

CABINET
26 JANUARY 2010

WILTSHIRE COUNCIL POLICY

FIRE SPRINKLERS IN NEW SCHOOLS

Reason for the policy

1. The need for this policy is derived from the following:
 - (i) To meet central government expectations with respect to fire sprinklers in new schools,
 - (ii) To reduce the potential impact on the Council's schools portfolio of a significant fire incident.

Policy Definition

2. Automated Fire Sprinklers are to be installed in all new schools built by or on behalf of Wiltshire Council from the date of approval of this policy.
3. The policy applies to all new-build schools and significant extensions or refurbishment projects.
4. A significant extension is deemed to be one that increases the footprint of the existing floor area of the school by more than 750m².
5. It is expected that the holistic refurbishment of an existing school will include a detailed technical appraisal and cost evaluation of retrospectively installing sprinklers throughout the existing buildings.
6. Where an extension or a partial refurbishment does not meet the criteria above, but takes place in line with a broader masterplan for the redevelopment of the site, the cumulative impact of the masterplan should be considered and a robust approach to sprinkler infrastructure taken in respect of the defined project.
7. This policy does not cover existing school buildings where no major building project is planned. The policy explicitly excludes mobile classrooms and similar temporary buildings.
8. Sprinklers must be installed to meet the defined requirements of the Council's insurers. Adequate consultation with the insurer's representatives must take place at appropriate stages of the project to ensure that their requirements are clear and being met by the design and installation. The Insurers Surveyor must formally approve firstly the design and then the installation to confirm that it meets their requirements, and that any conditions to the Council's insurance policy have been met.

9. Where an extension or partial refurbishment to a school triggers the threshold defined in paragraphs 4 and 6, sprinkler systems shall be installed as a minimum to the extended or refurbished area of the school with a connection provided, and flexibility given within reasonable assumptions, for the future installation of a system to the remainder of the building.
10. All sprinkler installations must form part of a holistic fire engineering design for the building to ensure that the full benefits available through application of sprinklers are realised.
11. All sprinkler installations must be carried out by contractors contained on the LPC List of Approved Fire and Security Products and Services. This requirement must be explicit within the specification for these systems when issuing tenders, and the proposed sub-contractor checked prior to award of the main contract.

Fire Sprinkler Project Assessment

12. A Fire Sprinkler Project Assessment must be carried out by the Project Manager in conjunction with the allocated Education Officer at the outset of the project, to determine the approach to be taken to sprinklers in respect of this policy. The intention of this policy should be respected to ensure that this assessment is robust and in line with the objective of the policy. This assessment must be updated at each key stage of the project to ensure that the assumptions made originally remain valid.
13. The outcome of the Assessment should be approved by the Head of School Buildings and Places and the Corporate Building Manager prior to approval of the Project Brief.
14. The planning implication of locating above ground sprinkler tanks on a school site, must be considered from the first point of pre-application consultation with colleagues in Development Control, and summarised in the assessment. Early consultation will enable mitigation for visual impact to be assessed and included as a central issue within the scheme.
15. If an above ground tank proves unachievable in planning terms, alternatives must be fully explored and options exhausted through full consultation with insurers. Such alternatives should be reported as minor derogations to this policy, due to the effect on compliance with the insurer's core requirements, and reported to the Head of School Buildings and Places and the Corporate Building Manager for approval.
16. If the Fire Sprinkler Project Assessment concludes that it is not possible to install sprinklers due to technical complexities (including planning constraints) this must be reported as a major derogation to this policy, and presented to the Cabinet Member for Children's Services for approval.

17. Responsibility for servicing and maintenance of the system rests with the Governing Body of the School. The outcome of the Fire Sprinkler Project Assessment must be shared with the incumbent school management. They must be made aware of this policy and its specific project application. They must then be made aware of the ongoing servicing and maintenance impact and potential costs. The Project Manager should assist the school in their understanding of the servicing and maintenance requirements.

Cost impact

18. Budget provision for sprinkler systems must be made within all project budgets at the capital bidding stage, or at the point of establishing a project budget where it is not subject to capital bidding. The cost of sprinkler installations should be kept under review by the Project Manager throughout the development of the project.
19. The cost of sprinkler installations must be separately identified within contractors tender sum breakdown to enable the cost of the systems to be monitored, and to inform future budget figures.

Relevant documents

- Building Bulletin 100: Designing for fire safety in schools.
- Outline Technical Specification for Proposed Automatic Sprinkler Systems for Schools, Royal Sun Alliance.
- Loss Prevention Council (LPC) Rules for Automatic Sprinkler Installations
- Standard Specifications, Layouts, Dimensions – DCSF
- Technical Bulletin 220 – Power supplies for Sprinkler Pumps -
- LPC List of approved fire and security products and services.

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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Appendices:

Appendix A – Outline Technical Specification for Proposed Automatic Sprinkler Systems for Schools, Royal Sun Alliance.