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| <u>Committee and Date</u> |
| Cabinet |
| 10 January 2018 |

FIRE SAFETY POLICY AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

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1. Summary

- 1.1. Cabinet members are asked to approve the revised Fire Safety Policy (attached at Appendix 1).
- 1.2. The Fire Safety Policy applies to all Service Areas within the Authority and identifies the responsible individuals, working groups and mechanisms that ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform Order and other relevant legislation.
- 1.3. The Policy has been developed alongside an internal review of organisational fire safety and a subsequent improvement plan. The main outcome of which is a project to create a management system with a centralised point for recording fire safety information (to be established in Spring 2018). The centralised function will report upon compliance using the KPI's identified within the Policy and allow efficient resource deployment moving forward.
- 1.4. The Policy has been subject to scrutiny and formally approved via the Fire Risk Assessment Group (officer group) and Fire Safety Panel (officer group.)

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. To approve the revised Shropshire Council Fire Safety Policy.

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 3.1. The Council has both a statutory and moral obligation to manage fire safety and reduce the risk of fire, as far as is reasonable practicable,

across its operations and estate. The primary aim of any fire safety action is to stop fire related death or injury from occurring.

- 3.2. Shropshire Council is subject to a range of fire related legislation, all aimed at reducing fire related incidents. Failing to meet legislative requirements can result in the loss of life, legal action with financial or criminal liabilities arising (against individual officers or the Council) and reputational damage amongst others.
- 3.3. Whilst the primary focus of the Policy is the protection of life, it is recognised that any subsequent improvements to fire safety management will also protect assets from the devastating effects of fire.
- 3.4. The Key Performance Indicators within the Policy have been developed to provide evidence based data that can report upon our level of fire safety compliance and set targets for improvement where required to deploy structured risk reduction activities.
- 3.5. In the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster, the management system will deliver additional assurance to all stakeholders that the Council is fully committed to reducing the risk of fire as far as is reasonably practicable.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. The improvement plan is progressing as a project within the Asset and Estates team. It is recognised that the outcomes may lead to some level of increased activity to ensure legislative compliance. Much of this activity will be devolved through teams and managers who already manage day to day fire safety within their area or department.
- 4.2. Once the management system is established, the ongoing task of centrally collating fire safety information is a new activity and as such will require additional resource. The full scope of this resource is to be identified in early 2018 but shall require no more than 0.4 FTE equivalent at officer level. This is similar to the resource level applied to the management of Asbestos (as another recognised risk area under H&S legislation).
- 4.3. In addition, we expect to use fire safety consultants on occasion to undertake Fire Risk Assessments on properties with the highest risk rating and/or of a very complex nature. External services will only be used when no suitable resource can be identified in house and the extent of work does not justify training internal staff. As such, the annual budget for this service will not exceed £10,000.
- 4.4. The level of financial requirement is therefore expected to be both within officer approval and the thresholds set out in 4.3.

5. Background

- 5.1. Shropshire Council has a good record of fire safety and in comparison to many local authorities, a relatively low risk estate including very few large, high risk and/or complex buildings. However, previous performance does not mean we are complacent and will ensure that we are guarded against incidents in the future.
- 5.2. The Fire Safety Group (FSG) was formed in October 2016 and acts as an officer advisory group which feeds into the Health & Safety Work Group. The FSG is chaired by the Strategic Asset Manager who, under the corporate landlord model, manages the operational risk of fire safety across the Council estate.
- 5.3. The Fire Safety Group initiated a review of the Fire Safety Policy in autumn 2017 which encompassed a review of organisational fire safety. The process identified that there was a significant amount of work being undertaken across the organisation and staff were in the main, aware of their roles and responsibilities with regards to fire safety.
- 5.4. However, it was identified that there is currently no central system in place to capture the work being undertaken and the Council cannot therefore report easily upon overall organisational compliance in a quantified manner. The lack of this oversight function was identified as a risk and the improvement plan aims developed as a result.
- 5.5. The improvement plan aims to be operationally lean, using the Council's ICT based property management system and the information held therein to collate and report upon fire safety. Furthermore, the improvement plan was developed with input from those who currently manage fire safety and builds upon current process where possible.

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| List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) |
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| Cabinet Member/ Deputy (Portfolio Holder) |
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| Councillor Steve Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support |
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| Local Member |
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| Appendices |
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| Appendix 1– Fire Safety Policy |
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