



AGENDA ITEM: 20

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19th March 2012

REGIONAL SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD

Report by Colin Everett, Clerk to the Authority

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present the recommendation of the North Wales Regional Leadership Board to form a Regional Safer Communities Board.
- 2 To present the underpinning Partnership Agreement for the Board.

Background

- 3 In December 2010 it was agreed that as part of the North Wales Partnership Review a Regional Safer Communities Board for North Wales would be established by 2012.

Information

- 4 This Board would take responsibility for the governance, regional commissioning and oversight of operational delivery arrangements of Community Safety Partnerships and Youth Justice Services. It would also influence Criminal Justice service provision and development.
- 5 The Board would be supported by sub-regional operational arrangements. These less formal partnerships would be operational with the county areas working in couplets, building on existing or developing partnership arrangements. They are as follows:
 - Anglesey/ Gwynedd
 - Conwy/ Denbighshire
 - Flintshire/ Wrexham

- 6 Sub-regional differences will be recognised and respected by the Board. There will be scope for different ways of working within each sub-region e.g. the extent of formal merging of the current operational teams. The priorities of the sub-regional groups would be guided by the Board to ensure greater consistency in the achievement of standards of performance and outcomes.
- 7 A further aim of setting up the Board is to lead the way for further regional 'strategic' partnerships where there is a good case. The creation of a Safer Communities Board will enable a regional approach to be tested for later applications to partnerships such as the Children and Young People's and Health, Social Care and Well Being.
- 8 The following recommendations of the Project Group, which was established to propose a Safer Communities Board, were endorsed by the Regional Leadership Board for presentation to all partner organisations, which would all be a part of the new Board:

Statutory and Strategic Role of the North Wales Safer Communities Board

- 9 The Board will assume the regional statutory and strategic responsibilities currently held by local strategic or executive groups. It will:
 - Develop and agree the vision for North Wales for Community Safety and Youth Justice.
 - Assume accountability to the Home Office for the production of the Strategic Assessment and Community Safety Plan.
 - Establish the broad strategic aims for the sub-regional operational partnerships to achieve the goals of the Community Safety Plan.
 - Oversee and develop strategic planning with initial impacts in specific policy areas where performance across the region is inconsistent.
 - Monitor performance, capture and commend good practice, and encourage continuous improvement and ensure compliance with the 'hallmarks of effective practice' as identified by statute.
 - Direct and undertake needs assessments and public consultation as required.

- Promote the mainstreaming of community safety at a strategic level with partner organisations.
- Promote collaboration in the design and provision of local public services.
- Reduce the scale and cost of underpinning partnership arrangements at sub-regional and local level.

Governance

10 The Board will have formal Joint Committee status as defined by the Local Government Act 1972. A Partnership Agreement (attached) will set out:

- Membership
- Roles and responsibilities
- Term
- Reporting procedures
- Performance management
- Risk management
- Dispute resolution
- Protocol for Partnership review

11 Discussions have been opened with the Welsh Government, Home Office and other regulatory bodies on this new model of working. To date they have been supportive of the proposal.

Commissioning and resource allocation

12 In the short term the Board will be tasked with policy, strategic direction and overall priorities. A commissioning function would be incorporated at a time when partners are confident that the Board is mature enough to adopt these additional duties.

13 Ultimately the Board could assume responsibility for the commissioning of services funded through Home Office and Welsh Government grants and allocate resources to support the function of the sub-regional Community Safety and Youth Justice operational partnerships.

Forward work programme

- 14 The Board would have a formal work programme with priorities set for making an early impact. Priorities include a youth offending prevention strategy, a consistent approach to anti-social behaviour policy and a joint approach to addressing domestic homicide reviews.

Key Actions to be undertaken and progress made to date

- 15 The Project Group supporting the work of the North Wales Safer Communities Board met for the third and final time on 6th December 2011. The preparatory work undertaken by the Group has provided a constructive framework for the Board. Key documents have been produced:
 - (i) A Partnership Agreement, which sets out the remit and function of the Board (the draft Agreement accompanies this report).
 - (ii) Initial work programme.
 - (iii) Detailed papers which proposes the approach to the Board by the Community Safety Partnership and Youth Offending Services.
- 16 The Regional Leadership Board endorsed the proposal for presentation to County Council and other partner bodies at its January 2012 meeting.
- 17 The next step is for the formal member organisations of the Board, who are identified as the statutory partner agencies as defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to formally adopt the proposal and agree to nominate members for the new Municipal Year (May 2012 – May 2013).
- 18 The model that has been developed is being closely observed by the Home Office and Welsh Government. Both regulatory bodies have expressed their approval. Whilst it is a new way of working regionally, it allows for operational work to continue at a sub-regional level.

- 19 The first meeting of the North Wales Safer Communities Board would be held at the earliest opportunity in the new municipal year, and no later than July 2012.

Recommendations

- 20 Members are asked to:

- (i) approve the proposal to create a Regional Safer Communities Board and that the organisation fully participates in the Board from July 2012 onwards, where appropriate;
- (ii) agree to appoint to the Board at the Annual Meeting in June;
- (iii) endorse the Partnership Agreement which accompanies this report.