

Report to	<b>North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority</b>
Date	<b>17 October 2022</b>
Lead Officer	<b>Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer</b>
Contact Officer	<b>Pippa Hardwick, Corporate Planning Manager</b>
Subject	<b>Annual Performance Assessment 2021/22</b>



## PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To present for Members' approval a draft assessment of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's performance during 2021/22 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 2021/22.
- 3 Steady progress was also made during the year towards achieving the Authority's 2016-20 Equality Objectives; and the Authority continued to comply with the applicable Welsh Language Standards.

## RECOMMENDATION

- 4 That Members:
  - (i) approve the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2021/22 (subject to minor additions and corrections if required) for publication on the Authority's website by 30/09/2022; and
  - (ii) note the Service's intention to publish a simple summary version of the key elements of the assessment report.

## **OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE**

- 5 This report has not previously been considered by Members.

### **BACKGROUND**

- 6 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 31 March on the progress that it has made towards fulfilling its equality objectives
  - 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.
- 7 For convenience, reporting against all four of the above has been incorporated within a single document for publication on the Authority's website.

### **INFORMATION**

- 8 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.

- 9 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.
- 10 The number of actions also increased from forty-five to fifty-three and evidence of progress against all of these actions is included. Unfortunately, the ongoing limitations imposed by the pandemic meant the target of 20,000 Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs) could not safely be met. In total 14,062 SAWCs were completed with 4,896 coming from partner agency referrals.
- 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 2022, 692 or 82% of the Service's employees had self-assessed or been assessed as having at least some Welsh language skills, with 36% 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 fourth 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 2021/22 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 12,470 emergency 999/112 calls;
  - alerting an emergency response within 90 seconds on 89.2% of occasions, against a target of 80%;
  - attending 5,354 emergency incidents, of which 1,879 were fires;
  - delivering fire safety talks in schools to 8,279 children and young people at key stages 1 to 4.

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 approach to corporate resilience. The report found that the Authority has demonstrated its short-term resilience but needs to take some decisions to remain resilient in the future:

- Finance: The Authority has managed budgets well, but some key risks need to be addressed to remain financially sustainable;
- Governance: The Authority has an appropriate governance framework but Members need to play a more central role in addressing the big risks facing the Fire and Rescue Service;
- Workforce: The Authority has a resilient workforce and has dealt well with immediate challenges, but there are some medium-term risks that need to be managed to ensure services are sustainable;
- Assets: The Authority has good examples of how it is integrating assets and developing its use of technology but there are some long standing challenges that need to be addressed to help support future resilience; and
- Business continuity: The Authority's business continuity plans helped maintain corporate and operational resilience in responding to the pandemic.

## IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	This assessment describes the Authority's progress during 2021/22 in relation to achieving its adopted long-term improvement and well-being 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.