



AGENDA ITEM: 10

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19th March 2007

PROPOSALS FOR INCLUSION IN THE AUTHORITY'S RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2008/09

**Report by Simon Smith,
Chief Fire Officer**

Purpose of Report

- 1.** To inform members of the Executive Panel's recommendations in relation to the options the Authority should include in its Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) Action Plan for 2008/09.
- 2.** To seek the Authority's approval to include these proposals in the draft Action Plan that will be presented to members at the Authority's June meeting, prior to public consultation.

Background

- 3.** In March 2006 the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) published its guidance for fire and rescue authorities on risk reduction planning – "Wales a Safer Country". The Guidance explicitly states that authorities have to develop, consult, approve and publish their RRP and/or Action Plan by 31st October each year and undertake an extensive consultation process which cannot last less than 12 weeks. Subsequently North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority conformed with the Guidance and published its first RRP and 2007/08 Action Plan by the statutory deadline of 31st October 2006.



Background *(continued)*

4. Authorities are required to produce a new RRP or action plan on an annual basis. To this end the RRP Working Group met on 30th January 2007 to explore areas for inclusion in the Authority's RRP Action Plan for 2008/09 onwards.
5. Following that first meeting the Working Group requested that more detailed options be presented to them on
 - how to reduce the number of fire deaths; and
 - how best value could be achieved from the Service's resources.
6. At the next meeting, on 5th March 2007, the Working Group was provided with briefing papers which:
 - outlined a new **prevention** strategy aimed at making "North Wales a safe place to live, work and visit";
 - outlined a new policy to deal with the Service's response to false alarms from automatic fire alarm systems which would assist the Service to **protect** the use of valuable resources;
 - detailed reviews that could be initiated into how wholetime firefighters could be employed and deployed to improve the Service's **response** to operational incidents.
 - inherent to all of the above aims is the need to further enhance the Service's performance management framework and risk management arrangements.
7. Following detailed consideration of the above areas the Working Group suggested that the following proposals merited inclusion in the RRP draft Action Plan for 2008/09. The Executive Panel agreed with the Group's view and recommended that the Authority sanction these proposals:



Background *(continued)*

8. **Prevention**: to consult on proposals to deliver an intensive programme of home fire safety checks (HFSC) across North Wales with a view to reducing the unacceptable high number of fire deaths in the area. The proposed strategy would include advertising campaigns, generation of referrals via a Fire Service Direct system, measures to deal with increased workloads, consideration of the provision of specialist sprinkler/suppression systems to certain vulnerable individuals, performance management software and recording systems and funding for the retention of the Arson Reduction Team (ART). Under the revised Strategy ambitious targets would be set for HFSCs. For these targets to be met investment would be required in information management and the CFS and fire safety management systems would require integrating. Promoting the merits of sprinkler installation in both public buildings and domestic properties would also form part of this strategy.
9. **Protecting**: to consult on proposals to introduce a robust policy with a view to reducing the number of false alarms from automatic fire alarms (AFAs). This policy proposes to implement a progressive registration programme for AFAs with the Service. This would enable the Service to gather information on the size and scope of the systems and the risk that they protect. The Service may then decide to issue a Unique Reference Number (URN) that will be used by the person in charge of the premises to identify the system when fire signals are passed to the Service's control room.
10. **Responding**: to undertake two substantial reviews - the first into officer cover across the Service at Operational, Tactical and Strategic levels and the second into the rostering of fire crews with a view to increasing station availability.



Background *(continued)*

11. Ultimately the outcomes of the 'Protecting' and 'Responding' initiatives listed above could produce efficiency savings that would be available for reinvestment into the above mentioned 'Prevention' strategy.
12. Members have requested a further RR Working Group meeting on 21st May 2007 to review findings from the responding reviews.
13. **Organisational Development**: for the Authority to deliver its prevention, protection and intervention/responding aims it needs to focus on two interlinked areas of organisational development – performance management and risk management. Therefore, by building on the work that has already taken place, the Authority needs to embed risk management into the Service's business processes. It also requires to further develop its performance management culture and enhance its performance management systems to ensure that personnel are in a position to manage their own and other people's work.

Financial Implications

14. The draft Action Plan that will be presented to members at the Authority's June meeting will, as far as possible, include estimated costings/anticipated efficiency savings for the proposals listed.



Recommendations

15. Members are recommended to:

- 15.1** to sanction the Executive Panel's recommendation to include the above proposals in the draft Action Plan that will be presented to the Authority at its June meeting for approval to go out to public consultation; and
- 15.2** in the meantime, to proceed to initiate an informal discussion on the proposals with the WAG's Minister for Social Justice and Regeneration.