



AGENDA ITEM: 9

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

11 May 2015

COUNTRYSIDE AND GRASS FIRES

Report by Richard Fairhead, Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members of recent activity in relation to countryside and grass fires in North Wales.

Background

- 2 Each spring fire and rescue services (FRSs) in Wales experience an increase in the number of countryside and grass fires that require an attendance. This has been attributed to a variety of different reasons including landowners burning vegetation and an increase in antisocial behaviour during school holidays.
- 3 Countryside and grass fires tend to attract both political and media attention, particularly if those fires are extensive or are close to buildings.

Information

- 4 The number of countryside and grass fires in North Wales this spring has been broadly comparable with previous years. However, there have been reports of a significant increase in these fires in other parts of Wales which has prompted increased media and political attention, particularly in South Wales.

- 5 North Wales FRS has been working with landowners to provide education and information about their responsibilities when lighting fires to clear vegetation from land. This includes notifying the fire and rescue service of their intention to carry out controlled burning, which helps to avoid unnecessary attendances to fires in response to reports made in good faith by people concerned about the fire.
- 6 North Wales FRS has also been working closely with North Wales Police in cases where fires have been found to have been started deliberately and malicious intent was suspected. This has resulted, in some instances, in the apprehension of alleged perpetrators who have been dealt with by the Police.
- 7 The Service will continue to work with a range of partners through its corporate communications department, fire safety function and the arson reduction team with the aim of continuing to drive down the incidence of countryside and grass fires in North Wales.

Recommendation

- 8 That Members note the information in this report.