

Item 2

Sprinklers' campaign

Purpose of report

For discussion.

Summary

The sprinklers' campaign working group are now in a position to respond in full to the FSMC's request to design a campaign plan to lobby for the mandatory installation of fire sprinkler systems. The group recommend the creation of a campaign toolkit aimed at Fire and Rescue Authorities and any other interested public organisations to facilitate local campaigns in collaboration with the public. The toolkit is intended to support campaigns lobbying for the installation of sprinklers in sites and dwellings where the most vulnerable in society either reside or regularly visit.

Recommendation

Members are invited to comment on the contents of the report.

Action

Officers to progress as directed.

Contact officer: Eamon Lally
Position: Senior Adviser
Phone no: 020 7664 3132
E-mail: eamon.lally@local.gov.uk

Sprinklers' campaign working group update

Background

1. The working group carefully considered the FSMC's request for a campaign to lobby for the change of regulation around sprinklers. Members of the group felt that a grassroots approach and public 'outrage' could be the most effective ways to influence Government. Lobbying by national organisations and individual FRAs does not seem to have moved Government as they are clearly minded not to legislate.
2. There is consensus across the fire sector about the need for the installation of fire sprinklers. This is an important strength of the sector and this proposed project approach. Coupling the sector's consensus with public concern on a co-ordinated national plane is a formula that has not been tangibly or widely tested before. This proposed approach is, therefore, potentially unique and the group would like to pioneer it with the FSMC's approval.

Sprinklers' campaign toolkit

3. There is already a lot of information out there on sprinklers – why they're needed, how they save lives, money and property. The strongest benefit of the toolkit is that all the relevant tools and information needed for a local campaign is accessible in one space. There are clear unique selling points of the approach:
 - 3.1 The 'space' will be online and continually updated for people to access the latest materials for their campaigns. Hard copies will also be produced.
 - 3.2 This unique product will enable FRAs to instigate 'grassroots' campaigns locally to exert pressure on Government to reconsider the case – localism in action.
 - 3.3 The toolkit will provide a rough benchmark for campaigns as well as demonstrate strength in numbers across the sector.
 - 3.4 The product is adaptable and will be produced in discrete sections for FRAs to take out or adapt to their local needs and requirements. It is not intended to be a prescriptive toolkit.
4. The proposed toolkit is primarily aimed at Fire and Rescue Authorities. The aspiration is that they would find having a regularly updated resource bringing together all the key elements of a campaign together in one site useful for their own campaigns. They are not to be bound by any aspect of the toolkit but instead will be encouraged to use it selectively or in its entirety according to their priorities. The ultimate goal is to have all Fire and Rescue Authorities sign up to the product and carry out co-ordinated activities to raise the profile of the issue.

Item 2

5. FSMC members have previously heard Cllr John Edwards talk through the elements of the product and how it would work at June's Fire Commission. The group hopes that the product will be adapted according to local needs and strengthen any existing campaigns and support the development of new ones in partnership with local people and groups.
6. The powerful imagery, informative tips on engaging the media and parliamentarians and comprehensive and current information data base will all assist in the building of tailored and effective campaigns. For example, if a Fire and Rescue Authority wanted to produce leaflets to promote awareness of their communities they can use text from the myth busting section and examples of sprinkler successes from the case study section and download images from the Media and Communications section. Alternatively, if an Authority decided they wanted to try their hand at social media they can use our support and advice on developing a viral campaign.

Launching the toolkit

7. The group propose that the toolkit is launched incrementally as a way of securing the most media coverage protracted over six to nine months. It is proposed that the toolkit is made available in October 2012 to all Fire and Rescue Authorities. We would ask for their feedback and stories of success over the following six months. Using the success stories and learning of Fire and Rescue Authorities over this six month period, the Annual Conference 2013 can be used as a formal launch pad for the toolkit.
8. If, by this point, there are a significant accumulation of local successes which we can showcase at the Fire Conference, we will work to engage national press and secure their support for the cause. The Fire Conference will demonstrate the sector's unified voice on the issue, bring together the local campaigning successes and channel the public's concerns through their local FRAs.
9. At the conference, it is envisaged that the sector will be visibly united on the issue and will formally launch the toolkit with their stories of campaigning successes. This would be encouraging to any Fire and Rescue Authorities who haven't, by that point, instigated local campaigns. Also the launch at this point will be likely to attract media attention especially if there is full and co-ordinated sector support.
10. The group would also like to propose a National Sprinklers' Day to take place two months after the Fire Conference. On this day all Fire and Rescue Authorities, who signed up to the toolkit's One Voice strategy on sprinklers, would co-ordinate

Item 2

the launch of various local activities. This kind of move would likely stimulate media interest, both locally and nationally. Local community activities involving firefighters to attract the public would draw in people. The aim of this would be to enable people to see for themselves the importance of sprinklers and garner their support for the cause.

Next steps

11. The next steps for the working group, following FSMC clearance is as follows:

- 11.1 Stakeholder engagement: members of the working group will continue to engage with a range of stakeholders including Registered Social Landlords, local MPs, planners and organisations who would be interested in the cause on behalf of their users, ie. the Women's Institute, Age Concern and the Children's Burns Trust.
- 11.2 Development and testing: members and officers will develop the toolkit in its entirety in line with feedback. The product will be user tested on a group of pilot Fire and Rescue Authorities over the summer months to temperature-check the practicality and usability of the toolkit.
- 11.3 Launch planning: members and officers will progress launch plans for October, at the Fire Conference in March 2013 and National Fire Sprinklers' Day.

Conclusion

12. The group would welcome feedback and comments on the rationale, aims and composition of the toolkit. Members of the group are confident that this toolkit will successfully embody localism and as a result mobilise a raft of local campaigns which will exert pressure on the Government to reconsider regulation change in this area.