

Suggested Draft Motion for Constituent Authorities of Cheshire Fire Authority

SPRINKLERS SAVE LIVES AND PROTECT PROPERTY FROM FIRE

We want our Council to be a leader in securing the fitting of sprinklers in buildings in our Borough.

We want it to lead by example: fitting sprinklers during major refurbishments of its buildings; specifying the fitting of sprinklers in buildings that are constructed on its behalf; and prioritising the fitting of sprinklers in buildings that it owns where specific risks exist (for example, where people sleep).

We wish to do all that we can to secure the fitting of sprinklers in the following building types:

- Care homes, Extra Care Facilities and Specialised Housing
- Flats and apartment blocks (below 11m)*
- Houses in Multiple Occupation
- Schools
- Large High Bay warehousing**

We know that legislative change is required to national planning and building policy in this area. However, we know of the success that local authorities have had in shaping local development policies through for example, neighbourhood planning and supplementary planning documents.

Therefore, we recommend:

1. Our council explores local policy options to promote and secure the fitting of sprinklers in the above building types when they are built, or if they undergo a major refurbishment.
2. Our council writes to the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and local Members of Parliament to promote changes to the law to require sprinklers in at least the above building types.
3. Our council writes to the Secretary of State for the Department for Education to strongly condemn the proposed removal of sprinkler provisions from the revision of the design guide for fire safety in schools (Building Bulletin 100) and to request that the requirement for sprinklers in schools is strengthened rather than removed.

Background Information

Sprinklers save lives, protect property and benefit the environment.

There have been no recorded fire deaths in a building fitted with correctly installed and maintained residential sprinklers.

Only the sprinkler affected by the fire will activate using a controlled quantity of water

There is a 1 in 16 million chance that a sprinkler will discharge due to a manufacturing defect.

Sprinklers are cost effective

It is a well-known fact that many businesses that suffer from significant fires and fire damage never return to operation. Sprinklers can safeguard against this and will significantly improve business continuity.

Cheshire Fire Authority has worked with Registered Social Landlords across Cheshire to secure the fitting of sprinklers in high-rise buildings. To date 17 high-rise buildings out of a possible 21 have been fitted with sprinklers with a further one in the fit out stage. All were part-funded by Cheshire Fire Authority.

The following link takes you to videos showing the effectiveness of sprinklers and a comparison of a fire in a room with and without sprinklers fitted.

<https://www.cheshirefire.gov.uk/business-safety/sprinklers/how-sprinklers-work/watch-how-sprinklers-put-out-fires>

* Flats and apartment buildings above 11m are now required to be fitted with sprinklers

** High Bay Warehousing does not need sprinklers until they exceed 20,000m². As an example it can be 200m long and 100m wide before it needs sprinklers.