

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee/Panel:	Buildings, Land and Procurement Panel
Date:	3 July 2012
Title:	Review of Fire Safety in County Council Buildings and the Approach to Sprinkler Provision
Reference:	4044
Report From:	Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report is intended to update the Buildings, Land and Procurement Panel on the current procedures and progress in relation to fire safety and the provision of sprinklers within County Council buildings. It also recommends and re-affirms the continuing commitment to a risk based approach to the management of fire safety and the application of sprinklers on constructions projects in the context of the Corporate Policies and Strategies.
- 1.2. This report also details that over £3.4 million has been spent on sprinkler installations to improve asset and life safety in 26 higher risk buildings. This is over and above any statutory and regulatory requirements.

2. Contextual information

2.1. Partnership for Safety

The County Council's successful partnership with the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) (dating from October 2005), provides a structured and integrated approach to achieve the desired outcomes of effective fire risk reduction in Hampshire County Council (HCC) premises and service delivery.

The common objectives are set out below:

- To reduce the risk of fires in HCC premises
- To increase the awareness of key issues in fire safety management within HCC premises including arson prevention and the reduction of unwanted fire alarms.
- To concentrate resources on reducing risk from fire in high life risk premises.

- To mitigate the effects of fires that do occur by ensuring appropriate responses by local management and the provision of appropriate improvements to structural fire precaution measures and through a risk based methodology, the installation of automatic sprinkler installations into new and refurbished buildings, where resources permit.

As part of the Partnership, a senior Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Prevention Officer is co-located within Property Services, working with the in house Fire Management Team and liaising with colleagues on construction projects. The arrangement has been in place since 2006 and supports the delivery of a collaborative, risk assessed approach to fire safety across HCC's built estate.

The HFRS Partnership Fire Safety Officer, Vinnie Stapleton, was asked to state his views on the success of the relationship and he has confirmed that:

“The Partnership to date has delivered its expectation by reducing the risks of fires starting in HCC premises and by mitigating the effects of fire, should one occur. This in turn has greatly reduced the risk to life, property and the environment.”

This is very much in line with the aim of HFRS that “Together, we make Hampshire Safer.”

2.2. Joint Audit Programme

HCC and HFRS operate a joint audit programme to highlight and respond to fire safety within the HCC built estate. The approach was established in 2006 and continues a rolling programme to create a pro-active approach to eliminating the requirement for potential enforcement by HFRS. Following completion of building priority assessments in relation to fire safety on all HCC buildings, priority lists have been established based on the highest risk buildings. These lists are used for the basis of the joint audit process where the HCC Fire Safety Team undertakes pre-audit reviews on buildings initially selected by HFRS and carry out a detailed premises and management survey to create an action plan of proposed fire safety improvement actions. These are categorised as P1, P2 and P3, based on national benchmarking standards (with P1 being the highest priority) which have agreed timescales for works to be carried out. The action plans are shared with HFRS prior to their own fire safety audits and then jointly agreed as the plan for implementing improvement work. An update on the extent of completed joint audits is attached in Appendix 1.

2.3. Programme of Improvement Works

A programme of improvement works are on going, informed by the outcomes from the joint audits and action plans produced. Significant improvements have been made to improve fire safety within the highest risk areas, such as multi storey secondary school buildings, elderly persons' homes and multi-storey secondary school buildings.

Over the period of the last eight years 2005 -2012, the programme will have invested nearly £11m in improvement works from various funding sources, including Policy and Resources Landlord capital, New Deals for Schools grant, Children's and Adult Services capital programmes. This includes the

installation of a large number of Automatic Fire Detection systems (AFDs) and other structural fire precaution works within the existing building stock, targeted at the highest risk buildings. As part of the HCC standard specification, new buildings benefit from an enhanced AFD system in line with the arson reduction strategy. Systems are provided with full monitoring (on a 24/7 basis) which provides the added benefit of early warning in the event of fire, both for means of escape and notification to the fire service. With the HFRS statistics of 80% of fires being attended within 8 minutes, the time for fires to develop is therefore greatly reduced.

As with such a vast existing building stock (totalling around 1.4 million m²), there is still an on-going programme of schools which require joint fire audits to be completed. This is all part of a long-term programme to audit the entire estate and is the principal reason why the corporate risk performance remains at 'amber' for the management of Fire and Arson Prevention.

Refer to Appendix 2, for the expenditure on Fire Improvement between 2005/06 to 2012/13 totalling £10.805m.

2.4. Risk Assessed Approach to Fire Safety / Provision of Sprinklers

As well as the approach to existing fire improvements noted above, for new building projects including extensions and refurbishments, a risk based methodology is adopted for the assessment of fire precaution works. This responds to the Corporate Strategic Risk Register, for the risk of 'Fire Including Arson', and County Council Corporate Policy for the provision of sprinklers.

The sprinkler policy dating from February 2004, states "The County Council continue with its policy of installing sprinkler systems where appropriate, based on a risk management methodology. The decision to be made on consideration of the risk assessment." This was ratified by the County Council on 25 February 2004 and served to amend the original policy to one which focuses upon the highest risk, rather than on a specific building category (e.g. all new stand-alone buildings).

The risk assessment is determined using a standard methodology, developed jointly with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service for this specific purpose, and is supported by a Practice Note to ensure a consistent approach is retained.

Specifically for education buildings, the document is also accepted by the Building Control Inspection Service as a part of the statutory process, to show compliance with 'Building Bulletin 100' (Fire safety in schools). The approach also identifies the highest risk situations and the most effective direction of available resources to secure best value in terms of life safety and asset protection. The risk assessment form has recently been reviewed with HFRS and confirmed that the approach meets with the current requirements.

All new building projects that invoke Approved Document B (Fire Safety) of the Building Regulations: 2000 (which includes Building Bulletin 100 for Schools), are required to complete the risk assessment in conjunction with the HFRS Embedded Officer. The completed assessment will indicate the suggested approach to sprinkler provision, based on a number of trigger points relating to : Building use (vulnerable users); sleeping risk; vertical evacuation; heritage loss; continuity of business; rebuild cost and the

completed form and fire strategy is then submitted to the HCC Officer 'Fire Safety Review Group', for comments and approval, including the final recommendation for provision of sprinklers.

These recommendations are then reported at the senior management operational meetings and the Property Health and Safety Panel, with outcomes recorded through the Project Appraisals, approved by Executive Members.

2.5. Installed Sprinkler Systems

Since the introduction of the sprinkler policy in 2004, a total of 26 systems have been installed across the built estate. These are all installed in addition to any structural fire precautions and statutory requirements and primarily to provide asset protection. In the exceptional cases of buildings with sleeping risk accommodation (e.g. nursing homes), systems installed provide life enhancements, to support the management procedures. A list of all properties with sprinklers is included within Appendix 3.

2.6. Sprinklers Responding to the On-going Local and National Debate

There is an on-going debate both locally and nationally about the appropriate deployment of sprinkler systems in the built estate. Fires in the County Council estate are very rare and, with a few exceptions, the risk profile of the majority of our buildings is low. This does not, however, mean that County Council Members and officers are not engaged in on-going dialogue with the Fire Authority, Rescue Service, other public bodies and interested groups about a general increase in sprinkler installations to mitigate against the loss of property and improve life safety.

Members of the Fire Authority (many of whom are County Councillors), are actively engaged in a current debate about their own Policy and stance in relation to sprinklers in public sector, private sector and domestic buildings. It is important for the County Council to actively participate in this to assist in the policy making and ensure the County Council's actions and policy are explained and recognised. This is being led by the Director of Culture, Communities and Business Services (CCBS).

No conclusion has yet been reached by the Fire Authority but this report is considered timely to get the Panel and the Executive Member for Policy and Resources continuing endorsement to the County Council's approach and support the on-going Partnership and dialogue with senior officers at HFRS.

3. Technical Advancements and Future Direction and Sprinkler System Types

- 3.1. Currently, sprinkler systems included within HCC projects are designed to meet the full requirements of the British Standard for residential and non-residential buildings as applicable. It is recognised that this can impose onerous requirements, particularly when systems are being added to provide basic asset protection only. With the knowledge and experience gained, the Director of CCBS is working closely with HFRS officers and the technical specialist industry to consider proposals for a bespoke 'property protection' sprinkler system. This will explore efficiencies in the design, installation and revenue maintenance costs. It will still be an appropriate and pragmatic

solution to respond to our risk assessed approach to the provision of sprinklers. The final designed system will be ratified by a third party independent accreditation.

- 3.2. It is recognised that a full British Standard system will still be applicable on certain building types where life enhancements are required, such as residential homes and other sleeping accommodation. The fire assessment for sprinklers and subsequent technical solution will always be carried out on an individual project-by-project basis.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. The joint approach with Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service and the risk assessed approach adopted by Hampshire County Council, provides both a measured and robust approach to fire safety, responding to the Corporate Strategic Risk Register for fire, sprinkler policy and current statutory requirements. The following benefits to the County Council can be evidenced:

- Skills and learning from a joint approach through Partnership with HFRS
- Embedded HFRS Fire Safety Officer within Property Services
- Risk assessment methodology
- Enhanced automatic fire protection systems provided
- A positive downward trend to the yearly expenditure on fire reinstatement. Refer to Appendix 4 for evidence
- Sprinkler provision where assessed as applicable (always as an enhancement to statutory requirements)
- Structural fire precautions to new buildings beyond minimum standard of Building Regulations
- Fire management template and expert guidance for use by building users to provide a consistent approach in line with responsibilities under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

5. Recommendations

That the Panel advises the Executive Member for Policy and Resources that:

- a) The successful improvements to Fire Safety through Partnership working with the HFRS, risk assessment, targeted capital expenditure and a comprehensive Fire Safety Audit process be noted.
- b) The County Council's risk based approach to sprinkler installations in new and refurbished buildings projects be re-affirmed and endorsed.
- c) Members note that over £3.4 million has been spent on sprinkler installations to improve asset and life safety in 26 higher risk buildings.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Sprinkler Policy	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u> February 2004
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u> Building Regulations		<u>Date</u> 2000

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

1.1. Not applicable to this report.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. Fitting of sprinkler systems and the impact of the Arson Reduction Strategy has a direct positive impact on the risk of fire and the reduced cost of reinstatement.

3. Climate Change:

a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

Not applicable

b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Not applicable

REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY IN HAMPSHIRE BUILDINGS

Property Fire Risk Assessment Review of Progress

The County Council have a Risk Profile of the Property Estate and use this to ensure resources are best used to manage fire safety effectively. This means that the premises are matched to the Risk Profile.

In summary, the areas of the estate are divided into different Customer Groups and the details of the progress in each area are given below.

1. Non-Education

There are approximately 655 buildings in the Non-Education sector ranging from Older Persons Residential Homes to Domestic Residential Properties and even a waterway.

All Residential, Day Service, Public Buildings including Libraries and Museums which equates to 290 (44%) of the Non-Education building list, have had a Joint Fire Safety Audit. The remaining premises are in the lower risk categories and surveys will be programmed in due course.

2. Secondary Schools

There are approximately 771 buildings in the Secondary School estate ranging from 4 storey system built structures to numerous small single storey buildings. All Secondary Schools have had a Management Review on at least one occasion. 120 of the buildings (16%) have had a Joint Fire Safety Audit and subsequent significant investment in improving the property fire precautions. The most recent Joint Fire Safety Audits (Phase 8) focussed on the single staircase SCOLA schools.

3. Primary/Infant and Junior Schools

There are approximately 441 Primary, Infant and Junior Schools. Of these ,38 (9%) have had a Fire Safety Audit and the most recent Joint Fire Safety Audits (Phase 8) focussed on the single staircase SCOLA school buildings, the identified highest risk.

4. Special Schools/Nurseries/Education and Study Centres

There are approximately 63 buildings in the Special Schools, Nurseries, Early Years and Study Centres estate. Of these, 53 (84%) have had a Joint Fire Safety Audit as these are all in the higher risk category of buildings. Work is on-going to address the remainder, following an internal assessment of use and risk.

5. Overall Assessment

25% of the whole estate has been subject to a Joint Fire Safety Audit. These have all been targeted to those properties and buildings from the higher risk categories.

REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY IN HAMPSHIRE BUILDINGS

Fire Improvements – Budget Expenditure from 2005/06 to 2012/13

2005/06	£700,000 Total (£430,000 P&R Capital and £270,000 NDS) Adult Services EPH's, R&H Residential Centres, Residential School Buildings, Four Storey SCOLA Blocks, Fire Alarm Systems in Secondary Schools etc.
2006/07	£1,100,000 (P&R Capital) Adult Services EPH's.
2007/08	£2,745,000 (£1,500,000 P&R Capital, £1,000,000 NDS and £245,000 Adult Services) Adult Services EPH and Day Centres, Accessible Secondary Schools etc.
2008/09	£2,500,000 (£900,000 P&R Capital and £400,00 Children's Services and £1,200,000 Adult Services) Adult Services EPH upgrading and multi-storey SCOLA buildings in Secondary Schools.
2009/10	£1,800,000 (£250,000 NDS and £100,000 Children's Services and £1,450,000 P&R) Fire Alarms in Primary Schools, multi-storey SCOLA and single staircase SCOLA buildings, principally in Secondary Schools.
2010/11	£700,000 (P&R Capital and NDS). Spending on Special Schools and remaining 3 Storey School Buildings.
2011/12	£700,000 (£550,000 P&R Capital and £150,000 Children's Services) Commencing single staircase SCOLA buildings principally in Primary Schools.
2012/13	£560,000 (£410,000 P&R Capital and £150,000 Children's Services) Completing single staircase SCOLA buildings in Primary Schools and commencing single staircase traditional school buildings.
Note:	Expenditure has been slowly reducing on an annual basis since 2007/08 as the risk profile reduces and limited capital is shared across all risks associated with the built estate (particularly condition).

Key:	NDS	New Deals for Schools	P&R	Policy & Resources
	R&H	Recreation and Heritage	EPH	Elderly Persons Homes

REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY IN HAMPSHIRE BUILDINGS

Schedule of current projects where sprinklers have been Installed, are in construction or are planned as at May 2012

Programme	Project	Approx Costs (£'000) of sprinkler installations, incl fees
Nursing Care New Build & Residential Home Refurbishments	Bickerley Green, Ringwood	105
	Emsworth House	117
	Fleming House, Eastleigh	114
	Hawthorne Court (Coldeast, Park Gate, Fareham)	151
	Marfield, Alton	117
	Oakridge House, Basingstoke	128
	Tatchbury Mount Hospital, Totton	146
	Ticehurst, Aldershot	128
	Westholme, Winchester	99
	Willow Court, Andover (Andover Hospital)	146
	Malmesbury Lawn, Havant	58
Education Projects	John Hunt of Everest Secondary School, Basingstoke	466
	Minstead Study Centre, New Forest	35
	East Hampshire Special School	151
	Lakeside Special School	58
	Costello Technology College, Fire Replacement Block	140
	Woodlands	117
	Prospect School, Havant	128
	Hollywater	170
	Forest Park	231
	Park Community School	221
Recreation and Heritage Projects	Winchester Discovery Centre	193
	Calshot Activities Centre New Dormitory Buildings	29
	Runways End Residential Building	128

REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY IN HAMPSHIRE BUILDINGS

Programme	Project	Approx Costs (£'000) of sprinkler installations, incl fees
	Basingstoke Discovery Centre	41
	Winchester Park and Ride	6
Buildings with Sprinklers Fitted Prior To 2004 Policy	EII Court Basement Car Park	N/A
	Mottisfont Court Offices	N/A
	Winchester Law Courts Car Park	N/A
Total Cost of Sprinkler Installations in HCC Buildings		3,423

REVIEW OF FIRE SAFETY IN HAMPSHIRE BUILDINGS

The Reinstatement Expenditure Costs Across All Hampshire Estate

The following figures show the fire reinstatement expenditure claims.

2002 / 2003	£353,355.82
2003 / 2004	£556,344.44
2004 / 2005	£547,609.30
2005 / 2006	£1,980,992.00
2006 / 2007	£3,482,702.00
2007 / 2008	£1,168,886.21
2008 / 2009	£324,192.74
2009 / 2010	£351,971.22
2010 / 2011	£20,717.74
2011 / 2012	£24,983.29

The notable increase in expenditure between 2003 and 2008 included the major fire damage to Romsey Mountbatten, Costello and the Woodlands Education Centre. These were projects constructed prior to the sprinkler policy being implemented. The replacement buildings at Costello and Woodlands are now fitted with sprinklers in line with the risk assessed methodology and policy.