



## **AGENDA ITEM: 13**

### **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL**

**9<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

### **WELSH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STRATEGY 2011-2016 CONSULTATION**

**Report by ACFO Ruth Simmons**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To detail the consultation arrangements for the Welsh Assembly Government's proposed Equality and Diversity Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Service 2011-2016.
- 2 To suggest a method for the drafting of the Fire Authorities response to the consultation.

#### **Background**

- 3 The draft strategy has been developed collaboratively for Wales by the Welsh Assembly Government, the Chief Fire Officers Association, the Welsh Local Government Association and the FRS Equality and Diversity officers.
- 4 The Strategy was produced with the involvement of a range of organisations including the Welsh Language Board, Fire Brigades Union, and Unison, Unite the Union, Fire Officers Association, Stonewall Cymru, Networking Women in the Fire Service and the Disabled Firefighters Association.
- 5 The purpose of the consultation is to seek views from a wider range of partners, interested organisations and individuals.

## Information

- 6 The Strategy has been devised to meet the legal requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty 2011. It is an explicit ambition of the Strategy's authors to create an inclusive FRS that serves all communities equally and to the highest standards.
- 7 It is proposed that action will be required in four priority outcome areas, linked to the Core Values and to the Equality Improvement Framework. The four areas are;
  - Leadership and Organisational Commitment
  - Citizen Centred Engagement
  - Modernised and Equipped Workforce
  - Generating Outcomes - Effective Service Delivery and Performance Management.
- 8 There is no intention to create new or separate processes and the need for action planning, monitoring and reporting on all diversity strands will build upon previous statutory duties. Progress will be reported via the FRS annual Improvement Plan. The Strategy will be reviewed in 2016.
- 9 Responsibility for delivering against the Strategy will rest at three levels:

National - Welsh Assembly Government, Welsh Local Government Association, Chief Fire Officers Association and Representative Bodies.

Local – Members of each Fire Authority, Chief Fire Officer, senior employees and Representative Bodies.

Individual Fire and Rescue Service Employees.
- 10 An illustration of responsibilities under Outcome 1 Leadership and Organisational Commitment for example would mean:

## **National Level**

- 10.1 The Welsh Assembly Government would endeavour to ensure clear direction to the FRS on equality, diversity and fairness.
- 10.2 The Welsh Assembly Government in collaboration with CFOA and WLGA will endeavour to ensure that a national Champion is identified and supported in creating an infrastructure to deliver the Strategy in Wales.

## **Local Level**

- 10.3 The Fire and Rescue Authorities will endeavour to mainstream equality through core business, Improvement Plans and planning processes, publishing progress annually.

## **Individual Level**

- 10.4 FRS staff members will endeavour to treat others with dignity and respect in accordance with core values.

## **Outcome**

- 10.5 Everyone from Members and Principal Officers to the most junior members of staff will be committed to equality, diversity and fairness and understand what is required of them.
- 11 The Strategy notes the role of the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) which was established under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. The EHRC has powers to enforce legislation and to encourage and promote equality for all. Breaches of the legislation can lead to significant penalties.

## **Recommendations**

- 12 That Members note the content of the report and give approval to mandate the Chief Fire Officer, in conjunction with the Chair, to respond to the consultation on behalf of the Authority in view of the closing date of 20<sup>th</sup> May 2011.