



AGENDA ITEM: 9

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

13 February 2017

RESOURCING TO RISK

Report by Richard Fairhead, Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To report to Members the progress of the "matching resourcing to risk" pilot being undertaken by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Background

- 2 In 2014 North Wales Fire and Rescue Service carried out a fire cover review which took into account fire calls, their severity, the location and the times of day of these calls. The outcome was a report which assigned levels of relative risk across the whole of North Wales. This evidence was presented to the Improvement Planning Working Group, which met over a number of months until June 2015, to analyse the findings of this review.
- 3 The conclusion from the fire cover review was that the areas of highest risk from dwelling fires are not always in the main centres of population and that the level of risk is not static and can vary by time of day. The review prompted the Improvement Planning Working Group to recommend the 'matching resourcing to risk' as the third objective in the Authority's Improvement Plan for 2016/17.

- 4 The matching resourcing to risk concept is based on the results of the fire cover review which identified that risk varies by time of day. During the evening and night-time, when people are sleeping, fire risk is at a higher level than during the day. Therefore fire risk in North Wales could be adequately provided for by maintaining the availability of a minimum of 20 fire appliances during the day, when the risk was identified as being lower, and the availability of a minimum of 38 fire appliances during the evening and night, when the risk increases.

Information

- 5 Having obtained members' approval to move to this new availability criteria, through the improvement planning process, the Service began to pilot this model in April 2016.
- 6 The day to day management of availability is the responsibility of the availability manager and the control management team (CMT) based in the Joint Communications Centre in St. Asaph. The CMT's role is to centrally plan and deploy firefighters to stations on a daily basis, in order to improve the availability of the retained duty system (RDS) stations during the daily fluctuations that occur.
- 7 On a day to day basis the availability manager and CMT use various options to provide the availability of a minimum of 20 fire appliances for North Wales. The options that are used are:
 - whole time duty system rural firefighters (WDSR); these innovative flexible firefighters were introduced in 2014 and have flexible contracts which guarantee a minimum of 21 hours and a maximum of 42 hours per week. These firefighters are deployed on a daily basis to RDS stations across the region to supplement the RDS crew on those stations
 - whole time duty system firefighters (WDS) who volunteer to provide additional hours when they are off duty – these firefighters are deployed in the same way as the WDSR firefighters on a daily basis

- RDS firefighters from RDS stations who are supernumerary on their own station or are the only firefighters available on their own station are deployed to neighbouring RDS stations to add to the crew at the neighbouring station
 - WDS firefighters who are on duty and are in addition to the 5 firefighters required for optimum crewing on the WDS watches. For example if there were 6 firefighters on duty one day, 1 firefighter maybe deployed to an RDS station to create a crew
 - standby crews are deployed from available stations to cover areas where availability is compromised to ensure that fire cover is provided strategically across the region.
- 8 Utilising these options has ensured that the Service has been able to maintain the minimum of 20 available fire appliances across the region each day of the pilot. The Service has found that through December 2016 maintaining the minimum of 38 fire appliances was more of a challenge, this being due to the number of RDS firefighters taking leave over the month, the onset of winter and illnesses and the time difference between firefighters leaving the RDS and the RDS recruitment.
- 9 In order to replace these firefighters there has been a recruitment process which has been rolled out in three phases. Phase 1 has just completed with 30 new fully trained firefighters joining RDS stations in late January 2017. The second and third phases of the recruitment process have the potential to deploy another 120 firefighters onto stations by July 2017, which will improve the evening and night time availability of those stations.

Recommendation

- 10 That Members note the information provided.