

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Acting Director of Social Work Services

Social Justice Committee: 14 June 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 up to £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 256 sheltered houses. These complexes are as follows:

Name of Complex	Tenants
Westbridgend	73
Melfort Avenue	20
Hogan Court	20
Mill Road	24
Manse Gardens	11
Gray Street	29
Willox Park	36
Young Street	23
Second Avenue	20
Total	256

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Discussions took place with Tunstall Telecom, who provide alarm service in the Council's sheltered housing 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 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, were 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 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 Westbridgend has still to be confirmed by Tunstall – due to the nature of the provision.
- 3.5** In enclosed complexes, Second Avenue, Gray Street, Manse Gardens and Young Street, the installation of “door open” sensors at each door allows wardens to be aware of entry or exit from the building during the night. The sensors cover the main entrance door and fire doors. This provides security for those tenants suffering from dementia. It is only suitable in the above complexes given the layout. Total cost of door sensors is approximately £3,000.
- 3.6** A number of Community Alarm units were not compatible with the new technology. Around 80 of these units required 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.
- 3.7** At the Council meeting on 22 February 2006 the Non-HRA Capital budget for 2006/07 was set which included assumptions of carried-forward underspends from 2005/06 capital projects. This included a projected spend on this project of £100,000 based on projected costs at that time and no carry-forward provision was made.

Projected Expenditure and Installation Programme

3.8 Updated projected costs of the programme are as follows:-

Technology	Unit Cost	Units	Total Cost
Smoke and Heat Detectors	£117	256	£29,952
Flood and Fall Detectors	£180	128	£23,040
Installation of Smoke and Heat Detectors	£20	256	£5,120
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			£93,947

3.9 As can be seen the expected total cost of the programme is around £106,000 less than the budget identified, and £6,000 less than the probable outturn of £100,000.

3.10 The installation programme required 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 – and commenced in November 2005. The following table shows the installation progress and an estimated timetable for the completion of the programme.

Name of Complex	Installation	Progress
Manse Gardens	November 2005	Smoke and Heat detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or heat detector as yet.
Second Avenue	December 2005	Smoke and Heat detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or heat detector as yet.
Young Street	January 2006	Smoke and Heat detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or heat detector as yet.
Gray Street	February 2006	Smoke and Heat detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or heat detector as yet.
Mill Road	March 2006	Smoke and Heat detectors installed. No clients identified as requiring a fall or heat detector as yet.

Willox Park	April 2006	Smoke and Heat detectors installed. One client identified as requiring a fall detector.
Melfort Avenue	July 2006	Awaiting upgrade by Tunstall
Hogan Court	August 2006	Awaiting upgrade by Tunstall
Westbridgend	September 2006	Awaiting upgrade by Tunstall

- 3.11** This programme takes the installation programme into the new financial year. In order to do this it was necessary to allow some capital carry-forward for this project into 2006/07.

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** At the close of the financial year 2005/06 an underspend against the probable outturn of £26,000 is anticipated. This will be carried-forward into 2006/07 to allow the completion of the installation programme.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1** The installation programme has been delayed slightly due to some complexities regarding three complexes and progress on these three remaining complexes is planned over the summer of 2006.
- 6.2** At the close of the financial year 2005/06 an underspend of £26,000 is anticipated. This has been carried-forward to allow the completion of the programme.
- 6.3** 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.
- 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.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1** It is recommended that Committee notes the position regarding the installation of smart technology in its sheltered housing complexes.

William W Clark
Acting Director of Social Work Services

Person to Contact: Stephen West, Manager of Resources, Garshake Road
01389 737705 stephen.west@west-dunbarton.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All