

Report to	Executive Panel	
Date	18 September 2023	
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer Corporate Policy and Planning	
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation	
Subject	Annual Performance Assessment 2022/23	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To present for Members' approval a draft assessment of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) performance during 2022/23 in relation to:
 - (i) its progress towards achieving its long-term Improvement and Well-Being Objectives, and medium-term Equality Objectives; and
 - (ii) its compliance with applicable Welsh Language Standards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The Authority made good progress last year towards meeting its long-term Improvement and Well-Being Objectives. This was achieved in part through the successful delivery of the planned actions outlined in the Authority's published Improvement and Well-being Plan for 2022/23.
- 3 Steady progress was also made during the year towards achieving the Authority's 2020/24 Equality Objectives; and the Authority continued to comply with the applicable Welsh Language Standards.

RECOMMENDATION

- 4 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) approve the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2022/23 (subject to minor additions and corrections if required) for publication on the Authority's website by 30 September; and
 - ii) note the Service's intention to publish a simple summary version of the key elements of the assessment report.

BACKGROUND

- 5 The Authority is required under various pieces of legislation to give a public account of its performance, progress and compliance. These pieces of legislation include:

- i) The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 which requires the Authority to set and publish objectives that will contribute to improving local well-being and to moving Wales closer to achieving its well-being goals. Having set these long-term objectives, the Authority must take all reasonable steps to pursue them and to report publicly after the end of each financial year on the progress it has made;
 - ii) the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 which requires the Authority to set and publish improvement objectives and to publish performance information annually by 31 October in relation to the preceding financial year;
 - iii) the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 which require the Authority to produce a strategic equality plan and to report annually by on the progress that it has made towards fulfilling its equality objectives; and
 - iv) the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires the Authority to comply with Welsh Language Standards and to report annually by 30 September on its compliance with those Standards.
- 6 For convenience, reporting against all four of the above has been incorporated within a single document for publication on the Authority's website.

INFORMATION

- 7 This year's Annual Performance Assessment opens with introductory sections which describe the legal requirements for reporting, presenting information about the challenges and issues facing Wales in the future along with information about the area covered by the Authority. This provides context to aid understanding of the Authority's provision of services and its contribution to the well-being of North Wales communities.
- 8 The middle section of the Assessment Report gives a detailed account of the specific actions that the Authority took last year to meet its long-term Improvement and Well-Being Objectives. As in last year's report, more emphasis has been placed in this year's report on narrative and case studies that demonstrate the real difference that the Authority's work makes to people's lives. Evidence of progress against all actions is included within the assessment.
- 9 Covid-19 restrictions were officially lifted in Wales from the 30 May 2022, however, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) faced new challenges as the 'Cost of Living Crisis' continued alongside the repeated increases to interest rates.

- 10 There were no reported accidental dwelling fire fatalities during the year.
- 11 This middle section of the Assessment Report also presents information on the Authority's compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. As at 31 March 2023, 757 or 84% of the Service's employees had self-assessed or been assessed as having at least some Welsh language skills, with 37% categorised as fluent Welsh speakers. In the past, language ability levels of each shortlisted candidates were assessed but more recently owing to the time/number of recruitment posts, those being offered posts are assessed to confirm their level in order to offer the support they need through the probationary period. For the fifth year in succession, no complaints had been received during the year in relation to the Welsh language. The many steps taken by the Authority to promote the Welsh language and proactively encourage a language choice for all staff and Service users are also described in this section.
- 12 The progress that was made during 2022/23 towards meeting each of the Authority's six Strategic Equality Objectives is also described in this middle section of the Assessment Report. Through a range of actions, the Authority has been able to contribute to improving aspects of people's lives under each one of the subject areas of: life and health; employment; education; personal safety; representation and voice; and access to services, information and buildings.
- 13 The final sections of the Assessment Report include performance indicator information in the Welsh context and an account of how the Authority has met its commitments under the 'All-Wales Dwelling Fires Response Charter'. Activity during the year included:
- handling 13,224 emergency 999/112 calls;
 - alerting an emergency response within 90 seconds on 86.1% of occasions, against a target of 80%;
 - attending 5,896 emergency incidents, of which 2,011 were fires;
 - delivering fire safety talks in schools to 18,001 children and young people at key stages 1 to 4; and
 - completing 18,052 Safe and Well Checks.
- 14 Additional information at the end of the Assessment Report includes the outcome of work undertaken by Audit Wales that looked specifically at the Authority's progress made to reduce and prevent fire false alarms.
- 15 The report concluded that the Authority has significantly reduced the number of non-domestic false fire alarms it attends but needs to address financial risks and capacity issues to ensure its risk-based approach is sustainable.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	This assessment describes the Authority's progress during 2022-23 in relation to achieving its adopted long-term improvement and wellbeing objectives.
Budget	None identified.
Legal	The combined document discharges the Authority's duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009; the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015; the Equality Act 2010 and the (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011; and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.
Staffing	None identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	Implications for the protected characteristics are covered within the draft assessment.
Risks	None identified.