

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places (Introduced by the Executive Member for Places)	Executive Cabinet	22 November 2012

LANCASHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING RELATING TO ENFORCMENT WORK

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To seek Members authorisation for the sign up to two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service and the Councils housing standards and workplace health and safety enforcement function.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. Members accept the terms of the Electrical Safety in Workplaces Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and authorise the Director of People and Places to sign.
3. Members accept the terms of the Housing Standards Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and authorise the Director of People and Places to sign.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. The Councils workplace health and safety enforcement and housing standards enforcement teams have been approached by Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service to sign up to two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between the two organisations. The MoU's relate to the Councils enforcement work in these areas.
5. Members will find the two MoU's referred to at Appendices 1 and 2 as follows:
 - Appendix 1 – Housing Fire Safety MoU
 - Appendix 2 – Electrical Safety in Workplaces MoU
6. The MoU's seek to formalise an unwritten arrangement that has existed between the two organisations so that there is clarity in terms of where responsibility lies in relation to both enforcement of fire safety provision in domestic dwellings and enforcement of electrical safety in workplaces that fall within Chorley Council's enforcement responsibility.
7. Both MoUs will be used by the respective enforcement teams as a reference document to ensure we provide the appropriate enforcement response where issues of fire safety arise in houses or electrical safety in workplaces.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

8. To ensure that partnership working in the areas of housing fire safety enforcement and electrical safety in work places enforcement is effectively coordinated and the roles and responsibilities of both organisations are fully understood.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

9. An alternative option would be not to sign up to the MoU's and continue with the informal arrangement between the organisations in determining enforcement responsibility and the agency best place to take action.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

10. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	√	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	√	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	√

BACKGROUND – FIRE SAFETY IN DWELLINGS

11. Chorley has approximately 45,000 domestic dwellings ranging from owner occupied detached dwellings to single room bedsits in the private rented sector.
12. Fire safety is an important element in domestic dwellings and particularly important in multiple occupied properties where the means of escape in the event of a fire requires effective control to ensure escape routes and building exits are kept clear.
13. Similarly all dwellings ought to have some means of fire detection to warn occupants in the event of a fire, although these are generally only enforceable in multiple occupied properties.
14. The MoU relating to this area of work will ensure effective liaison between housing enforcement officers and fire service colleagues where either agency identifies properties and hence occupants at risk.
15. Appropriate advice can be provided and where appropriate effective enforcement can then be agreed between the two agencies to ensure property owners and occupants provide the most appropriate fire safety measures.

BACKGROUND – ELECTRICAL SAFETY IN WORKPLACES

16. Chorley Council has enforcement responsibility for approximately 1,700 workplaces in the Borough ranging from small retail shops and offices to large warehousing and distribution premises.
17. A common cause of fires in workplace premises is due to poorly maintained or installed electrical equipment.
18. During routine visits or following a fire; both agencies will liaise where safety concerns are raised due to electrical safety and appropriate action will be agreed on providing a resolution.

19. This may range from simple advice to prohibition in the use of affected equipment or improvement to electrical infrastructure.

RESOURCES

20. Sign up to the MoU's is not anticipated to require additional resources and agreed actions and referrals will be absorbed within existing work streams and inspection programmes

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

21. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	√	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	√	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area	√	Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

22. I can confirm that the additional resources required within this report, namely training, will be provided from existing resources and therefore there are no financial implications for the council's budget.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

23. There are no issues arising out of this report other than the need to ensure that enforcement officers are duly authorised and are acting within their powers when undertaking enforcement work under the terms of these MoU's

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
LACORS Guidance Housing Fire Safety 2008	August 2008	www.lacors.gov.uk/lacors/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?id=19844	Online