

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 14 December 2015

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC SPRINKLER PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

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

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is to update Members on the partnership working to install sprinkler protection in dwellings within Tyne and Wear, which will improve the safety of vulnerable people in our community.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall three previous Fire Authority reports (16th July 2012, 17th September 2012 and 15th July 2013; minutes 15/2012, 26(ii)/2012 and 15/2013 refer respectively) highlighting the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) national sprinkler campaign and details of TWFRA'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 or converted houses / flats in Wales with effect from 1st January 2016. However in England, there is no requirement to fit automatic fire suppression systems in new residential premises and the Government appear reluctant to follow the lead of the Welsh Assembly without new evidence.
- 2.3 CLG have also previously reported that the benefits of installing sprinklers in *all* new housing would not match the installation costs; however, it does states, that a combination of fire prevention, including targeted domestic sprinklers, smoke alarms and education would provide net social benefit. The report suggested that compared to a situation with no sprinklers, a residential sprinkler system *might*:
- reduce fatalities caused by fires 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 As previously reported, the Chief Fire Officer maintains that the targeted use of domestic sprinklers will save lives and is committed to working with partners to promote the benefits of domestic sprinklers. This report updates Members on progress to date.

3 **DOMESTIC SPRINKLER PROJECT**

- 3.1 TWFRA identify 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 we aim to provide the best available prevention and protection measures, which includes the targeted use of portable misting systems and sprinklers.
- 3.2 At the inception of the Services 'Ultimate Protection' policy, installations of sprinklers commenced with projects at Regent Court Gateshead, High Street Jarrow together with installations of portable misting systems. These have provided the opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of residential and portable sprinkler systems.
- 3.3 As part of an engagement plan, the Service has hosted seminars for Local Authority partners, private landlords and installers to promote the benefits of sprinklers together with recent work to develop a 'Sprinkler Good Practice Guide'. The events were successful in stimulating on-going dialogue and as a catalyst for increasing the numbers of sprinkler systems within dwellings.
- 3.4 Officers are currently working closely with Local Authority Partners to develop a 'Sprinkler Good Practice Guide'. The guide will help develop and promote better understanding of the benefits of Sprinklers and will strive to encourage local authorities, developers, builders and building owners to install such systems where there is a risk-based case for doing so, or where there is a clear business case in terms of cost and benefit.
- 3.5 Since the last report, Officers continue to meet with partners (including representatives from each of the Local Authority's and ALMO housing groups) with the aim of developing and further promoting the Services Domestic Sprinkler Project. The ultimate aim remains to secure sprinkler installation in a number of homes of those most vulnerable within Tyne and Wear, both during initial building and as a retro-fit option.

4 **LOCAL AUTHORITY UPDATE.**

- 4.1 As a result of on-going discussions with partners, the following progress has been made in each of the 5 Districts with Sprinkler Systems either installed or in the planning phase:-
- 4.2 **Gateshead**
A total of 278 dwellings will be protected by sprinklers. These comprise of 160 flats at Regent Court, and 43 units at 7 further locations. Two more schemes are in planning for sprinklers to be fitted in an additional 75 dwellings.
- 4.3 **Newcastle**
A total of 307 dwellings will be protected by sprinklers. These comprise of 81 units within

three schemes, with a further 226 properties in the construction / development phase during 2016/17. Many of the above installations are solely funded by 'Your Homes Newcastle' (YHN).

4.4 **North Tyneside**

A total of 170 dwellings will be protected by sprinklers. These comprise of 21 units within three completed schemes, with a further 149 sprinklers installations as part of four Sheltered Accommodation schemes.

4.5 **South Tyneside**

A total of 98 dwellings will be protected by sprinklers. These comprise of installations within two schemes part funded with South Tyneside Housing Venture Trust (STHVT).

4.6 **Sunderland**

A total of 374 dwellings will be protected by sprinklers. These comprise of 88 units (extra care facilities) at Doxford Park and a further three schemes, funded by Gentoo, where 286 units are planned, or being fitted, with sprinklers.

5 **SUMMARY**

5.1 Since commencing this work in 2012, up to **1227** dwellings have had, or are in planning to have, sprinklers fitted as a result of the work of the Authority. TWFRAs have agreed to part-fund **254** of the installations on a case by case basis.

5.2 The work across the 5 Local Authorities will support this Authority's continued drive to see those most vulnerable within Tyne and Wear protected with domestic sprinklers.

5.3 Officers will continue working in partnership to further expand the numbers of homes protected by sprinkler systems; considering requests for support where appropriate from the Community Safety Reserve.

6 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.1 The risk to the authority has been assessed as minimal and the project will support both the safety of residents and firefighters of Tyne and Wear.

7 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 To enhance Community Safety innovation, Members will recall that £550,000 has been allocated to a Community Safety Reserve, which has supported this project in protecting our community through the installation of sprinklers.

7.2 To date, £320,000 has either been spent or is committed to installations.



8 DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY 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 front line firefighters by suppressing the development of a fire and making conditions within the building less severe.

10 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 The Authority is recommended to:

- a) Note the contents of this report.
- b) Champion the installation of Sprinklers in each LA area.
- c) Support the continuation of this project supported by the Community Safety Reserve

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, 16th July 2012
- Fire Authority Report: Domestic Sprinkler Partnership Project, 17th September 2012
- Fire Authority Report: Domestic Sprinkler Partnership Project, 15th 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