



AGENDA ITEM: 12

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

3rd February 2014

COMMISSIONER'S FEEDBACK ON WELSH LANGUAGE ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

Report by Richard Fairhead, Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To report on the feedback received from the Welsh Language Commissioner in relation to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2012-13.

Background

- 2 Each year, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is required to produce a detailed report on its Welsh Language Scheme – previously presented to the Welsh Language Board but now regulated by the Welsh Language Commissioner. The Monitoring Report details progress made towards meeting the targets outlined in the Service's Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13. Executive Panel Members approved the report at the meeting last September and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has since received formal feedback on this year's report and met with the Commissioner's representatives to go through the feedback in detail.

Information

- 3 The Commissioner welcomed many aspects of our work in relation to the Welsh language and the general progress achieved in the implementation of the Welsh Language Scheme during 2012-13.

- 4 In relation to fire safety checks, the Commissioner acknowledged our work to further promote the availability of home fire safety checks through the medium of Welsh to maintain the figures we had achieved through previous awareness raising campaigns.
- 5 The Commissioner welcomed the fact that we have developed our training provision with the production of a Level 3 CD to further develop staff skills, and acknowledged that fact that the number of staff trained to higher levels of Welsh language skills has increased.
- 6 In addition, the Commissioner welcomed the fact that we are in the process of completing an e-learning module for Language Awareness provision and that we are keen to translate other training modules on the Learn Pro system available to staff.
- 7 The Commissioner noted that we have achieved a continuous increase in the percentage of Welsh essential and Welsh desirable posts filled by individuals with the necessary Welsh speaking skills and our desire to target those members of staff who have not yet reached the necessary level to fulfil the linguistic requirements of their post.
- 8 In relation to promotion, awareness and language skills, it was welcomed that at the time of submitting the Annual Monitoring Report we had been nominated for an Inspire Wales award in the Welsh in the Workplace category, and we were congratulated on our success in going on to win this award.
- 9 The Commissioner requested further information on a number of specific aspects of our work in relation to the Welsh language – this was provided in detail to the Commissioner’s satisfaction.
- 10 In 2011, the Welsh Language (Wales) measure was introduced, which sets the legal framework in place in order to introduce duties whereby organisations comply with statutory Standards relating to the Welsh Language. These standards are expected to be introduced formally during the coming year and the Service is already working towards meeting the requirements of the first set of recently proposed standards and is doing so in collaboration with the other two Welsh fire and rescue services. In this way we

hope to be fully prepared towards meeting the standards once they are finalised. Our current Welsh Language Scheme 2010-13 extends until the time the new standards come into effect.

Recommendation

- 11 That Members note the progress made in relation to the Welsh Language Scheme and the Service's commitment to ensuring we continue to monitor progress in this area.