



## **AGENDA ITEM: 8**

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

**6th February 2012**

#### **REVENUE BUDGET 2012/13 AND PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE REQUIRED SAVINGS**

**Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer**

#### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide confirmation of the Authority's revenue budget for 2012/13. This report also forms part of the regular reporting mechanism to the Executive Panel of the progress towards achieving the required savings as directed by the Fire and Rescue Authority in December 2010, which in 2012/13 will be £815,000.

#### **INFORMATION**

- 2 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority approved its draft budget for 2012/13 at its meeting on the 19th December 2011. At the time the Treasurer had some concerns due to the delay in the Welsh Government's own budget being agreed. The WG budget was eventually passed on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011. It was only after that date that the final local government revenue and capital settlement details could be published, confirming the actual distribution of funds to the 22 Welsh local authorities. With this uncertainty, and the prospect of further announcements, the Treasurer thought that it would be prudent to set a provisional date for an extraordinary Fire and Rescue Authority meeting should any amendments be required to the Authority's own draft budget.

- 3 It transpires that there were no significant changes to the settlement which would require the convening of an extraordinary Fire and Rescue Authority meeting and it is now possible to confirm that the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's revenue budget for 2012/13 will be £32 million, as set out in the draft budget paper presented on the 19<sup>th</sup> December 2011.
- 4 That paper set out the level of required savings for 2012/13. The majority of these savings, some £500,000, is to be achieved by the introduction of a rostering system on day crewed and shift stations in North Wales, which will ensure optimum crewing with the need for fewer firefighter posts.
- 5 The decision to mandate officers to pursue a negotiated rostering system with the representative bodies was made in November 2011. Since that date there has been a series of productive meetings between the officers and the representatives of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). These meetings have resulted in a version of rostering being developed which is unique to North Wales and seeks to reconcile the needs of both parties. From an officer perspective the requirements are fairly straight forward; there is a need for optimum crewing, a saving of £1 million over two years and an implementation date of 1 April 2012.
- 6 By the end of January all the employees who may work this new system will have had at least one presentation to explain how this system came about and how it will work. They have been given the opportunity to ask questions directly to a joint team consisting of a principal officer, an FBU official and one of the watch managers who developed this rostering system.
- 7 It is hoped that an agreement to implement this rostering system will be shortly obtained. Work will then commence to make sure that it can be introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012.
- 8 This system requires 22 fewer posts and negotiations have commenced with the representative bodies as to how this can be achieved without the need for compulsory redundancies. A number of options are currently being explored, including the use of a voluntary redundancy scheme and a temporary reserve pool of firefighters.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 9 Members are requested to note the progress towards making the required financial savings in the current year and the confirmation of the draft revenue budget for 2012/13.