

**Wiltshire Council**

**Council**

**18 October 2016**

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**Notice of Motion No. 33 Water Sprinklers in New Schools  
From Councillors Graham Payne and Peter Edge**

**Briefing Note**

Current Wiltshire Council policy is to install fire sprinklers in new schools and large school extensions (Cabinet decision 26 January 2010). Where the Council commissions the work, the cost of installation of sprinkler systems is met by the Council, whereas the ongoing maintenance and servicing responsibilities rest with the school. This policy has been implemented in all new school or major school expansion schemes since 2010.

Earlier this year new draft guidance was issued in relation to *Fire Safety Design for Schools - BB100 Revised*. The amended guidance is no longer expected to mandate that sprinklers have to be installed, but instead advocates the use of a risk assessment for each new school project to help inform a decision as to whether to install a sprinkler system or not. The consultation on the draft guidance ended in August and final guidance has not yet been issued.

Two tools have been created to assist in this process. One tool kit covers risk assessments and enables a school to be classified as high risk, medium risk and low risk, and the second tool kit is a cost benefit analysis covering the use of sprinklers in schools.

So far as the outcome of a risk assessment is concerned:

1. If the outcome is high risk, then sprinklers should be provided.
2. If the outcome is medium risk then a sprinkler system is desirable.
3. If the outcome is low risk, then sprinklers may be beneficial.

Having reviewed the latest guidance, if a risk assessment was undertaken on a case by case basis to inform the need for sprinklers on a school project, then the outcome in some instances would be that the installation of a sprinkler system would not represent good value for money. This risk assessment could be undertaken in conjunction with the Fire Authority.

It is proposed that the matter be researched in more detail, to consult further with the authors of the revised BB100 and to seek the view of colleagues in neighbouring authorities to understand the approach that they are taking and to put this into a short paper for consideration as an amendment to the current policy.

NB A legal view has been sought on whether this policy should apply to all schools, including any new academy provision, where Wiltshire Council is the commissioner of the work. The legal view is that all schools regardless of status are currently included in the policy.

**Carolyn Godfrey**  
**Corporate Director**