

North Lanarkshire Council

Report

Communities and Housing Committee

approval noting

Ref BL/CB

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Smoke & Heat Detector Installation Programme

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to make Committee aware of the recent changes to the Housing Scotland Act (1987), specifically on the topic of smoke and heat detectors in domestic properties.

The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended) will insist on:

- at least one smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes,
- at least one smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings,
- at least one heat alarm installed in every kitchen,
- all alarms should be ceiling mounted, and
- all alarms should be interlinked.
- to allow specified types of sealed long-life battery alarms as well as mains-wired alarms – reflecting the availability of appropriate technology and will encourage compliance;
- to specify a maximum age of ten years for alarms; and to require carbon monoxide detectors in all homes.

In order to ensure the Council is fully compliant by the February 2021 deadline an installation programme is currently being developed.

Furthermore, existing contracts including gas heating and kitchen/ bathroom programmes are also being used to carry out assessments and installations whilst a new measured term contract (MTC) is being procured.

The cost of the installation programme is currently being considered, however it is estimated up to a maximum of £10m may be required over the course of the next two financial years (19/20 & 20/21). The profiling of the spend is also being reviewed.

There is currently no budget in place within the Housing Property & Projects (HP&P) capital plan to cover the costs associated with this programme, however HP&P will endeavour to manage a portion of the costs within the current allocation. A report to a future committee will be provided once a procurement exercise has been completed and the anticipated costs are clarified.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Communities and Housing Committee:

- Note the change to the Housing Scotland Act (1987) on the topic of smoke/ heat detection.
- Note the timescale for the Council to be compliant (February 2021).
- Note the estimated financial implications associated with the change in legislation and that these will be considered as part of the 20/21 HRA revenue estimates process.
- Approve the proposal to report back to a future committee on anticipated budget required.

Supporting Documents

The plan for North Lanarkshire This report reflects the action to improve the economic opportunities and outcomes by providing improved quality housing within the geographical boundaries of North Lanarkshire Council

1. Background

1.1 Installation of fire detection to domestic properties

Changes to the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 requires the Council to fit additional hard wired smoke and heat detectors in all homes.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to make committee aware of the recent changes and to note the anticipated costs to the Council of the change to legislation as well as the required timescale for the programme to be completed.

2. Report

2.1 Installation of fire detection to domestic properties

Further to an amendment to The Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 the new legislation will insist on:

- at least one smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes,
- at least one smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings,
- at least one heat alarm installed in every kitchen,
- all alarms should be ceiling mounted, and
- all alarms should be interlinked.
- to allow specified types of sealed long-life battery alarms as well as mains-wired alarms – reflecting the availability of appropriate technology and will encourage compliance;
- to specify a maximum age of ten years for alarms; and to require carbon monoxide detectors in all homes.

2.2 The new legislation came into force in February 2019, however landlords were given a two year period to undertaken the upgrades listed above, meaning that the Council has until February 2021 to undertake the requisite installations across its Housing stock.

2.3 HP&P are currently procuring a MTC for the installation programme. In the interim existing contracts are being used for detector installations, however this approach is unsustainable, as it would cost more than a standalone contract and installations wouldn't be complete in time for the February 2021 deadline.

2.4 The anticipated costs based on the required specification for a property which is currently non-compliant to be made fully compliant range between £250 - £415 depending on property type, however HP&P staff are anticipating that due to the size of the Council's portfolio economies of scale will be apparent.

2.5 HP&P will work closely with Financial Solutions colleagues in the upcoming months to finalise the budget requirements associated with this new programme. HP&P will continue to monitor the 19/20 capital allocation to identify if any opportunities exist in the current programme to contribute towards the larger installation scheme.

3. Equality and Diversity

3.1 Fairer Scotland

No impact under the Fairer Scotland Duty in relation to this report.

3.2 **Equality Impact Assessment**

No impact under the Equality Legislation in relation to this report.

4. **Implications**

4.1 **Financial Impact**

The cost of the work is currently being collated however it is estimated that up to £10m profiled over financial years 19/20 and 20/21 may be required to ensure that our current stock is legislatively compliant prior to the deadline of February 2021. The additional resource requirement will be incorporated into the mainstream capital programme once the procurement exercise has been concluded with any increase to the original programme funded through additional HRA borrowing.

4.2 **HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

There are no HR/Policy/Legislative impacts linked to this report.

4.3 **Environmental Impact**

There are no sustainability impacts directly arising as a result of this report.

4.4 **Risk Impact**

The most significant risk is that associated with the Council not being fully compliant across its full housing stock by the February 2021 deadline. HP&P will work towards ensuring this is mitigated by putting a new MTC in place as well as using existing contracts in the short term to undertake installations.

A further risk also exists within the marketplace. Given all Local Authorities and RSL's across the UK have the same requirement to be fully compliant by the February 2021 deadline, a risk with the availability or inflated costs for materials e.g. detectors may become apparent.

5. **Measures of success**

- 5.1 Success will be measured against the percentage of the Housing stock that is fully compliant by February 2021. HP&P are aiming for the Council to be 100% fully compliant by this date.
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