

# AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE



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| Report subject             | <b>Fire Safety Annual Update</b>  |
| Meeting date               | 15 January 2026   |
| Status                     | Public Report   |
| Executive summary          | <p>This report details the progress made on the delivery of the Fire Safety governance arrangements for BCP Council and highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The implementation of the Governance Framework continues to be embedded and is working effectively. The framework includes the Health and Safety and Fire Safety Board and others meeting at the agreed frequency, with generally good attendance</li> </ul> |
| Recommendations            | <p><b>It is RECOMMENDED that:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Audit and Governance Committee notes the continued progress in implementing the Health and Safety and Fire Safety Governance arrangements and operational updates</b></p> <p><b>(b) Fire Safety ongoing Governance arrangements updates continue to be reported annually to the Audit and Governance Committee</b></p>  |
| Reason for recommendations | <p>Following its meeting in October 2024, the Audit and Governance Committee requested an annual update to provide on-going assurance that health and safety governance arrangements effectively operate.</p> <p>The Audit and Governance Committee terms of reference include the following in the 'Other functions' section - to consider arrangements for health and safety and fire safety.</p>   |
| Portfolio Holder(s):       | Councillor Mike Cox   |
| Corporate Director         | Fire Safety – Glynn Barton  |
| Report Authors             | Phillip Lawrence (Fire Safety Service Manager)  |
| Wards                      | All   |
| Classification             | For decision  |

## Background

1. The service provided by the Fire Safety team is to ensure competent, specialist and risk-based advice and guidance is afforded to the Council to enable it to carry out its statutory duties safely. These duties fall under the legislative framework of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, the Fire Safety Act 2021, the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 and the Building Safety Act 2022, and assist in promoting a positive safety culture throughout the Council.
2. The BCP Council Corporate Fire Safety Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities for BCP Council. It places the Health & Safety and Fire Safety Board at the centre of strategic oversight and performance monitoring. Reviewed April 2024 with the 2025 revision in final draft awaiting Health and Safety and Fire Safety Board sign off, following the creation of a new BCP Homes Fire Safety Policy and supporting Management Plan, which focuses solely on housing properties and service delivery.
3. The BCP Council Corporate Health and Safety and Fire Safety Governance framework below details the Governance arrangements, including the Health and Safety and Fire Safety Board, directorate meetings and the Safety Supporters Forum.



## Ongoing Governance arrangements assurance

4. Health & Safety and Fire Safety Board meetings, chaired by the Chief Operations Officer or Chief Executive, continue quarterly with members attending remotely via Microsoft Teams. Attendance at these meetings by Directors (or their representative) since the last report to this Committee has been reasonable.
5. Most directorates hold quarterly Health & Safety and Fire Safety meetings via Microsoft Teams. These meetings remain critical to our Governance arrangements.
6. The Safety Supporters Forum commenced in December 2020 and has met quarterly since. The forum comprises of representatives from directorates and their Safety Supporters, Corporate Health & Safety, Corporate Fire Safety and Union

representatives. The forum provides a means for consultation with all employees as per statutory requirements. Colleagues can share best practices and issues at the workplace and operational level and provide communication tools between employees and the Board. A Microsoft Teams channel facilitates communication between attendees. Whilst the Corporate Health and Safety team spearheads the organisation of this forum, when capacity allows and/or a specific item is placed on the agenda, the Fire Safety team endeavours to attend and support the forum.

## **Reporting to the Board**

7. The Health & Safety and Fire Safety Board meetings facilitate discussion of strategic issues and emerging trends. This ensures that the meeting remains fit for purpose and considers the evolving nature of BCP Council services, our workforce, buildings and other assets.
8. A Corporate Health & Safety and Fire Safety Risk Register is established and is regularly reviewed between and at the Board meetings. This register contains directorate-level high-level risks that require additional mitigation measures to reduce the current risk level. These are raised at the Board for agreement on necessary risk-reduction measures.
9. In addition the fire safety service function within BCP Homes provides quarterly fire safety assurance updates to the BCP Homes Advisory Board. These updates cover compliance status, progress on remediation activities, and any emerging risks or issues identified through Fire Risk Assessments and other monitoring processes. This reporting mechanism ensures that the Advisory Board maintains oversight of fire safety performance within housing services and supports transparency and accountability in line with statutory obligations and best practice.

## **Operational updates**

### **Resource**

10. The Council Fire Safety team (which, as of 1 September 2024, now includes BCP Homes) comprises one full-time Fire Safety Service Manager, one full-time and one part-time Corporate Fire Safety Advisor (2.6 FTEs in total), a Building and Fire Safety Manager, a Building Safety Officer and the retained services of an external Fire Risk Assessor alongside the ad-hoc service of an external Fire Safety Consultancy which services are specific to the completion of ad-hoc Fire Risk Assessment to support the ongoing Risk Assessment work programme.
11. The Fire Safety team continues delivering the service from within the Facilities Management (FM) service team, falling within Customer and Property.

### **Service Delivery**

12. While the CEO holds the ultimate position as the 'responsible person' under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, it is important to note that the Chief Operations Officer (COO) has been appointed as the Corporate Director under whom fire safety management responsibilities fall. Consequently, the COO carries delegated responsibility for overseeing fire safety across BCP Council, ensuring compliance and the implementation of effective fire safety measures in alignment with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
13. The Fire Safety team maintained contact with operational service areas. Resources have been allocated to specific high-risk areas to better

understand day-to-day practice. The knowledge gained continues to result in improved support and advice the corporate team offers. Advice is given to all directorates and schools on many aspects, including risk assessments.

14. The Fire Safety team conducts periodic Fire Risk Assessments in line with the proactive inspection work programme. These assessments are scheduled to ensure consistent coverage across the Council's property portfolio and compliance with statutory obligations. Observations made during site visits are documented, and any required actions are recorded, shared with relevant parties, and tracked through to completion within the assigned deadlines based on risk prioritisation. This structured approach ensures accountability and the timely resolution of identified issues.
15. Data and outcomes from these FRAs are collated and analysed to provide the necessary information for BCP Council's overall compliance scorecard. This process strengthens governance, supports transparency, and demonstrates the Council's commitment to maintaining robust fire safety standards.
16. Support continues to be provided to Local Authority maintained schools on localised fire safety arrangements and mitigation plans following their Fire Risk Assessments or subsequent reviews.
17. BCP Homes were contacted by the BSR on 22 July 25 for further information relating to Rodney Court, this was provided on 29 July 2025. To date we have received not further contact from the BSR other than confirmation the required information has been received by them.
18. BCP Homes continue to provide quarterly updates to with regards Fire Safety Remediation Survey to the Housing Regulator via NROSH portal.
19. Completion of the Building Safety Case reports for the five high-rise blocks has been delayed due to the delays with the refurbishment. While refurbishment has temporarily impacted progress, the remaining work is well advanced, and it is anticipated that all reports will be finalized and submitted early in the New Year.
20. Digital information screens have now been installed in the entrance lobbies of all six high-rise blocks, providing residents with immediate access to essential safety updates. These screens will display real-time information on building safety, including compliance notices and emergency alerts, as well as practical updates such as lift breakdowns with expected repair times. This initiative enhances transparency, improves communication, and ensures residents remain informed about critical issues affecting their homes, supporting both safety and confidence in building management.
21. BCP Homes continue to provide quarterly updates with regards Fire Safety Remediation Survey to the Housing Regulator via National Register of Social Housing (NROSH) portal.
22. BCP Homes manages six High-Rise Residential Buildings (over 18metres). The existing High-Rise Resident Engagement Strategy has been refreshed, and residents are aware of the structural and both the active and passive fire protection measures in place where they live. Asset, Housing and Fire Safety teams have attended Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP`s) training.

23. Annual smoke detector checks are carried out across all residential properties to ensure tenant safety and compliance with fire regulations. Legacy Bournemouth properties currently meet the LD2 standard. Legacy Poole properties are scheduled to achieve this same standard by April 2026, ensuring consistency and alignment with best practice across the housing portfolio.
24. There were no Fire Risk Assessments or fire safety remediation actions outstanding at the end of December 2025.

### **Corporate systems**

25. The Incident Reporting System (IRS), or the Fire Safety Reporting App, as it is commonly known, provides an online reporting tool for colleagues to log incidents, Unwanted Fire Signals (UWFS) and near misses continues to evolve and now includes users across BCP Homes, who previously used a different system.
26. While some incidents are still initially logged using the previous housing system, these are redirected to the reporting app for completeness of record keeping and incident logging.

### **Standards Update: BS 8674:2025 and BS 9792:2025**

27. The British Standards Institution (BSI) has published two new standards of direct relevance to the Council's fire safety governance and operational practice. These standards are intended to strengthen competence, consistency and the defensibility of our fire safety arrangements across the built environment.
28. BS 8674:2025 – Built Environment: Framework for the competence of individual fire risk assessors – Code of Practice  
Establishes a structured competency framework for individual fire risk assessors operating within the built environment. The standard supports alignment with existing statutory duties and promotes a risk-based approach to the commissioning, delivery and oversight of fire risk assessment activities, thereby enhancing assurance for duty holders and elevating the quality and consistency of assessments across diverse property types.
29. BS 9792:2025 – Fire Risk Assessment – Housing – Code of Practice  
Sets out practical guidance for undertaking fire risk assessments in housing settings, with an emphasis on methodical, evidence-based evaluation and clear documentation. Application of the standard is expected to reinforce assessor competence and ensure assessments remain robust and defensible, complementing existing internal procedures and supporting compliance with statutory obligations.
30. The Fire Safety team is reviewing both standards to identify integration points within both the Corporate Fire Safety Policy and BCP Homes Fire Safety Policy, and associated management plans, including any training requirements and procedural updates necessary to embed best practice. Progress and proposed changes will be communicated through the Health & Safety and Fire Safety Board and reflected in future governance reports.

## **Policies and Procedures**

31. The BCP Council Corporate Fire Safety Policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of BCP Council. It places the Health & Safety and Fire Safety Board at the centre of strategic oversight and performance monitoring. Reviewed April 2024 with the 2025 revision in final draft awaiting Health and Safety and Fire Safety Board sign off, following the creation of a new BCP Homes Fire Safety Policy and supporting Management Plan, which focuses solely on housing properties and service delivery.

## **Summary of financial implications**

32. No material under or overspends are projected in the Fire Safety team.
33. No financial implications are arising from the specific recommendations of this report.
34. There are potential financial risks associated with inadequate or non-compliant health, safety and welfare practices that could lead to financial penalties and losses. The governance arrangements outlined in this report help to mitigate these.

## **Summary of legal implications**

35. No legal implications are arising from the specific recommendations of this report.
36. The Council is legally obliged to have adequate health and fire safety arrangements in place and the current governance arrangements support demonstrating compliance with these obligations.

## **Summary of human resource implications**

37. No human resource implications are arising from the specific recommendations of this report.
38. Where necessary, colleagues in People and Culture are contacted to ensure that HR implications of any health and safety management actions are considered.

## **Summary of environmental impact**

39. There are no environmental impacts arising from the specific recommendations of this report.

## **Summary of public health implications**

40. There are no public health implications arising from the specific recommendations of this report.

## **Summary of equality implications**

41. No equalities implications are arising from the specific recommendations of this report.
42. Where necessary, the Fire Safety team work alongside People and Culture colleagues to ensure that both equality and health and safety aspects are considered to safeguard that equality aspects, such as disability, are suitably actioned.

**Summary of risk assessment**

43. Failure to report annually would leave the Committee unaware of continuing governance arrangements. This failure increases the risk of ongoing governance falling below acceptable standards.
44. Annual reporting to this Committee is considered appropriate. However, there should remain the option for exception reporting if relevant officers or members are concerned that governance arrangements may have been compromised.

**Appendices**

None