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1 Introduction and Objectives:

This document identifies the ways in which Swale Borough Council [SBC] will manage the risk of fire within its property portfolio, as required by the Regulatory Reform [Fire Safety] Order. The information provided includes control of fire risks and the maintenance of fire detection systems.

The objectives of the Fire Safety Policy are to ensure:

- SBC meets its duty of care by managing the risk of fire within its properties.
- Lives are not put at risk through poor fire risk management.
- Damage is not sustained to property and plant through poor fire risk management.

All employees/contractors and tenants should familiarise themselves with this Fire Safety Policy and the roles and responsibilities which have been discharged to them.

2 Occupancy:

Swale House is owned and managed by SBC and comprises basement & roof plant rooms, ground, first, second and third floors. The majority of occupants are SBC employees/contractors, however there are some areas which are occupied by other organisations.

3 The Responsible Person:

The Regulatory Reform [Fire Safety] Order requires the employer to identify a responsible person who will ensure that all fire safety requirements are met and that procedures are followed. This employee must be senior enough to have influence on the decision making process and resource allocation to ensure fire safety legislation is fully considered and complied with.

The responsible person for fire safety at SBC is the Chief Executive. However, the Chief Executive may delegate specific tasks to others. These are identified in this policy.

Tenant organisations must also appoint a responsible person and a deputy who will ensure that all fire risks in the areas under their control are identified and assessed. They must also ensure that their employees/contractors are provided with information and training on fire safety and evacuation.

4 SBC fire safety Roles and Responsibilities:

These are summarised in the table below for fire safety.

| Role | Responsibility |
|--|--|
| Elected Members Chief Executive Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ultimate responsibility for the fire safety of Council employees and other persons who may be affected by the way that the Council conducts its undertaking.• The Chief Executive Officer is the 'Responsible Person' under the Regulatory Reform [Fire Safety] Order. |
| Strategic Management Team | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ratify the Fire Safety Policy.• Consider fire safety and Health & Safety as a whole when making decisions.• Promote and embed the fire safety policy.• Allocate sufficient resources for fire safety. |
| Head of Property Services | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibility for the management of fire risks within the property portfolio.• Considers fire risk management in planned preventative maintenance.• Authorises remedial works and allocates resources accordingly.• Appoints competent contractors to maintain and service all fire safety equipment and systems. |
| All Heads of Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communicates and implements the fire safety policy within their service units.• Supports and promotes fire safety training, including fire evacuation drills.• Considers fire safety when re-organising the workplace, changing systems of work or introducing new plant and machinery. |
| Managers and Supervisors | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures all employees [new, temporary, permanent, agency or work experience] are aware of the fire safety evacuation procedures.• Ensures fire risk is considered in departmental risk assessments.• Ensures the employees for whom they are responsible comply with the fire safety policy.• Immediately reports any fire risks or concerns to the Property Services Team. |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensures adequate supervision of employees, particularly young/vulnerable persons. |
| H&S Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides advice and guidance on fire safety matters. Maintains the fire safety policy. Advises on relevant fire safety training. Conducts periodic inspections/audits and advises the appropriate Head of Service and the Head of Property Services of fire safety concerns. |
| Training Development Mgr | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organises employee fire safety training. |
| Fire Wardens and Fire Marshalls & their deputies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarise themselves with their designated floor zone/s. Perform their designated fire safety role in the event of a fire/emergency evacuation or a fire drill. Liaise with each other to ensure absences from the office are covered. Attend fire safety training, as directed. Formally report fire safety concerns. Assist in providing fire safety information to new employees. Advise line managers if temporary PEEPs should be instigated for employees on their floor. |
| H&S Committee [Safety Representatives] | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide feedback on the Fire Safety Policy. Periodically inspect the work areas for which they are responsible and report any fire safety concerns to line management and the H&S Officer. Promote good fire safety management within their work area. |
| All Employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-operate with SBC management to ensure the fire safety of themselves and others. Adhere to the fire safety policy and the fire evacuation procedures. Report fire safety concerns to the H&S Officer via the Property Services [SBC] email address. |

As an employer and Landlord SBC is responsible for the following at Swale House:

- Undertaking Fire Risk Assessments.
- Maintenance and repair of the building.
- Testing and maintenance of gas appliances, fixed electrical equipment and portable electrical appliances.
- Testing and maintenance of the fire alarm & detection system, emergency lighting, fire fighting & fire suppression equipment and emergency escape routes.
- Managing the emergency evacuation process.
- Providing training and information to employees, contractors and visitors.
- Conducting fire drills.
- Managing the handling, storage and disposal of combustible/flammable materials and waste.
- Communicating relevant fire safety information to Tenant Organisations.

5 Tenant Organisation's Responsibilities:

Unless otherwise agreed, Tenant Organisations who occupy buildings where SBC has overall responsibility, must ensure that:

- A Fire Risk Assessment is completed for their demised area.
 - However, for those tenant organisations based at Swale House, their demised area will be incorporated into the SBC Fire Risk Assessment.
- Ensure their employees, contractors and visitors are provided with fire safety training/information and that they fully participate in fire drills.
- Ensure fire escape routes and fire exit doors are maintained in good condition in order to maintain fire compartmentation.
- They conduct their own checks, tests and servicing of fire safety equipment which prevents, detects and fights/suppresses fires.
- Flammable substances are not brought on site without SBC's approval.
- Allow reasonable access for maintenance of SBC owned fire safety equipment.

Tenant Organisations also have a duty to advise SBC if there are any changes to their business activities/operations which could impact fire safety and/or have an adverse effect on the ability to perform safe emergency evacuations.

SBC will ensure that the fire safety arrangements are complied with in all operational buildings and will ensure that it complies with the arrangements where the Council is the tenant.

6 Review:

This plan and relevant documents are available for inspection by authorised personnel and will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to fire safety legislation, if there has been a fire incident or if there are other changes which may have a significant impact on fire safety [eg work practices, occupancy levels, building structural changes, etc].

7 Fire Zones:

Swale House is divided into four zones eg zones A, B, C and D. The fire evacuation procedures and floor plans showing each of the zones are available on the intranet.

8 Fire safety induction:

On commencement of employment at Swale House, employees will be provided with fire safety information by their line manager. The Fire Warden [and the Fire Warden Deputies] may be able to assist with this training which should comprise the following:

- The identification of the zone they work in.
- The names of the Fire Wardens, the Fire Marshalls and the deputies for their floor.
- Details of when the weekly fire alarm tests are conducted.
- An explanation of the emergency evacuation procedures for normal working hours, outside of normal working hours and weekend working.
- The location of the Fire Assembly Point.
- SBC's policy relating to the use and operation of fire extinguishers.
- The process for reporting fire safety concerns.

9 Fire Alarm Tests:

At Swale House, the fire alarm is a continuous ringing bell and is tested every Wednesday morning. Employees are not required to evacuate the premises during the weekly test. If the test time/day needs to be changed, employees will be notified in advance.

By conducting weekly fire call point tests, it provides SBC with assurance that the alarm works and also ensures that employees/contractors and visitors become familiar with what the fire alarm sounds like.

10 Raising the fire alarm and contacting the emergency services:

The fire alarm can be activated in two ways:

- Automatic activation of the fire detection unit/s.
- By someone breaking the glass of a fire call point.

At Swale House, the fire alarm & detection system is monitored by an approved contractor. If the fire alarm activities when the Facilities Officers are not on duty [eg after 9.30pm and before 6.45am Monday to Friday or at the weekend], the approved contractor will contact a rota'd Facilities Officer and request that they to attend site to ascertain whether the emergency services need to be contacted. If required, the Facilities Officer will contact the emergency services by dialling 999.

11 Evacuation:

When the fire alarm activates, an immediate evacuation of the whole building must be undertaken. All employees, contractors, visitors and members of the public must evacuate the building using the nearest available exit.

The Fire Evacuation Procedures for Swale House can be found on the intranet.

12 Fire Assembly Point:

The Swale House Fire Assembly Point is the rear car park. This location ensures that the access road will be kept clear from obstructions for the arrival of the emergency services and will allow evacuated personnel to be easily moved further away should there be a risk of explosion.

All employees are required to go to the Fire Assembly Point in the rear car park and congregate with their department at their department's Fire Assembly Point eg by Fire Assembly Point 1, 2 or 3.

13 Evacuation outside of normal office hours:

When meetings are held at Swale House outside of normal office hours [9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday], it will be the responsibility of the person facilitating the meeting to provide fire safety information before the meeting starts. This person must also ensure that meeting attendees evacuate safely and congregate at the Fire Assembly Point.

See the Fire Evacuation Procedures for more information.

14 Weekend Access to Swale House:

Employees are permitted to work on site at the weekend and must use the rear entrance to access/exit the building. All employees are aware that the lifts are taken out of service from Friday night until Monday morning and therefore employees are required to use the stairs.

Employees are required to enter their details [name, location, extension number and time of arrival] on the whiteboard on the ground floor. When employees leave Swale House, they must completely remove their details from the whiteboard. This will ensure that the whiteboard contains only the details of those employees who are actually on site and, in the event of an out-of-hours fire evacuation, will help to speed up the roll call process, whilst ensuring the lives of the emergency services are not put at risk by them searching for employees who are not actually on site.

15 Visitors and Contractors:

At Swale House, all visitors and contractors will be required to sign-in [and out] and will be provided with an access control badge. Visitors should always be hosted whilst they are on site and contractors, who have been assigned work on site, will have been contracted by SBC's Property Services department.

All contractors must sign-in prior to commencing work on site.

16 Limited Mobility and Sensory Impairment:

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans [PEEPs] will be created and communicated for those employees with limited mobility; those who use mobility devices and those who have sensory impairment, to ensure that all personnel can be evacuated safely and without delay.

There are five Evac Chairs on site and trained operatives on each floor. These can be used to evacuate individuals who need assistance to evacuate from the building. A list of the trained operatives can be found on the intranet.

For out of hours public meetings, at the beginning of the meeting, the Chairperson will ask attendees if anyone might require assistance in the event of an emergency evacuation. The Chairperson will then communicate the fire evacuation procedures.

17 Specific fire safety roles:

At Swale House, each floor has a Fire Warden & two Deputies and a Fire Marshall. Furthermore, specific fire safety roles have been assigned to the Chief Executive, the H&S Officer, the Facilities Officers and the Customer Service Advisor [CSA] on Reception.

See the Fire Evacuation Procedures for more information.

18 Training and Fire Drills:

All SBC employees receive fire safety training in accordance with SBC's training arrangements and this includes an induction for new employees. Thereafter, fire safety training will be provided through the council's e-learning system and occasionally, training with an external training provider will be provided.

At Swale House, fire drills will be completed on an annual basis. The objective of the fire drill is to test the effectiveness of the fire procedures. Therefore different scenarios [eg closing down of fire exit routes/fire doors] may be adopted to test employee responsiveness. After the fire drill, employee feedback will be obtained and a de-briefing with those in fire safety roles will be conducted so that improvements can be considered, agreed and communicated.

Tenant Organisations, who are not based at Swale House, are responsible for training their employees/contractors and for conducting fire drills.

19 Fire safety signage:

Fire safety signage will be displayed and maintained on site in accordance with Regulations. This includes appropriate signage for: fire escape routes, fire doors & final fire exit doors, fire extinguishers, fire suppression systems and hazard warning for utility etc services.

20 Service and Testing Regimes for fire safety equipment - Swale House:

At Swale House, the Property Services department maintains a log of the equipment provided on site to prevent, detect, suppress & fight fires and maintains details of completed tests/inspections, as per Regulatory requirements. Various visual checks and documented tests are conducted either in-house or by specialist external contractors. Where concerns have been identified, they will be logged for remedial action.

a) Fire extinguishers and fire blankets:

- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets are provided throughout Swale House.
- Each fire extinguisher is either affixed to the wall or placed on a stand with an identifying sign above it.
- All inspection and testing information is maintained by the Property Services department.

Monthly Check: The Facilities Officers will conduct an adhoc visual check to ensure fire extinguishers and fire blankets are in place, the tags/gauges are intact and the equipment is unobstructed.

Annual Test: Servicing and testing will be arranged by the Property Services department. The approved contractor will test fire extinguishers and fire blankets and affix labels stating the test dates.

b) Fire alarm & detection system:

- Swale House's fire detection & alarm system is activated by manual fire call points and smoke detectors.
- The fire control panel is located on the ground floor near the main entrance.
- Each fire call point has been numbered to allow for systematic testing.

Daily Visual Check: The Facilities Officers conduct a daily visual check of the Fire Control Panel to ensure it indicates normal service.

Weekly Test: The fire alarm is tested on a weekly and rota'd basis. The test will be documented by the Facilities Officers who will test a different fire call point each week. The test will confirm that:

- The fire call point is working correctly.
- The fire alarm is operating as it should.
- The fire alarm can be heard by all personnel on site.

Quarterly Test: Servicing and testing will be arranged by the Property Services department. The approved contractor will test the smoke detectors and the automatic fire doors. A log of the contractor tests will be maintained.

Annual Test: Servicing and testing will be arranged by the Property Services department. The approved contractor will test the automatic opening of the smoke vents. A log of the contractor tests will be maintained.

c) Fire escape routes and fire doors:

- Clearly defined fire escape routes and fire doors are provided throughout the building to allow safe passage to a place of safety.
- Fire escape routes and fire doors are constructed to withstand the progression of fire, flames and smoke for at least 30 minutes [more in some cases].

Daily Check: The Facilities Officers conduct informal checks of the Final Exit Fire Doors to ensure they remain tagged.

Monthly Test: The Facilities Officers conduct documented monthly premises inspections which include aspects of fire safety such as:

- Checks to ensure fire doors work effectively, are in good condition and 'fail safe':
 - Electronic release mechanisms on fire doors.

- Fire Door seals and self-closing devices.

Annual Test: As part of the Fire Risk Assessment self-closing fire doors are checked to ensure they open/close correctly and the fire escape routes are checked to ensure compartmentation is in good repair.

d) Emergency lighting:

- Emergency lighting has been installed on site.
- In the event of a power failure, the emergency lights will illuminate fire escape routes and Final Exit Fire doors.

Quarterly Test: Servicing and testing will be arranged by the Property Services department. The competent contractor will ensure the luminaries operate on test for one third of their rated value. A log of the contractor tests will be maintained.

Annual Test: Servicing and testing will be arranged by the Property Services department. The competent contractor will ensure luminaries operate for a three hour duration test. A log of the contractor tests will be maintained.

e) Fire suppression systems:

- FM200 Gas Suppression Systems have been installed in the Strong Room [Ground Floor] and ICT Server Room [1st floor].
- The control panels are adjacent to each of these rooms.
- These are linked to the fire detection & alarm system.

After activation, the rooms should be left open to ensure they fully vent and a competent contractor requested to attend site to re-fill or replace the cylinders and re-set the systems. This will be managed by the Facilities Officers.

Six Monthly: Servicing and testing will be arranged by the Property Services department. The competent contractor will conduct a mechanical test every six months. A log of the contractor tests will be maintained

Annual Test: Servicing and testing will be arranged by the Property Services department. The competent contractor will conduct an annual integrity test. A log of the contractor tests will be maintained

Tenant Organisations are responsible for conducting their own checks, tests and servicing of fire safety equipment which prevents, detects, suppresses & fights fires.

21 Utilities:

The Property Services department will ensure that fixed electrical wiring and gas appliances are tested and maintained in accordance with statutory requirements and will maintain a log of test results.

PAT testing will also be managed by the Property Services department and a log maintained of test results. Employees/contractors are not permitted to bring un-tested personal portable appliances onto SBC's premises.

Visual pre-use inspections of portable electrical appliances should be conducted by employees. These will include checking for damaged casing, exposed wires, burn marks/smell, correct fuses used, damaged 4-way adaptors, overloaded 4-way adaptors, etc. Damaged equipment should be labelled [as defective], removed from service and either disposed of or appropriately stored until such time that it can be inspected by the Property Services department's electrical contractor.

22 Combustible and Flammable Material:

Wherever possible, all fabrics/blinds/curtains etc, used on site will be constructed of non-combustible material. Where flame-retardant treatments have been applied, their effectiveness will diminish over time and therefore treatment will need to be re-applied in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.

Flammable and combustible materials will be appropriately stored away from ignition sources and rubbish will not be permitted to accumulate on SBC premises.

COSHH substances used by employees/contractors and stored on site will be stored in appropriate storage containers in designated areas.

23 No Smoking:

In accordance with the Smoke Free legislation, smoking is not permitted anywhere inside or outside of SBC's buildings, this includes the use of e-cigarettes.

24 Fire Bag:

The [green] 'Fire Bag' is located on the ground floor Reception and contains:


- Floor Plans
- Fire Evacuation Procedures
- Fluorescent jacket
- First Aid Box
- Megaphone
- Spare copies of the 'Assembly Point Tick Sheets'

These items are taken to the Fire Assembly Point by the Customer Services Advisor on Reception together with the visitor/contractor sign-in/out logs and a walkie-talkie.

25 Construction Work:

These works are controlled by the Property Services department and fire safety risks will be assessed prior to the works being authorised. Contractor Risk Assessments and Method Statements will be signed off by the Property Services department who may require additional fire safety controls to be implemented for the duration of the construction works.

26 Signature:

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|------------|---|-------------|--------------|
| Position: | Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council | Date: | 18 May 2020 |
| Signature: |  | Print Name: | Nick Vickers |

Review Date: May 2023