



AGENDA ITEM: 15

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

18th March 2013

ESTABLISHMENT OF ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANTS

Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 Members are asked to confirm their approval for North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to sign up to the Armed Forces Community Covenants for The Isle of Anglesey County Council and for Wrexham County Borough Council.

Background

- 2 In his letter of the 16th July 2012 (appendix 1) the Minister for Local Government and Communities, Carl Sargeant, encouraged all Local Authorities and their partners, which includes North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, to create Community Covenants with the Armed Forces Community.
- 3 The Isle of Anglesey County Council was the first council in the region to respond to this request with a covenant with the Armed Forces Community drawn up and signed in 2012. Having taken legal advice Wrexham County Borough Council is now in a position to draw up its covenant. Both documents are attached as appendices.

Information

- 4 The principles of the Armed Forces Community Covenants are set out in the two attached documents (appendix 2 and 3). The aim of which is to encourage a relationship of mutual respect and support

between local authorities, their partners and the Armed Forces. They do not confer any special privileges or provide for preferential treatment for personnel who are either currently part of the Armed Forces or veterans. However, the Councils and their partners agree to ensure that these people and their families are not disadvantaged as a result of their current or previous association with the Armed Forces.

- 5 Although these covenants are voluntary, a number of Councils within North Wales are currently considering whether to develop their own. A covenant is a legally binding document and that is the reason why partner organisations such as North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority are being asked for their approval prior to official signing by Wrexham Borough Council at a formal ceremony on the 5th April 2013.
- 6 Any future Armed Forces Community Covenants will be brought to the Authority for approval because the precise objectives and general intentions may vary from one local authority to another. The Fire and Rescue Authority will then have to determine what actions it will take in order to support the intentions of each covenant. This is likely to focus around access to our existing community safety services.
- 7 The community covenants are supported by the community covenant grant scheme which has been established to financially support projects, at the local level, which strengthen the ties or the mutual understanding between members of the armed forces community and the wider community in which they live. The covenants allow the Councils along with their partners to access this direct grant funding from the UK government.

Recommendation

- 8 That members confirm their agreement for North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to sign up, as a recognised partner, to the Armed Forces Community Covenants for the Isle of Anglesey County Council and Wrexham County Borough Council.