



AGENDA ITEM: 12

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

15th October 2012

NATIONAL ISSUES COMMITTEE

Report by Simon Smith, Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To update Members as to the work being undertaken under the direction of the National Issues Committee (NIC).

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 implement improved arrangements for the strategic and co-ordinated delivery of collaborative work. The NIC's membership consists of the Chairs, Deputy Chairs, Chief Fire Officers and Deputy Chief Fire Officers of the three FRAs in Wales. Working Groups led by senior officers have been established to review all aspects of the three Fire and Rescue Services.

- 4 The NIC has met twice since its inauguration in July 2012. At its first meeting, the governance and business arrangements were approved and a report was received recommending that all three fire and rescue services in Wales use the same framework to buy light vehicles. It is anticipated that this will save £600,000 across the three FRAs over 5 years. The all-Wales Dwelling Fire Response Charter was also presented at the meeting.
- 5 At its second meeting on 25th September 2012, it was agreed that as part of the work stream on "Effective Resilience Plans for Large-Scale Emergencies", a strategic review into operational service delivery and resilience across the whole of Wales will be undertaken. This will enable the NIC to present FRAs with the opportunity to address service delivery on an all-Wales basis to determine optimum levels of provision in the context of severe financial restraint. This is an innovative piece of work, the outcome of which will be referred back to each FRA for individual consideration.
- 6 Further work will be undertaken on the previously established "National Control Arrangements". 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.
- 7 Regular reports will be provided at meetings of the Authority and Executive Panel where NIC's recommendations which are non-delegated matters will be brought for Members' approval.

Recommendation

- 8 Members are asked to note the information provided.