

HEALTH AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19 JUNE 2024

HOUSING SERVICES GAS AND ELECTRICAL SAFETY POLICIES 2024-2029

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. For Members to consider the draft Housing Services Domestic Gas and Heating Safety Policy 2024-2029 and the draft Housing Services Domestic Electrical Safety Policy 2024-2029 before approval by Cabinet on 16 July 2024.

Summary

2. We are committed to ensuring the safety of our tenants, staff, our partners and the wider community who may be affected by gas and electrical installations and appliances, associated flues and pipework in properties that we own or have a responsibility for managing.
3. The Housing Services Domestic Gas and Heating Safety Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** and Housing Services Domestic Electrical Safety Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 2** set out our legal obligations in relation to gas and electrical safety, together with the responsibilities for our staff, contractors and our tenants, to ensure they are not put at risk from the effects of gas and electricity.
4. The Tenants Panel has been consulted on the draft policies and they have given their full support.

Recommendation

5. It is recommended that Members:
 - (a) Consider the report and draft Housing Services Domestic Gas and Heating Safety Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** and Housing Services Domestic Electrical Safety Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 2** and agree their onward submission to Cabinet.

Reasons

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
 - (a) The Housing Services Domestic Gas and Heating, and Electrical Safety Policies ensure we have a clear approach to the safety of our tenants, staff, our partners and the wider community, who may be affected by gas and electricity in our Council homes.
 - (b) The Regulator of Social Housing's new Consumer Standards from April 2024 places a duty on social housing landlords to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and

safety of our tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.

- (c) The adoption of formal gas and electrical safety policies is one of the ways to demonstrate how we will achieve this.

Anthony Sandys
Assistant Director – Housing and Revenues

Background Papers

Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards.

Anthony Sandys: Extension 6926

S17 Crime and Disorder	There is no impact
Health and Wellbeing	Ensuring we have a clear approach to gas and electrical safety in our Council homes will have a positive impact on our tenants' health and well-being
Carbon Impact and Climate Change	There is no impact
Diversity	There is no impact
Wards Affected	All wards with Council housing
Groups Affected	Council tenants and leaseholders
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
Council Plan	This report supports the Council plan to ensure we are able to provide our tenants with good quality housing
Efficiency	There are no implications
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

7. Darlington Borough Council provides over 5,300 high quality homes for local residents. We are committed to ensuring the safety of our tenants, staff, our partners and the wider community who may be affected by gas and electrical installations and appliances, associated flues and pipework in properties that we own or have a responsibility for managing.
8. All landlords have a legal responsibility to comply with the relevant gas and electrical safety regulations and approved codes of practice, which are enforced by the Health and Safety Executive. The Housing Services Domestic Gas and Heating Safety Policy 2024-2029 and Housing Services Domestic Electrical Safety Policy 2024-2029 set out our legal obligations in relation to gas and electrical safety, together with the responsibilities for our staff, contractors and our tenants, to ensure they are not put at risk from the effects of gas and electricity.
9. The Housing Services Domestic Gas and Heating Safety Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 1** and Domestic Electrical Safety Policy 2024-2029 at **Appendix 2** set out the following:
 - (a) The responsibilities of our staff and contractors in undertaking any gas and electrical work in our Council homes and ensuring that all work is undertaken by suitably qualified and trained staff.
 - (b) The responsibilities of our tenants, in relation to any gas and electrical installations and appliances, in accordance with their tenancy agreement, including allowing access to their homes for safety checks and associated work to be undertaken.
 - (c) The legal framework in which all gas and electrical installations, appliances and associated work are governed by.
 - (d) The gas and electrical safety checks, inspections and testing that will be undertaken by Housing Services staff and contractors, to ensure we comply with our statutory duties as landlords.
 - (e) The approach to undertaking any repairs and dealing with any faults or reported hazards.

Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Consumer Standards

10. The RSH has published new consumer standards from April 2024. These new standards place a duty on social housing landlords to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of our tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.
11. Specifically, the Safety and Quality Standard states:
 - (a) Registered providers must identify and meet all legal requirements that relate to the health and safety of tenants in their homes and communal areas.

- (b) Registered providers must ensure that all required actions arising from legally required health and safety assessments are carried out within appropriate timescales.
 - (c) Registered providers must ensure that the safety of tenants is considered in the design and delivery of landlord services and take reasonable steps to mitigate any identified risks to tenants.
12. Our Housing Services gas and electrical safety policies will help us demonstrate how we will achieve these new standards.

Outcome of Consultation

13. Our Tenants Panel were consulted in May 2024 and overall, the Panel support the proposed Housing Services Domestic Gas and Heating Safety, and Housing Services Domestic Electrical Safety Policies.