

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE:

<b>Date:</b>	<b>27 NOVEMBER 2002</b>
<b>Venue:</b>	
<b>Title:</b>	<b>COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY TRUST</b>

### **Purpose**

1. To update on the progress of the establishment of the Community Fire Safety Trust.

### **Summary**

2. Under the terms of Standing Order 9.7, each subject committee has the responsibility to contribute to the development of the Assembly's policies within the fields for which the relevant Assembly Secretary is accountable and to keep under review the expenditure and administration connected with policy implementation. The Community Fire Safety Trust links with the Assembly's wider community fire safety agenda and aims to champion aspects of community fire safety on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government and the three Welsh Fire Services.

### **Background**

3. Community Fire Safety Working Group (CFSWG) was set up following discussions with representatives of the three Welsh Fire Services over the mutual concern, to ensure the Government, public sector organisations and private sector bodies work jointly to reduce the numbers of deaths and fire related injuries, and to protect domestic and public property in Wales. The Group's first report 'Wired for Safety' was endorsed at the LGH committee in November 2001.
4. The Community Fire Safety Trust has been proposed by and has the full support of the Fire Service in Wales. The Minister has agreed that the Welsh Assembly Government should provide financial support for the establishment of the Trust and be represented on the governing body. The Trust's overall remit is to improve the quality of life in Wales by reducing the numbers of preventable fire deaths and injuries. It will do this by pursuing three distinct areas of activity, promotional campaigning and public education; research to better understand the causes of fire death and injury; and grant giving to support local fire safety initiatives.
5. The Trust is currently in the process of being established and has now been incorporated at

Companies House. The post of Trust Chief Executive was advertised during September in the Western Mail/Echo Group; Guardian Media Group; and Liverpool Daily Post. 31 applications were received by South Wales Fire Service (who are co-ordinating the recruitment process on behalf of the three Welsh Fire Services and Assembly Government) and a shortlist of four candidates was drawn up following initial sift. These were interviewed on 5 November. An announcement on the successful candidate will be made in the next few weeks and it is the intention that the Chief Executive will be in post by the beginning of January 2003.

6. The objects of the charitable trust, as incorporated under Companies Law, are to advance the education of the public in relation to all aspects of fire safety and fire prevention, and to reduce or assist in the reduction in the number of preventable fire related deaths and injuries.

### **Consideration**

7. The proposal to establish a Community Fire Safety Trust has been the subject of widespread discussion between the Chief Fire Officers of the three Welsh Fire Brigades and one of the primary functions of Trust would be to build on and, where appropriate, implement the recommendations arising out of the Assembly's Community Fire Safety Working Group 'Wired for Safety' report and the Arson 'Up in Flames' report.

8. As an all-Wales body, the Trust will cut across the three Welsh Fire Brigades, as such it will prove more economically viable than any combination of regional alternatives and will benefit from economies of scale. While the three Welsh Fire Brigades have distinct organisational structures, there is increasingly a need for strategic and functional collaboration, a trend that is likely to increase and be facilitated by the Trust.

9. The Trust would champion aspects of community fire safety on behalf of the three Brigades. Although there are obvious differences in the incidence of aspects of the community fire safety agenda between different parts of Wales, there are equally many similarities across the country. Furthermore, there are already examples of community fire safety matters being taken forward on an all-Wales basis, particularly in relation to the Assembly's success in the production of its 'Wired for Safety' report examining hard wired smoke detectors and domestic sprinklers and the Assembly's sponsored work in the field of Arson.

### **Financial Implications**

10. The formation and start-up costs for establishing the Trust are estimated to be £210,000 for 2002-03, covering office costs; salary costs, for the Trust Director and support staff; promotional costs; training and development; and equipment purchase.

### **Compliance**

11. The establishment of the Trust is being supported by the Assembly Government under both section 126 of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and section 5 of the Science and Technology Act 1965, in relation to the research objectives of the Trust.

### **Action for Subject Committee**

12. The Committee is asked to note and comment on proposals for the Community Fire Safety Trust.

### **Construction and Domestic Energy Branch – Housing Directorate**