

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL REPORT

DATE:	26 th October 2005
REPORT BY:	PETER SLEE, ASSISTANT CHIEF OFFICER (CORPORATE SERVICES)
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To inform members of the proposed New Firefighters' Pension Scheme

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 19th September 2005, members requested information on the proposed new Firefighters' Pension Scheme to be introduced in England from April 2006. In addition it was requested that a letter be sent to the Welsh Assembly Government's (WAG) Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration, registering the Authority's concerns on the delay encountered in introducing changes to the pension scheme similar to those proposed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in England.
- 1.2 Copies of the letter sent by the Chairman to the Minister, and Minister's reply are attached to this report (Appendix A).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, Section 34, pensions became the responsibility of the National Assembly for Wales. Statutory Instrument 2004 2918 came into force on 11th November 2004, which provided for the Firemen's Pension Scheme, established under Section 26 of the Fire Services Act 1947, to continue in force in Wales. The Order also provided for the name of the Scheme to be changed to the 'Firefighters' Pension (Wales) Scheme'.
- 2.2 On 13th October 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) issued Fire Service Circular 44-2004 – Review of Pension Arrangements for Firefighters. This Circular covered the Government's proposals for a new Firefighters' Pension Scheme, with a commencement date of 1st April 2006 (England).

2. **BACKGROUND** *(continued)*

- 2.3 On 8th September, 2005, the ODPM issued a further circular which gave details of the Framework for a New Firefighters' Pension Scheme, Government's Response to the Consultation.

3. **DEVELOPMENT OF PROPOSALS FOR A NEW SCHEME**

- 3.1 The Framework for the New Firefighters' Pension Scheme is attached as Appendix B to this report. Members will note that this response to the consultation has been issued jointly by the ODPM; the Scottish Executive; the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland; and the WAG.
- 3.2 The Firefighters' Pension Committee (FPC), which is chaired by the ODPM, and has a representative from the Welsh Assembly, will meet over a 16 week period to discuss in detail how the new Scheme will be drafted. The Committee will also be discussing proposed changes to the existing Scheme.
- 3.3 The new Scheme will be open to all firefighters, regardless of the terms of their contracts. For example, those firefighters on the Retained Duty System are not eligible to join the existing Scheme but will be able to join the new Scheme.
- 3.4 Once the new Scheme has been approved, existing firefighters will have the opportunity to consider whether they want to join it or stay in the existing Scheme. The basis for such transfers has not yet been agreed.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The intention by the ODPM is to have the New Scheme in place in England for April 2006. Indications are that the New Scheme, which has to be approved by the Welsh Assembly Government, will not be in place in Wales until April 2007.