

Item 7

Sprinklers Working Group

Purpose of the Report

To note.

Summary

At its meeting on 9 December 2011, the Fire Commission agreed that a cross party working group should be set up to examine how Fire and Rescue Authorities can take the sprinklers agenda forward. A working group has now been established and will be meeting for the first time on 25 January 2012.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of this paper.

Action

Officers to take forward any actions agreed by the Committee

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Background

1. The issue of installation of sprinklers in building regulations covering business and domestic premises has been an important issue for FRAs over a long period. The Fire Commission received a presentation from Ann Jones AM about the legislation in Wales, and Members have raised this issue with the Fire Minister on a number of occasions. To date, the Minister has explained that he does not believe there is a compelling business case to warrant legislation or regulation regarding sprinklers, although he has been clear that he would review this position should new evidence emerge.
2. More recently, the issue of sprinklers was revived by the launch Lord Harrison's Private Members' Bill, the Building Regulations (Review). The Bill advocated the installation of sprinklers in new builds, a position supported by the London Fire Brigade. The Bill was due for second reading on 21 October 2011; however, it was listed as 20th on the agenda out of 28 and was not debated.
3. At the Fire Commission meeting of 9 December 2011, Councillor Sian Timoney proposed a cross-party working to examine how Fire and Rescue Authorities can take the agenda on sprinklers forward and to consider a campaign strategy to raise the profile of this issue.

Membership

4. Political groups nominated the following members to sit on the working group:
 - 4.1 Cllr John Edwards (Labour, West Midlands)
 - 4.2 Cllr David Milsted (Liberal Democrat, Dorset)
 - 4.3 Cllr Rebecca Knox (Conservative)
 - 4.4 Vacant (Conservative)
5. The Chief Fire Officers' Association will be also supporting this group and attending the meetings.
6. The group will be meeting in January, February and March and will report back to the Commission on 15 June meeting.

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Terms of reference

7. The terms of reference for the working group have been written in draft form and circulated to the group members to be discussed and agreed at the first meeting this month. The working group's suggested terms of reference are:
 - 7.1 To identify how best to refresh the approach/campaign to achieving the implementation of sprinklers;
 - 7.2 To identify and establish how best to deploy the latest evidence on sprinklers;
 - 7.3 To develop the outline of a campaign on sprinklers identifying the key decision-makers/influencers; potential partners; key milestones/events/meetings; coordinated press and public relations work.

Work programme

8. A total of three meetings for the working group are proposed. In order to meet the spring/early summer deadline to report back to the Fire Commission, it is suggested that the working group meet monthly from January.
 - 8.1 **25 January**
Items for discussion: agree terms of reference; recap of current position; latest evidence; key messages– this should include discussion of both the safety message and the financial benefits; identification of any additional professional support (e.g. public relations; marketing)
 - 8.2 **17 February**
Items for discussion: initial work to develop outline campaign strategy and tactics including focus on central government, local authorities, insurance industry; building industry; other public sector bodies, campaign groups.
 - 8.3 **21 March 2012**
Finalise campaign plan and agree draft report for Fire Commission in June 2012.

Next Steps

9. The working group will proceed as above and will report back to FSMC regularly on the progress made.