



AGENDA ITEM: 9

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

19th July 2010

Rhyl Community Fire Station

Report by Dawn Docx, Deputy Chief Fire Officer

Purpose of Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide information on the progress to date of Rhyl Community Fire Station. It illustrates out how the activities within the station are satisfying the needs of the community; how it helps towards North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's (NWFRS) aims and objectives and how it satisfies the original business case.

Background

- 2 The original concept of the Community Fire Station was to transform a traditional operational fire station into a proactive, community orientated station. The primary focus is to engage with the community, encourage the prevention of fires and protect people, in addition to responding to incidents.
- 3 Prior to building, in February 2006, North Wales Fire & Rescue Service (NWFRS) launched a series of consultation events in the town, to assess local views about the project. Local views were received which enabled the architect to ensure the Community Fire Station provided facilities that were needed in Rhyl, enhancing the life of the town and helping NWFRS to reduce the risk of fire.
- 4 The overwhelming majority of people who responded to the consultation events were positive about the plans to remodel Rhyl Fire Station and the creation of a community space. It was

generally felt that there was a need for more community facilities in Rhyl involving all age groups and that opening the fire station for community use would be a positive thing. Many community organisations, including charity groups, voluntary organisations and neighbourhood watch, expressed an interest in using the space for meetings.

- 5 The project to remodel Rhyl station and to create a Community fire station was completed in August 2008. It was delivered on time and under budget, costing under £2.5million which was partly funded by a grant from the Welsh Assembly Government of over £650,000.
- 6 On completion a management team was established to oversee and assist the Community Fire Station manager in the running of the facility. The team consists of the Chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority, Senior Fire Safety Manager, Community Fire Safety Manager, Finance Manager and Deputy Corporate Communications Manager. Meetings are held quarterly unless urgent matters dictate otherwise.

Information

- 7 In the 22 months since Rhyl Community Fire Station opened it has become part of the community in Rhyl, providing much needed facilities and a focus for community safety activities. The current opening hours are between 08:00 hrs and 21:00 hrs and it can be available seven days a week.
- 8 Whilst visitors use the station for their own purpose and enjoyment, they are also reminded of the importance of fire safety. These messages are delivered in a number of different ways throughout the station, such as posters and leaflets, televised messages and Bluetooth mobile phone messaging devices. Station personnel along with the community fire safety department work proactively to ensure visitors receive fire safety information, either formally through presentations or by informally talking to visitors at the reception or during intervals. This has resulted in over 400 home fire safety check referrals.

- 9 Over the past 18 months the station has established formal arrangements with "Stop Smoking Wales" and the Cardiac Rehabilitation Unit for the use of its facilities and a three year service level agreement was signed with Denbighshire County Council's Telecare department which saw their first demonstration facility in Denbighshire located within the Community Fire Station. Discussions are currently underway to further develop this partnership with Telecare, whereby NWFRS staff will work in conjunction with Telecare to carry out HFSCs for their clients and provide Telecare with extra support and equipment.
- 10 Another example of a successful partnership is with Tai Hafan (Hafan Cymru) who are one of the main housing associations in the area. They regularly use the station for tenants' association meetings and courses, during which their tenants receive fire safety presentations and information.
- 11 The facility is also used by Coleg Harlech who since September 2008 have had 262 learners on their learner activity courses. These courses have attracted 45% of the total Denbighshire intake from within disadvantaged areas. This has enabled NWF&RS to influence these students, who are at a higher risk of having a fire, to be safer in their homes.

Conclusion

- 12 The Rhyl community fire station has developed successful community partnerships and has exceeded its business targets for the first year:
 - In year one the target occupancy rate was 40%. This was exceeded and in the first year it was an average of 58%. It is currently at 65%.
 - The target for income generation was £41,500. The actual income generated was £52,720.
 - 16,500 visitors used the facilities during the period from October 2008 to March 2010 and as a direct result 400 referrals for Home Fire Safety Checks were generated.

- 13 The long term objectives of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service contained within its first Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) published in 2003 directed the Service to be more accessible to the public, to raise the profile of its community work, to develop partnerships with other agencies and to extend its work with young people. These objectives have been actively supported by the Welsh Assembly Government and the remodelling of Rhyl fire station into the first Community Fire Station in Wales is the tangible embodiment of those long term objectives. The aim now is to build upon this initial success and continue to develop to meet the community safety needs of the people of Rhyl and the wider communities of North Wales.