

Report to	<b>Executive Panel</b>	
Date	<b>13 May 2019</b>	
Lead Officer	<b>Shân Morris, Assistant Chief Officer (Corporate Policy and Planning)</b>	
Contact Officer	<b>Tracey Williams, Corporate Communications Manager</b>	
Subject	<b>Public engagement and consultation strategy to support the development of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Improvement and Well-being Plan 2020/21</b>	

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1 To outline proposals for the Authority's 2019 consultation with the public and other stakeholders as part of the process of developing its Improvement and Wellbeing Plan 2020/21.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2 The Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) is required to publish improvement objectives and to have involved the public and other stakeholders in the process of developing those objectives.
- 3 This public engagement and consultation strategy outlines the means by which the FRA can invite comments and views about the development of its Improvement and Well-being Plan 2020/21 prior to its formal adoption and publication in March 2020.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

- 4 That Members endorse the public engagement and consultation strategy outlined in this report for delivery between July and October 2019.

### **BACKGROUND**

- 5 The FRA is required under relevant legislation to set itself improvement objectives. As part of the development of those objectives, and whilst they are still at a formative stage, the FRA is expected to allow time for anyone with an interest to submit their views on the matter. The engagement and consultation process is considered to be an important element in shaping the draft objectives before they are adopted.

- 6 Although there are no strict rules about the duration of consultation periods, 12 weeks is considered to be sufficient in most cases.
- 7 Public consultations must be done fairly and with an open mind, with sufficient explanation being provided to allow for intelligent consideration and response.
- 8 The product of the consultation must then be conscientiously taken into account by the FRA before proposals are formally adopted.

## **INFORMATION**

- 9 This strategy is aimed at consulting publicly between July and October 2019. This will be after the FRA has considered its intention for 2020/21 at its meeting in June 2019.
- 10 This strategy comprises the following aspects:
  - a stakeholder analysis to identify who to engage with and to help decide on the most appropriate means of engaging with the people identified;
  - adopting a variety of communication methods to encourage wide participation and response from stakeholders;
  - using the consultation as an opportunity to raise awareness of the broad range of services provided by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and of the diverse aspects of its operations;
  - avoiding language that is difficult to understand, explaining clearly and avoiding over-complication.
- 11 It is anticipated that this strategy will include:
  - engaging with the general public and other stakeholders through the Service website, a media release and social media;
  - meeting with county councils to highlight the work of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service and to explain the rationale for developing a new Environmental Strategy in the context of its corporate obligations and its operational effectiveness;
  - encouraging partner organisations and other emergency services to raise awareness of the FRA's consultation.
- 12 The outcome of the consultation will be presented to the Executive Panel in October 2019 with a view to giving due regard to the response when setting the budget for 2020/21 in December 2019 and again when drafting the FRA's 2020/21 Plan for publication before the end of March 2020.

## IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	Public consultation will have a direct implication for pursuing the Authority's long-term well-being objectives.
Budget	The cost of this strategy will be met from this year's corporate communications budget.
Legal	Supports compliance with improvement planning and well-being legislation.
Staffing	No direct implications on staffing levels identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	In communicating – bilingually, in Welsh and English - with the public, all protected characteristics are considered with e.g. an easier read summary of what the consultation is about, the ability to 'listen' to bilingual information on the Service website. Groups representing all the protected characteristics are included in the circulation list of consultation stakeholders.
Risks	Failure to consult in accordance with the Gunning Principles would risk eventual decisions by the FRA being the subject of a legal challenge.