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To: PS/Jim Fitzpatrick

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Fire Legislation, Safety &
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Date: 16th November 2005

**MEETING WITH SIR GEORGE PIGOT (NATIONAL FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK)
AND ROBERT WORNHAM: 22nd NOVEMBER 2005**

Issue

1. You have agreed to meet Sir George Pigot and Robert Wornham, the father of Firefighter Jeff Wornham who died in the Harrow Court fire in Stevenage in February, and have asked for some background briefing on the sprinkler systems issue.

Recommendation

2. That you note the attached background briefing at Annex A-D which details the current situation with the consultation process for Part B of the Building Regulations (Fire Safety), research into residential and low cost sprinkler systems, and the Home Fire Risk Check initiative.

Timing

3. Routine.

Consideration

4. The incident in which Jeff Wornham and his colleague, Michael Miller met their deaths occurred in a flat on the 14th floor of the 17-storey Harrow Court council block in Stevenage at around 3.00am on 2nd February 2005. The female occupant of the flat also died and several people were treated for minor injuries. Seventy-two people were evacuated to be housed overnight in temporary accommodation.

5. The precise circumstances in which the firefighters met their deaths have yet to be established by a Coroner's Enquiry. **The fire dynamics in this incident were unusual and it was not possible to explain them fully from the initial investigation. Moreover there may have been some departure from usual operational procedures which require further scrutiny [not for disclosure at meeting].**

6. We would recommend that this meeting be low key in nature and given that the matter is *sub judice*, it would not be appropriate to discuss the circumstances of the fire in any detail.

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Presentation Issues

7. Given the circumstances of this tragic case, it is likely that Sir George will raise the issue of the mandatory installation of sprinklers in buildings. This would also be in keeping with the low cost sprinkler campaign currently underway involving CFA, the National Fire Sprinkler Network and European Fire Sprinkler Network.

Financial & Legal Consideration

8. None.

Terry Pretious

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