



AGENDA ITEM: 7

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

15th October 2007

RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE AUTHORITY'S DRAFT RISK REDUCTION ACTION PLAN 2008-09

**Report by Dawn Docx,
Assistant Chief Officer (Finance and Procurement)**

Purpose of Report

- 1.** To seek the Fire and Rescue Authority's endorsement of the Executive Panel's recommendations relating to the draft RRP Action Plan for 2008-09 and the Authority's response to comments received during the consultation period

Introduction

- 2.** Members approved the Authority's draft Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) 2008-09 for consultation on 18th June 2007.
- 3.** In accordance with guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government, a comprehensive 12 week consultation process was undertaken, and responses were received up to and including the closing date of 7th September 2007.

Information

- 4.** A full colour printed consultation document was sent to 918 external individuals and organisations at the end of June/beginning of July, in 34 different categories of consultees. An additional 69 copies were distributed during the National Eisteddfod, the Anglesey Show, the Meirionnydd Show and the Denbigh and Flint Show.



Information *(continued)*

- 5.** Covering letters to Assembly Members, Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament were worded to include an open invitation to discuss proposals in more detail should they so wish.
- 6.** 450 copies were distributed to staff in all Service premises, as well as to those currently on secondment, long term sickness, maternity or other leave. Messages were issued to staff through internal communications to inform them of the consultation and to encourage participation.
- 7.** A programme of personal visits to all watches in the three 24 hour shift fire stations and in the five day crewing fire stations was delivered by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery), to give an opportunity for personnel to discuss the proposals, and to encourage them to submit their written responses. The normal programme of station visits by Principal Officers also continued during this period.
- 8.** Staff and staff representatives were given presentations by an external company and Principal Officers on how a new rostering system might be configured, and how this type of reconfiguration can release resources.
- 9.** An electronic version was available on the Authority's website from 19th June 2007 onwards.
- 10.** 62 written responses were received in total, 52 of which arrived in the last week of the consultation. No responses were received from Control or Support Staff, but around 61% of all the responses came from staff. The fact that some electronic responses did not reveal full details of the person responding means that an accurate analysis is not possible. As in previous years, the Fire Brigades Union submitted its written response.



Information *(continued)*

- 11.** In contrast to last year, the majority of responses received this year were not supportive of the proposals in the form in which they were presented in the consultation document. Many were disappointed that detailed costings and fully developed implementation plans had not already been completed and included at the consultation phase.
- 12.** The wording was either exactly the same or very similar in a number of responses, suggesting that a degree of campaigning or sharing of responses had occurred.
- 13.** There were concerns from staff about how the proposals might affect their personal home and work life, and a number suggested that although they agreed that prevention work is very important, they wished to see this being funded either through an increase in budget or by releasing efficiencies from any part of the service except where it might affect firefighters employed on fire stations. The point that the rostering review would relate only to staff based at 24 hour shift and day crewed stations (8 out of 44 fire stations in North Wales) but not to retained fire stations had been missed.
- 14.** All responses have been read and analysed, and a selection of either single comments or ones that are representative of a number of very similar comments that were submitted are presented in the Appendix. Draft responses to the issues raised are as approved by the Executive Panel on 24th September 2007.

Recommendations

- 15.** That Members:
 - 15.i.** note the responses received to the consultation on the draft RRP Action Plan 2008-09;



Recommendations *(continued)*

15.ii. confirm the Authority's intention to proceed with plans shown in Proposals 1, 2 and 4 of the Draft RRP Action Plan 2008-09;

15.iii. agree to defer a decision on plans shown in Proposal 3(a) the Rostering Review, and 3(b) the Dedicated Response Option of the Draft RRP Action Plan 2008-09 to allow time for the Risk Reduction Plan Working group to undertake additional detailed work to assess the full implications of these plans, and submit its recommendation to the Executive Panel for ratification by the full Authority;

15.iv. agree the final wording of its response to written comments submitted by consultees on the draft RRP Action Plan 2008-09.