



Briefing Note

To:- Lesley Fraser, Director of Housing & Social Justice, Scottish Government

By:- Tom Barclay, Wheatley Group Director of Property

Subject:- Community Improvement Partnership and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Date:- 28 June 2017

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this paper is to provide background information on the development of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) role within the Wheatley Group's Community Improvement Partnership (CIP) to Lesley Fraser, Director of Housing & Social Justice at the Scottish Government.
- 1.2 Further, it provides detail on the future vision for the CIP and how our refreshed approach will strengthen our strategic and operational response to fire safety issues across the Wheatley estate. Critical to achieving this ambition will be our ability to continue to develop and grow our strategic partnership with SFRS.

2. Background

- 2.1 In August 2010, Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) and Strathclyde Police agreed to trial the deployment of seconded police officers. The purpose of this was to create a multi-agency team that would respond to, and prevent, antisocial behaviour.
- 2.2 In May 2011 it was decided to augment the CIP service offering by including a seconded Station Manager from SFRS. This was subsequently added to in June 2013 when a Watch Manager was also seconded to support the Station Manager.
- 2.3 The main driver of this approach was the requirement to better understand the causal factors around the disproportionately high incidents of fire within and around GHA tenancies. **In the year up to March 2012 GHA had approximately 15% of Glasgow's housing stock but 53% of the fire fatalities within the city were from our households.**

- 2.4 We know health issues such as alcohol consumption, smoking prevalence and mental health are all recorded as key contributory factors to fire risk. High levels of deprivation and other social issues such as housing composition, the projected increase in the number of older people and the number of people receiving social care or care in the community are also recorded as key contributory factors. The inclusion of Fire and Rescue personnel with the CIP, and the development of a strategic partnership with SFRS, was seen as key to mitigating the risk of fire, and associated fire deaths, within our communities.
- 2.5 Our early partnership approach was informed by The ‘Scotland Together’ report which was published following a study to examine how to reduce deaths and injuries caused by fire in Scotland, This report highlighted the need for public bodies such as SFRS to work in partnership with housing organisations to identify Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) within Registered Social Landlords and Local Authority housing stock in Scotland.
- 2.6 As a result, the promotion of HFSVs became a key priority for the partnership to help protect our customers, communities and properties from fire incidents. The HFSV referral is triggered by a simple referral form which can be accessed by all staff via the Intranet Site.
- 2.7 In addition to this the partnership promoted and advised on the installation of sprinklers, which were installed in bin stores to all 102 of GHA’s multi-storey blocks and delivered extensive fire awareness training to all front-line staff.
- 2.8 Subsequent to the Station Manager’s secondment to the CIP a formal partnership agreement was established between SFRS and GHA in 2012. The key aims of which are noted below:
- Establishing and/or enhancing good practice in relation to home fire safety within the GHA’s properties;
 - Raising fire safety awareness among the GHA’s employees with responsibility for visiting its properties;
 - Assisting both organisations in achieving their corporate priorities of Protection, Community and Partnership, Better Homes and Better Lives; and
 - Sharing expertise, knowledge and relevant operational intelligence.
- 2.9 Since the formation of CIP in 2011, GHA has seen an incredible reduction in the number of fire fatalities within our communities. There were zero fire fatalities within GHA stock for 4 consecutive years (July 2011 – 2015) and there have been no fatalities within our MSF stock since 2008/09. We recognise however that there is still significant scope to build on this success and continue to develop innovative service offerings with our partners that will prevent or mitigate the risk of dwelling fires.

3. Current SFRS Service Provision Within CIP

- 3.1 A significant element of SFRS role within the CIP consists of processing HFSV referrals and maintaining reporting records. The HFSV referrals are assessed and prioritised as high, medium or low. If high risk, SFRS Community Advocates will conduct the visit and all others (medium and low risk) will be carried out by the Local Stations. Housing Officers receive feedback on the outcome of their referral and of any comments made, or concerns raised, at the time of the visit. Since 2014/15 over 1000 HFSV referrals have been made.
- 3.2 In addition to the HFSV's the seconded Watch Manager also check SFRS systems on a daily basis to capture all fire related incidents within a GHA property or community; this information is then cascaded to the relevant Housing Officer/LHO to make them aware of the incident and the relevant circumstances.
- 3.3 Over the last 12 months the information collated by the Watch Manager in relation to fire related incidents and HFSV referrals has been segmented by subsidiary/LHO and included within the Monthly / Quarterly Community Assessment Reports produced by CIP. These are then circulated to all Directors, Area Directors and Managers to consider and address any areas of concern.
- 3.4 Other activities have also included CIP's Watch Manager attending/coordinating attendance at LHO Tasking meetings; carrying out ad-hoc joint visits with LHO staff and/or Health & Safety; providing general advice/publications around fire prevention and coordinating interventions such as 'Cook Safe.'
- 3.5 SFRS currently conduct quarterly inspections of our multi-storey blocks. As part of their inspections they will highlight any areas of concern and we have developed a process whereby any inspections carried out are submitted to the CIP who in turn record this and send the info directly to our Technical and Safety Compliance Manager.

4. Opportunities for Improving our Strategic and Operational Response to Fire Safety

- 4.1 In recent years the SFRS role within the CIP has concentrated primarily on the processing of HFSV referrals and the daily analysis of fire incidents taking up the majority of the Watch Manager's time. There have been recent discussion around the benefits to both organisations of GHA (and in the near future Wheatley) accessing the data captured by SFRS using their own Business Intelligence System (Clickview.) This system captures data and trending analysis around deliberate fires, accidental fires, fire casualties, false alarms and special services such as support to vulnerable / elderly individuals who have fallen etc.
- 4.2 The Clickview system used by SFRS is similar to the Police Scotland Business Intelligence Toolkit that has recently been developed and tailored to provide bespoke Wheatley Group intelligence on all instances of reported crime within our estates. By providing our X and Y co-ordinates to SFRS we could potentially replicate this hugely innovative and sector leading approach to information sharing. Both organisations are

committed to the principle and benefit of, more effective and efficient sharing of information and have committed to working towards achieving this goal.

- 4.3 On 26th April 2017 The Wheatley Board approved a revised Operating Model for the CIP. The new model acknowledges the importance of focussing on a more preventative and collaborative approach to behavioural change, fire safety and keeping people safe.
- 4.4 The new model sees the creation of 3 additional posts to focus on 'Home Safety.' This includes a specific emphasis on home fire safety and targeting our most vulnerable customers across Group. These posts will ensure that we increase the volume, and maximise the benefits of, our HFSVs. They will also enhance the after-care element by creating a bespoke Wheatley service provision that provides access to additional safety measures; this will include fire retardant bedding, fire retardant letter-box covers, advice packs, access to cooker isolation switches and referrals to 'Cook Safe' programmes. These are just some of the measures that, in the near future, will be available to our customers. Previous research has shown that access to these types of safeguard measures is extremely effective in the reduction and prevention of fire incidents.
- 4.5 A new performance management framework has also been developed within the CIP. The revised PMF includes key outcomes, measures and targets around fire safety.
- 4.6 The CIP has developed a bespoke fire safety prevention work plan that all subsidiaries will be able to access and benefit from. This will require the buy-in of SFRS and we will look to ensure this is covered as part of our strategic partnership review.
- 4.7 The Wheatley Group is keen to explore the potential benefits of developing a Wheatley / SFRS Fire Safety Charter that clearly evidences our joint approach to developing strategies, policies and services. This would send an extremely positive and reassuring message to our customers around the importance we place on fire safety. A 'charter' of this nature, between the largest landlord in Scotland and SFRS, has the potential to receive an extremely positive response and could readily be replicated by other landlords/sectors.

5. Concluding Remarks

- 5.1 It is hoped that this paper provides sufficient insight into the extent and nature of the partnership that has existed between GHA and subsequently the Wheatley Group for several years now, a partnership that we are engaged in developing further in light of the tragic events at the Grenfell Tower in London earlier this month.
- 5.2 This information is only a snap shot however, highlighting that particular partnership and this work is augmented by a robust system of support services and processes administered by the Group to its customers that is focussed on customer safety and on service excellence. We will therefore continue to work directly with our customer base and our other key stakeholders to learn any further lessons that emerge from

the Grenfell fire and look to support the Scottish Government in in any way we can as it considers its responses to recent events.