

TYNE AND WEAR FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

MEETING: 15th July 2013

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC SPRINKLER PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

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

1 PURPOSE

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

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall two previous Fire Authority reports (16th July 2012 and 17th September 2012; minutes 15/2012 and 26(ii)/2012 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 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 reluctant 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 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 The Chief Fire Officer believes 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 the next steps.

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 Previously, as part of the Services 'Ultimate Protection' policy and partnership working, installations of sprinklers at Regent Court Gateshead and High Street Jarrow have provided the opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of residential sprinklers. In addition to this, we have more recently installed a portable misting system in the home of a vulnerable resident in Sunderland.
- 3.3 As part of our engagement plan, the Service hosted two seminars during 2012 for Local Authority partners, private landlords and installers to promote the benefits of sprinklers. Partners were encouraged to install sprinklers during initial build or refurbishment of housing stock. The events have been successful in stimulating on-going dialogue.
- 3.4 In the Fire Authority report of 17th September 2012: Domestic Sprinkler Partnership Project, (minute 26(ii)/2012 refers) Members were informed that Officers would be working with partners to encourage installation of sprinkler systems in their building stock, and where appropriate, supported by TWFRA from existing budgets and the Community Safety capital reserve.
- 3.5 Since this last report, Officers have met with partners (including representatives from each of the Local Authority's and ALMO housing groups) with the aim of 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:-
- 4.2 **Gateshead**
In addition to the 160 flats sprinklered at Regent Court, the Gateshead Housing Company has confirmed that 17 units (1 – 4 bedroom flats / houses) will be sprinklered through the TWFRS Project this year. Over the next 5 years, provisional development plans include the provision of sprinklers in approximately 20 – 30 units per year.

4.3 Newcastle

'Your Homes Newcastle' are supportive of the project for new build and retro-fit schemes. Currently, in two locations there are up to 32 units planned this year which will have sprinklers installed, with an additional 4 bungalows being co-funded through the TWFRS Domestic Sprinkler Project.

4.4 North Tyneside

North Tyneside Homes (NTH) are installing sprinklers to 9 (2 bedroom bungalows) units this year, with provisional agreement to extend the TWFRS Project to include a further 9 units early in 2014. NTH are also considering the installation of sprinklers as a standard for new builds in the future.

4.5 South Tyneside

A number of housing and town centre developments are planned within South Tyneside over the coming 3, 5 and 10 years. As part of the development plans, South Tyneside Homes are installing sprinklers within 12 – 15 older person's bungalows which the TWFRS Project is aiming to support. Further developments will include the consideration of sprinklers installations.

4.6 Sunderland

A Gentoo development at Doxford Park includes the provision of sprinklers systems to 88 units (extra care facilities and older person's apartments). Through the TWFRS Project a further 8 units will have protection installed enabling the development site to be fully sprinklered.

4.7 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. Since commencing this work in 2012, up to 340 dwellings have been, or are in planning to have, sprinklers fitted, with TWFRS supporting 60 of these installations, with each scheme being considered for funding support on a case by case basis. 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.

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 The risk to the authority has been assessed as minimal.

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 TWFRA from existing budgets and the Community Safety capital reserve, with consideration of schemes on a case by case basis.
- 6.2 To support the schemes identified in section 4 of this report, £85,000 has been ring fenced from within the £250,000 Community Safety capital reserve, which Members established as part of the June 2007 Outturn report, to deliver community safety initiatives; - (minute 18(i)/2007 refers).

7 DIVERSITY AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

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

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 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.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 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
- CLG Report: A cost benefit analysis of options to reduce the risk of fire and rescue in areas of new build homes, March 2010.