



## **AGENDA ITEM: 14**

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

**17<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

#### **CHAMPIONS WORKING GROUP UPDATE**

**Joint Report by Councillor Ted George, Member Support and Development Champion and Rhian Evans, Member Liaison Officer**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1.** To inform members of the work of the Community Safety and Member Support and Development Champions Working Group since the Authority's last meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

#### **Background**

- 2.** The Community Safety and Member Support and Development Working Group, established twelve months ago, has a dual remit. It has been tasked with forging stronger working relationships between the Fire and Rescue Service and the constituent authorities in the field of community safety and with enhancing members' support and development in line with the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development: an Approach for Fire and Rescue Authorities.



## **Information**

- 3.** The Working Group met on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008. During this meeting the Working Group decided that the Committee's Terms of Reference continued to reflect its current interests and therefore did not require amending. The Group also received an update on alternative funding streams and how various initiatives and projects were benefiting from a collaborative approach to funding and service delivery.
- 4.** Future meeting arrangements were also discussed. The Working Group decided to approach the constituent authorities seeking their views on the feasibility of all local authorities holding full council and other committee meetings on the same day(s) of the week. This would assist other organisations on which council representatives serve, such as the Fire and Rescue Authority, to maximise member attendance at their meetings.
- 5.** In relation to community safety members were given a presentation on the circumstances surrounding the recent fire fatality in Conwy and the post incident work carried out in that area. As result of this presentation the Working Group requested that all Fire and Rescue Authority members are briefed on fatal dwelling fires that occur within their county areas and that the Authority's Community Safety Champion for the relevant county is invited to attend the post-incident debrief session.



### **Information** *(continued)*

- 6.** Details were also provided on the current position regarding the number of Home Fire Safety Check (HFSC) requests received to date, and still outstanding, in the current financial year. Champions were also informed about the work currently underway with the 3 National Health Service (NHS) Trusts in North Wales in a bid to increase the uptake of HFSC referrals from vulnerable citizens. The Group was also informed about 'Brake', the road safety charity's 'Pledge to Drive Safely' campaign.
- 7.** The establishment of a Working Group, charged with sponsoring and promoting member support and development, is an essential requirement for accreditation under the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development. The Fire and Rescue Authority has already indicated its intention to bid for Charter accreditation in due course.
- 8.** On the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008 the Working Group approved a Business Review questionnaire and a Training Needs Analysis questionnaire. Both these questionnaires will be distributed to all Authority members following the inception of the new authority in June 2008. The replies to these questionnaires will be used as a basis to inform the arrangements for future Authority meetings and for the training and development opportunities that will be provided for members.
- 9.** The Fire and Rescue Authority at its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007 had tasked the Champions with undertaking a self-assessment against the Charter criteria to determine whether the Authority would be in position to sign a Statement of Intent to apply for basic level Charter accreditation at the current meeting.



### **Information** *(continued)*

- 10.** This self-assessment was considered by the Working Group at the meeting and consequently the Group agreed to recommend to the Authority that it proceeds to sign the Statement of Intent (a copy of which is attached as Appendix 1) at the current meeting and that it also adopts a statement declaring its commitment to member support and development.
- 11.** To further enhance members' knowledge and understating of the sphere of the Service's work the Group suggested that short themed presentations on various aspects of its work become a standing item on the agenda of full Authority meetings. The proposal is to commence these presentations at the Authority's June meeting as there will be a number of new members present following the local authority elections.
- 12.** From the date the Statement of Intent is signed the Authority will have a period of 6 months in which to collate and submit its evidence portfolio to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), and to ensure that all required measures are in place before it is visited by a Peer Review Team who will assess its attainment against the set criteria.
- 13.** At the Authority's last meeting it was reported that both Mid and West Wales and South Wales Fire and Rescue Authorities intended to Sign the Statement of Intent, to put themselves forward for basic level Charter accreditation, before the local authority elections in May 2008. Regrettably, South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has recently decided to defer its intention to apply until a future date. However, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority intends to proceed with its application and is expected to sign its Statement of Intent at its Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2008.



## **Recommendations**

**14.** That members:

**14.1** note the information provided;

**14.2** adopt the following statement:

“North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to creating an environment of learning and development so as to equip members with the necessary level of skills and understanding to operate efficiently and effectively”;  
and

**14.3** authorise the Chairman to Sign the Statement of Intent to apply for the basic level of the Wales Charter for Member Support and Development – an Approach for Fire and Rescue Authorities for submission to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and that officers proceed to compile the evidence portfolio in readiness for the submission to the Association in support of its bid.