many fires in this type of accommodation, items in communal areas affected ease of escape or impeded firefighters tackling fires.

It must be ensured that communal areas that enable evacuation from the building are not obstructed with objects, door mats, furniture, household equipment or used as additional storage areas. Also, tenants and other relevant persons **MUST NOT** prop open or block fire doors in communal areas.

9. Training

All employees, as identified as appropriate, must be provided with suitable Fire Awareness training on a three-year rolling basis. Where employees are responsible for premises, such as those with responsibility for the management of Sheltered Housing Schemes, additional Fire Marshal/Fire Extinguisher training must be provided.

The Responsible Person must provide employees, contractors or other person working in or on a premise with comprehensible and relevant information for:

- The risks to them identified by the risk assessment.
- The preventive and protective measures
- The emergency / evacuation procedures; and
- The risks from other parties using the same premises.

The above information must be provided to all persons and consideration given to any needs that people may have, for example: - hearing impairment, visual impairment, learning difficulties and those where English is not their first language.

This information also needs to be provided to contractors, either by providing information cards which can be given when they sign into a premise or by a verbal induction to the premise.

Where a child (some not over compulsory school age) is to be employed (this is generally a work experience student) the above must be communicated to the parent/guardian of the child. Close supervision must be given always, and they will be advised of the Fire Evacuation procedure.

10. User Inspections (BBC led)

To safeguard all persons on a premise it is essential that all equipment and devices that are provided are fully maintained and tested according to the manufacturer's instructions. This is generally a contracted annual service visit from the suppliers of the firefighting equipment, fire detection/alarm systems and emergency lighting systems. In addition to the servicing visits, the Responsible Person must arrange regular inspections to ensure the equipment and devices are in good working order.

Weekly communal housing checks must be carried out in all sheltered schemes, documented, and include:

- Fire routes are clear.
- Emergency lighting indicator checked.
- Fire extinguisher in place (where applicable)
- Fire alarm panel *
- Fire alarm test.
- Smoke detector test.

* Daily checks for fault lights should be carried out.

Monthly communal housing checks must be carried out in all sheltered housing schemes and general needs premises, documented and where they are installed:

- Smoke control systems i.e. Automatic Opening Ventilation (AOVs) where installed.
- Sprinkler systems (visual check only)

11. Contractor Inspections

Following on from user inspections, the same applies for equipment maintained and serviced by contractors. The following equipment checks are completed for specific fire safety items:

- Fire alarm six monthly checks.
- Fire extinguisher annual checks.
- Emergency lighting annual three hour drain down and monthly flick test.
- Smoke control systems (AOVs) annual service.
- Dry riser maintenance (visual safety checked monthly, visual checked six monthly, and wet test annually)
- Sprinkler systems
- Fire door assemblies secure and in working order to flat entrance doorsets annually and communal cross corridor doorsets quarterly.

All records will be recorded on the compliance data management system.

12. Mobility Scooters

There is a mobility scooter policy relating to storage and charging of scooters but needs organisational Housing arrangements to enable the Policy to be implemented in common areas of blocks including sheltered schemes which applies in partnership to this fire safety policy.

13. Information for residents

We will publicise the importance of fire safety to all tenants on a regular basis, regardless of tenure, but generally, the responsibility for safety in individual private domestic properties that are not sheltered housing falls on the individual Tenant or Leaseholder, rather than the Council, including carrying out regular tests of their individual fire detection system (smoke alarms).

We will ensure that all buildings have an evacuation procedure notice relevant and site specific for the building, which will be communicated to all residents by a letter and installed, and updated when required, within each block.

We are responsible for fire safety in sheltered housing properties, and for communal areas in all tenures. However, sheltered residents must ensure they behave responsibly and, follow all the points that all other residents are expected to comply with.

The Council own 3 High Risk Blocks over 18M or 7 storeys in height and residents living in these blocks will receive a bespoke block resident engagement strategy and a safety information pack, in accordance with the Building Safety Act 2022. We are introducing a High Rise Living forum targeting all residents/leaseholders living in high rise blocks as a forum to discuss building safety concerns.

The Council's website will be updated with a health & safety section which will regular include any legislation/regulation changes, any updated information for residents, and changes to the building to improve the safety to the block.

The actions of residents may affect the fire safety of a building. We will not permit exceptions to the application of the policy and where a tenant or leaseholder refuses to comply, we will consider taking enforcement action in line with the tenancy agreement/lease.

14. Auditing and Review

We will manage compliance and keep accurate records.

BBC's Repairs and Maintenance Contracts Manager and Compliance Manager have responsibility to ensure that contractors are compliant with all the relevant health and safety legislation.

This policy is reviewed every three years and updated whenever legislation, regulation, or the Council's organisational arrangements changes.

We will retain written records of the risk assessment for at least five years or until one year after a new assessment has been completed and any fire precautions put in place to address the risks identified.

We expect all our contractors to behave and operate in line with our Contractor Code of Conduct.

Quality of works undertaken by contractors are generally assessed by:

- Assessment of a percentage of works by a suitably experienced and qualified officer or consultant.
- Self-assessment and quality assurance by the contractor
- Resident feedback and satisfaction surveys

The Responsible Person will delegate monitoring of all health & safety including fire arrangements to other officers within the organisation as covered in section five. This monitoring will be part of an overall audit of health & safety systems and any actions required from the audit will be prioritised on a risk basis.

15. Consultation with Authorities and other Groups

BBC will meet quarterly with representatives of the local Fire Service, to discuss projects, incidents, and any other relevant information.

When projects are undertaken, plans will be submitted to Building Control and the Fire Service for comment and approval as required.

BBC will meet with the **Residents Liaison Group** to consult and inform of changes to conform with legislation.

16. Who or what will be affected by the policy?

This Policy affects everyone, from Council employees to residents and leaseholders. Everyone defined in this policy has a role to play in keeping themselves, their visitors, their home, and common areas (where applicable) safe.

Inclusion and Diversity

This policy will not have any equality and diversity implications because the data is based on the property address and not an individual person. The policy will not require to have a separate EDA (equality diversity assessment) written as it covers all stock within the housing portfolio.

Data Protection

This policy will not have any data protection implications because the data is based on the property address and not an individual person. All data is confidentially held on the contractor's secure system which is part of the terms and conditions of their contract.

17. Corporate Knowledge

The table below provides a visual display of how this Policy will impact on the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

BBC's Corporate Priorities	Levels of Impact			
	High	Medium	Low	None
Cleaner, Greener, Safer	X			
A Growing Economy			X	
A Place to Call Home	X			
A Leading Local Authority	X			

RDC's Corporate Priorities	Levels of Impact			
	High	Medium	Low	None
Places & Spaces				X
Economy & Prosperity				X
Communities & Homes				X

A Forward Thinking and Well Managed Authority				X
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5.1 Outcomes and Priorities

Summarise the Outcomes and Priorities of the Policy here:

Outcome	Priority
Ensure Council owned properties and estates are well managed and maintained, with tenants and leaseholders supported to have an active voice in decision making about their homes.	Plan for and deliver high quality homes for all to meet current and future housing needs.

18. Links to other Corporate Policies or Partner documents

List key corporate documents that are linked to this Policy:

- Corporate Plan
- Housing Service Plan
- One Team Fire Safety Policy (October 2024)
- Mobility Scooter Policy