

Stevenage Borough Council

Building Safety Policy

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01. Table of Definitions

SBC	Stevenage Borough Council
BSA	The Building Safety Act 2022
FSA	The Fire Safety (England) Act 2022
RRFSO	The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – Amended by Fire Safety Act
HRRB	High Rise Residential Building – Over 18 Metres in height
ILS	Independent Living Scheme
DLUHC	Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities
BSR	Building Safety Regulator
FRA	Fire Risk Assessment
UPRN	Unique Property Reference Number
SIB	Secure Information Box
PIB	Premises Information Box
HFRS	Herts Fire & Rescue Service

02. Statement of Commitment

Stevenage Borough Council (SBC) are committed to providing a safe place to live for our residents and a safe place to work for our staff and contractors. To ensure this we will implement all aspects of The Building Safety Act and deliver a “Best Practice” approach to the management of our buildings and related fire safety assets that are critical to managing the buildings.

03. Buildings in Scope

The Building Safety Act (BSA) clearly defines the scope of buildings to which it applies, these are identified as being over 18 metres in height. We have included as Appendix A a list of these buildings.

Whilst the BSA is clear on instructing us to manage buildings over 18 Metres in height in a different way than other buildings, SBC are aware that the BSA is enabling legislation and at some point, in the future, DLUHC will lower the height of buildings to be included within scope of the BSA.

To meet the current requirements of the act, we must register our five High Rise Residential Buildings (HRRBs) and complete the building safety cases for them.

We will manage our purpose-built Independent Living Schemes in the same way as we will our HRRBs as we consider them to be High Risk buildings, at this time we do not need to register them or develop building safety cases.

04. Legislation & Guidance

We have given regard to the following legislation and guidance in preparing this policy.

- The Building Safety Act 2022
- The Fire Safety (England) Act 2022
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – Amended by Fire Safety Act
- LACoRS – Fire Safety Guidance (Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services)
- Fire Safety in Specialised Housing – National Fire Chiefs Council Guidance
- Fire Safety in Purpose Built Blocks of Flats – Local Government Association
- Housing Act 2004, which introduced the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002
- Furniture and Furnishing (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Equality Act 2010
- Building Regulations – Approved Document B
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 – As amended
- Management of Health & Safety at Works Regulations 2006
- Workplace (Health Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Health & Safety Executive INDG236 – “Maintaining Portable Electric Equipment”
- All relevant British Standards

05. Supporting Documents & Policies

- Stevenage Borough Council Fire Safety Policy.
- Stevenage Borough Council Tenancy Agreement.

06. Golden Thread

The Building Safety Act, creates a legal duty on duty holders and Accountable Persons to create, obtain, store and share documents and information about our buildings in a prescribed format, this includes the six main principles of:-

- Kept Digitally.
- Kept Securely.
- A Building’s Single Source of Truth.
- Available to people who need the information to do a job.
- Available when the person needs the information.
- Presented in a way that people can use.

A more detailed breakdown of information required for the Golden Thread is attached as Appendix B

07. Roles & Responsibilities

The Building Safety Act identifies new duty holders, who will be known as “Accountable Persons”.

In relation to this policy and the implementation of the Building Safety Act, the Accountable Person is the Body-Corporate, Stevenage Borough Council.

The Roles & Responsibilities for key stakeholders across SBC are detailed below:

- **Chief Executive:** Will need to ensure that adequate resources are made available to ensure we are able to comply with the requirements of legislation. For existing properties that fall within the BSA, the Chief Executive will delegate their responsibilities to the Assistant Director of Housing and Head of Resident Safety. For properties under construction and yet to be completed the Chief Executive will delegate their responsibilities to the Assistant Director of Development.
- **The Executive:** Will provide guidance on the development of policy for the Building Safety Act. A consolidated report on the day-to-day management, risk, issues will be reviewed by the executive and recorded. Future issues around mandatory reporting will be escalated to the executive.
- **Senior Leadership Team:** Will review reports that provide progress updates to ensure that SBC is meeting the requirements of the Building Safety Act, Fire Safety Act (England) 2021, this policy and the SBC Fire Safety Policy
- **Housing Service Leads:** Will work closely with the Head of Resident Safety and others to design and implement suitable projects within their respective service responsibilities to ensure SBC is compliant with legislation.
- **Head of Resident Safety:** Is responsible for the overall implementation of the policy and the development and delivery of the projects detailed within. The Head of Resident Safety will monitor and track performance to ensure SBC remains compliant with current legislative requirements and that projects are on track to ensure we are ready for the implementation of future legislation and guidance. The Head of Resident Safety will work closely with all departments across SBC to deliver the requirements of this policy and to ensure buildings within the scope of the BSA remain safe. The Head of Resident Safety will work closely with the Fire Safety Manager and Building Safety Inspector to ensure SBC meet these legislative requirements. The Head of Resident Safety will provide regular updates to Senior Leadership Team and Compliance Group.
- **Fire Safety Manager:** Is responsible for managing all compliance activities and informing the Head of Resident Safety of any compliance related issues which may affect the safety of buildings in scope.
- **Building Safety Inspector:** Will support the Fire Safety Manager with general administration, contract management and ensuring access is in place. They will record completed reports, ensuring that they are uploaded to central storage areas and shared with Fire Safety Manager and Head of Resident Safety.

08. Fire Risk Assessments

Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) will be conducted annually across all buildings in scope of the BSA. Future FRAs will see the Fire Safety Manager & Building Safety Inspector meet and escort assessors on each FRA to ensure suitable access is available, to share feedback and evidence on completed works. They will also ensure that any urgent issues identified are recorded and raised, with mitigation or remedial actions being implemented.

09. Management of Building Safety Risks

We will make an assessment of the building safety risks for each of our higher-risk buildings and will review that assessment at regular intervals, and at any time that we have reason to suspect that the current assessment is no longer valid, or at the direction of the regulator and within the specified time period.

We will take all reasonable steps to prevent a building safety risk materialising and all reasonable steps to reduce the severity of any incident resulting from such a risk materialising. Where necessary, we will carry

out such works to prevent a building safety risk from materialising and to reduce the severity of any incident resulting from such a risk materialising. We will take those necessary steps promptly, make and give effect to arrangements for the purpose of ensuring the planning, organisation, control, monitoring and review and record of the steps we take in regard to building safety risks.

10. Mandatory Reporting

We acknowledge our responsibility under the BSA to give prescribed information that relates to building safety to the regulator by the prescribed time and in the way specified, and we will establish and operate an effective mandatory occurrence reporting system which complies with the prescribed requirements.

At the time of writing this policy, the Building Safety Regulator had not published the final details and format of their requirements for Mandatory Reporting. Once this information is published it will be adopted into the next version of this policy.

11. Person Centred Fire Risk Assessment (PCFRA)

SBC will train all Housing Officers, Support Officers and those interacting directly with residents during such events as a tenancy audit and where we are informed that a resident may have difficulty in safely evacuating their home, will complete a PC-FRA.

PCFRAs help to identify residents who are at higher risk from fire in their own home, whether this is due to their behaviours or their ability to respond and escape from a fire, for an example a resident with disabilities.

The PCFRA focuses on three key areas;

- 1 An increased fire risk. Example might be of a resident with mobility issues who is a careless smoker.
- 2 Ability to react to a fire or fire alarm
- 3 Ability to respond and escape a fire

PCFRA's will be conducted across our Independent Living Schemes and in general needs properties as we are advised or learn of residents who may be of increased risk from the items list above.

Following the completion of a PCFRA, there may be a need to develop a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) and or implement mitigation measures to ensure additional safety for identified vulnerable residents.

12. Fire Door Survey & Management

New legislation requires us to undertake regular inspections of all Fire Doors within our housing stock, this includes the following categories of Fire Door:-

Flat Entrance Doors – Including Leasehold Flats

Riser Cupboard Doors

Cross Corridor Doors

Electrical Intake Doors

Storage Cupboard Doors (If they open onto common parts)

To fulfil our duties in this area SBC will appoint an external specialist consultant. Who will conduct quarterly inspections on all Fire Doors in common parts and an annual inspection of Flat Entrance Doors.

This will also require us to build an additional “No Access” policy for the inspection of Flat Entrance Doors, the act provides legal measures to compel residents to provide access. This measure forms part of our no access process.

SBC will at the time of the initial survey of each door, install an RFID tag and define each door a UPRN, this will allow migration of data into our asset management system.

Where, if following the inspection of a door, it is found not to meet a “Notional” status, we will carry out repairs to the door, to bring it up to the required status and performance, if this is not possible, due to damage as an example, we will replace that door, with a new door set.

13. Premises Information Boxes / Secure Information Boxes

It is a requirement that all of the buildings that are in scope of the act, have a Secure Information Box fitted, that can easily be located by the Fire & Rescue Service upon attendance.

These boxes must contain:-

Current Floor Plans for each floor, with key information clearly identified

A list of vulnerable residents, with additional information about flats that may contain medical gases.

Keys / Fob to all doors on all floors, other than Flat Entrance Doors

We will regularly review and update the information stored within the boxes.

14. Fire & Rescue Service Liaison

The act mandates that we have a relationship with the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) and that we co-operate with all requests for information.

This may also include supporting site visits from various staff (Watches) to facilitate a clear understanding of the building layout and how FRS would manage any emergency.

There is now a requirement to notify FRS if a fire safety asset, including any Fire Fighting or Fire Fighters Lifts are or will be out of service for more than 24 hours. This is to ensure that FRS can make alternative arrangements in the provision of equipment or for SBC of HFR to carry out additional mitigation measures, until the equipment is back in service.

We will develop a reporting mechanism with FRS to advise of any asset issues, along with a clear timeline to bring that asset back into operational performance.

15. Fire Signage / Wayfinding Signage

To support the implementation of this act Approved Document “B” of Building Regulations has been updated to clearly define what type of Fire and Waypoint Signage is required in buildings in scope of the act.

In addition to existing Fire Action Notices, we must install clear Wayfinding Signage, pointing residents in the direction of Fire Exits. We must also install floor number signage at low level in stairwells, to assist FRS in identifying which floor they are on, if the stairwell is engulfed in smoke.

16. Contractor Management

The act specifies that only “Competent Contractors” can work in or on buildings within the scope of the BSA.

The compliance team and SBC contract managers will ensure that all contractors and operatives are competent to carry out specified works on our buildings.

We will by October 2023, implement a “Permit to Work” scheme on all of the in-scope buildings, which will ensure that Method Statements for each piece of work have been reviewed and approved, prior to commencement of any works.

In the event that works are required to pass through or compromise existing compartmentation, then an appropriate Fire Risk Assessment must be carried out and an inspection by a suitably qualified person, check that the compartmentation has been suitably completed.

No “Hot Works” will be allowed in any in scope buildings, without prior approval. A detailed Method Statement will be required, which must include how a small initial fire in the local area will be extinguished.

17. Resident Communication

We must display in a conspicuous part of the building a notice board containing all of the information prescribed in the act. In addition, this includes information about dates of servicing of all compliance and fire safety assets. This is to provide assurance to residents that all of the fire safety equipment and assets are working as they should.

The BSA also provides a requirement for SBC to communicate with all residents to ensure that they are aware of what to do in the event of a fire, aware of what Fire Safety Assets / Equipment is in place and the part that it plays in providing fire safety to residents, visitors and the Fire & Rescue Service in the event of their attendance.

SBC will deliver its responsibilities in this area by ensuring:

At the time of onboarding a new resident / family, we provide a site-specific document that highlights all of this information, along with providing detailed information of how to report any concerns to SBC if a Fire Safety Asset is not working.

Once a year, SBC will write to all residents in blocks that are in scope of the BSA and provide the above information again. The aim of this is to regularly remind residents about Fire Safety information.

18. Resident Engagement Strategy

The BSA requires SBC to develop a resident engagement strategy specifically for all residents and any person who owns a residential unit in a building in scope of the BSA.

The BSA places a legal obligation on the Accountable Person "Stevenage Borough Council" to ensure residents are involved in all "Building Safety Decisions". A building safety decision is a decision made by us about the management of the building in connection with the performance of our duties as the accountable person or under regulations contained in the BSA.

To meet our requirements under this part of the act, SBC will:-

- Develop and implement a resident engagement strategy that promotes residents' engagement and involvement in decision making about safety issues.
- Establish a complaints system that ensures residents' safety concerns are heard and dealt with.
- Residents will also have the ability to escalate complaints to the Building Safety Regulator.

Once developed we will provide a copy of our resident engagement strategy to all residents in the building that are over 16 years of age.

To support a focused complaints system, for complaints that relate to building safety, we will establish and operate a system for investigating relevant complaints regarding a building safety risk, or the performance of an accountable person for the building or any duty under the BSA or a duty under any regulations made under the Act.

19. Resident Obligations

The BSA not only introduces duties on SBC as the landlord / building owner, but for the first time introduces obligations on residents, to:

- Not act in a way that creates a significant risk of fire or structural failure.
- Not interfere with any relevant safety item.
- Comply with a request by the Accountable Person for information or access to reasonably perform their duties to assess and manage building safety risks.

Where a resident or owner of a residential unit contravenes their duty not to interfere with a relevant safety item, we will give them a contravention notice that specifies how we believe they have interfered, tells them what they should do to remedy their contravention giving them a reasonable time to do so, tells them what they must not do in the future to avoid repeating the interference, and tells them what we may do further if they do not comply with the notice.

We may include in the notice a requirement for the relevant person to pay us the necessary cost to repair or replace the relevant safety item to rectify their interference. The cost we charge will not exceed the reasonable cost of repairing or replacing the relevant safety item. When necessary, we may make an application to the county court to make an order in respect of the sum we have charged in relation to the relevant building safety item.

Where we require access to some part of the building to assess or manage a building safety risk or to determine whether the duty on residents and owners of residential units in the building not to interfere with relevant safety items has been breached, we will request access in writing setting out the purpose for which we are requesting access, we will explain why it is necessary for us to enter the premises for that purpose, we will make request to access at a reasonable time, and will give at least 48 hours' notice. If we are denied access, the act provides us powers to make an application to the county court for an order to grant us access.

20. External Wall Assessment

It is a requirement of the BSA that we undertake an intrusive External Wall Assessment, to establish the entire make up of the external wall system. SBC have appointed specialist external consultants to carry these out. The outputs from these surveys, will be used to support our Building Safety Case for each of our HRRBs.

21. Building Safety Case

Under the Building Safety Act, Stevenage Borough Council, will have to provide a Building Safety Case for each of our HRRBs every five years. The Safety Case will evidence how SBC have ensured that the building is safe and is required before the Regulator issues a licence. Whilst this licence is needed to occupy the building, SBC can continue tenancies within a block, whilst the licence is pending.

We will prepare a building safety case report containing our assessment of the building safety risks and a brief description of any steps we take to manage or mitigate those risks. We will update that building safety case where we make further assessment of building safety risks and when we add further steps to our management of building safety risks.

We will notify the regulator as soon as is reasonably practicable after we prepare or revise a safety case report, and if the regulator asks us to, we will provide a copy of it to the regulator as soon as reasonably practicable.

It is estimated by the BSR that it will take around three years (from October 2023) for them to be at a point to evaluate safety cases for our two tallest blocks (Brent & Harrow Court) and a further year to review the remaining three buildings.

22. New Build Development of over 18m Buildings

The golden thread will hold the information that those responsible for the building require to identify, understand, manage, and mitigate building safety risks in order to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse throughout the lifecycle of the building. The information stored in the golden thread will be reviewed and managed so that the information developed and retained, clearly identifies all elements of safety to achieve the purpose of providing clear evidence of materials and workmanship.

The golden thread covers both the information and documents, and the information management processes (or steps) used to support building safety. The government (DHULC) has defined the information as including all the information necessary to understand and manage risks to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse in a building.

The golden thread information should be stored as structured digital information. It will be stored, managed, maintained and retained in line with the golden thread principles.

We will apply for a completion certificate before we occupy a newly constructed higher risk building, we create additional residential units in such a building, or we carry out works that cause a building to become a higher-risk building.

23. Emergency Evacuation Alarms

It is a requirement of the BSA that in all new build residential properties over 18 metres, that a full emergency evacuation alert system is installed.

This will allow HFRS in the event of an emergency to manage an evacuation of a property, in phases according to floors and or call a full evacuation.

SBC will ensure that all new build properties in scope of the BSA will have such an alert system installed during the build phase and will be handed over to the Compliance Team to ensure that regular servicing, maintenance, and testing is carried out.

At the point of developing this policy, it is not a requirement to retrospectively install an emergency evacuation alert system to existing buildings. We will continue to monitor any changes to legislation in this area and will update this policy should requirements change.

24. Review Frequency

The BSA is intended to be enabling legislation and as such is subject to update and change, following guidance or regulation changes from DHULC or the Building Safety Regulator.

To support this and ensure that this policy is kept up to date with any changes in guidance or legislation, SBC will review this policy on a six monthly basis.

Appendix A – List of In Scope Buildings

Name of Building	Address	Type
Harrow Court	Silam Road, Stevenage, SG1 1JN	HRRB
Brent Court	Silam Road, Stevenage, SG1 1JS	HRRB
High Plash	Cuttys Lane, Stevenage, SG1 1JG	HRRB
High Croft	The Chace, Stevenage, SG2 8QU	HRRB
The Towers	Southgate, Stevenage, SG1 1HE	HRRB
Fred Millard Court	Cuttys Lane, Stevenage, SG1 1UQ	ILS
Gladstone Court	Spring Drive, Stevenage, SG2 8AY	ILS
Highfield Court	Grace Way, Stevenage, SG1 5EH	ILS
Norman Court	York Road, Stevenage, SG1 4HP	ILS
Pinewoods	Broadwater Crescent, SG2 8EN	ILS
Pitt Court	Park View, Stevenage, SG2 8PR	ILS
Shaftesbury Court	Buckthorn Avenue, SG1 1TX	ILS
Silkin Court	Cotney Croft, Stevenage, SG2 9PU	ILS
Truro Court	Canterbury Way, Stevenage, SG1 4LF	ILS
Grosvenor Court	Filey Close, Stevenage, SG1 2JN	ILS

This list of blocks is correct as of 15th May 2023. It will be further reviewed in November 2023, to establish if the scope of the Building Safety Act has increased, bringing building below 18 metres into scope.

SBC will continue to review building to establish if they are in scope of the act, on a six monthly basis

Appendix B – Principles of the Golden Thread

The below information is extracted from DHLUC publication “Golden Thread Definition”

Full Definition

- 1 The golden thread will hold the information that those responsible for the building require to identify, understand, manage and mitigate building safety risks in order to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse throughout the lifecycle of the building. The information stored in the golden thread will be reviewed and managed so that the information retained at all times achieves this purpose.
- 2 The golden thread covers both the information and documents, and the information management processes (or steps) used to support building safety. The government has defined the information as including all the information necessary to understand and manage risks to prevent or reduce the severity of the consequences of fire spread or structural collapse in a building.
- 3 The golden thread information should be stored as structured digital information. It will be stored, managed, maintained and retained in line with the golden thread principles (see annex below). The Government will specify digital standards which will provide guidance on how the principles can be met.
- 4 The golden thread information management approach will apply through design, construction, occupation, refurbishment and ongoing management of buildings. It supports the wider changes in the regime to promote a culture of building safety.
- 5 Building safety should be taken to include the fire and structural safety of a building and the safety of all the people in or in the vicinity of a building (including emergency responders).

Annex: Golden Thread Principles

- 1 **Accurate and Trusted:** the dutyholder/Accountable Person/Building Safety Managers (BSM) and other relevant persons (e.g. contractors) must be able to use the golden thread to maintain and manage building safety. The Regulator should also be able to use this information as part of their work to assess the safety of the building and the operator’s safety case report, including supportive evidence, and to hold people to account. The golden thread will be a source of evidence to show how building safety risks are understood and how they are being managed on an ongoing basis. The golden thread must be accurate and trusted – it will not be used unless people trust that the information in the golden thread is accurate and up to date . The information produced will therefore have to be accurate, structured and verified, requiring a clear change control process that sets out how and when information is updated and who should update and check the information.
- 2 **Residents feeling secure in their homes:** residents will be provided information from the golden thread – so that they have accurate and trusted information about their home. This will also support residents in holding Accountable Persons and Building Safety Managers to account for building safety. A properly maintained golden thread should support accountable persons in providing residents the assurance that their building is being managed safely.
- 3 **Culture change:** the golden thread will support culture change within the industry as it will require increased competence and capability, different working practices, updated processes and a focus on information management and control. The golden thread should be considered an enabler for better and more collaborative working.
- 4 **Single point of truth:** the golden thread will bring all information together in a single place (potentially a Common Data Environment) meaning there is always a ‘single point of truth’. It will record changes (i.e. updates to information/plans), including the reason for change, evaluation of change, date of change, and the decision-making process. This will reduce the duplication of information (email updates and multiple documents) and help drive improved accountability, responsibility and a new working culture.

- 5 **Secure:** the golden thread must be secure, with sufficient protocols in place to protect personal information and control access to maintain the security of the building or residents. It should also comply with current GDPR legislation where required.
- 6 **Accountable:** the golden thread will record changes (i.e. updates to information), when these changes were made and by who. This will help drive improved accountability. The new regime is setting out clear duties for the duty holders and the Accountable Person for maintaining the golden thread information to meet the required standards. Therefore, there is accountability at every level – from the Client/Accountable Person to those designing, building or maintaining a building. This will mean that changes can more easily be tracked, and this will support better building safety.
- 7 **Understandable/ Simple to access (accessible)/Consistent:** the golden thread needs to support the user in their task of managing building safety. The information in the golden thread must be clear, understandable and focused on the needs of the user. It should be presented in a way that can be understood and used by users. This also should consider that users have different needs. The information should be accessible so that people can easily find the right information at the right time. This means that the information needs to be stored in a structured way (i.e. like a library) so people can easily find, update and extract the right information. The Government will set out the digital standards which will apply to the golden thread. Storing information to digital standards would mean the information is stored in a structured way. To support this dutyholders/Accountable person should where possible make sure the golden thread uses standard methods, processes and consistent terminology so that those working with multiple buildings can more easily access, understand and use the information consistently and effectively.
- 8 **Longevity/ Durability of information:** the golden thread information needs to be formatted in a way that can be easily handed over and maintained over the entire life time of a building. In practical terms this is likely to mean that it needs to align with the rules around open source data – so that information can be handed over in the future and still be accessed. Information should be able to be shared and accessed by contractors who use different software and if the building is sold the golden thread information must be accessible to the new owner. This does not mean everything about a building and its history needs to be kept, the golden thread must be reviewed to ensure that the information within it is still relevant and useful.
- 9 **Relevant / Proportionate:** preserving the golden thread does not mean everything about a building and its history needs to be kept and updated from inception to disposal. The objective of the golden thread is building safety and therefore if information is no longer relevant to building safety it does not need to be kept. The golden thread, the changes to it and processes related to it must be reviewed periodically to ensure that the information comprising it remains relevant and useful.

Appendix C – Clarification of Roles & Responsibilities