



AGENDA ITEM: 11

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

17th September 2012

NATIONAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Report by Simon Smith, Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members about the latest developments with regards to the National Issues Committee.

Background

- 2 In December 2011 Members of the three FRAs in Wales considered a joint report from the Chief Fire Officers outlining a number of potential strategic options relating to the future governance and structural arrangements for the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales. At that meeting, Members indicated their preferred model and resolved that further discussion, research and analysis should be undertaken around the establishment of a National Issues Committee (NIC) for the three Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales.

Information

- 3 The NIC's terms of reference were approved by the three FRAs in March 2012 and its aims are to develop and implement improved arrangements for the strategic and co-ordinated delivery of collaborative work.
- 4 The NIC's membership consists of the Chief Fire Officers, Deputy Chief Fire Officers, Chairs and Deputy Chairs of the three FRAs in Wales.

- 5 The NIC has been established on a voluntary, informal basis and not by way of a variation to the Combination Order, nor by way of the Local Government Act. In addition, given the complete retention of the existing three Authority model with all associated powers and governance arrangements, there are no specific legal implications.
- 6 The NIC's inaugural meeting was held on 17th July 2012 and the Chair of the South Wales FRA, Cllr Tudor Davies, was appointed Chair of the committee with Cllr Morris Jones and the Chair of Mid and West Wales FRA appointed as deputy chairs. The agenda items included the appointment of lead members and officers to take forward the work programme. A further paper set out the proposed all-Wales response to dwelling fires charter.
- 7 Working Groups led by senior officers have been established to review all aspects of the three Fire and Rescue Services. It will be proposed at the next meeting on 25th September that as part of the "Effective Resilience Plans for Large-Scale Emergencies" work stream, there should be a strategic review into operational service delivery and resilience across the whole of Wales. Further work on the already established "National Control Arrangements" will be carried out. Project teams are already collecting data on other key collaborative areas include Procurement, Training and Development, Human Resources and Common and Specialist Services. The Common and Specialist Services work stream will review a wide range support functions including Financial Management, ICT and Transport in order to learn from each other and to generate cashable savings across all three Services.
- 8 Regular reports will be provided at meetings of the Authority and Executive Panel where NIC's recommendations will be brought for Members' approval.

Recommendation

- 9 Members are asked to note the information provided.