



AGENDA ITEM: 7

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

20th June 2011

2011 CONSULTATION ON COMBINED IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND RISK REDUCTION PLAN

Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To seek Members' ratification of decisions taken in relation to the content and consultation arrangements for the Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan (RRP) 2012-13.

Background

- 2 Part 1 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 ('the measure') requires Welsh Improvement Authorities to set themselves improvement objectives upon which they have consulted.
- 3 The Fire and Rescue Authorities (Improvement Plans) (Wales) Order 2010 requires Welsh improvement authorities to publish their improvement plan as soon as reasonably practicable after 30 September of the year prior to the financial year to which it relates. To tie in with the RRP publication timetable, this has been interpreted in practice as 31 October each year.
- 4 Although FRAs are required to set improvement objectives every year, this does not mean that the objectives have to change every year or be deliverable within one year.
- 5 Section 5 of the measure requires authorities, in deciding how to improve, to consult with representatives of residents, non-domestic rates payers, service users and those with an interest in the area.

- 6 The measure itself does not specify the frequency, duration or timing of consultations, but the issued fire and rescue authority guidance for complying with the measure does assume that non-statutory requirements in the RRP guidance (to consult on RRP and resultant action plans for a minimum of 12 weeks) will be met.

Introduction

- 7 The Authority's combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan published in October 2010 contained seven improvement objectives relating to strategic effectiveness, service quality, service availability, sustainability and fairness in 2011-12 and beyond.
- 8 Twenty-one actions arose from those seven objectives, several of which will take more than one year to achieve.

Information

Content of the 2012-13 Combined Plan

- 9 In view of:
- the broad scope of the existing objectives already in the 2011-12 Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan;
 - the need to allow time to consolidate existing objectives at a time of increasing pressure from reducing budgets;
 - unexpectedly tight timescales for publishing this year's plan by the end of October 2011 rather than the end of March 2012 as had initially been proposed; and
 - the Assembly's decision to defer the production of a new Fire and Rescue National Framework, leaving the existing 2008-11 Framework in place for the time being;

the Authority's Executive Panel resolved at its meeting of 9th May 2011 to carry forward the same seven objectives for another year to 2012-13, but with updated action plans.

Consultation on the 2012-13 Combined Plan

- 10 Given the relatively few changes being proposed, and bearing in mind cost and environmental aspects of publication, the Executive Panel also resolved to take a different approach this year and not to produce the usual colourful multi-page consultation document.
- 11 Instead, a simple bilingual three-fold sheet containing a brief summary of the seven objectives and other general information will be distributed throughout North Wales.
- 12 Additional information will be available on the Authority website, and anyone wishing to comment on the proposals will be invited to do so by mail, e-mail, or via the website.

Recommendation

- 13 That Members ratify the Executive Panel's decisions for the content of the draft combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2012-13 and associated limited consultation process.