

**Classification:** Public

**Key Decision:** No

## **Gravesham Borough Council**

**Report to:** Housing Committee  
**Date:** 3 February 2022  
**Reporting officer:** Nicole Arthur, Service Delivery Manager (Housing Repairs)  
**Subject:** Working Safely in Council Housing

### **Purpose and summary of report:**

To outline, and to give assurances to Housing Services Cabinet Committee on how DSO Building Management meets compliance with the general requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the more specific requirements of the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 2015.

### **Recommendations:**

1. For information only.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Gravesham Borough Council recognises its duty of care and is committed to creating a safe and healthy environment for all construction and maintenance activities within its housing stock. This will include thorough planning, co-ordination and project management from conception to completion
- 1.2 Gravesham Borough Council has a statutory duty to ensure that works undertaken to its housing stock is performed in a safe manner to prevent damage to property, or injury to any person (resident, employee or visitor) which is subject to the following specific regulations, Approved Codes of Practice and industry guidelines:
  - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
  - Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
  - Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
  - L153 – Managing Health and Safety in Construction
  - The Work at Height (Amendment) Regulations 2007
  - Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
  - Electricity at Work Regulations 1989
  - Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
  - Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992
  - Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
  - Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998
- The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005
- The Confined Spaces Regulations 1997
- The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005- Section 17 (Maintenance)

## **2. Construction Design and Management Regulations (CDM) 2015**

- 2.1 The Construction Design and Management Regulations (CDM) 2015 have been established to improve health and safety across the construction industry and require work to be planned and managed so the risks involved are eliminated or reduced so far as reasonably practicable.
- 2.2 The requirements of CDM apply to all “construction work” as defined within the Regulations. This definition includes a very wide scope of activities. Examples range from minor repairs and maintenance activities to major construction and renovation projects.
- 2.3 In 2016, DSO Building Management recruited a CDM Officer into the Compliancy Team to carry out the functions of the Designer or Principal Designer for DSO Building Management. The CDM Officer will liaise with all duty holders and stakeholders to ensure DSO Building Management construction and maintenance activities fulfil the requirements of the CDM Regulations.
- 2.4 In 2019 Management Team approved the Construction & Maintenance Safety Policy and Management Plan which describes how DSO Building Management effectively manages the requirements of the CDM Regulations to protect the health of our tenants, employees, contractors and members of the public from the potential risks associated with construction and maintenance activities. This document is reviewed and updated on an annual basis.

## **3. Contractor monitoring**

- 3.1 The CDM Officer carries out scheduled and unannounced site inspections on the Council’s contractors and provides comprehensive reports on a monthly basis to the relevant Project Manager and the Principal Contractor. The inspection report focuses on elements of the project that are specific to CDM Regulations, where applicable these include:
  - 3.1.1 Site security, signage, registration and housekeeping
  - 3.1.2 A Construction Phase Health and Safety Plan
  - 3.1.3 The Health and Safety File
  - 3.1.4 Statutory notices including HSE law poster and F10
  - 3.1.5 Emergency arrangements ( inc. fire safety plan & first aid provisions)
  - 3.1.6 Record of inductions, inspections, audits, incidents and accidents
  - 3.1.7 Evidence of training and competence
  - 3.1.8 RAMS and permits to work
  - 3.1.9 Hazardous substances including asbestos
  - 3.1.10 Traffic management
  - 3.1.11 Welfare facilities
  - 3.1.12 Maintenance records
  - 3.1.13 Personal Protection Equipment

- 3.1.14 Scaffolding & electrical safety
- 3.1.15 Waste management
- 3.2 The inspection report will recommend remedial actions, further control measures and deadlines to track progress and will be reviewed at contract meetings. An example of an inspection report can be found in Appendix 2.

#### **4. DSO Building Management in-house workforce**

- 4.1 The voids, responsive repairs and in-house work programmes are also subject to periodic site inspections by the CDM Officer with a subsequent follow up report. Unlike major projects not all of the elements of the CDM Regulations apply, however to ensure best practice, the managers and supervisors within the service adopt a similar approach when establishing safe systems of work.
- 4.2 In order to comply with the policy and regulations for the operational workforce, the managers and supervisors within DSO Building Management ensure:
  - 4.2.1 The relevant safety information is communicated effectively to all. This is done through a variety of channels such as training, toolbox talks, team meetings and one to ones.
  - 4.2.2 Risk assessments are in place and are an important element when ensuring the health and safety of employees and the public. Risk assessments are reviewed annually or when changes have been made or new hazards arise. Part of the process is to ensure that the workforce is consulted with and engaged in regards to risk and how they will be managed. Staff are also encouraged to report any accidents or incidents to enable changes in work practices or amendments to risk assessments. An example Risk Assessment can be found in Appendix 3.
  - 4.2.3 Work is planned sensibly for each day so that risks involved are managed from concept to completion.
  - 4.2.4 A skills matrix is carried out with all staff yearly to ensure the right people are used for the right task at the right time. Skill sets are embedded within the Oneserve system which ensures that only the relevant skillset and qualification is used.
  - 4.2.5 The right information is available for the workforce to ensure risks can be managed effectively, such as access to an up-to-date asbestos report.
  - 4.2.6 Health and safety issues are on the agenda of all routine management meetings and one to ones.
  - 4.2.7 An on-the-job risk assessment and relevant safety information is embedded within each individual appointment on Oneserve for the employee to complete and is monitored via the office.
- 4.3 Over the last three years, five accidents/ injuries have occurred amongst the operational workforce which have involved small injuries such as bruising as banging of hands which is low for this sector and also taking into account that over 65,000 repair jobs were undertaken during this period as well as refurbishment on 813 empty properties.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 As outlined within the report, there are sufficient health and safety arrangements in place across DSO Building Management that will continually be reviewed and improved upon and this should give Housing Committee confidence in the working practices and processes of the service.

## **6. Background papers**

- 6.1 None

IMPLICATIONS	APPENDIX 1
<b>Legal</b>	As a landlord, Gravesham Borough Council (GBC) has a legal responsibility to ensure the health and safety of their employees, contractors, tenants and others, by keeping the property safe and free from health hazards
<b>Finance and Value for Money</b>	Not having sufficient health and safety measures in place and safe systems of work has the potential to be extremely costly for the Council in regards to Public Liability and Employee Liability Claims.
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	Any breach of health and safety regulations is a criminal offence and as such, any company or individual manager found to be in breach of these health and safety regulations could face prosecution by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).
<b>Data Protection Impact Assessment</b>	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of <a href="#">personal data</a> or <a href="#">special category data</a> or <a href="#">criminal offence data</a>? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links.</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at <a href="mailto:gdpr@medway.gov.uk">gdpr@medway.gov.uk</a>. N/A</p>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No.</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No.</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
<b>Corporate Plan</b>	<p># 1 People</p> <p>Provide a Proactive, Supportive &amp; Financially Efficient Housing Service: high quality tenant management experienced through a service making full use of its assets.</p> <p>Put Our Customers First: Implement a suite of quality and effective front line service</p>
<b>Climate Change</b>	N/A
<b>Crime and Disorder</b>	N/A

<b>Digital and website implications</b>	N/A
<b>Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults</b>	N/A