

Individual Executive Member Decision

Title of Report:	Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Policy
Report to be considered by:	Individual Executive Member Decision
Date on which Decision is to be taken:	26 th March 2014
Forward Plan Ref:	ID2739

Purpose of Report: To present the proposed formal policy and guidance related to Automatic Fire Suppression systems.

Recommended Action: To approve the Policy and Guidance

Reason for decision to be taken: The requirement for a formal policy document was established following the recommendations of the Safer Select Committee in 2011.

Other options considered: The policy is formed from the recommendations of the Safer Select Committee and does not explore alternatives.

Key background documentation: Scrutiny review into installation of automatic fire suppression systems in Council Buildings and DCSF guidance BB100 - Design for fire safety in schools.

Portfolio Member Details	
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Implications

Policy:	Introduces a new policy to WBC
Financial:	Financial implications to both the capital cost of individual projects and the ongoing revenue costs of maintaining buildings.
Personnel:	NIL impact
Legal/Procurement:	NIL impact
Property:	Requires compliance with the policy and management of the process to ensure compliance on all projects.
Risk Management:	The policy will act to reduce risk to life and property on new buildings, extensions and major refurbishments.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes		Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:				
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)				
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: To date no response has been received, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting

Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman: To date no response has been received, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting

Ward Members: To date no response has been received, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting

Opposition Spokesperson: To date no response has been received, however any comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting

Local Stakeholders: To date no response has been received, however any

comments will be verbally reported at the Individual Decision meeting

Officers Consulted: Corporate Board

Trade Union: n/a

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

Supporting Information

1. Introduction

1.1 Following a scrutiny review into the installation of automatic fire suppression systems in Council Buildings by the Safer Select Committee and recommendations in its report to the Executive dated 13th January 2011, the recommendations received approval by the Executive with immediate effect.

1.2 It was resolved by the Executive that:

- (1) The Head of Property and Public Protection develop a policy in relation to the installation of automatic fire suppression systems in all new building or buildings undergoing major refurbishment within the Council's property portfolio.
- (2) The basis of establishing the need to install automatic fire suppression systems is to be a fire risk assessment, the same or similar to that currently used for schools projects. The risk assessment process should include the ability to recognise the comparative savings that would be achievable with the installation of such a system, for example through altered building design or the use of different materials.
- (3) The policy is to indicate an assumption that automatic fire suppression systems will be installed unless the completed risk assessment provides sufficient argument against.
- (4) The policy is to state that consideration be given early in the design stages of a project as to where the components of an automatic fire suppression system would be located in order to reduce installation costs.
- (5) Further discussion is held with the Council's property insurers with the aim of achieving further savings.

2. Proposals

2.1 Contact was made with other local authorities to establish the position of our near neighbours toward inclusion of sprinklers in buildings and their policy approach.

The following was found:

- (1) Wokingham Simple policy statement clarifying sprinkler inclusion.
- (2) Hampshire Simple policy briefing note clarifying sprinkler inclusion.
- (3) Windsor & Maidenhead No formal policy
- (4) Bracknell No formal policy
- (5) Reading No reply to requests
- (6) Slough Not prepared to share information

- 2.2 In general where an authority has a comparable policy to that of WBC, policy documents are in the form of simple short statements or briefing documents, with no detailed clarification of how to apply the policy.
- 2.3 Interest has been expressed by local authorities to learn from the outcome of this task by WBC for potential to share information.
- 2.4 For the purposes of this policy an Automatic Fire Suppression System (AFSS) refers only to those systems subject to fully adopted national (British Standard) or fully adopted European or International (EN or ISO) design standards where available. In circumstances where this is not available, an installation compliant with a Draft British Standard may be selected, subject to West Berkshire Council insurers approval and evidence of 'fitness for purpose'.
- 2.5 Two documents have been produced, which are appended to this report. These are:
- (1) Automatic Fire Suppression Systems policy.

This acts as the principal policy document and sets out West Berkshire Council's approach to the installation of automatic fire suppression systems in its buildings.
 - (2) Automatic Fire Suppression Systems procedure and guidance

This acts as a supporting document to the policy document, setting out detailed guidance on the management of the policy.
- 2.6 The Automatic Fire Suppression Systems procedure and guidance document offers detailed guidance on the operational use and application of the policy.
- 2.7 This includes the following:
- (1) When the policy applies
 - (a) Freehold or long lease ownership by WBC
 - (b) Construction intended to be permanent
 - (c) New buildings, extensions and major refurbishment
 - (d) All construction (described in c) over 500 sq.m. or
 - (e) 20% or 50% of total gross internal floor area (depending on site size)
 - (f) Projects with a gross project budget of £350,000 or more.
 - (g) AFSS with an estimated cost no greater than 15% of the construction budget.
 - (2) The risk assessment approach
 - (a) AFSS risk assessment to be carried out for construction projects which fall within the criteria listed above.

- (b) Inclusion of automatic fire suppression systems to apply to risk assessments with a High risk or Average risk (not Low risk).
- (c) For schools, the risk score is to be established using the analysis tool provided within the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now Department for Education) Building Bulletin 100 - Design for Fire Safety in Schools.
- (d) For non school buildings the fire risk assessor is to offer their professional judgment on the high/average/low risk grading based on their risk assessment, consultation, design measures included and guidance/legislation.

Property Services will investigate, as part of the further development of this process, the potential for an analysis tool to be created for use on all non school projects.

- (e) The assessment is to include consultation with WBC Assurance team and WBC insurers.

(3) Cost Benefit Analysis

- (a) Where an AFSS is estimated to represent a percentage no greater than 3% of the construction budget, the AFSS is to proceed without a CBA.
- (b) Where an AFSS risk assessment has recommended the inclusion of an AFSS, a cost benefit analysis is to be undertaken to establish if the system represents value for money.
- (c) In the case of schools the CBA template used is to be that provided in DCSF Building Bulletin 100.
- (d) In the case of non school buildings, the project cost consultant is to produce a project specific CBA (based on the principals in DCSF - BB100).

(4) Legislation and Guidance

- (a) Consideration needs to be given to relevant legislation including:
 - (i) Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
 - (ii) Building Regulations 2010
 - (iii) BS9999 COP for fire safety
 - (iv) BS9991 COP for fire safety in residential buildings

(5) Design and installation standards

- (a) Where an AFSS is required, the installation is to be based upon established technologies to relevant current fully adopted standards where available.

- (b) Such standards are to include:
 - (i) BS EN 12845 - Fixed firefighting systems - Automatic sprinklers
 - (ii) BS 9251 - Sprinkler systems for residential premises
 - (iii) BS EN 15004 - Fixed firefighting systems - gas extinguishing
 - (iv) Loss prevention council recommendations and technical bulletins
 - (c) Where an adopted BS is available which complies with WBC insurers requirements and is suited to the proposed installation, it should be adopted in preference to a Draft BS (DD).
 - (d) In circumstances where this is not available, an installation compliant with a DD may be selected, subject to WBC insurers approval and evidence of 'fitness for purpose'.
- (6) Selection of installers
- (a) Specialist sub contractors are to be selected from certification bodies
 - (i) Loss Prevention Certification Board
 - (ii) Warrington Certification Limited
 - (b) Sub contractors are to demonstrate commitment through membership of professional bodies such as British Automatic Fire Sprinkler Association.
- (7) Maintaining systems
- (a) The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 places significant liability on the 'Responsible Person' should they fail to maintain fire safety equipment (including sprinklers)
 - (b) It is critical that any installed automatic fire suppression system is serviced and maintained by a competent person.

2.8 The report issued to the Executive 'Scrutiny Review into the installation of automatic fire suppression systems in Council Buildings' indicated estimated costs related to both the installation of systems and ongoing maintenance costs.

- (1) Capital installation costs can vary between 2.3% and 15%, depending on the complexity of the system required and the economies of scale achieved on large projects.

Recent example of an installation is the Sixth Form block at Theale Green school which cost £175,000 of a £1.9M contract (approx 9%).

- (2) Ongoing maintenance costs can range between £500 and £5,000 per annum for the budget holder responsible for the building maintenance.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

3.1 In the creation of this policy and its guidance no impact relevant to equality is anticipated.

4. Conclusion

4.1 The proposed policy documents offer clarity of the stated policy requirements of the Executive and operational application of the policy for Officers.

Appendices

Appendix A – Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Policy

Appendix B – Automatic Fire Suppression Systems Procedure and Guidance