



## **AGENDA ITEM: 12**

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

**17<sup>th</sup> September 2012**

#### **DWELLING FIRES RESPONSE CHARTER**

**Report by Shân Morris, Corporate Planning Manager**

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To recommend that the Authority formally adopts the Dwelling Fires Response Charter.

#### **Introduction**

- 2 A review of the 2006 Service Standard to Fires in the Home led the Welsh Government to develop an alternative approach whereby each Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) would be required to develop and consult locally on its own dwelling fire response criteria, subject to a single set of '*guiding principles*' issued by the Welsh Government
- 3 This alternative approach was seen as resolving the problem of the different profiles of the three FRA areas (e.g. urban/rural split and road links) affecting the calculation of any single standard applied across the whole of Wales.
- 4 A Fire and Rescue Circular issued in March 2012 states that:

*"The Welsh Government expects FRAs in Wales to improve public safety by reducing the instances of death, injury and accidental fires within domestic dwellings, whilst reducing firefighter operational injuries. The Guiding Principles will support FRAs in meeting their statutory duties, whilst at the same time recognising the differences between the areas of the Authorities."*

- 5 The Welsh Government's public consultation on the alternative approach during 2010-11 revealed general support, and identified that it placed accountability more clearly with the FRAs.
- 6 One response to the public consultation recognised that the 2006 Service Standard was not effective, but nevertheless regretted the removal of an all Wales standard.
- 7 As reported to the Authority at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2012, officers from the three fire and rescue services jointly prepared a draft 'All-Wales Dwelling Fire Response Charter', which was endorsed by the National Issues Committee (NIC) at its first meeting in July 2012.

### **Information**

- 8 The Charter (Appendix 1) takes account of the requirement for FRAs to design and consult on local response criteria but also takes the opportunity to ensure a level of consistency throughout Wales.
- 9 The Charter is intended to provide Welsh residents and householders with a clear picture of what they can expect from their Fire and Rescue Service, but without fettering the FRAs' discretion to determine what is appropriate for its own area in terms of setting its local response criteria.
- 10 The issued Fire and Rescue Circular requires FRAs to set their own local response criteria based on the Guiding Principles. Specific performance standards, measures and indicators would therefore remain a matter for each FRA to determine according to its own processes of development and consultation.
- 11 The draft Charter addresses all four aspects of the guiding principles: dwelling fires; injuries and deaths from dwelling fires; firefighter safety; and firefighter operational competence.
- 12 The precise response criteria to be adopted by the Authority (in compliance with the issued Welsh Government Circular) would be developed through the Authority's normal processes of improvement planning.

### **Recommendation**

- 13 Members are asked to approve the adoption by the Authority of the Dwelling Fires Response Charter.