



## **AGENDA ITEM: 12**

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

**20 July 2015**

#### **JOINT WELSH LANGUAGE PROTOCOL WITH NORTH WALES POLICE**

**Report by Richard Fairhead, Assistant Chief Fire Officer**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To seek approval for a Joint Welsh Language Protocol between North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and North Wales Police.

#### **Background**

- 2 There already exists a wealth of successful collaboration between North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. This protocol is viewed as an extension of this existing collaboration which recognises that by working in partnership both organisations are often able to achieve more with the resources available between them.

#### **Information**

- 3 The joint protocol reflects continued commitment between both organisations towards the Welsh Language, which includes learning, awareness and development.
- 4 The protocol also recognises the benefits of working jointly in relation to sharing best practice and in considering the provision of Welsh language translation services.
- 5 Within the protocol, there is a commitment to continued collaboration and maintaining a partnership between both organisations in relation to the Welsh language.

- 6 The commitment to partnership working in relation to the Welsh language and promoting bilingualism recorded in this protocol has been agreed within both organisations by members of the North Wales Police Force Welsh Language Group and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Welsh Language Forum.

### **Recommendation**

- 7 That Members note the contents and approve the Joint Welsh Language Protocol between North Wales Police and North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

# **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AND NORTH WALES POLICE**

## **JOINT WELSH LANGUAGE PROTOCOL (DRAFT)**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

There already exists a wealth of successful collaboration between NWP and NWFRS. For example;

- Joint Estates Department
- Joint Communications Centre
- Joint Arson Reduction Team
- Road Safety collaboration
- Joint out of hours press office
- Joint police/fire stations

This protocol is viewed as an extension of this existing collaboration which recognises that by working in partnership we are often able to achieve more with the resources that we have available between us, create a stronger impact in our communities where required, as well as offer greater resilience and an improved service for the people of North Wales.

### **2. AIMS**

- To formally recognise the collaboration that exists between both the above named organisations in relation to the Welsh Language
- To recognise a commitment from both organisations to continue to maintain this collaboration
- To identify any opportunities for improved collaboration which may be deemed acceptable by both organisations

### **3. EXISTING COLLABORATION**

#### **3.1. Welsh language commitment**

Both organisations are committed to the Welsh language and to offering an equal language choice to the communities we serve and we are also working to provide the same to our own staff.

To this effect both organisations have developed a Welsh language skills policy to ensure that all new staff who do not speak Welsh are able to demonstrate linguistic courtesy on appointment, as a minimum,

Although both organisations are operating the Welsh language skills policy differently the continued commitment to the policy is recognised as key to improved language skills and linguistic awareness amongst staff and indeed there is substantial evidence of its success in both organisations to date.

Commitment to the Welsh language is officially recognised by individual Welsh Language Schemes for both organisations and by the annual monitoring and reporting to the Welsh Language Commissioner on progress with these Schemes.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 sets out a framework to introduce a duty on some organisations, including NWP and NWFRS, to comply with standards to do with the Welsh language and both organisations are working towards appropriate compliance with the standards once they are formally introduced.

### **3.2. Welsh language learning, awareness and development programmes**

NWFRS has benefitted from being able to adapt and adopt a Welsh language CD learning programme developed by NWP which has been modified to help establish minimum Welsh language skills for fire and rescue service staff and to promote continued learning. Level 1-3 CDs have been adapted for fire and rescue service staff.

Both organisations have developed Welsh language training programmes in response to identified learning and developmental needs of staff. Where there is capacity, course places are advertised to staff within the other organisation and the course can be held on either organisation's premises.

Staff at both organisations are also required to attend a Welsh language awareness session on appointment (NWP officers and PCSOs undertake this during their initial police training programme).

### **3.3. Commitment to share experience and best practice**

- **Welsh Language Champions**

Both organisations have developed the use of Welsh Language Champions amongst staff to encourage learning through support from other staff which offers advice and mentoring, extended learning etc.

- **Promoting bilingual workplaces**

Both organisations have commitments in their respective Welsh language schemes to promote, encourage and support more use of Welsh at work as part of their ongoing commitment to become bilingual organisations.

- **Welsh language badges**

NWFRS has adopted the innovative 'Dw i'n siarad Cymraeg' and 'Dw i'n dysgu' badges first developed in NWP as part of efforts to make the Welsh language ability of staff more visible at work and to promote the use of Welsh with the public. Staff are encouraged to wear the appropriate badge when on duty.

- **Hunaniaith**

Both organisations are members of the Gwynedd County Council group Hunaniaith which meets regularly to discuss opportunities, best practice and decide on issues relating to the Welsh Language specific to organisations which operate across Gwynedd and North Wales.

- **Language promotion** – both organisations are committed to promoting the Welsh language through internal and external events, use of a range of promotional items and by promoting learning achievements of staff through annual learning awards etc.

### 3.4. Welsh Language Translation

- Both organisations operate internal resources for the provision of translation services, including written and simultaneous translation.
- The resources operated by NWP are recognised as being more extensive and the translation team has been open to consideration of occasional requests to provide additional translation support to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

## 4. CONTINUING COLLABORATION

This protocol officially recognises the above collaboration and a commitment towards maintaining and continuing such a partnership.

The officers responsible for ensuring compliance with the new Welsh language standards within each organisation are committed to continuing to share best practice in relation to the Welsh language and to linking together on any future opportunities to improve such collaboration.

To this end, as well as meeting through Gwynedd County Council's Hunaniaith Bilingual Workplaces and Services Group, the responsible officers will also meet regularly twice a year to exchange information and identify any further shared opportunities.

### Responsible Officers

<b>North Wales Police</b> <b>Meic Raymant (Head of Welsh Language Services Department)</b> Tel: 01286 670810 Ext: 70810 Mobile: 07748 624706 <a href="mailto:meic.raymant@nthwales.pnn.police.uk">meic.raymant@nthwales.pnn.police.uk</a>	<b>North Wales Fire and Rescue Service</b> <b>Tracey Williams (Corporate Communications Manager)</b> Tel: 01745 585794 Mobile: 07787 578466 <a href="mailto:Tracey.williams@nwales-fireservice.org.uk">Tracey.williams@nwales-fireservice.org.uk</a>
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