

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Meeting
Date of meeting:	29th June 2017
Subject:	Retrofitting of Sprinklers in Council Housing
Report by:	Director of Finance and IS
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	Yes
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1. To seek approval to commence scoping the procurement process to ascertain the cost of retrofitting sprinklers into the Council's high-rise and sheltered blocks.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve a full review of all of the Council's high rise and sheltered blocks, including site surveys where necessary, to establish where it would be necessary to retrofit sprinkler systems
- 2.2 That Cabinet give approval to commence scoping the procurement process to ascertain the cost of retrofitting any necessary sprinklers into the Council's high-rise and sheltered blocks.
- 2.3. That authority is delegated to the Director of Housing and Property Services in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Leader of the Council, to undertake the procurement process and appoint a contractor to undertake any necessary retrofitting of sprinklers into the Council's high-rise and sheltered blocks.
- 2.4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Housing and Property Services in consultation with the Section 151 Officer to amend the Capital Programme to reflect the temporary reprioritisation of capital schemes to fund the retrofitting of sprinklers into the Council's high-rise and sheltered blocks, pending any award of additional funding from Central Government after which any re-prioritised / deferred schemes can be re-instated
- 2.5. In the event that additional Government funding is not received, the Council undertakes a comprehensive review of its entire capital programme to ensure that it is fully funded from the resources available.

3. Background

- 3.1 Portsmouth City Council has thirteen high rise blocks of flats (10 storeys or more), which equate to 1,594 residential dwellings, which includes 414 category 1 sheltered housing dwellings. It has been established that two of the Council's high rise flats, Horatia House and Leamington House, have been found to have been fitted with cladding that is not compliant with current building regulations, and as a result steps have been taken to remove this cladding as a matter of urgency.
- 3.2 Letters have been written and delivered to all residents of high rise blocks of 10 storeys or more, in order to reassure them of the fire safety improvements that have been undertaken, and to remind them of the actions to follow in the event of a fire.
- 3.3 The Council-owned high rise blocks all have up to date Fire Risk Assessments, and comply with fire safety legislation. It has been documented that sprinklers have the advantage of attacking, rather than containing a fire, and do so quickly, locally and effectively. It is important that they are however seen in context; other fire protection measures, many of them mandatory, minimise fires and fire damage. The table below shows the composition of our high-rise over 10 storey blocks, sheltered and supported living dwellings, and how many already have sprinkler systems fitted.

	Total number of dwellings	No of dwellings with sprinklers	No of dwellings without sprinklers
High Rise Blocks (exc Sheltered Housing)	1,180	0	1,180
Cat 1 Sheltered Housing	732	0	732 [#]
Cat 2 Sheltered Housing	208	62	146
Cat 2.5 Sheltered Housing	360	0	360
Supported Living	43	13	30*

[#] 30 of these dwellings are bungalows

* 19 of these dwellings are staffed 24/7

- 3.4 Properties with sprinklers fitted have a much improved record of safety in circumstances of fire than those properties which do not have sprinklers installed, and as a result it is proposed that a full review of all high rise and sheltered blocks be undertaken, including site surveys where necessary, in order to establish where it would be necessary to retrofit sprinkler systems.
- 3.5 Alongside this review, in order to ensure prompt action, it would be necessary to commence scoping the procurement process alongside the review work, in order to ascertain the anticipated cost of retrofitting any necessary sprinklers into the Council's high-rise and sheltered blocks.
- 3.6 Initially, estimates have indicated that the retrofitting of sprinklers would cost approximately £5,000 per dwelling, which if applied to the stock listed above would cost approximately £12.2m, however a detailed review of Portsmouth's stock would

need to be required in order to understand exactly how this national estimate compares to Portsmouth's own stock requirements.

3.7 Given the urgency of the review, and the likely delay in Govt issuing any announcement regarding the award of funding to finance such schemes, it would be necessary to amend the existing Capital Programme and temporarily reprioritise the capital schemes in order to fund the retrofitting of sprinklers into the Council's high-rise blocks and sheltered and supported living properties.

3.8 At the point that Central Government announce funding for Local Authorities to undertake the works, any re-prioritised / deferred schemes can be re-instated. In the event that additional Government funding is not received, the Council will undertake a comprehensive review of its entire capital programme to ensure that it is fully funded from the resources available.

4. Reasons for the recommendation

4.1 To seek approval to commence scoping the procurement process to ascertain the cost of retrofitting sprinklers into the Council's high-rise and sheltered blocks.

5. Equality Impact Assessment

5.1 Although the recommendations within this report do not specifically require an Equality Impact Assessment, it is important to understand that equalities issues are taken into account throughout PCC's procurement exercises, and adhere to legislative requirements.

5.2 As the proposed outcomes are aimed at improving the safety of all residents, they will not disproportionately impact on any particular protected characteristic.

6. Legal Implications

6.1 The report in seeking to address the requirement to undertake a detailed analysis of the need to install sprinklers suitably assuages/ identifies the common law and statutory requirements to act as a competent landlord appropriately emphasising a necessity to re-prioritise capital spend the aim being to effectively avoid the current risks associated with properties that present a risk that can be managed by structural change/re-design.

7. Director of Finance's comments

7.1 The comments of the Director of Finance are included within the body of this report.

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Signed by:

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:
Councillor Donna Jones
Leader of the City Council

(End of report)