

Committee: **Corporate Overview and Performance Scrutiny Committee**

Date of meeting: **22nd June 2023**

Report Subject: **Fire Safety At Work Policy**

Portfolio Holder: **Councillor Steve Thomas, Leader / Cabinet Member Corporate Overview and Performance**

Report Submitted by: **Andrea J Prosser, Head of Organisational Development**

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Governance and Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	Council	Other (please state)
X	15.6.23	12.06.23			22.06.23		20.7.23	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of the implementation of the proposed Fire Safety at Work Policy (appendix 1).

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 It is important that the Council can show that they are managing the risks to their employees and others while they are undertaking their duties within buildings managed by the Council. Fire Safety legislation imposes specific requirements on employers in respect of prevention of fires and precautions that should be in place to minimise the spread of fire and to ensure that staff can escape from a building should a fire start.
- 2.2 Health and Safety Executive state that most fires are preventable and those responsible for workplaces and other buildings can avoid them by taking responsibility for and adopting the right behaviours and procedures. The new policy will provide information for the council buildings concerning the fire safety prevention and precautions. These include that:
- Fire risk assessments are carried out and reviewed regularly and communicated to staff
 - Fire safety information, instruction and training should be communicated
 - Appropriate fire safety measures are in place and maintained
 - Emergency plans are in place
- 2.3 This policy applies to all workplaces within the Council's portfolio (and buildings that are leased depending on the contractual agreements in place).
- 2.4 Employers owe the same duty of care under health and safety law to staff and members of the public that access Council buildings.

2.5 The Fire Safety Policy will provide guidance for managers to ensure that the risks to employees and others can be managed and will also provide information to employees and others should they encounter any issues while working within the Council managed buildings.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 **Option 1**

Support Health and Safety compliance by recommending that Council approve the implementation of the Fire Safety Policy.

3.2 **Option 2**

Make suggestions to further improve the Fire Safety Policy for implementation, prior to approval.

4. **Evidence of how this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

4.1 The proposed Fire Safety Policy has direct links with the Council's Corporate Plan, Health and Safety Policy and Workforce Strategy.

4.2 The Corporate Plan's core values include Trust and Integrity and to support and develop a workforce that has the capacity and capability to be productive and responsive to future demands.

4.3 Priority outcomes for the Council's Workforce Strategy includes "A highly motivated and engaged workforce" and a "Modern Employer of Choice"; the introduction of a Fire Safety Policy directly contributes to both priorities. Clear information and understanding of legislative requirements can have a significant impact on a person's health and well-being. It can reduce stress levels and improve motivation. Two of the aims of the strategy are:

- Safe working situations/environments and promotion of workforce health and wellbeing.
- The workforce demonstrates expected behaviours, standards and culture in line with the Council's values.

The Fire Safety Policy directly supports both of those aims by helping managers consider the risks to workers and others and providing clear expectation of behaviours.

4.4 The Blaenau Gwent Statement of Safety Policy states that Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, together with each employee is committed to ensuring that the highest standards of Health, Safety and Welfare are maintained throughout the organisation. The Fire Safety Policy will support that aim through clarifying requirements and responsibilities.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short- and long-term impact)***

There are no direct negative budgetary implications as a result of implementing the policy.

- 5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***
Risk Management should be improved following implementation of the Fire Safety Policy.
- 5.3 ***Legal***
The Fire Safety Policy will provide support and evidence of legal compliance with risk management and specific fire safety legislation.
- 5.4 ***Human Resources***
The Fire Safety Policy will provide support and guidance to managers and employees.
6. **Supporting Evidence**
- 6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***
N/A
- 6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***
N/A
- 6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***
The Trade Unions have received the policy for review and raised no objections.
- 6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***
Directly links the Council's Plans and Strategies as detailed above.
- 6.5 ***Preventative focus***
N/A
- 6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***
N/A.
- 6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***
Policy applies to all Council staff only.
- 6.8 ***Decarbonisation and Reducing Carbon Emissions***
N/A
- 6.9 ***Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)***
N/A
7. **Monitoring Arrangements**
- 7.1 The Policy will be reviewed and updated by Organisational Development on a regular basis.

Background Documents /Electronic Links

Appendix 1 –Fire Safety at Work Policy