

**TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**Item No: 6**

**MEETING 15<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2014**

---

**SUBJECT: DOMESTIC SPRINKLER PARTNERSHIP PROJECT**

**JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER, THE CLERK TO THE AUTHORITY AND THE  
FINANCE OFFICER**

---

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report updates the Fire Authority on partnership working to install sprinkler protection in dwellings within Tyne and Wear; improving safety of some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Members will recall previous Fire Authority Reports (16<sup>th</sup> July 2012, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013, minutes 15/2012, 26(ii)2012 and 12/2013 refer respectively) highlighting the Chief Fire Officers Associations' (CFOA) national sprinkler campaign and details of this Authority's partnership work. The reports set out key elements of the Authority's on-going strategy to promote domestic sprinklers to protect life and property.
- 2.2 Additionally Members will be aware that In April 2010 the Welsh Assembly implemented an Order which requires the provision of automatic fire suppression systems in all new residential premises in Wales. However in England, there is no requirement to fit automatic fire suppression systems in new residential premises and the Government appear unwilling to follow the lead of the Welsh Assembly without new evidence.
- 2.3 A CLG publication suggests that the benefits of installing sprinklers in *all* new housing would not match the installation costs; however, more importantly, it states a combination of fire prevention, including targeted domestic sprinklers, smoke alarms and education would provide net social benefit. The report also suggested that compared to a situation with no sprinklers, a residential sprinkler system might:
- reduce fatalities caused by fire by 70% to 100%
  - reduce injuries caused by fires by 30% to 80%
  - reduce property damage caused by fires by 40% to 90%

2.4 The Chief Fire Officer believes that the targeted use of domestic sprinklers will save lives and remains committed to working with partners to promote the benefits of domestic sprinklers. This report updates on the steps taken so far.

### **3 ULTIMATE PROTECTION**

3.1 The Authority identifies vulnerable households through an intelligence led targeted methodology which enables resources to be directed to those most in need. Using a four-stage 'Ultimate Protection' policy (see below) we aim to provide the best available prevention and protection measures, which includes the targeted use of portable misting systems and sprinklers.

- **Level 1** - Fire Safety education and smoke detection targeted to those at greatest risk from fire, as directed by the Home Safety Check (HSC) Targeting Strategy.
- **Level 2** - Referral to specialist Prevention and Education (P&E) teams for further education and where applicable, the provision of additional specialist fire safety equipment.
- **Level 3** – Additional intervention involving services arranged via partner organisations such as domiciliary care, Telecare services, housing alterations etc.
- **Level 4** – Consideration of Automatic Water Suppression Systems (AWSS); Portable Misting Systems or Sprinklers.

3.2 Previously, as part of the Services 'Ultimate Protection' policy and partnership working, installations of sprinklers at Regent Court Gateshead and High Street Jarrow, and installations of portable misting systems in homes of vulnerable residents in Sunderland and Newcastle have provided the opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of AWSS.

3.3 As part of our engagement plan, two seminars for Local Authority partners, private landlords and installers to promote the benefits of sprinklers have been hosted. The events have been successful in stimulating on-going dialogue and action.

3.4 Earlier Fire Authority reports have advised members that Officers would be working with partners to encourage installation of sprinkler systems in their building stock, and where appropriate, supported by TWFRS from the Community Safety capital reserve.

3.5 TWFRS continues to engage with partners to secure sprinkler installation in homes of the most vulnerable within Tyne and Wear, either during initial building or as a retro-fit option.

### **4 DISTRICT UPDATE.**

4.1 As a result of on-going discussions with partners, the following progress has been made in each of the 5 Districts:-

#### 4.2 **Gateshead**

- 2014/15
  - Regent Court – 160 individual flats with sprinklers.
  - Gateshead Housing Company confirmed the installation of sprinklers to a further 45 units (flats / houses) within 2 phases (6 locations).
- 2015/17
  - A further 21 units are planned, with discussions between GHC and TWFRS ongoing.

#### 4.3 **Newcastle**

- 2014/15
  - Your Homes Newcastle confirmed the installation of sprinklers to 45 units (bungalows) within 2 schemes and a further scheme of 16 units undertaken in Walker.
- 2015/17
  - 42 units (bungalows) are planned, with installation parameters and costs being established.

#### 4.4 **North Tyneside**

- 2014/15
  - North Tyneside Homes (NTH) have installed sprinklers to 9 units (bungalows).
- 2015/17
  - A further four schemes amounting to a potential 22 dwellings are currently being considered between TWFRS and NTH.
  - Furthermore, discussions are in progress for potential installation in future sheltered accommodation schemes.

#### 4.5 **South Tyneside**

- 2014/15
  - South Tyneside Homes have identified three schemes comprising 88 units (houses / flats) where sprinklers will be installed.
- 2015/17
  - A further scheme comprising of 67 units is provisionally planned.
  - Discussion to establish opportunities between TWFRS and South Tyneside Homes is on-going.

#### 4.6 **Sunderland**

- 2014/15
  - An existing Gentoo development at Doxford Park includes the provision of sprinklers to 88 units (extra care facilities and older person's apartments). The

installation of sprinklers enabled flexibility of building design (within Building Regulations) to facilitate the needs / risks of the occupiers.

- 2015/17
  - 'Housing 21' are investigating the feasibility of the installation of sprinklers to 17 units within an 'extra care facility'.
  - Following a visit to Regent Court Gateshead, Gentoo are investigating the feasibility of potential retro-fitting sprinkler systems to High-Rise properties.

- 4.7 There is a variation in the total installation costs of the various schemes. This is due to the number of compartments protected and the complexity of installation i.e. whether systems are pressure fed (directly from the water main) or if tank / pump installation is required. The total costs range from £959 - £3,467 per installation.
- 4.8 Since commencing this work in 2012, up to 620 dwellings have been, or are in planning to have, sprinklers fitted, with TWFRS either supporting or planning to support 187 (to date) of these installations. TWFRS will continue working in partnership to further expand the numbers of homes of those most vulnerable with sprinkler systems; considering requests for support where appropriate from the Community Safety Reserve.

## **5 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The risk to the authority has been assessed as low.

## **6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 In keeping with 3.4 above, commitment will be sought from partners to resource installations in their building stock, and where appropriate, supported by TWFRS from existing budgets and the Community Safety capital reserve, with consideration of schemes on a case by case basis.
- 6.2 To support the confirmed schemes identified in section 4 of this report, a sum of £221,227 is committed from within the £300,000 Community Safety capital reserve, established by the Fire Authority as part in the June 2007 Outturn report, to deliver community safety initiatives; - (minute 18(i)/2007 refers).
- 6.3 With the positive progress made to date and further opportunities to protect vulnerable people living within Tyne and Wear currently being explored, it is requested that the Fire Authority consider augmenting the Community Safety capital reserve by a further £300,000.
- 6.4 Subject to Members approval, the funding will be identified by reprioritising existing resources.

## **7 STRATEGIC PLAN LINK**

7.1 The objectives of this report contribute to goals one and four.

## **8 EQUALITY AND FAIRNESS IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no diversity and equality implications in respect of this report.

## **9 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The benefits of domestic sprinklers not only improves survivability for the occupants, but also improves safety for firefighters by suppressing the development of a fire and making conditions within the building less severe.

## **10 RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 Members are recommended to:

- Note the contents of this report
- Agree to the proposal in 6.3 to support further schemes for the most vulnerable.
- Champion the installation of Sprinklers.

---

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The under mentioned Background Papers refer to the subject matter of the above report:

- Fire Authority Report: Provisional Budget Outturn 2006/2007, 11th June 2007
- Fire Authority Report: Retrofit of Sprinklers, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012.
- Fire Authority Report: Domestic Sprinkler Partnership Project, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2012
- Fire Authority Report: Domestic Sprinkler Partnership Project, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013
- CLG Report: A cost benefit analysis of options to reduce the risk of fire and rescue in areas of new build homes, March 2010.

•