



AGENDA ITEM: 10

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19th December 2011

Business Continuity Management Update following Industrial Action 30th November 2011

Report by Ruth Simmons, Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To detail the preparation for and the impact of the recent industrial action in response to public sector pension reform.

Background

- 2 During the TUC Conference in September 2011 there was a proposal for a national day of action on Wednesday 30th November 2011 in response to changes to pension arrangements.
- 3 Soon afterwards the Clerk to the Authority received correspondence from the General Secretary of the Fire Brigades Union registering a trade dispute with the Service on this matter.
- 4 In anticipation of potentially major disruption to service provision the Chief Fire Officer invoked the Major Absence/Disruption Contingency Plan and instigated a series of meetings of the Business Continuity Management Planning Group (BCMPG). This group is made up of the Chief Officer's Advisory Team, Area Managers and Heads of Departments. Initial actions included the production of a Risk Register to assist with planning, to capture decision making and contribute to a consistent approach by all three Fire and Rescue services in Wales.

Information

- 5 On the 19th October the Fire Brigades Union wrote to the Chief Fire Officer confirming that as a result of further talks with the UK Government no immediate industrial action would be taken including participation in the planned action of 30th November 2011. Subsequently it was confirmed that Unison and Unite the Union would participate, predominantly confining the impact to service support functions.
- 6 The BCMPG continued to meet to ensure an appropriate response to the planned industrial action and to test the Service's continuity plans. A communication strategy incorporating information for the public and guidance for line managers and employees considering participation in the event was created. Call handling arrangements, community safety activity and operational response were all reviewed within the context of large scale absence from partner agencies. On the 10th November the Service held a walkthrough exercise to ensure that preparations were appropriate and sufficient.
- 7 On 28th November a Service officer participated in a teleconference call with local Chief Executives to confirm arrangements for the day of action.
- 8 Whilst 38 NWFRS personnel were eligible to participate in the action only 8 individuals actually did so. Given the numbers participating in the action the impact upon service delivery was negligible.
- 9 Following consideration of lessons learnt and the impact of the industrial action on service users and each of the organisations functional areas the BCMPG was stood down at a meeting on 2nd December.
- 10 Members can be assured that business continuity management arrangements for major disruption to business processes have been comprehensively tested and where appropriate improvements to those arrangements have been made.

Recommendation

- 11 That Members note the content of the report.