



AGENDA ITEM: 8

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19th March 2012

LOCATION OF AERIAL LADDER PLATFORMS

Report by Simon Smith, Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To advise Members of the recommendation of the Executive Panel with regard to the location(s) of the remaining Aerial Ladder Platforms (ALPs) once the Wrexham appliance is withdrawn from service (noting that a decision is required on the deployment of the 3 in-service ALPs by 31st March 2012). Members are asked to agree either the Executive Panel's recommendation or an alternative disposition.

Background

- 2 At the Authority's meeting on 18th October 2010, Members resolved to adopt an attendance time standard of 30 minutes for an ALP. This decision was based on extensive briefings at the Risk Reduction Working Group, Executive Panel and on a comprehensive report for the Authority meeting itself.
- 3 Members will recall that, central to the decision to adopt a 30 minute standard, was the advice of the Chief Fire Officer that, if such a standard was adopted, the Authority could meet its obligations with 3 ALPs rather than the 4 currently in service.
- 4 Members will also recall that the ALP currently based at Wrexham will reach the end of its fleet life after March 2012 and that, in common with other such occasions in 2002 and 2006, the Chief Fire Officer's advice was to review the provision given the extremely high costs of purchase, maintenance and training involved in ALP provision.

Information

- 5 At the Executive Panel meeting on 6th February 2012 Members received a briefing in addition to the tabled report (Appendix FRA1) and, following extensive discussion, resolved by 6 votes to 3 that a recommendation be made to the full Authority that the remaining 3 ALPs be located at Bangor, Rhyl and Wrexham. The relevant extract from the draft minutes of the meeting is attached as Appendix FRA2.
- 6 The recommendation of the Executive Panel is based on the following considerations given advice from the Chief Fire Officer and the Clerk and that this recommendation was considered to be the lowest risk option for North Wales as a set of communities.
- 7 The area covered by the Wrexham appliance is on the eastern extremity of the NWFRS area and would, in the event of this appliance being removed, not be covered by the 30 minute standard. Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service are unable to enter into a formal agreement to provide this cover from Chester.
- 8 Whilst the town and risks of Bangor can be covered within the 30 minute standard if the Bangor appliance (the western most appliance in the NWFRS area) were removed, the Ynys Môn and Caernarfon areas currently covered by Bangor would not be. The Ynys Môn area includes the Port of Holyhead and the nuclear facility at Wylfa A.
- 9 The town and risks of Rhyl can be covered within the 30 minute standard if the Rhyl appliance were removed. The area to the south of Rhyl in the vale of Clwyd including St Asaph and Denbigh currently covered by the Rhyl appliance would not be.
- 10 Llandudno and the majority of the area covered by the current appliance at Llandudno can be covered within the 30 minute standard by both Rhyl and Bangor. This is the only one of the current locations that has cover from two other locations.

- 11 The risks in the Llandudno area are predominantly hotels which are regulated and subject to audit under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 or purpose built apartments built under the stringent requirements of the Building Regulations. Both pieces of legislation require that the provision for escape from a fire in such premises is without external assistance.
- 12 Of the four current appliances the Bangor and Wrexham appliances had the highest number of occasions where they were actually used at incidents.
- 13 The Llandudno appliance was actually used at incidents the lowest number of times.
- 14 The provision of ALPs at Bangor, Rhyl and Wrexham would provide the greatest overall area of coverage of population and risks across North Wales within the 30 minute standard.
- 15 Supporting statistical information will be available at the meeting.
- 16 At the 6th February meeting, Members were advised that whichever disposition of the 3 ALPs was recommended would undoubtedly result in criticism from the community that perceived itself as losing an appliance. Members were reminded that they had a duty to serve the Fire and Rescue Authority and the interests of all communities within its geographical area in making a collective decision.
- 17 Since the Executive Panel's decision, the Chief Fire Officer has received 12 items of correspondence:-
 - Six from members of the public which includes 2 items from 1 couple
 - Six from forum chairs or councillors as below:
 - Llandudno Hospitality Association
 - Councillor Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC
 - Llandudno Development Partnership
 - Guto Bebb Member of Parliament - Aberconwy

- Mayor of Llandudno on behalf of Llandudno Town Council
 - Chairman of Conwy County Borough Council
- 18 Transcripts of all the letters received are attached to this report as Appendix FRA3.
- 19 In addition there has been coverage of the issue in the local printed and online media. This has included a campaign initiated by the North Wales Weekly News and a web based petition created by the Mayor of Llandudno. The Chair and Assistant Chief Fire Officer Paul Claydon were scheduled to attend a meeting of Llandudno Town Council on 13th March 2012. This follows an offer by the Service to attend to provide more information about the matter. A similar offer was made to Conwy County Borough Council but was declined by its Chairman.

Recommendation

- 20 That Members agree the future disposition of Aerial Ladder Platforms as recommended by the Executive Panel namely at Bangor, Rhyl and Wrexham as the option of lowest risk or:-
- 21 That Members agree an alternative disposition of the three Aerial Ladder Platforms.