

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Community Safety & Environmental Services Committee: 3 May 2006

Subject: Smart Technology in Sheltered Housing – Update Report

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide Committee with an update of progress on the installation of smart technology in the Council's sheltered housing complexes.
- 1.2 To make recommendations to Committee on the ongoing use of the funding identified for smart technology.

2. Background

- 2.1 In setting the Council's revenue budget for 2005/2006 on 10 February 2005, the Council agreed that a sum of £200,000 of capital expenditure be spent through the prudential borrowing policy of the Council in installing smart technology in the Council's sheltered housing complexes.
- 2.2 The Council has nine sheltered housing complexes, which have a total of 276 sheltered houses. These complexes are as follows:

Name of Complex	Tenants
Westbridgend	73
Melfort Avenue	30
Hogan Court	30
Mill Road	24
Manse Gardens	11
Gray Street	29
Willox Park	36
Young Street	23
Second Avenue	20
Total	276

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Discussion has taken place with Tunstall Telecom, the alarm service providers in the complexes, regarding implementing Smart Technology to clients based within sheltered housing.
- 3.2** There is a range of electronic devices available which may assist in the care of clients:
- Smoke and heat sensors – these can be used in all complexes and for all clients and cost £117 per unit;
 - Flood and fall detectors – these are particularly specialised and are not suitable for all clients. Each client would require to be assessed for suitability for these sensors. It is estimated that this technology would be suitable for around 50% of clients. This technology costs £180 per unit.
- 3.3** Tunstall have surveyed the nine complexes and found that three of them have more complex communications issues which are discussed below. The remaining six, i.e. Mill Road, Manse Gardens, Gray Street, Willox Park, Young Street and Second Avenue, are able to have these systems installed in a straightforward manner.
- 3.4** In the three others, i.e. Melfort Avenue, Hogan Court and Westbridgend, Tunstall have advised that additional works to the communications links are required. The additional works will mean an additional cost of around £6,000 per complex for Melfort Avenue and Hogan Court, while Westbridgend is expected to cost an additional £10,000. The viability of this option for these complexes has still to be confirmed by Tunstall.
- 3.5** In enclosed complexes, Second Avenue, Gray Street, Manse Gardens and Young Street, the installation of “door open” sensors at each door would allow wardens to be aware of entry or exit from the building during the night. The sensors would cover the main entrance door and fire doors. This would provide security for those tenants suffering from dementia. It is only suitable in the above complexes given the layout. Total cost of door sensors would be approximately £3,000.
- 3.6** A number of Community Alarm units are not compatible with the new technology. Around 80 of these units require to be replaced at a cost of £10,000. A few pieces of minor works have also been carried out using this funding valued at £835.

Projected Expenditure and Installation Programme

- 3.7** Initial projected costs of the programme are as follows:-

Technology	Unit Cost	Units	Total Cost
Smoke and Heat Detectors	£117	276	£32,292
Flood and Fall Detectors	£180	138	£24,840
Installation of Smoke and Heat Detectors	£20	276	£5,520
Additional Links – Melfort Avenue & Hogan Court	£6,000	2	£12,000
Additional Links – Westbridgend	£10,000	1	£10,000
Door Open Sensors – Enclosed Complexes	n/a	Total	£3,000
Community Alarm Units – Upgrades	£125	80	£10,000
Other minor works	n/a	Total	£835
Total Projected Spend			£98,487

3.8 As can be seen the expected total cost of the programme is around £101,500 less than the budget identified.

3.9 The installation programme requires to be done at one complex at a time – as each installation has to be assigned to the call centre, which is located in East Dunbartonshire Council, commencing in November 2005. The following table shows the likely installation timetable.

Name of Complex	Installation	Progress
Manse Gardens	November 2005	Smoke and Flood detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or flood detector as yet.
Second Avenue	December 2005	Smoke and Flood detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or flood detector as yet.
Young Street	January 2006	Smoke and Flood detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or flood detector as yet.
Gray Street	February 2006	Smoke and Flood detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or flood detector as yet.
Mill Road	March 2006	Smoke and Flood detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or flood detector as yet.
Willox Park	April 2006	
Melfort Avenue	May 2006	
Hogan Court	June 2006	
Westbridgend	July 2006	

3.10 This programme will take the installation programme into the next financial year. In order to do this it will be necessary to allow some capital carry-forward for this project into 2006/07.

- 3.11** As can be seen there is, so far, no uptake or requirement assessed regarding fall or flood detectors. If this trend continues then there is likely to be a further underspend of up to £24,840.

Assessment of the Benefits of Smart Technology

- 3.12** In 2004 the Council ran a pilot project to assess the benefits of using smart technology. As technological advances continue newer sensors and other equipment which could enhance the existing community alarm system are being developed. The pilot was run to evaluate the benefits of utilising this new technology.
- 3.13** The views of clients were mixed, with some feeling that the technology could be of benefit, while others felt that the new technology did not make them feel any more confident in living at home than the current community alarm system.
- 3.14** It was felt by some that the equipment was sometimes awkward to wear.
- 3.15** Community alarm staff felt that the equipment may result in an increase in numbers of callouts, with some of these being false alarms. An increased level of requests for assistance was evidenced during the pilot.
- 3.16** Generally staff involved feel that, where such technology could be of benefit to a client and that client agreed to use of the new technology, such technology could assist in maintaining that client to remain in their own home. Under such circumstances it would be appropriate to utilise such technology.

4. Personnel Issues

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1** It is intended to carry forward as much as possible for the above-noted underspend into 2006/07. This depends on the final outturn of the whole of the Social Work capital programme for 2005/06. Any carry-forward will be used to install Smart technology in the community, based on the assessed need of individuals.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The installation of Smart Technology in the Council's sheltered housing complexes is likely to cost less than the budget originally identified with an expected underspend of around £101,500.

- 6.2** There are a number of options available to the Council in relation to the use of the underspend as detailed in section 5 (above).
- 6.3** The preferred option from the Social Work point of view would be to use the underspend to purchase additional Special Needs adaptations to reduce the waiting list.
- 6.4** Where smart technology is seen as an aid for home care clients that would assist in keeping clients in their own home, then such purchases should be funded from within existing budgets.
- 6.5** The use of smart technology is not, at this time, proven to be of significant benefit, though the use of this equipment may make living at home safer for our clients.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1** It is recommended that Committee:
- 1) notes the position regarding the installation of smart technology in its sheltered housing complexes; and
 - 2) considers the options identified at section 5 and agrees that the balance is spent on extending the provision of Smart Technology to priority older people in the community (£30,000) and the remainder of the underspend to Special Needs Adaptations (£71,500).

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Wards Affected: All