



AGENDA ITEM: 8

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

18th July 2011

FIRE SAFE CIGARETTES

Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members that an EU-compliant standard known as fire safe cigarettes will be introduced in November 2011.

Background

- 2 The Chief Fire Officer's Task Group (CFOTG) report in 2007 recognised that one of the contributory factors to accidental fire deaths was

“... careless disposal of smoking materials in waste containers, or by cigarettes falling on flammable surfaces. Smokers exacerbate the risk of fires by falling asleep when smoking, causing the ignition of chairs/sofas and beds.”

- 3 A key recommendation of the CFOTG report was to promote fire safety cigarettes at national level:

“NWFRS to give high level support and lobby the Welsh Assembly Government for legislation to introduce Reduced Ignition Propensity cigarettes in Wales, to mirror successful initiatives in Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the USA.”

- 4 The UK Government has been at the forefront in encouraging the European Commission to look into the case for creating a European Standard for fire safe cigarettes. The cigarettes were introduced in the USA in 2003. Research was undertaken by the Communities and Local Government (CLG) in 2004, which

estimated that had the UK introduced the cigarettes at the same time as the USA, the number of smoking related fires would have been reduced in that year by nearly two thirds.

- 5 A Joint Working Group within the International Standards Organisation was established, consisting of representatives from the tobacco industry and fire safety, to progress the matter.

Information

- 6 The Service has been informed in Fire and Rescue Service Circular W-FRS(11)15 that it is expected that the EU will approve the Standard in November 2011 and the Standard will be referenced in the Official Journal of the EU thereafter. The new Safety Standard is titled BS EN 16156: 2010 Cigarettes – Assessment of the ignition propensity - Safety requirement and BS EN ISO Standard test method of assessing the ignition propensity of cigarettes.
- 7 The Standard will place fire safety requirements on cigarette manufacturers to produce reduced ignition propensity cigarettes. Cigarettes sold in the European Union will have to be manufactured to have bands down the length of the paper, which make the product self-extinguish when not actually smoked. However, illegal cigarettes which may not meet the Standard will still be a problem and it will take time for the new Standard to have the desired impact.

Recommendation

- 8 Members are asked to note that the fire safe cigarettes will be introduced in November 2011.