

### Independent Retirement Living Communal Lounge Policy (Housing, Andy Vincent)

**Synopsis of report:**

**A draft of the Independent Retirement Living Communal Lounge Policy was presented to Housing Committee in September 2022.**

**Permission was given by Committee for Runnymede Borough Council's Housing Service to consult with Independent Retirement Living residents on the draft policy.**

**Consultation has been concluded and the policy is being presented for approval.**

**Recommendation(s):**

- I. Housing Committee note the consultation results and the inability of the Housing Service to engage with Independent Retirement Living residents on this issue.**
- II. Housing Committee approve the Independent Retirement Living Communal Lounge Policy (Appendix A).**

**1. Context and background of report**

- 1.1 There is currently no policy in place for the use of Communal Lounges within our Independent Retirement Living (IRL) schemes. Historically managers have overseen the use and it is now deemed appropriate to have a consistent policy in place for all five schemes.
- 1.2 This policy applies to Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) tenants, and anyone that visits tenants in a IRL scheme.
- 1.3 This policy outlines the use of the communal lounges which exist in all of the Council's Independent Retirement Living Schemes (IRL).
- 1.4 This draft policy was considered by the Housing Member Working Party on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 and was presented to the Housing Committee in September 2022 – where approval for consultation was given. The proposed final policy is unchanged from the draft report considered by September's Committee.

**2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended**

- 2.1 Independent Retirement Living Scheme Managers have discussed the Communal Lounge Policy with residents of their schemes.
- 2.2 Posters have been displayed in RBC's Independent Retirement Living Schemes setting out the aims of the policy (see appendix B).
- 2.3 Details of the policy and consultation exercise was set out on the Runnymede Borough Council website – see enclosed link [Housing consultations and surveys – Runnymede Borough Council](#)

2.4 Unfortunately no formal consultation feedback has been received.

### 3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 Within the Housing Older Persons Strategy 2021-2024 the Council commits to improving the communal areas in IRL and this policy ensures those spaces are accessible to all residents with appropriate use, managed by the Council.

### 4. **Resource implications/Value for Money (where applicable)**

4.1 There are no resource implications of approving the Communal Lounge Policy.

4.2 The policy is created to ensure the use of the lounges is controlled and that only appropriate organisations which benefit all residents are able to use them.

### 5. **Legal implications**

5.1 The provision of a room with furniture in it and facilities within a property owned by the Council is subject to several Statutory regulations:

- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Housing Act 2004
- Building Regulations 2000, 2010
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988

### 6. **Equality implications**

6.1 The Equality Impact Screening for this policy found a full impact assessment is not required as this new policy is being put in place to ensure consistency in the use of Communal Lounges in a fair and transparent way.

6.2 There is no evidence that tenants with any of the nine protected characteristics will be negatively impacted by this policy. Rather, it is anticipated that this policy will promote equality.

6.3 It is therefore considered that the Council will comply with its Public Sector Equality duty when endorsing this Policy and a full impact assessment is not required at this stage.

### 7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

7.1 None identified

### 8. **Other implications (where applicable)**

8.1 The consultation undertaken with residents on this policy was undertaken in line with the Council's Consultation Strategy principles.

- A. Consultations should have a clear purpose and start at an appropriate stage
- B. Consultations should take account of the groups being consulted
- C. Consultations should be clear and concise
- D. Consultations should last for a proportionate amount of time

- E. Responses to consultations should be published in a timely fashion and facilitate scrutiny
- 8.2 Consultation commenced on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 and ended on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022
- 9. **Timetable for Implementation**
- 9.1 This policy will be implemented immediately following Housing Committee approval.
- 9.2 This policy forms an action within the Runnymede Borough Council Housing Older Persons Strategy 2021-2024. The progress in delivering that strategy is reported to the September Housing Committee annually.
- 10. **Conclusions**
- 10.1 This policy is essential to bring consistency and assurance to residents and Runnymede Borough Council that Independent Retirement Living communal lounges are being used appropriately.
- 10.2 Residents have had the opportunity to comment on the policy, no views have been expressed.

(To resolve)

**Background papers**

September 2022 Housing Committee report – proposing the draft policy and for tenant consultation to be conducted [DRAFT AGENDA REPORT COVER SHEET](#)  
([runnymede.gov.uk](http://runnymede.gov.uk))