



AGENDA ITEM: 9

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

9th May 2011

THE TIMING OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY'S (FRA'S) IMPROVEMENT/RISK REDUCTION PLAN 2012-13

Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To summarise for Members the timing requirements for producing the 2012-13 Combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan Action Plan, and to propose a timetable to ensure compliance.

Background

- 2 For several years the Authority has published its Corporate Plans at specific points in the planning year according to whichever regulations were in force at the time.

Best Value Performance Plans/Improvement Plans

- 3 Between 1999 and 2001 the deadline for publishing Best Value plans was the end of March – i.e. one day before the start of the financial year to which the plans related.
- 4 New requirements between 2002 and 2005 moved the publication deadline forward to the end of June – i.e. a quarter of the way through the financial year to which the plans related.
- 5 Further change meant that between 2006 and 2009 FRAs published their plans even later, by the end of October – i.e. over half way through the financial year to which the plans related.

Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMPs)/Risk Reduction Plans (RRPs)

- 6 The Authority published its first full IRMP in April 2004, followed by annual action plans in March 2005 and June 2006.
- 7 The next full RRP was published in October 2006 (for 2007-08) under new guidance for Welsh FRAs. Annual action plans followed in each October until 2009, and always for the forthcoming year.

Combined Improvement/Risk Reduction Plans

- 8 Rather than run two separate processes for improvement planning and risk reduction planning, FRAs in Wales are encouraged to adopt a single planning process that combines both elements.
- 9 Although by 2008 the publication deadline for both plans had been set at 31 October, the Improvement Plan was for the current year and the RRP was for the forthcoming year.
- 10 This changed in 2010. Although FRAs are still expected to publish their Improvement Plans by the end of October, these are now for the next (not the current) financial year.
- 11 In October 2010, for the first time, both the Improvement Plan and the Risk Reduction Plan elements were published five months ahead of the financial year to which they related.

Introduction

- 12 Having an October deadline for publishing Improvement/Risk Reduction Plans means that their development cannot be effectively aligned with financial planning cycles.
- 13 With this in mind, WAG officials recently sought Ministerial agreement and legal advice to: a) remove the existing RRP guidance and build stronger references to reducing risk into improvement planning guidance, and b) move the publication date for combined plans forward to March – just before the start of the financial year to which the plans related.

- 14 The intention was to introduce the change formally in 2012-13, with interim arrangements in 2011-12. This would have meant that the Authority's Combined Plan for 2012-13 would be published in March 2012 rather than in October 2011.
- 15 However, confirmation was received from WAG officials by e-mail on 31 March 2011 that they had been unable to obtain the necessary consent to make the changes, and that consequently the existing deadlines would remain in force.

Information

Proposed timetable for producing the 2012-13 Annual Action Plan

- 16 The Authority's next combined Improvement/Risk Reduction Plan for 2012-13 needs to be published by 31 October 2011, having first allowed a period of 12-weeks for public consultation.
- 17 This can be achieved if the consultation on next year's objectives were to begin on the day of the Fire Authority meeting (20 June 2011) and end on 9 September. The Executive Panel would then consider a draft Combined Plan in light of the consultation responses in September, and take forward the final draft of the Combined Plan to the Fire Authority meeting on 17 October 2011.

Recommendation

- 18 That Members:
 - (i) note the unanticipated announcement from WAG officials that the October 31 publication deadline would remain for 2011; and
 - (ii) approve the proposed timetable for producing the Authority's combined Improvement and Risk Reduction Plan 2012-13.