Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council

Fire Safety Policy

Introduction

The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) places duties on "responsible persons" (See 1, Glossary of Terms) to the extent that they have control over premises, to:

- assess the risks posed by fire to the health and safety of their employees and to anyone else who may be affected by their activities; and
- to eliminate those risks, so far as reasonably practicable, or to otherwise reduce those risks to a tolerable level.

In the Council context the "responsible person", as defined by the FSO, will be the Town Clerk. On a day-to-day basis, the responsibility for ensuring that these duties are undertaken will be delegated to individual employees within the Council (see 5. Organisational Responsibilities).

Policy Statement

Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council recognises and acknowledges its responsibility to take general precautions to protect the safety, so far as reasonably practicable, of its employees, volunteers, visitors and service services and anyone else potentially affected by its undertaking, against fire, dangerous substances which could give rise to fire and the effects of fire.

Policy Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that:

- Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clearly defined and understood in order to secure fire safety and both corporate and individual compliance with relevant legislation;
- One or more competent persons is appointed to provide fire safety advice;
- Risks from fire, or from dangerous substances (See 2, Glossary of Terms) which could lead to a fire, are assessed and control measures commensurate with the general principles of control (See 3, Glossary of Terms) or the principles of control (dangerous substances) (See 4, Glossary of Terms) described in the FSO are implemented to either eliminate risk or to reduce residual risk to a tolerable level;
- Measures are devised and implemented to ensure that satisfactory procedures are in place to reduce risks to persons in the event of a fire and that all persons affected are able to reach a place of safety (See 5, Glossary of Terms) in the event of an emergency;

- Any aspect of the Council's premises and any equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety is maintained, by a competent person, in a fit and efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;
- All employees of the Council including contractors and visitors, are provided with clear and relevant information regarding fire risks and measures taken to prevent fires occurring or to mitigate against the consequences of fire;
- Council buildings are designed in accordance with relevant standards;
- Employees are properly consulted about policy, procedures and arrangements for ensuring fire safety;
- Employees are provided with appropriate information, instruction and training at appropriate intervals about the fire precautions in their relevant place of work within Council premises;
- The Council co-operates and co-ordinates, as necessary, with any other responsible persons as defined by the FSO;
- The Council will liaise with relevant statutory authorities as required by the FSO and any other relevant statutory provisions.

Application

This Fire Safety Policy applies to all premises and activities falling, to any extent, under the Council's control. The policy sets down the framework by which the Council and all employees of the Council will be expected to meet their fire safety duties.

The majority of premises, that are the Council's responsibility, including any temporary structures, fall within the requirements of the FSO.

Organisational Responsibilities

The Council (Responsible Person)

The "responsible person" will ensure that:

Adequate resources are made available to enable the Council to fulfil their duties under the FSO.

The Town Clerk

The Town Clerk will be responsible for ensuring that, in areas falling under their control:

- The significant findings of fire risk assessments relating to building fabric and structure are properly addressed and suitable control measures implemented in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;
- All premises features (e.g. structural components, fire doors, partitions etc.) and equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety is maintained, by a competent person, in a fit and efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;
- All new and refurbished areas are so designed to ensure compliance with this policy and the requirements of any relevant fire-safety legislation;
- Where relevant, construction contractors engaged for, or on their behalf, undertake a fire risk assessment before commencing works on site;

- Liaise and co-operate, as applicable, with other responsible persons, e.g. tenants / contractors, to ensure that they are aware of the Council's fire safety policy and procedures and to identify any risks arising from their activities which could impact upon the Council or employees of the Council.
- Fire risk assessments are undertaken (building fabric and structure and means of escape only) and significant findings brought to the attention of those responsible so that they may fulfil their duties under this policy;
- Competent fire safety advice is available to enable the Council to comply with its duties under this policy, the FSO and any other relevant legislation and standards;
- Relevant statutory bodies are consulted on matters of fire safety as and when necessary;
- Appropriate guidance and standards are developed to enable the requirements of this policy to be properly implemented;
- Appropriate fire safety information, instruction and training is made available to all employees of the Council as required.

Managers

Managers will be responsible for ensuring that:

- All activities and processes falling under their control are assessed for fire safety and suitable control measures implemented in accordance with the principles of control (General and Dangerous Substances) defined in the FSO;
- All employees falling under their control are given training and instruction in fire safety matters commensurate with their activities;
- Sufficient numbers of people are appointed as fire wardens for all areas
- occupied by their departments;
- All staff, visitors and contractors falling under their control comply with the requirements of the fire safety policy.

Employees

All employees have a responsibility to comply with the Fire Safety Policy. This will include, but not be limited to:

- Observing all instructions, information and training intended to secure fire safety;
- Co-operating with the Council on matters of fire safety;
- Not interfering with any building fabric or equipment provided in connection with assuring fire safety;
- Report any obvious defects or short-comings in Council's fire safety
- arrangements or procedures.

NB. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy could result in disciplinary action being taken.

Contractors

Contractors are required to:

- Assess the fire safety risks arising from their works / activities and implement control measures in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;

- Co-operate with the Council on all matters of fire safety;
- Ensure that they and all staff falling under their control have received appropriate information, instruction and training to enable them to comply with this policy and the Council's emergency arrangements;
- Obey all instructions relating to fire safety given by authorised members of the Council.

NB. Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy could result in the contractor being asked to leave site and removal from the Council's list of approved suppliers / contractors.

Tenants (Commercial properties)

Tenants will have their own duties under the FSO. This will include the identification of a responsible person. This responsible person will have a responsibility to:

- Co-operate with the Council to ensure that the Council can meet all relevant statutory requirements;
- Assess the fire safety risks arising from their works / activities and implement control measures in accordance with the principles of control defined in the FSO;
- Ensure that they and all staff falling under their control have received appropriate information, instruction and training to enable them to comply with this policy and the Council's emergency arrangements.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed bi-annually by Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council at a Full Council Meeting.

This policy has been agreed and approved by Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council.

Cllr P Davidson

Cllr Pamela Davidson
Chair of Appleby-in-Westmorland Town Council

Adopted by Appleby-in Westmorland Council on 19th March 2025
Review Date: March 2027

Glossary of Terms:

1. Responsible Person:

According to the FSO "responsible person" means—

(a) in relation to a workplace, the employer, if the workplace is to any extent under his control;
(b) in relation to any premises not falling within paragraph (a)—
    i. the person who has control of the premises (as occupier or otherwise) in connection with the carrying on by him of a trade, business or other undertaking (for profit or not); or
    ii. the owner, where the person in control of the premises does not have control in connection with the carrying on by that person of a trade, business or other undertaking.

2. Dangerous Substances:

(a) a substance or preparation which meets the criteria in the approved classification and labelling guide for classification as a substance or preparation which is explosive, oxidising, extremely flammable, highly flammable or flammable, whether or not that substance or preparation is classified under the CHIP Regulations;
(b) a substance or preparation which because of its physico-chemical or chemical properties and the way it is used or is present in or on premises creates a risk; and
(c) any dust, whether in the form of solid particles or fibrous materials or otherwise, which can form an explosive mixture with air or an explosive atmosphere;

3. Principles of Control (General):

The FSO defines the principles of control, in order of preference, as being

(a) avoiding risks;
(b) evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided;
(c) combating the risks at source;
(d) adapting to technical progress;
(e) replacing the dangerous by the non-dangerous or less dangerous;
(f) developing a coherent overall prevention policy which covers technology, organisation of work and the influence of factors relating to the working environment;
(g) giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures; and
(h) giving appropriate instructions to employees.

4. Principles of Control (Dangerous Substances):

The FSO states that:

1. The responsible person must, in order of priority—

(a) reduce the quantity of dangerous substances to a minimum;
(b) avoid or minimise the release of a dangerous substance;
(c) control the release of a dangerous substance at source;
(d) prevent the formation of an explosive atmosphere, including the application of appropriate ventilation;

(e) ensure that any release of a dangerous substance which may give rise to risk is suitably collected, safely contained, removed to a safe place, or otherwise rendered safe, as appropriate; avoid—
    i. ignition sources including electrostatic discharges; and
    ii. such other adverse conditions as could result in harmful physical effects
    iii. from a dangerous substance; and
(f) segregate incompatible dangerous substances.

2. The responsible person must ensure that mitigation measures include:

(a) reducing to a minimum the number of persons exposed;
(b) measures to avoid the propagation of fires or explosions;
(c) providing explosion pressure relief arrangements;
(d) providing explosion suppression equipment;
(e) providing plant which is constructed so as to withstand the pressure likely to be produced by an explosion; and
(f) providing suitable personal protective equipment.

3. The responsible person must:

(a) ensure that the premises are designed, constructed and maintained so as to reduce risk;
(b) ensure that suitable special, technical and organisational measures are designed, constructed, assembled, installed, provided and used so as to reduce risk;
(c) ensure that special, technical and organisational measures are maintained in an efficient state, in efficient working order and in good repair;
(d) ensure that equipment and protective systems meet the requirements of the FSO;
(e) where the work is carried out in hazardous places or involves hazardous activities, ensure that appropriate systems of work are applied including —
    i. the issuing of written instructions for the carrying out of work; and
    ii. a system of permits to work, with such permits being issued by a person with responsibility for this function prior to the commencement of the work concerned.

5. Place of Safety:

In relation to premises, means a safe area beyond the premises.