



AGENDA ITEM: 12

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

9th May 2011

Annual Governance Statement

**Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer and
Colin Everett , Clerk to the Authority**

Purpose of Report

- 1 To advise Members on the progress to date of the self assessment exercise being carried out in preparation for the Annual Governance Statement.

Background

- 2 Changes to the Account and Auditing (Wales) Regulations 2005 now require that the Authority's Annual Statement of Accounts contain a Governance Statement. This replaces the Statement of Internal Control (SIC) in the Statement of Accounts.
- 3 The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to report publicly on the extent to which an Authority complies with its own code on an annual basis. It will include how it has monitored the effectiveness of its governance arrangements in that year and on any planned changes in the coming period.

Progress to date

- 4 Following the approval by Members of the Authority's Local Code of Governance at the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting in March, officers have now set about the self assessment process to measure the Authority's performance against the set objectives.

- 5 The Finance Manager along with the Fire Service Accountant of Conwy County Borough Council have been working together to collate evidence and measure the extent to which the Authority complies with its own governance objectives.
- 6 On completion of this exercise they will be able to bring together their findings to produce the Annual Governance Statement to be included in the Statement of Accounts 2010-11.
- 7 The Deputy Chief Fire Officer has recently met with the Clerk to the Authority to scrutinise the work carried out to date and to make further recommendations as required.
- 8 The officers will now reconsider their work to include the new recommendations and highlight any issues that need action in the future.
- 9 The progress of this self assessment exercise is also being shared with the Welsh Audit Office as well as the Authority's Internal Audit department at Conwy County Borough Council.
- 10 Attached is a copy of the officer's action plan relating to the self assessment exercise.

Recommendation

- 11 That Members note the contents of this report and the attached action plan.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

ACTION PLAN ARISING FROM DCFO AND CLERK SCRUTINY

PRINCIPLE 1	ACHIEVED TO DATE
Obtain copy of Combined Risk Reduction and Improvement Plan.	√
Obtain evidence of the frequency of business continuity tests and outcomes (debriefs).	Liaise with Control Manager
Identify how comprehensive the Services Partnership Strategy is.	Liaise with Partnership Manager
Include evidence of the budget setting process, including minutes of the budget working group, budget options book to demonstrate that the Authority makes best use of its resources and demonstrates excellent value for money.	√
PRINCIPLE 2	
Include Member job descriptions contained within the Members Charter.	√
Ascertain how often the Scheme of Delegations to Officers is updated.	√
Obtain a copy of the communications strategy including public communications and engagement concerning prevention.	Liaise with Corporate Communications Manager
Evidence RRP consultation.	Liaise with Corporate Planning Manager
PRINCIPLE 3	
Obtain register of annual declarations of interest and third party transactions and ensure all officers/members submit their return annually at year end.	To be obtained from CCBC Accountant
Initiate the promotion of the Whistle Blowing Policy more actively on the Intranet.	Liaise with Corporate Communications Manager

PRINCIPLE 4	
Evidence that all key meetings are public and rotated around North Wales.	√
Obtain the register of interests of Members and Senior Managers and ascertain its completeness.	To be done
Ascertain in which Service documentation it states that the Service operates within its legal framework.	To be investigated
PRINCIPLE 5	
Evidence the staff consultation process, including the Senior and Middle Managers seminar, station visits and formal union meetings.	√
Emphasise the Welsh Language Scheme, bilingual meetings and language training as part of the evidence for 'encouraging representation from all sectors of the community we serve.'	Liaise with Corporate Communications Manager
PRINCIPLE 6	
Identify separate measures for staff and union consultation	√
Identify evidence of softer knowledge and contacts gained through community safety work, which has influenced policy decisions.	To be done
Obtain evidence of the maintenance of relationships with key partnerships (regional statutory partners)	To be done