



AGENDA ITEM: 14

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

19 December 2016

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PROVISION OF NATIONAL RESILIENCE ASSETS WITHIN NORTH WALES

Report by Richard Fairhead, Assistant Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 To inform Members of changes to the provision of national resilience assets in North Wales.

Background

- 2 Following the terrorist attacks in the United States on 9 September 2001 the United Kingdom (UK) Government provided funding to develop a number of assets known as National Resilience Assets (NR assets) to deal with potential terrorist attacks in the UK. These included:
 - Incident Response Units (IRUs), which were provided to allow for the decontamination of large numbers of people following a large scale chemical or biological release
 - Urban Search and Rescue teams (USAR) to assist in the rescue and recovery of individuals trapped following a building collapse
 - Detection, Identification and Monitoring (DIM) officers to detect, identify and monitor different chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear contaminants following releases, and
 - High Volume Pumps (HVP) which have the ability to move large amounts of water over long distances.

- 3 The distribution of these assets was based on planning assumptions about where terrorist attacks were more likely to happen. This included major transport hubs, critical utility distribution centres and centres of major population across the whole of England and Wales.
- 4 Of the NR assets allocated to Wales, NWFRS was provided with 2 of the 7 IRUs and 1 of the 4 HVPs. The IRUs were placed in Bangor and Deeside and the HVP was placed in Llandudno.
- 5 On the allocation of the assets nationally the capital and revenue funding to provide and maintain the assets and train and maintain the competence of the staff was funded by the UK Government in England and the Welsh Government (WG) in Wales.

Information

- 6 In 2010 the UK Government and the WG transferred ownership of the NR assets to the individual fire and rescue authorities (FRAs). In Wales the transfer of assets differed to that in England whereby section 8 of the agreement identified that if funding to the FRAs was reduced then the FRAs in Wales could return ownership of the NR assets to the WG.
- 7 Recently, planning assumptions have been revised and the latest perceived risks identified across the UK have changed. This means that due to the changing nature of terrorist attacks there is less need for IRUs. England has already reduced the number of IRUs from 63 to 42 and in Wales the Minister has given approval for the number to be reduced from 7 to 4.
- 8 This reduction of 3 IRUs in Wales means that there will be 1 IRU taken out of service in North Wales. Officers from the Service have liaised with officials from WG, colleagues from England and the representative bodies and have identified that the IRU from Deeside is no longer required. Therefore this will be removed by the end of this financial year.

- 9 It is proposed that the equipment currently held on the redundant IRU be held in stock for future asset replacement and used, where appropriate, for ongoing training.
- 10 There are no financial implications to the Service following removal of this vehicle.

Recommendation

- 11 That Members note
 - (i) the result of the analysis of the new planning assumptions and UK wide discussions about the disposition of IRUs;
 - (ii) that the IRU from Deeside will be taken out of Service before the end of this financial year.