



## **AGENDA ITEM: 6**

### **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL**

**11 May 2015**

#### **IMPROVEMENT PLANNING WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

**Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To inform Members of the progress of the Improvement Planning Working Group.

#### **Background**

- 2 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, as a Welsh Improvement Authority, is required under the Local Government Measure 2009 to:
  - determine its own improvement objectives under any of the seven defined elements of improvement. Although 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;
  - consult publicly on its objectives for a period of time. There is no set time for consultations, although most are about 12 weeks. Consultations should have a clear start and end date.
- 3 In order to develop the Authority's improvement objectives for 2016-17 the Improvement Planning Working Group has held three meetings on 2 March, 23 March and 27 April 2015

## Information

- 4 During the three IP working group meetings held this year, members have received presentations and information on the Service's risk review for North Wales. This entailed analysing incident data for the period April 2009 to March 2014 and applying it as part of a risk formula which includes information from the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. This has enabled officers to categorise the level of risk across North Wales.
- 5 It was noted that the areas of higher risk were located across the whole of North Wales, not merely concentrated in the larger towns and centres of population. Therefore the group concluded that resources for fire cover need to be matched to areas of highest risk.
- 6 Further presentations covered an analysis of all incidents from April 2009 until March 2014 including dwelling fires, fires at commercial premises and road traffic collisions. This analysis demonstrated the variation in time and season when these incidents have historically occurred. This prompted an extensive discussion as to ways of making best use of resources to meet risk, particularly now that the Authority is operating on a reduced budget.
- 7 Members were reminded of the challenges of delivering fire cover using the retained duty system which increasingly does not reflect the way people live their lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Information on recruitment and retention supported the case for grouping stations in to clusters of two or three stations to ensure that at least one station might be available at times of low risk, with more available at times of higher risk, which is usually in the late afternoon and evening.
- 8 Lastly wider aspects of community safety were discussed and Members were supportive of exploring where the Authority can assist demand management across the public sector and felt it was important to look at ways of enhancing the role of a firefighter.

## **Recommendations**

9 It is recommended that members:

- (i) note the progress of the Improvement Planning Working Group;
- (ii) endorse the concept of flexibly providing firefighters to match levels of risk;
- (iii) encourage the Fire and Rescue Authority to explore wider aspects of community safety.