

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority	
Date	17 September 2018	
Lead Officer	Chief Fire Officer	
Contact Officer	Chief Fire Officer (01745) 535253	
Subject	Finance and Governance arrangements for FRAs in Wales	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To update Members regarding the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services' (the Cabinet Secretary) proposals to change the finance and governance arrangements for fire and rescue authorities (FRAs) in Wales.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 This report brings Members up to date regarding developments in the Cabinet Secretary's proposals to change the finance and governance arrangements for Welsh fire and rescue authorities. In particular, it draws attention to the most recent correspondence received from the Cabinet Secretary.

RECOMMENDATION

- 3 That Members note the contents of the report and discuss the contents of the Cabinet Secretary's letter of August 2018.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 4 The latest information has not been considered by either the Executive Panel or Audit Committee.

BACKGROUND/INFORMATION

- 5 Members will recall that the Cabinet Secretary has indicated his desire to change the existing finance and governance arrangements for fire and rescue authorities in Wales. The Chief Fire Officer's report to the June 2018 meeting of the Authority refers.
- 6 Key issues were set out in a letter to FRA Chairs in February 2018. This letter received a collective response from all three Chairs in April, and a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary took place at the end of that month.

- 7 Following that meeting the Cabinet Secretary engaged the services of Professor Catherine Farrell of the University of South Wales and Professor Rachel Ashworth of Cardiff University to speak with representatives of the FRAs and to develop more precise proposals for change.
- 8 Their report was submitted to the Cabinet Secretary in due course and a copy is attached at Appendix A for Members' information.
- 9 On 20 August 2018, the Chair of the Authority received a further letter from the Cabinet Secretary (Appendix B). The contents of the letter are self-explanatory but members are asked to note, in particular, the Cabinet Secretary's offer to hold further discussions between his officials and officers of the three FRAs. Members may wish to discuss this offer and take a view on what issues they would wish to see discussed with Welsh Government officials.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	None at this time.
Budget	Change to the Authority's finance and governance arrangements has the potential to affect the Authority's budget position in the future. Any legal advice that may be sought is not budgeted for at this time.
Legal	There are potential legal issues around amendments to, or repeal of, The North Wales Fire Services (Combination Scheme) Order 1995. Legal advice may need to be sought at a future date.
Staffing	None at this time.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	None at this time.
Risks	There is the potential for any change to the Authority's finance and governance arrangements to affect its ability to deliver appropriate services to the North Wales community, particularly if the budget position is negatively affected.