

AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU



NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

A meeting of the **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY** will be held on **MONDAY 15 JULY 2024** virtually **via Zoom**. The meeting will follow the Annual General Meeting which commences **at 09:30**.

Yours faithfully,
Gareth Owens
Clerk

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Notice of Urgent Matters**
Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.
- 4. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 April 2024**
- 5. Matters Arising**
- 6. Chair's Report**
- 7. Emergency Cover Review (ECR) Proposal**
- 8. Fleet Decarbonisation Plan**
- 9. Amendments to the Member/Officer Protocol**
- 10. Performance Monitoring Report 2023-24**
- 11. Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-29 for approval**
- 12. Draft Annual Governance Statement 2023-24**
- 13. Local Pension Board Annual Report 2023-24; and Terms of Reference 2024-25**

Cont...

- 14. Update on Processing the Age Discrimination Remedy**
- 15. Internal Audit Annual Report 2023-24**
- 16. Statement of Accounts 2023-24**
- 17. Appointment of the Proper Officer for s.36 Freedom of Information Act 2000**

18. Urgent Matters

To consider any items which the Chair has decided are urgent (pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972) and of which substance has been declared under item 2 above.

PART II

It is recommended pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that there would be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 12 to 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

- 19. Culture Review**
- 20. Outcome of pre-hearing from ET**

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

Minutes of the meeting of **North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority** held on **Monday 15 April 2024** virtually via **Zoom**. Meeting commenced at **09.30hrs**.

Councillor

Dylan Rees (Chair)
Bryan Apsley
Marion Bateman
Carol Beard
Tina Claydon
Sharon Doleman
Jeff Evans
Chrissy Gee
Alan Hughes
Chris Hughes
Gareth R Jones
Marc Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Beverley Parry-Jones
Arwyn Herald Roberts
Austin Roberts
Gareth A Roberts
Paul Rogers (from 09:39)
Gareth Sandilands
Dale Selvester
Rob Triggs
Michelle Walker
Mark Young

Representing

Anglesey County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Anglesey County Council
Flintshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Gwynedd Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Gwynedd Council
Conwy County Borough Council
Gwynedd Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Denbighshire County Council
Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Denbighshire County Council
Denbighshire County Council

Also present:

Dawn Docx
Stewart Forshaw
Helen MacArthur
Justin Evans
Dafydd Edwards
Gareth Owens
Tracey Williams
George Jones
Lisa Allington

Chief Fire Officer (CFO)
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (DCFO)
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO)
Treasurer
Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Head of Corporate Communications
Atebol Translation Services
Members' Services

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor

Paul Cunningham (Deputy Chair)
John Brynmor Hughes
John Ifan Jones
Rondo Roberts
Adele Davies-Cooke

Representing

Flintshire County Council
Gwynedd Council
Anglesey County Council
Wrexham County Borough Council
Flintshire County Council

ABSENT

Councillor

Representing

The above apologies were offered and accepted.

The Chair asked for a moments silence in order to remember Rob Outram, the Deputy Head of Fleet and Engineering, who passed away suddenly on 3 April 2024. The Chair confirmed that a condolence card had been sent on behalf of the Authority and that he would also be attending the funeral.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 No notice of urgent matters had been received.

4 MINUTES OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2024

4.1 The minutes of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) meeting held on 22 January 2024 were submitted for approval.

4.2 It was noted that Cllr. Carol Beard had been present at the meeting and had not offered apologies, as reflected in the minutes.

4.2 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) approve the FRA minutes from 22 January 2024 as a true and correct record of the meetings held, with the above amendment having been made.**

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 There were no matters arising.

6 CHAIR'S REPORT

6.1 It was noted that a written paper had been provided to Members to inform them on the meetings and events attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority in their official capacities between January and March 2024.

6.2 The Chair noted that a number of meetings had been held with Hannah Blythyn, Deputy Minister for Social Partnership, over the last quarter. However, following the appointment of Vaughan Gething as First Minister for Wales, the responsibility for Fire and Rescue had been moved to the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government, and Planning, Julie James.

6.3 **RESOLVED to:**

i) Note the information provided within the paper.

7 INDEPENDENT CULTURAL REVIEW

7.1 The CFO presented the Independent Cultural Review paper which provided Members with an update as to the cultural journey of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) and progress towards commissioning an Independent Cultural Review. This followed the verbal update already given at a previous meeting.

7.2 One Member asked how Members might be involved in the Independent Review and the CFO responded that whilst this paper formed the official notice of the review, regular updates would be provided and a formal briefing would be given at the Full Authority meeting in October 2024.

7.3 Concern was expressed around the potential cost of the review. It was felt that a lot of work had already been carried out around culture within the Service and that movement in the right direction was being made. It was therefore asked whether Julie James may overturn this decision. The CFO confirmed that controlling costs was a priority and conversations would be held with Julie James at the upcoming Social Partnership Forum on 8 May, which would be attended by both the CFO and the Chair, in order to clarify her stance on the issue.

7.4 The Chair drew Members' attention to the area of the paper which stated that the review would be limited to experiences within a set timeframe, which was yet to be agreed.

7.5 A Member felt that the FBU should be heavily involved in this review as part of the Service's commitment to work more closely with them. At this juncture the Chair noted that since last FRA, both the Chair and the Secretary of the FBU had stepped down and formal ratification of the new Chair and Secretary was being awaited. The CFO confirmed that involvement from all Unions would be sought during this process.

- 7.6 A Member asked if there was a rationale behind setting a timeframe for the review as they were concerned that some voices may not be heard as a result. The CFO responded that there were mechanisms in-house to deal with historical issues, but that anything historical that remained ongoing would be covered by the review.
- 7.7 It was asked who would be appointing the Independent Reviewer and the CFO responded that this would be within the gift of the two Fire Authorities. However, it had been stipulated by the Welsh Government that this must not be someone with any current or previous connection with either service. A Member felt that it was also important that the successful appointment must also have experience of the Emergency Services in order to fulfil the brief effectively.
- 7.8 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) Note the contents of the paper; and**
 - ii) approve in principle the creation of a reserve to fund the independent review and supporting roles within the Service.**

8 EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW (ECR) UPDATE

- 8.1 DCFO Forshaw delivered the ECR update which aimed to provide Members with the latest position on the progress being made by the newly formed ECR Task and Finish Group, established in response to the decision made by the Authority at its meeting on 18 December 2023 to develop a new permanent option for the provision of emergency cover across North Wales.
- 8.2 The Chair highlighted that the issues that had triggered this review remained and needed resolving.
- 8.3 It was asked whether any progress had been made in this area and the DCFO confirmed that the way that other fire and rescue services operated had been looked into and that the Working Group had come up with a number of ideas as a result. These were being refined and a viable option was hoped to be available to deliver to Members at the Full Authority meeting in July.
- 8.4 It was noted that the Task and Finish Group had been meeting in different locations and asked whether they had yet met in Southern Gwynedd, this being one of the areas that was underrepresented. The DCFO responded that he would ensure that this information was disseminated to Members.

- 8.5 A Member asked how many options were being developed for presentation to the Authority and the DCFO responded that the aspiration was to provide one viable option that was not too fundamentally different to that presented to the Authority previously. If it were to be, there was the potential that further public consultation may be necessary.
- 8.6 The CFO noted that Mid and West Wales were currently carrying out an emergency cover review in order to address the geographical areas that they were unable to provide guaranteed cover for. Between the two services, this was obviously a bigger issue as there was a significant combined area across Wales that did not have guaranteed cover.
- 8.7 A Member asked what work had taken place between relevant officers with regards to finance for the potential new option. ACFO MacArthur confirmed that any option put forward would be within the available cost envelope.
- 8.8 The DCFO also noted that should the option put forward in July be accepted by the Authority, it may be possible to implement it ready for the start of the new financial year, and budget setting could therefore take place with that in mind.
- 8.9 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) Note the engagement of all stakeholders on the ECR Task and Finish Group to work together to develop options that deliver improvements in emergency cover for the communities of North Wales; and**
 - ii) note the progress made by the Task and Finish Group to date.**

9 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STRATEGY 2024-2029

- 9.1 DCFO Forshaw presented to Members the proposed 2024-2029 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy (the EDI strategy). It presents our commitments relating to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and sets out how we propose to meet them.
- 9.2 The Chair noted that this strategy had already been scrutinised by the Executive Panel, and that a Members' EDI Champion had been appointed in Cllr Sharon Doleman. Cllr Doleman was thanked for her commitment to the role.

9.3 A Member asked how communication could be improved in order to ensure that all Members were aware of the great work been carried out across the Service. The DCFO responded that this would be part of the new EDI Champion's responsibility. Updates were also regularly given via the Weekly Brief; however, it was acknowledged that further work could be carried out in this area.

9.4 A Member noted that the essential criteria within all Service job descriptions may require review in line with the EDI Strategy in order to ensure that no person was being excluded from being able to apply for reasons which may relate to a protected characteristic.

9.5 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) note the content of the paper; and**
- ii) approve the proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029.**

10 NORTH WALES HEALTHY TRAVEL CHARTER

10.1 ACFO Evans presented the North Wales Healthy Travel Charter paper which set out the obligations as prescribed in the North Wales Healthy Travel Charter (the Charter), and the practical considerations of implementing them.

10.2 The Chair noted that this paper had already been scrutinised by the Executive Panel.

10.3 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) endorse the ratification of the North Wales Healthy Travel Charter, under the following terms:**
 - The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) be delegated to sign the Charter on behalf of the Authority;**
 - The Environment and Climate Change Manager be designated the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) for the scheme; and**
 - Compliance reporting to the Flintshire and Wrexham Public Service Board to be made by ACFO Justin Evans.**

11 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2023/24

11.1 The Treasurer presented to Members the Provisional Outturn 2023/24 paper which provided an update on the revenue and capital expenditure forecast for 2023/24, as at 29 February 2024.

11.2 It was noted that this paper had not previously been scrutinised by Members.

- 11.3 A Member asked whether there was any scrutiny with regards to the capital expenditure and ACFO MacArthur responded that the Budget Scrutiny Working Group would be responsible for this.
- 11.4 It was noted that funding had been withdrawn by the Welsh Government for the Firelink project. ACFO MacArthur advised Members that as this was a national project, it remained a significant challenge across all fire and rescue services. A national legal challenge on the increase in costs had also been commenced.
- 11.5 A Member asked what steps were being taken to remedy the issues being experienced with the fire kits. ACFO MacArthur responded that it was important that the Service was able to provide appropriate kit to its workforce and that at the current time, this was being carefully managed.
- 11.6 It was queried whether fire kits were reusable and responded that they were carefully checked when laundered and providing they were within their lifespan, they were then reallocated.
- 11.7 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) note the draft revenue and capital outturn projections for the 2023/24 financial year as detailed within the paper;**
 - ii) note the risks associated with inflation and supply chain issues; and**
 - iii) approve the use of earmarked and general fund reserves.**

12 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25

- 12.1 ACFO MacArthur presented the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 which aimed to inform Members of the Authority of their responsibilities arising from the Localism Act 2011 (the Act). Key areas of the paper were highlighted.
- 12.2 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) note the requirements of the Localism Act 2011; and**
 - ii) approve the Pay Policy Statement for the 2024/25 financial year.**

13 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (TMS) 2024-25

- 13.1 The Treasurer presented the Treasury Management Strategy (TMS) 2024-25, the purpose of which was to present to Members the proposed Treasury Management Strategy for the period April 2024 – March 2025.
- 13.2 It was noted that this paper had previously been scrutinised in Audit Committee.

13.3 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25;**

14 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2024-34

14.1 ACFO MacArthur explained to Members that the purpose of this paper was to present the proposed Capital Strategy for the period April 2024 to March 2034, and provide details and explanations of the proposed Strategy.

14.2 **RESOLVED TO:**

- i) **approve the Capital Strategy for 2024-2034;**

15 FINANCIAL RESERVES STRATEGY

15.1 ACFO MacArthur presented an updated version of the Financial Reserves Strategy (the Strategy) to Members of the Authority.

15.2 The Chair thanked the Treasurer, ACFO MacArthur and the Audit Committee for the excellent work carried out in relation to these financial papers.

15.3 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Approve the Financial Reserves Strategy at Appendix 1, as a basis for managing the Authority's usable reserves.**

16 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

16.1 The Clerk presented Members with the standards Committee's Annual Report 2023/24.

16.2 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Note the content of the annual report of the Standards Committee.**

16i ROLLING REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

16i.1 The Clerk explained that the purpose of this paper was to give Members the opportunity to review the councillors' Code of Conduct (the Code) to ensure that it remain pertinent and up to date, especially in light of recommendations made within the Penn Review.

16i.2 The CFO noted that this referred to Members of the Authority rather than employees of the Service.

16i.3 A Member asked what the process would be in the event that a Member had received a caution from the police but had not officially been charged. The Clerk responded that as cautions were usually in relation to less serious offences and did not constitute a criminal conviction, there would be no responsibility for this to be reported.

16i.4 The Chair thanked the Members of the Standards Committee for their very thorough work.

16i.4 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) **Include all the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 within the prohibition on discrimination; and**
- ii) **Amend the requirement to report criminal behaviour by others to also include reporting oneself where a councillor receives a conviction (other than a fixed penalty notice)**

17 URGENT MATTERS

17.1 There were no urgent matters to consider.

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 15 July 2024.

Meeting closed: 11:19

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Not applicable
Contact Officer	Members Services (members.services@northwalesfire.gov.wales)
Subject	Chair's Report



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report provides Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) with information on the meetings and events attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair in their official capacities between April and June 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The Chair and/or Deputy Chair have attended several meetings and events, both internally and externally on behalf of the Authority.

RECOMMENDATION

- 3 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) note the information provided.

OBSERVATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

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

INFORMATION

- 5 In addition to Authority-related meetings, the Chair and Deputy Chair have met with the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) on a regular basis.
- 6 On the evening of 8 April, the Chair visited the Watch at Porthmadog Fire Station who were holding a recruitment event.
- 7 On 19 April, the Chair attended the Phoenix Ceremony of Achievement at Porthmadog Fire Station and presented certificates to the school pupils from Ysgol Eifionydd who had completed the course.

- 8 On 30 April, the Chair attended the funeral service of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) employee Rob Outram at the Mochdre Crematorium.
- 9 On 8 May, the Chair and the CFO attended the Social Partnership meeting held at the Senedd in Cardiff.
- 10 On 10 May, the Chair and the Deputy Chair attended the Phoenix Ceremony of Achievement at Llanfairfechan Fire Station and presented certificates to the students from Coleg Llandrillo who had completed the course.
- 11 On 14 May, the Chair, the CFO and Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) Justin Evans attended the “Charter for Families Bereaved by Public Tragedy Executive Workshop for Public Services in Wales” at South Wales Police HQ in Bridgend.
- 12 On 19 May, the Chair attended the charity car wash at Menai Bridge Fire Station.
- 13 On 3 June, the Chair joined the Service Leadership Team (SLT) in attending a virtual presentation by three companies who were bidding for the contract to undertake an independent cultural review of the Service and Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.
- 14 On 13 June, the Chair and the CFO met with Union representatives to discuss the forthcoming Executive Panel agenda.
- 15 On 27 June, the Deputy Chair attended a Chairs and Deputy Chairs review meeting with members of the Standards Committee.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	Not relevant.
Budget	Any costs associated with meetings and events attended by members are reimbursed from the travel and subsistence budget.
Legal	No specific implications arise from approving the recommendation.
Staffing	No specific implications arise from approving the recommendation.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	No specific implications arise from approving the recommendation.
Risks	No specific risks arise from approving the recommendation.

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Corporate Policy and Planning
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation
Subject	Emergency Cover Review (ECR)



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) with an update on the progress made by the Emergency Cover Review (ECR) Task and Finish Group, established in response to the decision made by the Authority at its meeting on 18 December 2023. The purpose of this group was to research and develop a new permanent option for the provision of emergency cover across North Wales.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The ECR Task and Finish group was chaired by a Crew Manager from Deeside Fire Station, with the Deputy Chair a Watch Manager from Rhyl Fire Station. The Group comprised of sixteen colleagues working at various levels, stations and departments within North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service), including representatives of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU). They met on nine occasions between February and May 2024, during which they discussed and researched several emergency response models.
- 3 This work concluded with three pieces of emergency response model research being presented by the ECR Task and Finish Group to the Fire Authority ECR Working Group on the 20 May 2024. These three pieces of research represent a significant amount of effort, work and engagement by stakeholders and members of the ECR Task and Finish Group and all offered potential improvements in emergency cover.
- 4 At its meeting on the 20 May 2024, the Fire Authority ECR Working Group requested that the Service review in detail the three pieces of research presented by the ECR Task and Finish Group to provide recommendations at the next Fire Authority ECR Working Group meeting on the 12 June 2024.

- 5 Following further analysis of the three pieces of emergency response model research, presented to the Fire Authority Working Group on 12 June, two of the models have been recommended for further development as potential viable future emergency response models that improve the equity of emergency cover for the communities of North Wales.

RECOMMENDATION

- 6 It is recommended that Members:
- i) approve that Officers continue to work with staff and representative bodies in social partnership to progress, develop and implement ECR Task and Finish Group research models two, and three, or variations of them, following consultation with staff;
 - ii) approve that the Service undertake the necessary arrangements to make suitable the stations identified for the introduction of a day staffing duty system; and
 - iii) appreciate the efforts and contribution made by the ECR Task and Finish Group Members to develop a new permanent option for the provision of emergency cover across North Wales.

BACKGROUND

- 7 During the period of July to September 2023, the Authority consulted the public on three possible options for the future delivery of its emergency response to the communities of North Wales.
- 8 Following the 12-week public consultation exercise the Authority met on 18 December 2023 and decided that:

Members request that Officers continue to work with all stakeholders to develop a new permanent option taking into consideration today's decision and the limits of the proposed budget.

- 9 Therefore, expressions of interest were sought from staff working at all levels across all stations, duty systems and departments and an ECR Task and Finish Group was established in January 2024. The FBU have also been represented and present at every meeting.

INFORMATION

- 10 The ECR Task and Finish Group held its first meeting on 1 February 2024 and have met on nine occasions, discussing the current response model in depth and examining innovative means of providing a future, more equitable emergency response model.

- 11 The ECR Task and Finish Group accepted that improvements in emergency cover, particularly in more rural areas of North Wales are required and understood that any proposals they put forward must meet the ECR evaluation criteria used throughout the development of the original options.
- 12 The ECR Task and Finish Group has been supported by Service departments as required, have had access to emergency response data and modelling and have also received presentations on alternative emergency cover delivery models from other UK Fire and Rescue Services.
- 13 Following each meeting, ECR Task and Finish Group members were tasked with speaking to their colleagues to gauge feedback on the ideas being discussed in order that the wider workforce remain informed on progress. Colleagues were also encouraged to bring their ideas forward to the ECR Task and Finish Group representatives for inclusion in their group discussions.
- 14 The ECR Task and Finish Group explored a variety of future emergency response options and reviewed these against the ECR evaluation criteria and feedback from colleagues.
- 15 Three pieces of emergency response model research were developed and presented by the ECR Task and Finish Group Chair and Deputy Chair to the Fire Authority ECR Working Group on 20 May 2024. These were:
 - **Model 1:** Utilises all 12 Wholetime Duty System Rural (WDSR) firefighters and 89% of the Service's crewing resilience* to provide two new day staffed stations.
 - **Model 2:** Duty system changes are introduced on all fulltime stations to release staff. Utilising staff released by this change, the WDSR firefighters and 78% of the Service's crewing resilience, provides three new day staffed stations.
 - **Model 3:** Aligns the minimum ridership of eight fulltime appliances with the minimum ridership of the on-call Retained Duty System (RDS), WDSR firefighters and Wrexham's second fulltime appliance i.e. appliances crewed with four firefighters. Utilises staff released by this change, the WDSR firefighters and 11% of the Service's crewing resilience to provide three new day staffed stations.

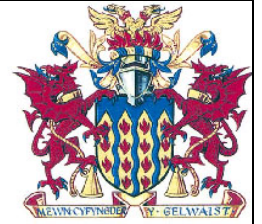
** Crewing resilience is required to cover long term absences, vacancies due to retirements between recruitment campaigns and to cover temporary promotions and secondments.*

- 16 At its meeting on 20 May 2024, the Fire Authority ECR Working Group requested that Officers review the research models and provide recommendations at its meeting on 12 June 2024.
- 17 Following further analysis and evaluation, Officers presented to Fire Authority ECR Working Group Members on the 12 June 2024, and research models two and three were identified as offering potential, viable emergency response models that meet the aims and evaluation criteria of the ECR. Research model one was identified as placing the Service at too much risk regarding resilience of an effective response and offered limited improvement in emergency cover.
- 18 Officers recommended to the Fire Authority ECR Working Group on 12 June 2024 that ECR Task and Finish Group research models two and three be further developed in social partnership with staff and the representative bodies. This was endorsed by the Fire Authority Working ECR Working Group Members for approval by the Authority on 15 July 2024.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The ECR outcomes must meet the Authority's obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
Budget	The consultation budget implications have been publicised. The ECR Task and Finish Group have been reviewing emergency cover options that sit within the current budget.
Legal	Our legislation requires that the Authority must consult the public on changes to our emergency cover. The ECR consultation and the best practices the Services is following as recommended by the Consultation Institute support the Authority in meeting these requirements.
Staffing	The Service has conducted extensive direct consultation with staff and their representative bodies during pre-consultation and this continued during the full public consultation. However, in deciding on options to be presented, staff will be impacted by the proposed changes within the options
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The Service's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer engaged with EDI groups throughout the consultation. The best practice the Service is following and the quality assurance of the consultation by the Consultation Institute, ensures focus on the Authority's requirements in this area.
Risks	The ECR, its consultation and the work of the Task and Finish Group reduces the risks of not being able to respond to emergencies effectively and efficiently in the communities of North Wales.

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Justin Evans, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Tim Christensen, Environment and Climate Change Manager
Subject	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report sets out the details of our Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (the Plan), which provides detailed measures and timescales to mitigate the carbon emissions arising from our vehicle fleet for the period up to 2030.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) approve the Fleet Decarbonisation Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3 Under Welsh law, we are required to mitigate our operational carbon footprint by 2030. This Plan addresses the emissions from our vehicle fleet, with a detailed plan to eliminate these emissions as required under our Environmental Strategy.
- 4 The most notable measure within the Plan is a proposal to substitute diesel with a sustainable biofuel, Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO). Following a successful trial, we are now deploying a pilot storage tank and dispenser at Deeside Fire Station, with a further eighteen identified sites to follow.
- 5 The plan also proposes changes to the procurement of cars and vans, as well as staff travel patterns.

BACKGROUND

- 6 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 requires Welsh Government to enact a series of carbon budgets, setting out a path for Wales as a nation to be carbon neutral by 2050. Under Carbon Budget 2, the Welsh public sector is required to have reached this goal by 2030.

- 7 To comply with this ambition, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) adopted an Environmental Strategy on 17 July 2023 covering the period 2023-2030. Among other targets, this strategy mandated the development of a Fleet Decarbonisation Plan, setting out how we would mitigate the Scope 1 (direct) carbon emissions arising from our fleet. In the 2022/23 Financial Year, these amounted to 706 tonnes of CO₂.
- 8 A Members Working Group was convened between April and July 2023 to provide Members with relevant information and to obtain strategic direction for the development of detailed decarbonisation plans. This group endorsed the fleet decarbonisation strategy set out in this report.

INFORMATION

- 9 Given the longevity of a typical fire appliance, and the lack of a commercially viable low-carbon alternative, we propose transitioning all diesel vehicles operated by the Service to run on HVO. HVO is a drop-in substitute for diesel, which requires no mechanical adaptations to our vehicles and which can be mixed with diesel in any proportion, allowing for exceptional supply chain resilience.
- 10 We have set out criteria within the Plan to ensure that all HVO sourced will be derived from genuinely sustainable sources to minimise wider environmental impacts.
- 11 An operational trial of HVO was carried out between June and July 2023 by the Training and Fleet departments. No concerns were raised and HVO was found to be indistinguishable from diesel in performance.
- 12 19 stations have been chosen to host HVO tanks and dispensing equipment. These have been specified to store approximately three months supply for these stations and those surrounding them. Deeside has been chosen as the pilot location, with a tank planned for installation there in the coming weeks. The cost of this project and the remaining installations has been included within the 2024/25 capital budget.
- 13 Other measures within the Fleet Decarbonisation Plan include:
 - A. Compliance with a Welsh Government deadline to only procure (or commence an ordering process for the supply of a lease vehicle) only zero-emission (and where duty cycle does not allow for a zero-emission vehicle, an ultra-low emission) vehicles from the beginning of calendar year 2025. This may include the use of diesel engines where run entirely on HVO;

- B. Some residual plant or equipment may require the use of petrol beyond 2030, for example boat engines and Holmatro cutting equipment. Where possible, these will be substituted with zero-carbon alternatives within the period of the Environmental Strategy; and
- C. A range of measures to promote sustainable and active travel.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The proposed Plan aligns with the Authority's stated Well-being Objectives.
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital costs of HVO storage tanks and dispensing equipment already included in 2024/25 budget; • Revenue cost of HVO is approximately 20% higher than diesel, although it can be fixed up to one year ahead; and • Increased capital cost of cars and vans as we transition away from internal combustion engines
Legal	Risk of non-compliance with Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
Staffing	No changes to staffing levels are anticipated as a result of this Plan
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	EDI Manager consulted through the development of this Plan, no issues raised.
Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgetary risks from future HVO price volatility; and • Planning permission required for installation of tanks, risk of refusal.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Environmental Strategy 2023 – 2030

Fleet Decarbonisation Plan

May 2024

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg
This document is also available in Welsh

Author(s):

Tim Christensen
Environment and Climate Change Manager

Prepared by:
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Ffordd Salesbury
St Asaph Business Park
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0JJ



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 Fleet Procurement	2
2.1 Background	2
2.2 Red Fleet.....	2
2.3 White Fleet.....	2
3.0 Fuel Decarbonisation	3
3.1 Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)	3
3.2 Unleaded Petroleum.....	3
3.3 Alternative Fuels	3
4.0 Staff Travel	4
4.1 Background	4
4.2 Objective.....	4
4.3 Strategies and Initiatives.....	4

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 Section 10.2.1 of the Authority's Environmental Strategy (2023-2030) requires the Authority to prepare a Fleet Decarbonisation Plan which sets out how it proposes to eliminate Scope 1 emissions arising from transportation. Accordingly, this Plan has been prepared following a period of consultation with the public and Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 1.0.2 Our fleet plays a crucial role in responding to emergencies and keeping our communities safe. However, it is also important that we consider the environmental impact of our fleet operations. We are committed to reducing the emissions and environmental footprint of our fleet, as well as to promoting sustainable transportation within our Service. As affirmed by our Environmental Strategy, we aim to lead by example and demonstrate that it is possible to balance safety and environmental responsibility in our operations.
- 1.0.3 Our fleet can be described within three distinct categories. The red fleet consists of operational and response vehicles. The white fleet is entirely Service-provided cars and vans, and the grey fleet consists of employee-owned vehicles used on official business.
- 1.0.4 The red fleet consists of a mixture of fire appliances and 'special' vehicles - such as all-terrain vehicles and foam carriers; there are also aerial ladder platforms, portable power tools, lifting and winching and other specialist equipment to enable us to respond to many different types of incidents, as well as a dedicated incident command unit.
- 1.0.5 The Scope 1 carbon emissions arising from our fleet operations in FY 2021/22 were nearly 614 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent; enough to fill 307,000 CO₂ fire extinguishers.

2.0 FLEET PROCUREMENT

2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Procurement plays a crucial role in the transition to a greener fleet. By adopting vehicles and equipment reduce greenhouse gas emissions, minimise air pollution, and utilise cleaner energy sources, fire and rescue services can not only contribute to a healthier and more sustainable environment but also demonstrate leadership in the pursuit of a low carbon future.
- 2.1.2 In this section, we will outline the key objectives, strategies, and considerations for the fleet procurement process. We will examine the various technologies and alternative fuel options available to ensure the evolution of our fleet aligns with our decarbonisation commitments.
- 2.1.3 Ultimately, by aligning our fleet procurement practices with our wider environmental objectives, the Authority can set a standard for sustainability and contribute to the wider national and global efforts to combat climate change, ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities for generations to come.

2.2 Red Fleet

- 2.2.1 An operational fire appliance in the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service fleet has a serviceable life in excess of 15 years. For special appliances with low utilisation, this can be considerably longer. Red fleet vehicles are replaced on a rolling year-by-year basis, with end-of-life appliances typically being donated to Fire Aid.
- 2.2.2 Whilst electrically-powered fire appliances are available, the Authority believes that, at present, the significant capital cost required for each represents a poor return in terms of pounds spent per tCO₂e emissions mitigated, and the cost of replacing the existing operational fleet would be prohibitive. However, as the market and technology evolve in this area, use of electric LGVs will remain under review.
- 2.2.3 To meet the requirement to eliminate Scope 1 emissions arising from this segment of our fleet, the Authority will continue to purchase diesel-engine LGVs, and will seek to fuel them using sustainably-sourced Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) where possible (see Section 3.1).
- 2.2.4 This practice is a time-limited measure over the period of the Environmental Strategy, to allow a technological consensus to develop over fuelling of LGVs, which will be available to the mass market with appropriate economies of scale and sufficiently resilient supporting infrastructure.

2.3 White Fleet

- 2.3.1 The Welsh Government's Carbon Budget 2 (CB2) requires public bodies within Wales to purchase only zero or ultra-low emissions cars and vans by 2025.
- 2.3.2 We will comply with this deadline and order (or commence an ordering process for the supply of a lease vehicle) only zero-emission (and where duty cycle does not allow for a zero-emission vehicle, an ultra-low emission) vehicles from the beginning of calendar year 2025. This may include the use of diesel engines where run entirely on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (see Section 3.0).
- 2.3.3 Any residual hydrocarbon-fuelled vehicles still in operation at this time will continue to be operated until the end of calendar year 2029, by which time they will be removed from service unless they can be safely run on an alternative fuel with zero Scope 1 carbon emissions.

3.0 FUEL DECARBONISATION

3.1 Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO)

- 3.1.1 The Authority will transition the existing diesel fleet to HVO by the end of calendar 2029, with the exception of any residual vehicles that are mechanically unable to support it (those manufactured prior to the introduction of Euro 6 technical standards or those not otherwise certified as suitable by the manufacturer).
- 3.1.2 This fuel will be provided from dispensing tanks located at selected NWFRS sites. A stock with a maximum capacity of approximately three months use will be held in order to provide supply resilience for response vehicles.
- 3.1.3 At the time of writing, there is no consensus around certification of origin of the biomass used to create HVO. However, during procurement the Authority shall make best reasonable endeavours to ensure that no palm oil has been used, and that all HVO purchased is derived entirely from waste biomass, creating no land use additionality. Any certification of origin scheme which the Authority's procurement staff reasonably believe to be credible may be relied upon for this purpose.

3.2 Unleaded Petroleum

- 3.2.1 The majority of current petrol consumption arises from the white fleet, and will therefore be significantly reduced under the procurement policy set out in Section 2.3.
- 3.2.2 It is anticipated that some residual plant or equipment may require the use of petrol beyond 2030, for example boat engines and Holmatro cutting equipment. Where possible, these will be substituted with zero-carbon alternatives within the period of the Environmental Strategy.
- 3.2.3 No commercially available substitute for unleaded petrol is available at the time of writing, however this will remain under review and any future product with a resilient supply chain and reasonable cost shall be considered as a means to mitigate carbon emissions arising from petrol consumption.

3.3 Alternative Fuels

- 3.3.1 The stated decarbonisation measures set out within this Plan shall not prejudice the consideration or use of any novel or alternative fuel sources which may become available. The principle underpinning this Plan is to deliver a reduction in carbon emissions in the most sustainable way possible, within the financial and operational limits the Service

4.0 STAFF TRAVEL

4.1 Background

4.1.1 In addition to fleet procurement, staff travel is a critical aspect of the overall decarbonization strategy for the Fire and Rescue Authority. Recognising the importance of reducing carbon emissions from employee commuting and work-related travel, this section of the Plan will focus on implementing sustainable practices and initiatives to minimize the environmental impact associated with staff travel.

4.2 Objective

4.2.1 The primary objective of addressing staff travel within this Plan is to promote and facilitate sustainable commuting and work-related transportation options for Fire and Rescue Service personnel. By reducing the reliance on conventional vehicles and encouraging alternative modes of transportation, we aim to significantly decrease greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to the national targets for carbon reduction.

4.3 Strategies and Initiatives

4.3.1 Encouraging Active and Sustainable Commuting:

- Promote and incentivise walking and cycling to work by providing facilities such as bicycle racks, changing rooms, and showers where possible.
- Organize awareness campaigns and events to educate staff about the benefits of active commuting and provide guidance on route planning.
- Consider home locations of staff when deciding place of work.

4.3.2 Supporting Public Transportation:

- Encourage the use of public transportation for commuting by providing information on bus and train routes, schedules, and subsidies.
- Explore partnerships with public transport providers to secure discounted fares or special passes for Fire and Rescue Service employees.
- Continue to promote flexible working arrangements for office-based staff, such as compressed workweeks or hybrid working, to reduce the need for daily commuting.

4.3.3 Implementing a Green Fleet for Work-Related Travel:

- Prioritise the use of low-emission vehicles for work-related travel, such as inspections, meetings, and trainings.
- Promote carpooling and ride-sharing initiatives to optimise vehicle occupancy and reduce the number of individual vehicles on the road.
- Support staff use of personal electric vehicles where possible by considering allowing use of charging facilities at cost.

4.3.4 Education and Awareness:

- Conduct training and awareness programmes to educate staff on the importance of sustainable travel practices, carbon footprint reduction, and the benefits of alternative transportation options.
- Provide resources and information to support employees in making informed decisions about sustainable commuting and work-related travel.
- Promote national Action Days or similar campaigns to raise awareness of sustainability and environmental impact amongst staff.

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Matthew Powell, Deputy Clerk
Contact Officer	Matthew.powell@flintshire.gov.uk
Subject	Protocol on Member/Employee Relations



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To review the Protocol on Member/Employee Relations (the Protocol) to ensure that it remains up to date and pertinent.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The Protocol was last reviewed in 2018 and was recently considered by the Standards Committee (the Committee) at their meetings on 14 February 2024 and 5 April 2024. The Committee is of the view that it remains pertinent but has recommended that it be amended to apply to all categories of worker regardless of their legal status of employment as well as minor amendments to paragraphs 2.2 and 2.14.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) agree that the revised Protocol be adopted as part of the Constitution.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 4 This report has not previously been considered by Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority).

BACKGROUND

- 5 The Committee reviews each code and protocol once per authority term to ensure that it remains up to date and pertinent. The Protocol was last reviewed in 2018.
- 6 The Protocol serves to illustrate and reinforce the underlying principles of the legally binding regulatory codes that apply to Employees and Members. However, fundamentally it is about good ways of working and standards of communications between Members and those who work for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service).

- 7 Prior to 2018, the Protocol referred to "Officers". At that time, amendments were made meaning it now refers to "Employees". "Employee" has a particular meaning in law, that is someone who is engaged under an employment contract.
- 8 Senior managers within the Service were consulted and it was reported to the Committee that there had not been any reported problems with the application of the Protocol.
- 9 The Committee considered that the Protocol remains pertinent, but that the core principles of the Protocol are equally as applicable whatever the legal status of a person's employment and regardless of whether they are subject to regulatory codes. The Protocol should therefore be expanded to cover other potential categories of paid worker so it remains up to date.
- 10 The word "Staff" is considered to hold a suitably broad meaning and is used throughout the revised Protocol in place of "Employee." A definition is set out in paragraph 1.2 of the Protocol. It encompasses anyone "employed or engaged to work for the Service on a remunerated basis (regardless of employment status) to advise the Service and implement its decisions." It covers staff that have regular dealings with Members.
- 11 Paragraph 2.2 has been amended to clarify that the provisions of that paragraph are applicable to politically restricted posts, rather than simply referring to Senior Employees. The word "personally" has been added to paragraph 2.14 for clarity.
- 12 It is considered that widening the scope to include other categories of employment status represents a minor change and not one that would likely require consultation with employee representatives (given that it doesn't change the scope of the protocol in so far as it applies to employees).

INFORMATION

- 13 Senior managers in the Service have been consulted on the revisions to the Protocol.

APPENDICES

- 14 Revised draft Protocol.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	Considered not relevant
Budget for 2023/24	Considered not relevant
Legal	The role of the Committee under section 54 Local Government Act 2000 is: (a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by the members and co-opted members of the Authority; and (b) assisting members and co-opted members of the authority to observe the authority's code of conduct
Staffing	None identified
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	It is not considered that there are any issues that need addressing as the guidance within the Protocol applies equally to all Employees / Members regardless of protected characteristics
Risks	None identified

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

PROTOCOL ON MEMBER/STAFF RELATIONS

Member/Staff Protocol

This protocol codifies existing good practice in member/staff relations in North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. It is not intended as a prescriptive checklist.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An effective working relationship between members and staff is crucial to the successful operation of the Authority's business.
- 1.2 **Members** are appointed by their respective county (borough) council and serve until their appointment is terminated, they resign or they cease to be a member of their council. **Staff** are the people employed or engaged to work for the Authority on a remunerated basis (regardless of employment status) to advise the Authority and implement its decisions.
- 1.3 Advice given by staff must be full and impartial and should include all relevant options. It must not seek to second-guess the decisions of members, for example by excluding presumed unpalatable options, and must be clear and professional at all times. Members should respect staff' political neutrality at all times however members are entitled to reject advice from staff and to give effect to their lawful policies even if these are clearly at variance with the views of staff. Members are entitled to seek advice and to call for a report to a committee on any matter within its terms of reference.
- 1.4 **Relations between members and staff** – For the effective conduct of Authority business there must be mutual respect in all meetings and contact between members and staff. The basic tenets of common courtesy apply in both formal and informal settings. Members should be aware that staff are constrained in the response they may make to public comment from members, and should not abuse staff in public or through the press, nor seek to undermine their position by abuse, rudeness, or ridicule. This in no way reduces members' proper right and duty to criticise the reports actions and work of a department or section of the Authority, where they believe such criticism is merited. If members believe they have reason to criticise the work of an individual member of staff, the proper approach should be through the senior manager of the section or the Chief Fire Officer. Equally, where staff feel they have good cause to criticise a member, an approach by the Chief Fire Officer to the Chair is a sensible first step.

1.5 It is widely accepted that there will be informal contact between party political groups and staff at a senior level, often of a sensitive nature. This protocol is designed to provide a framework for contact between members and staff, both formal and informal, and to ensure that members and staff are as clear as they can be as to their roles and responsibilities in relation to each other.

2. Specific Issues

2.1 **Appointments** – Every paid appointment to the Authority must be on merit.

2.2 **Political impartiality** –Staff that hold politically restricted posts cannot be local authority councillors or MSs/MPs, nor can they “speak or publish written work for the public at large or to a section of the public with the apparent intention of affecting public support for a political party”. Such staff are nevertheless able to engage in such activity to “such extent as is necessary for the proper performance of their duties”. (Section 1- 3 Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Local Government Employees (Political Restrictions) Regulations 1990).

2.3 **Staff are employed or engaged by the Authority**, not by committees or individual councillors, and are subject to the Authority’s employment procedures. Staff cannot be required to advise any political group of the Authority, either as to the work of the group or as to the work of the Authority, nor can they be required to attend any meetings of any political groups. This is without prejudice to any arrangements to the contrary which may be made with any staff and which includes safeguards to preserve the political neutrality of the staff in relation to the affairs of the Authority.

2.4 **Authorship of reports** –Committee reports should be written by the relevant Principal Officer or another member of staff authorised by him or her. The report is that of the member of staff who wrote it and may not be amended by a member. Nor can an individual member instruct a member of staff not to present a report if the member of staff considers it proper to do so. If the report is not regarded as appropriate, the remedy is for the committee to reject its recommendations or refer it back.

2.5 **Decision making and political groups** – Members and staff must understand that Authority decisions can only be made by the Authority, a committee or sub-committee or the Chief Fire Officer acting under delegated authority. Members and staff should not act on group decisions. Representations by interested parties on any matter for Authority decision should be made to the appropriate committee, and not exclusively to a political group, at which staff advice on the points raised is unavailable.

- 2.6 **Proper communication between members and staff** –Principal Officers must recognise that it is their duty to keep members fully informed about developments of significance in relation to Authority activities. Principal Officers must also report promptly to the relevant committee any significant failure to implement a decision of that committee.

Regular contact between members and senior staff is necessary to ensure the efficient working of the Authority. In this context, it is the responsibility of Principal Officers to identify the senior staff who should have regular contact with members, and this will depend upon the nature of the service they provide and the nature of the member contact envisaged but members should always bring major concerns about issues directly to the attention of the Principal Officer concerned. Principal Officers may issue instructions to their staff to ensure that this is the case.

Serious problems can arise if members by-pass appropriate lines of communication to Principal Officers and their senior colleagues and, for example, deal with more junior members of staff to seek views on policy issues, non-routine business, or attempt to give instructions to staff. This has the effect of depriving members of the formal, informed, and accountable advice they have a right to expect from Principal Officers and which they have a duty to consider. It may also serve to undermine the formal accountability of staff to their line manager.

- 2.7 **Courtesy and complaints** – Contact between members and staff should always be courteous both in public and in private. If an individual member has a complaint about a junior member of staff, it should be raised with the appropriate Principal Officer.

If the complaint concerns a senior member of staff, it should be raised with the Chief Fire Officer. A complaint about the Chief Fire Officer should be raised with the Clerk to the Authority. A complaint may be dealt with as part of routine liaison, supervision, or review, or be referred for formal action in accordance with Authority procedures and any statutory provisions governing disciplinary action. This does not however preclude a member from making public, at a meeting or in another appropriate way, a concern about the manner in which the Service has acted. Nor does it prevent members at formal meetings being critical of staff advice or action or of the quality of reports before them.

- 2.8 **Social contact** between senior staff and members is beneficial in a public setting and a work-related context. However, a professional relationship must be maintained at all times and staff must be careful not to socialise with members of one political group to the exclusion of others. Social contact between a member and a more junior staff may also be appropriate providing this occurs openly and does not result in breaches of confidence or of management instructions, or the reasonable suspicion of them. Staff must always take care in such situations to avoid casting doubt on their impartiality.

- 2.9 **Canvassing and visits** – Members should be aware that it can be a disciplinary offence for members of staff to seek to circumvent agreed staff consultative procedures by lobbying Members on matters which directly concern them as staff. Members should also remember that informal contacts with staff should not be used to promote their own personal interests.

Members will frequently come into contact with junior staff when visiting Service premises. Such visits are encouraged as they increase member understanding of Service functions, provide reassurance to service users of the involvement of their elected representatives in monitoring services, and will often also be welcomed by staff. However, such visits should be arranged via Members Services and relevant Principal Officers should normally be advised in advance of member visits to front-line services.

- 2.10 **Close personal relationships** between members and staff with whom they have, or are likely to have, contact in the course of their duties as a councillor are to be avoided. This includes close friendships between members and Principal Officers, and applies in particular to sexual relationships. If such a relationship arises, the member or staff should disclose this to the Chief Fire Officer who will consult with the Chair on the appropriate course of action. Both members and staff should also avoid establishing business or contractual relationships with each other, or entering into loans or other financial obligations.

- 2.11 **Assistance to all members** - Staff have a duty to offer the same assistance and facilities to all members. This particularly applies to briefings, at which staff provide oral advice and information to members outside the formal processes of the Authority. They may be requested by the relevant members or offered by the Principal Officer, and are confidential in the sense that staff should not disclose matters discussed at such briefings. Individual members may also request briefings from Principal Officers from time to time on general issues affecting the work of the Authority. It is the duty of staff to comply with reasonable requests of this kind.

- 2.12 **Correspondence and confidentiality** – Frequently, members and staff correspond, and where not obviously confidential, such correspondence may, subject to the rules below, be copied by either the sender or the recipient to others. Correspondence should be courteous. Wide circulation of it should not be employed as a means of administering a public rebuke to Authority staff or members. Members should, wherever possible, keep departmental or section heads informed by copying their correspondence, e-mails, etc. or approaching them directly for replies to general queries.

If a member asks for information about or relating to another member or asks for comment upon another member's conduct then the member requesting the information must be told in writing that any reply will be shared with the member to whom the information relates. If the member making the request does not agree to this, they will not be given the information.

2.13 **Access to Information** – Members have legal rights of access to documents in the possession or under the control of the Authority and staff should implement requests for information from members who need that information for the fulfilment of their duties as a member.


- a) Normally, staff will accept that members do not ask for information without good reason and will not question the member's "need to know" but in the words of relevant legal judgements, a member has no right to a "roving commission" and "mere curiosity or desire" is not sufficient. Nor can the member exercise the right for some improper motive, e.g. to assist someone in litigation with the Authority, its staff, suppliers, or service users.
- b) In rare cases, therefore the Chief Fire Officer may apply the "need to know" test. The member will need to show why the information is necessary to fulfil Authority duties. Where member of staff considers that a member has not established a "need to know" in support of a request for access to information and refuses to provide the information requested, the staff shall state reasons for doing so.
- c) A member asking for complex or bulky information should be flexible in his or her demands if compiling and reproducing the documentation results in significant cost to a department. The member will normally be able to retain material for a reasonable time, and to copy individual documents, but may not make use of such information for an improper purpose or one unrelated to the member's duties as a councillor.

2.14 **Press and public relations** – contact with the media on issues related to the Authority, or to Authority business, including the issue of press release, will be handled through the Corporate Communications Team.

Any Member who approaches the media purporting to speak on behalf of the Authority on any item involving or affecting the Authority, without first approaching or consulting with the Chair and Chief Fire Officer will be personally responsible for such action.

3. Legal Rights of Members

Nothing in this code shall derogate in any way from any right of a member enshrined in law and such legal rights override any conflicting provisions in this code.

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority	
Date	15 July 2024	
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer	
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation	
Subject	Performance Monitoring: 2023/24 Financial Year	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide information about incident activity during the 2023/24 financial year, performance in relation to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) improvement and well-being objectives, and other notable incident activity.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 During the 2023/24 financial year, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) attended 5,932 emergency incidents. This is an increase of 0.6% compared with to the previous financial year (5,897).
- 3 The number of accidental fires in the home (ADFs) attended during the reporting period slightly decreased to 337, compared to 344 in 2022/23. However, there were a total of six accidental fatalities in dwelling fires in 2023/24, following on from the zero dwelling fire fatalities in 2022/23.
- 4 There was also an increase in the number of serious injuries, from three to seven. The Service continued to deliver fire prevention interventions and initiatives to support fire safety in the homes and communities of North Wales.
- 5 During the reporting period, there was a decrease to 14 from 35 compared to the previous year in the number of wildfires. These were attended by a combined total of 54 vehicles for over 476 hours.
- 6 There were 2,901 false alarms attended during the reporting period, an increase of 8.4% compared to the last financial year. This was due to a 15.8% increase in attendances at fire alarms due to apparatus from 1,532 to 1,774. The Service received 1,587 calls to AFAs at commercial premises, of which eight, were attended and 1,579 were not attended in line with our policy.
- 7 The Authority has a policy that determines its attendance to automatic fire alarms. The Service will not send an emergency response to automatic fire alarm actuations in a non-domestic premises unless a back up 999 call is received confirming that there is a fire.

- 8 In addition, 498 hospital AFA calls were received, of which 208 (41.8%) were attended and 290 (58.2%) were not attended.
- 9 There was an increase in the number of fires attended at HMP Berwyn from 19 to 26.
- 10 Pump availability in accordance with the 18 pump availability target was met 100% during the reporting period.

OBSERVATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PANEL

- 11 The Chair stated that it was pleasing to note the reduction in domestic dwelling fires.
- 12 One Member asked what kind of relationship the Service had with other partner agencies in connection with weather related emergencies. The CFO confirmed that the Service enjoyed a very good working relationship with Natural Resources Wales, along with other key partners, and response to these events was collaborative.
- 13 AM Jones advised members that the Service also had representation on the All-Wales Wildfire Board.
- 14 One Member asked if there were any plans to begin to install stove guards as a preventative measure and the CFO confirmed that the Service had been involved in a pilot which proved to be very effective and now they are available through our Prevention teams across the Service.
- 15 Members agreed to note the content of the performance monitoring report.

RECOMMENDATION

- 16 That Members:
 - i) note the content of the performance monitoring report.

BACKGROUND

- 17 N/A

INFORMATION

- 18 **All Incidents**
5,932 incidents were attended compared with 5,897 during 2022/23.
- 19 **Fires**
Fires attended during the reporting period decreased 17.8% to 1,654 compared with 2,011 in 2022/23.

20 **Grassland, Woodland and Crop Fires**

Grassland, woodland and crop fires decreased 52.3% (472 to **225**) compared to the last financial year. Secondary accidental grassland, woodland and crop fires decreased (450 to **215**), with 'grassland, pasture, grazing etc.' (94 to 36), and 'heathland or moorland' (107 to 49) being the main contributors. Decreases were also recorded in 'hedge' (29 to 20), and 'tree scrub (includes single trees not in garden' (31 to 10), although there was an increase in 'Railway trackside vegetation' (Zero to four).

21 **Wildfires**

During the reporting period, there was a decrease in attendance at wildfires (35 to 14) compared to the same period of 2022/23, where 54 vehicles attended compared to 47. The time spent at scene decreased to 476 hours, compared to 628 hours during the same period of the previous year.

22 **Primary Fires**

Primary fires decreased 7.6% (854 to **789**) compared with the same period of 2022/23, and were 6.7% below the three-year average of 846. Accidental primary fires decreased 8.2% (711 to 653), and were 5.9% below the three-year average of 694. The number of deliberate primary fires decreased (143 to 136) compared to the previous financial year, and were 10.5% below the three-year average of 152.

23 **Secondary Fires**

Secondary fires, which were 14.3% below the three-year average of 908, decreased 25.0% (1037 to 778), primarily due to a 32.2% decrease in accidental secondary fires (661 to 448). Decreases were recorded in secondary accidental 'grassland, woodland and crops' fires (306 to 146) and 'other outdoors (including land)' (205 to 164).

Deliberate secondary fires decreased 12.2% (376 to 330), primarily due to a 50.2% reduction in 'grassland, woodland and crops' (144 to 69). However an increase in 'Outdoor structures' fires (155 to 176) was recorded.

24 **Chimney Fires**

Chimney fires decreased 27.5% compared with the same period of 2022/23 (120 to 87). This is 34.1% below the three-year average of 132.

25 **Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)**

The Service attended 2.0% less ADFs (344 to 337) during the 2023/24 Financial year.

The main contributors to ADFs included both increases and decreases. There were increases in 'Combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)', (64 to 76). 'Fault in equipment or appliance', (27 to 35). 'Cooking – chip pan/deep fat fryer (10 to 15)'. Decreases were recorded in 'Cooking – other cooking' (78 to 61), and 'Faulty fuel supply – electricity' (34 to 29), compared with the previous financial year.

An increase was recorded in ADFs within 'Bungalow – single occupancy', (40 to **58**), and 'Converted Flat/Maisonette - multiple occupancy', (19 to **22**). Decreases were recorded in 'House – single occupancy', (198 to **191**), and 'Purpose Built Flat/Maisonette – multiple occupancy', (74 to **58**), compared to 2022/23. ADFs remain 8.4% below the three-year average of 368.

26 **Fatalities/Casualties in ADFs**

There were six fatalities in ADFs in 2023/24, three in Q2, one in Q3, and two in Q4, compared to zero recorded fatalities last financial year.

Three of the fatalities occurred in Conwy, two in Gwynedd and one in Flintshire.

All of the fatalities were in the most vulnerable category, all being 65 years or older, currently the focus of Safe and Well Checks. The average age of the victims was 78 years old, with three being male (ave. age 77) and three female (ave. age 80). Three of the victims had previously received Safe and Well Checks, there had been three unsuccessful attempts to make contact with one victim and the other two were not known to NWFRS.

The number of casualties in ADFs increased from 71 to 72, with seven people sustaining serious injuries compared to three during 2022/23.

27 **Smoke Detectors – ADFs**

Smoke/heat detectors were present at 290 out of the 337 accidental fires in dwellings over the financial year (86.1%). ADFs where a smoke/heat detector was fitted, operated and raised the alarm, increased from 176 to 186.

28 Where a smoke/heat detector was fitted - operated but did not raise the alarm, the number of incidents decreased from 43 to 32.

29 ADF's where no detector was fitted increased from 44 to 47, and where a detector was fitted and did not operate, the number of incidents decreased to 72 from 81.

30 **Deliberate Primary Fires in Non-Residential Buildings**

Deliberate primary fires attended in non-residential buildings increased from 48 to 50.

31 **False Alarms**

The upward trend in false alarms continued with the Service attending **2,901** false alarms – 8.4% more than the previous financial year (2,675), and 15.9% more than the three-year average of 2,502. Those originating from AFA systems increased 15.8% (1,532 to **1,774**) and represented 61.2% of false alarm attendances.

32 **Non-Residential Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA)**

Non-Residential AFAs increased 4.7% (254 to 266). The main causes of activation in non-residential AFAs were 'faulty' (95 to 128); 'dust' (16 to 26). However, a reduction was recorded in 'accidentally/carelessly set off' (40 to 27).

33 **Other-Residential AFAs**

There was a 0.4% increase in 'other-residential' AFAs (113 to **118**), with 'nurses'/doctors' accommodation' showing a significant decrease (25 to 16). 'Residential home' however, increased (15 to 26), and 'Student Hall of Residence' increased (20 to 33).

Although the main cause of activation in 'other-residential' was 'faulty', which had a slight increase (26 to 34), 'cooking/burnt toast' saw a marginal decrease in activation (30 to 29).

'Dust' and 'accidentally/carelessly set off' also reported reductions from (nine to five), and (13 to nine) respectively.

34 **Dwelling AFAs**

AFAs in dwellings continued on an upward trend, increasing by 19.1% (1,165 to 1,387), with 'purpose built flat/maisonette – multiple occupancy' being the lead contributor to the total number of incidents, rising (361 to 492), followed by 'bungalow – single occupancy' which rose (340 to 410).

'House – single occupancy' increased (338 to 377), and 'Converted flat/maisonette – multiple occupancy' remained the same at 42. Decreases were recorded however in 'self-contained sheltered housing', (74 to 56).

Of the 1,387 dwelling AFAs, 'cooking/burnt toast' was the main cause of activation, increasing (600 to 738). Slight increases were also recorded in 'faulty' (255 to 290), and 'dust' (37 to 40), and 'Accidentally/carelessly set off' (60 to 70). 'smoking' also saw a slight increase (22 to 27).

35 **Good Intent False Alarms**

Good intent false alarms decreased from 1,091 to 1,087. However increases were recorded in 'Dwelling' by 23.2% (431 to 531).

Decreases were recorded in 'Grassland, woodland and crops' by 37.1% (116 to 73) due to decreases in 'controlled burning (88 to 60). 'Other outdoors (including land) also reduced (243 to 206).

36 **Malicious False Alarms**

The number of malicious false alarms decreased 24.5% from 53 to 40 compared to the same period last year.

37 **Special Service Calls**

Special service calls increased by 13.7% from 1,211 to 1,377 during the same period of the previous financial year, and were 84.6% above the three-year average of 746. This can be attributed to the change in policy aimed at increasing the presence of the fire and rescue service in the community when needed.

38 **Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) Incidents**

The Service attended 7.3% more RTCs (234 to 251), where 61 (24.3%) involved the extrication or release of persons. Where the Service was called upon to make a vehicle safe, attendance increased 2.8% (104 to 107).

Although the Service attended more RTCs, the percentage of RTCs which involved the release or extrication of persons decreased (29.5% to 26.3%), which is below the three-year average of 33.3%.

39 **SSC 'Other than RTC'**

SSC 'Other than RTC' increased 41.0% (977 to 1,378). The main contributor to the increase was 'Assist other agencies' which increased 35.2% (355 to 480). There was a significant increase of 'flooding' attended by 120.8% (53 to 117).

Decreases were recorded in 'no action (not false alarm)' (80 to 61), 'lift release' (87 to 48), and 'Other rescue/ release of persons' (92 to 72).

40 **Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs)**

The Service completed 19,859 SAWCs, of which 6,032 (30.4%) were high priority SAWCs. Of the high priority SAWCs completed, 3,290 (54.5%) were referrals from a partner agency.

41 **Station Performance**

Planned 18 pump availability was achieved on all 365 days (100%) of 2023/24.

42 Sickness Absence

458 cases of sickness absence were reported during the financial year. This equates to 5.13% of lost time.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	Helps the Authority to monitor its performance against the improvement and well-being objectives in the Corporate Plan 2021-24.
Budget	Helps to highlight any potential impacts on budget due to unanticipated incident activity.
Legal	Assists the Authority with ensuring that there are sufficient resources to meet demand.
Staffing	No implication identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	No implication identified.
Risks	Not satisfying legal requirements to report on and monitor performance that may impact on the ability to ensure that there are sufficient resources to meet demand.

**NORTH WALES
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**



**Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service**

Performance Monitoring Report

For the 2023/24 Financial Year

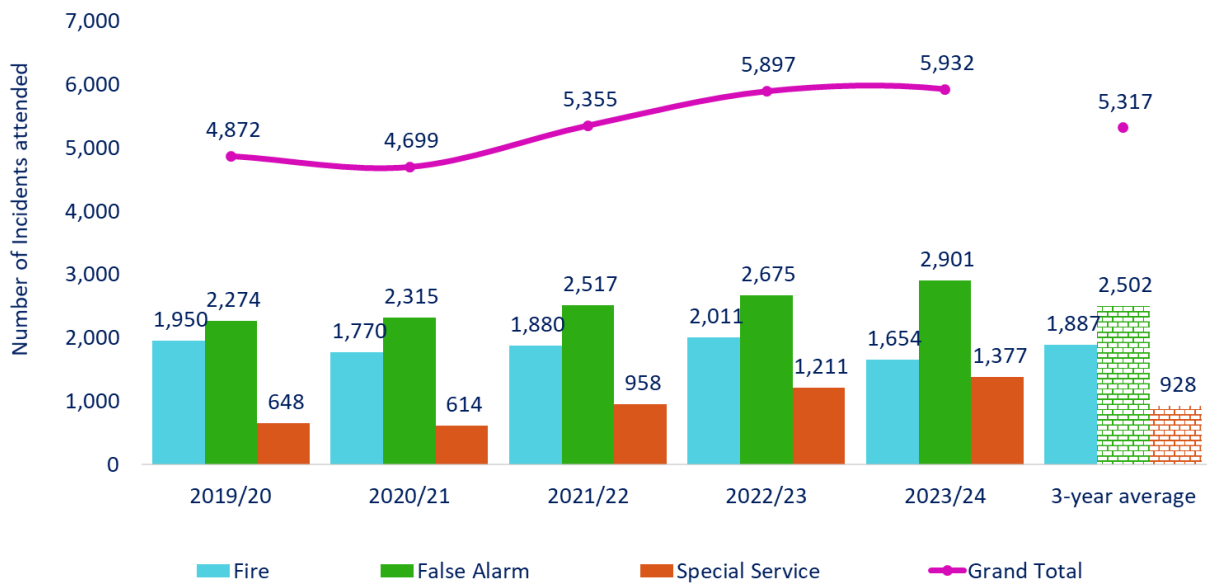
Figures are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Contents

1	All Incidents	1
2	Fires, by Category and Motive	2
3	Primary Fires, by Property Type and Motive	3
4	Accidental Fires in Dwellings	4
5	Fatalities and Casualties from Accidental Fires in Dwellings.....	6
6	Smoke Detectors – Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs).....	6
7	False Alarms	8
8	Special Service Calls.....	9
9	Traffic Collisions and Extrications/Release.....	10
10	Monitoring against Improvement and Well-being Objective One.....	12
11	Planned 18 Pump Availability.....	14
12	Sickness Absences	15

1 All Incidents

1.1 During 2023/24 financial year, the Service attended 5,932 emergency incidents and false alarms, this is a 0.6% change compared to the previous year (5,897).



Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
Total incidents attended	2023-24	1,638	1,552	1,417	1,285	5,932	↓ 0.6%	5,317	↑ 11.56%
	2022-23	1,575	1,878	1,211	1,233	5,897			
Total fires	2023-24	604	408	326	316	1,654	↓ 17.8%	1,887	↓ 12.3%
	2022-23	577	719	337	378	2,011			
Total special service incidents	2023-24	332	331	390	324	1,377	↑ 13.7%	928	↑ 48.7%
	2022-23	327	371	267	246	1,211			
Total false alarms	2023-24	702	813	741	645	2,901	↑ 8.4%	2,502	↑ 15.9%
	2022-23	671	788	607	609	2,675			

*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

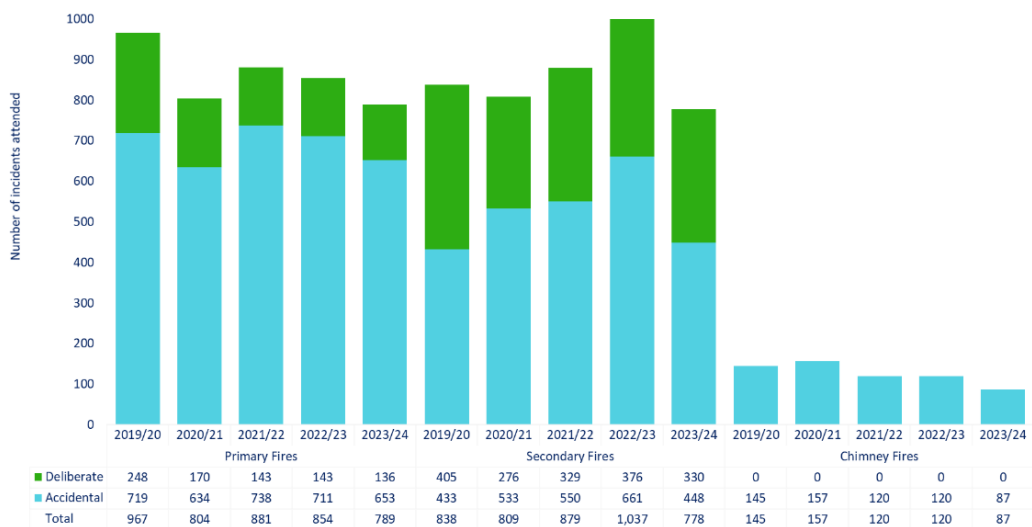
2 Fires, by Category and Motive

2.1 A total of 1,654 fires were attended in 2023/24; a 17.8% decrease from 2,011 in the previous financial year.

2.2 Primary fires – There was a 7.9% decrease in primary fires (854 to 789) compared with the same period in the previous financial year, which was 6.7% below the three-year average of 846.

2.3 Secondary fires – There was a 25.0% decrease in secondary fires (1,037 to 778), which was 12.6% below the three-year average of 908.

2.4 Chimney fires – The number of chimney fires decreased (120 to 87) during the same period in the previous financial year, which was 34.1% below the three-year average of 132.



Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
Primary fires	2023-24	235	205	190	159	789	↓	846	↓
	2022-23	226	236	193	199	854	7.6%		6.7%
Secondary fires	2023-24	356	200	108	114	778	↓	908	↓
	2022-23	332	476	100	129	1,037	25.0%		14.3%
Chimney fires	2023-24	13	4	27	43	87	↓	132	↓
	2022-23	19	7	44	50	120	28.0%		34.1%

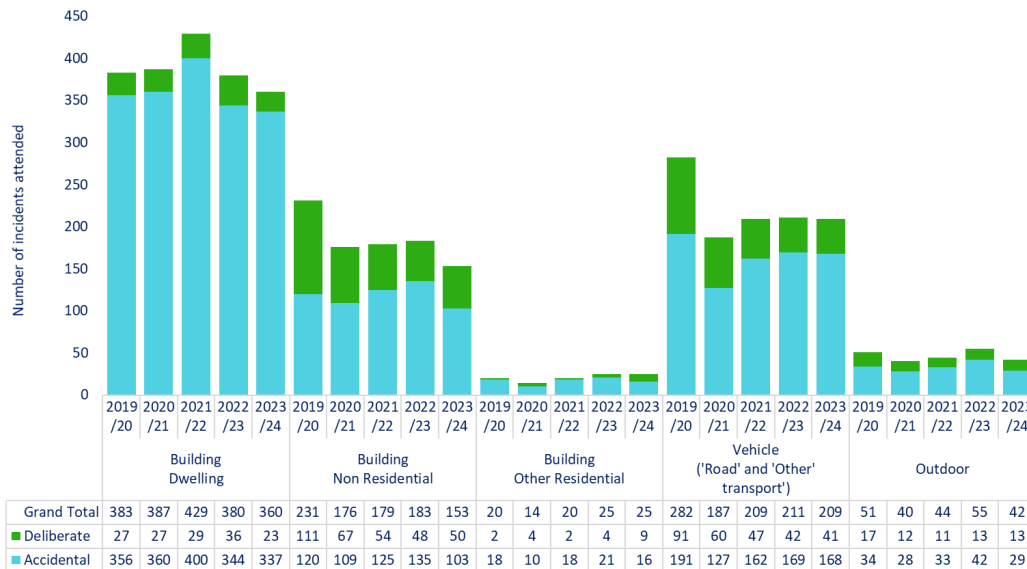
*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

Actions taken to support the reduction of fire events during the financial year:

- The completed number of SAWCs for the year 2023/24 was above the target at 19,859, with 4,838 referrals from agencies. 12,500 of the checks were completed by operational crews.
- Exeter Data: Each Watch is now completing door to door activity for a minimum of one hour a day, utilising the provided data to help ensure a more targetted approach towards those people over the age of 65. Mid Q4 the data was further enhanced by introducing amber dots to mapping systems to signify those people aged over 70 and red dots for those over the age of 75.
- Partnership Managers continue to foster relationships with external agencies to encourage high quality referrals.
- 3rd "wellbeing event" for FS prevention team (22 attended) took place during Q4, this continues to offer support to our teams and ensure high level activity and output.
- Reviewed and renewed contracts with Catrefi Conwy and Care and Repair, thus continuing to receive high level referrals and receive 50% salary payment.
- Campaign Steering Group (CSG) continued to work with Corporate Communications to proactively promote safety and Wildfire messaging across all media platforms. Significant media attention around fires involving tumble dryers led to social media posts, interviews with BBC involving FRS staff and the occupiers, local campaigns and radio interviews.
- Deliberate fire setting intervention schemes continue to be facilitated in-house and by Danger Point; During 2023/24, 13 FACE sessions and one adult intervention delivered by the Arson Reduction Team and 34 Firesafe courses delivered by Danger Point.

3 Primary Fires, by Property Type and Motive

- 3.1** During the 2023/24 Financial year, 136 primary fires were started deliberately, compared with 143 in 2022/23.
- 3.2** There were 60 deliberate fires at HMP Berwyn, compared with 46 over the same period of the previous financial year. The Service attended 26 of these fires.

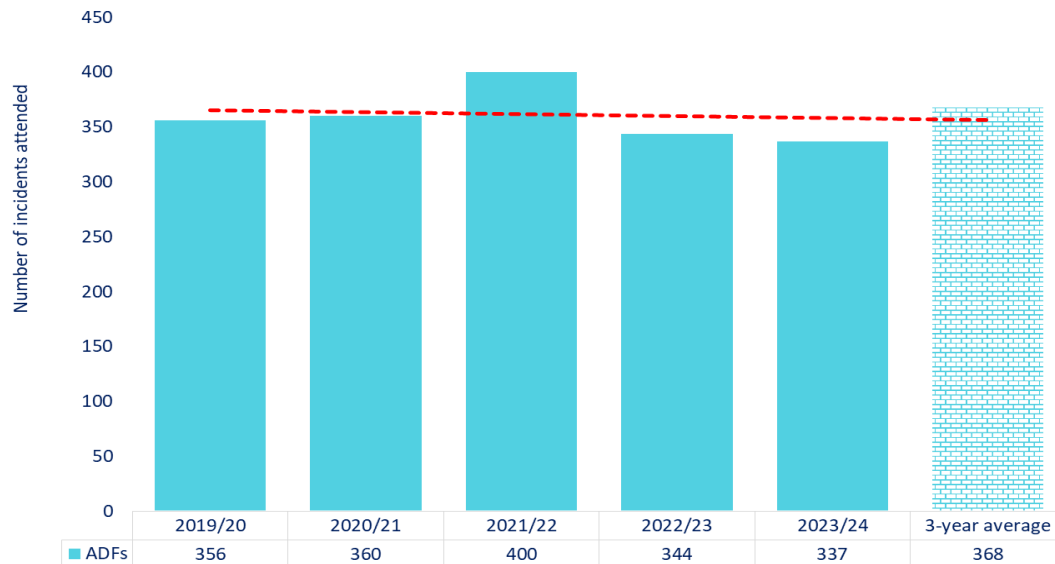


Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
All deliberate primary fires	2023-24	40	36	32	28	136	↓ 4.9%	152	↓ 10.5%
	2022-23	41	49	24	29	143			
All accidental primary fires	2023-24	195	169	158	131	653	↓ 8.2%	694	↓ 5.9%
	2022-23	185	187	169	170	711			

*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

4 Accidental Fires in Dwellings

4.1 The Service attended 337 accidental dwelling fires in 2023/24; seven (2.0%) less than the previous financial year (344). Accidental dwelling fires (ADFs) this period remained 8.4% below the three-year average of 368.



Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year- to- Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
Accidental fires in dwellings	2023-24	91	70	106	70	337	↓ 2.0%	368	↓ 8.4%
	2022-23	81	81	97	85	344			

*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

Action taken to further understand our community demographic and risk during the previous year:

- The scoring “system” was reviewed and amended during Q4 and now ensures the scoring has greater weighting to age.
- Additional guidance given to administrators to ensure a stricter adherence to scoring to ensure only the most vulnerable are classed as high priority.
- Partnership Managers continue to explore new relationships with external partners to identify those persons most vulnerable to fire and provide them with suitable advice and interventions.
- Review of guidance documents underway including a new procedure document regarding SAWCs.

5 Fatalities and Casualties from Accidental Fires in Dwellings

5.1 There were six ADF fatalities during the 2023/24 financial year, compared to no human life lost during the same period of the previous year. There were seven serious, and 19 slight injuries, compared with three and 23 respectively. The number of precautionary checks increased (20 to 23), and the number of people requiring first aid at the scene decreased (from 25 to 17).

Three of the fatalities occurred in Conwy, two in Gwynedd and one in Flintshire.

All of the fatalities were in the most vulnerable category, all being 65years or older, currently the focus of Safe and Well Checks,

Severity of injury	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Precautionary Check	19	33	31	20	23
First Aid	41	26	43	25	17
Injuries - Slight	26	29	34	23	19
Injuries - Serious	4	3	5	3	7
Fatality	3	5	5	0	6
Total	93	96	118	71	72

Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	Change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
Injuries from accidental fires in dwellings	2023-24	29	9	22	6	66	↓ 8.2%	92	↓ 10.8%
	2022-23	10	37	14	10	71			
Deaths from accidental fires in dwellings	2023-24	0	3	1	2	6	↑ N/A%	3	↑ 200%
	2022-23	0	0	0	0	0			

*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

6 Smoke Detectors – Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)

6.1 Smoke/heat detectors were present at the majority of ADFs, although not all went on to operate. At 47 of the ADFs, no detector was fitted.

6.2 Of the 337 ADFs, 309 were confined to the room of origin, the item first ignited, or there was heat/smoke damage only.



Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
Smoke detector fitted which operated and raised alarm	2023-24	48	37	59	42	186	↑ 5.7%	177	↑ 5.1%
	2022-23	36	45	49	46	176			
Smoke detector fitted which operated but didn't raise the alarm	2023-24	16	4	9	3	32	↓ 25.6%	62	↓ 48.4%
	2022-23	17	4	10	12	43			
Smoke detector didn't operate	2023-24	22	19	25	16	72	↓ 13.8%	80	↓ 2.5%
	2022-23	17	16	23	16	81			
Smoke detector not fitted	2023-24	10	13	15	9	47	↑ 6.8%	48	↓ 2.1%
	2022-23	6	13	13	12	44			

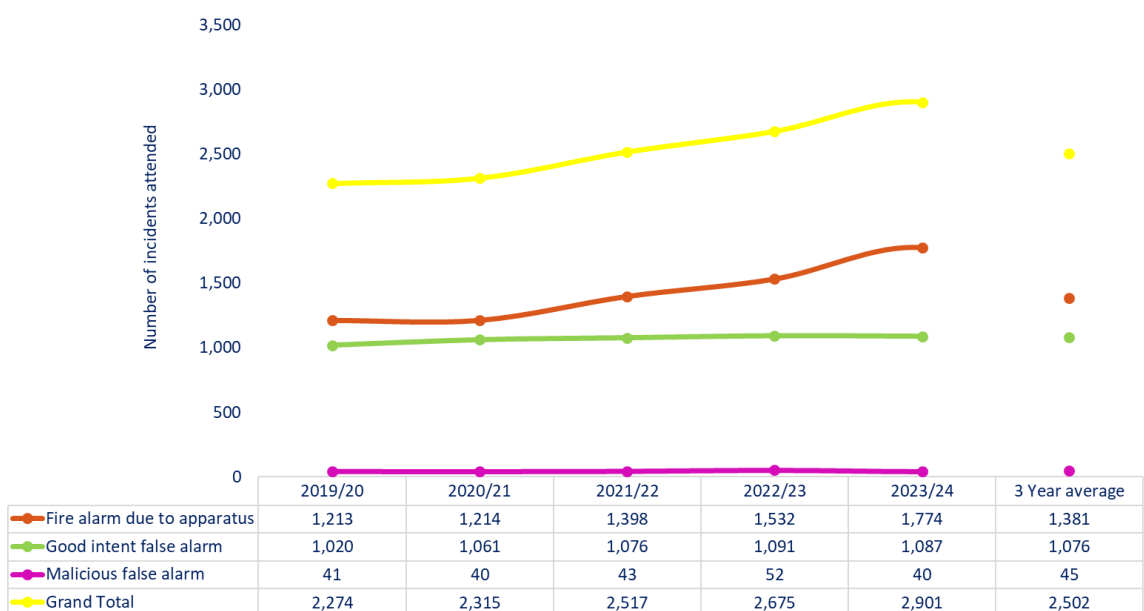
*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

Actions taken to support communities by increasing smoke alarm ownership and safety education during the financial year, in addition to those previously mentioned:

- Renewed the three year contract with Caterfi Conwy.
- SAWC video which included sign language completed during Q4, will be officially launched by CSG in support of NFCC campaign.
- Partnership Managers continue to foster relationships with external agencies to encourage high quality referrals. Presentations given to various groups during Q4, including at a conference for Dementia carers and at volunteer forums.
- Supported 12 No Smoking Day events across the service alongside other agencies.

7 False Alarms

7.1 During 2023/24 false alarms increased by 8.4% (2,675 to 2,901). There was a 15.8% increase in AFAs (1,532 to 1,774). False alarms made with good intent decreased by 0.4% (1,091 to 1,087).



Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
Total false alarm	2023-24	702	813	741	645	2,901	↑ 8.4%	2,502	↑ 15.9%
	2022-23	671	788	607	609	2,675			
AFA	2023-24	407	520	458	389	1,774	↑ 15.8%	1,381	↑ 28.5%
	2022-23	416	420	360	336	1,532			
False alarms made with good intent	2023-24	281	281	276	249	1,087	↓ 0.4%	1,076	↑ 1.0%
	2022-23	241	353	238	259	1,091			
Malicious false alarm	2023-24	14	12	7	7	40	↓ 23%	45	↓ 11.1%
	2022-23	14	15	9	14	52			

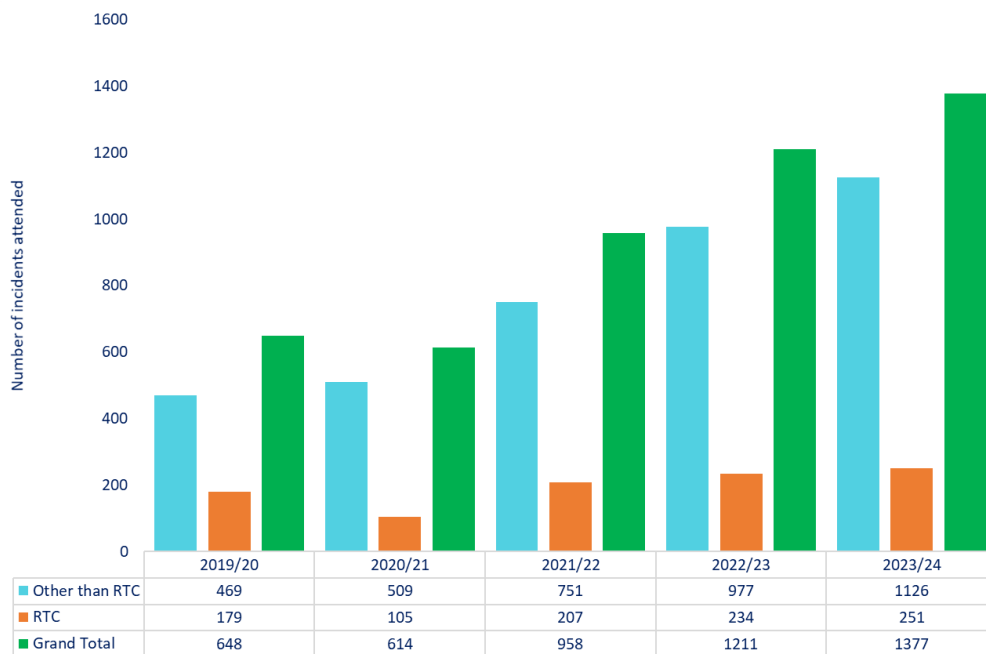
*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

Actions taken to reduce Hospital AFAs during the financial year:

- Meeting was held with BCUHB facilities management team. It was highlighted that they have investment plans for various locations across North Wales to enhance the fire safety over the next five years, including fire alarm systems. NWFRS discussed the issues around AFA's and the resources which are deployed. BCUHB will work with NWFRS and identify areas to reduce such activations. To ensure open communication is maintained the next meeting will be in Q1 of 2024/25.

8 Special Service Calls

8.1 Special service calls (SSCs) increased 13.7% (1,211 to 1,377), compared with the same period of the previous year. Road traffic collisions increased 7.3% (234 to 251), whilst 'other than RTC' incidents increased 15.3%, (977 to 1126). The rise in SSCs attended was expected following the Service's decision to increase visibility in the community.

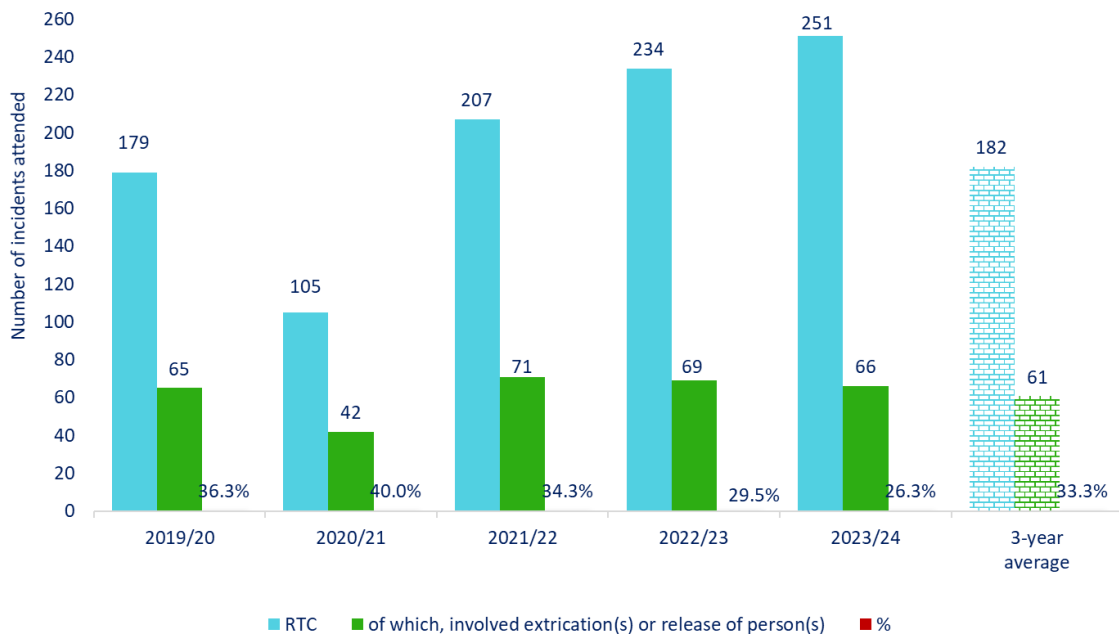


Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
Total special service calls	2023-24	332	331	390	324	1,377	↑ 13.7%	928	↑ 48.4%
	2022-23	327	371	267	246	1,211			
Road traffic collisions (RTC)	2023-24	77	63	55	56	251	↑ 7.3%	182	↑ 37.9%
	2022-23	53	65	60	56	234			
Other than RTC	2023-24	255	268	335	268	1,126	↑ 15.3%	746	↑ 50.9%
	2022-23	274	306	207	190	977			

*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

9 Traffic Collisions and Extrications/Release

9.1 Of the 251 road traffic collisions attended in 2023/24, 66 (26.3%) involved the Service using equipment to extricate at least one casualty from the vehicle. Whilst 140 incidents resulted in injuries, the majority of casualties sustained slight injuries.



251	RTC incidents attended
140	Incidents where people sustained injury
66	Incidents involved extrication / release

Severity of Injury *	Number of people
Precautionary check	47
First Aid	36
Injuries - Slight	93
Injuries - Serious	43
Fatalities	16

*RTC injuries - where available are recorded in the IRS in the same categorisation as fire injuries

Actions taken to reduce RTCs during the previous year:

- Olivia's Story continues to be delivered by the FS WM`s and remains current and very impactful. 1,207 people over 2023/24.
- Biker down: 67 attended during 2023/24, during Q4 we had our first Brew with a Biker session. These will continue through 2024/25.
- Phoenix team continue to cover "fatal 5" during courses.
- Project Ugain, aimed at delivering roadside engagement as an alternative to penalty points or a fine, commenced during Q4. There have been 399 engagements thus far.
- FS WM`s attended Major incident day WAST NWP / Wrexham University (road safety) 6th March 2024 debrief will be on 14/03/2024. Attended an all Wales Road Safety seminar.
- Regular engagement with NWP regarding road safety to ensure targeted and continued delivery of Olivia's story.

10 Monitoring against Improvement and Well-being Objective One

To support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur.

10.1 Safe and Well Checks

The Service completed 19,859 Safe and Well Checks during the financial year of 2023/24, of which 4,838 (24.3%) were undertaken in response to a referral from a partner agency.



Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% Change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
% of all Safe and Well Checks undertaken that originated from a referral from a partner organisation	2023-24	30.5%	23.9%	30.9%	20.4%	24.3%	↓ 49.1%	51.2%	↓ 52.5%
	2022-23	35.2%	30.2%	47.6%	30.0%	47.8%			
*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.									

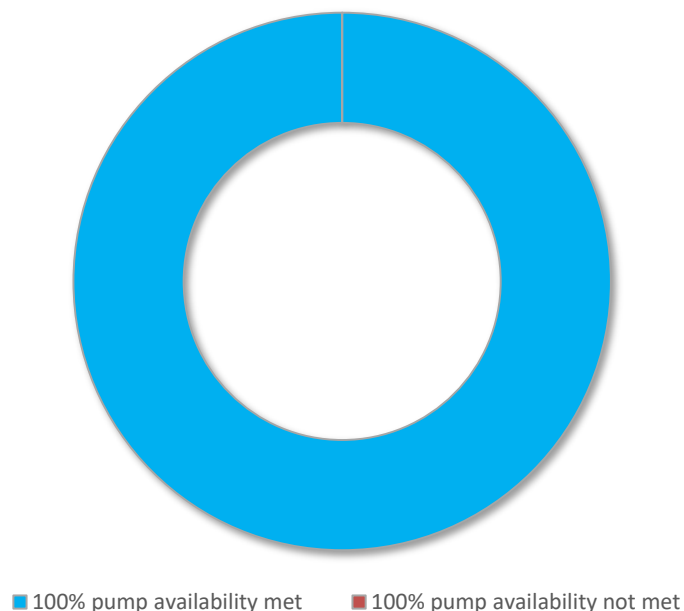
Actions taken to improve Safe and Well Check performance during the financial year:

- The completed number of SAWCs for the year 2023/24 was above the target at 19,859 with 4,838 referrals from other agencies. 12,500 of the checks were completed by operational crews.
- Exeter Data: Each Watch is now completing door to door activity for a minimum of one hour a day, utilising the provided data to help ensure a more targetted approach towards those people over the age of 65. Mid Q4 the data was further enhanced by introducing amber dots on mapping systems to signify those people over 70 and red dots for those over the age of 75.
- The “dashboard” to provide current data was drafted in Q4 and will continue to be trialled before being officially launched to all stations. This will allow crews to be even more targetted in their approach and help identify areas to work, and will allow FS area teams to highlight areas to run campaigns.
- “Impact Days” are now being completed in each areas (one per month), these multi agency events are working well and proving successful. Operational crews are being utilised at these event and are organised by the area FS WM.

- During Q4, the WDS rural crews completed additional training around SAWC delivery and have now been allocated the majority of all the Low and Medium referrals which result in a SAWC telephone call. Each crew member being required to make a minimum of 5 telephone calls each day on duty. This will allow the DC & WT crews more time to concentrate on door to door activity utilising the Exeter Data.
- PM`s continue to work with external agencies to try and ensure the quality of referrals received is high and as targetted as possible, this is a challenging task and will take time.
- One HSSW temporarily relocated to Eastern area to help with backlog of overdue SAWCs. Overtime is being used by HSSW's which is having a positive impact in terms of managing the waiting list. 80 hours resulting in 56 high priority SAWC`s being completed.
- Changes were made during Q4 to the SAWC scoring process to ensure "age" is weighted accordingly.

11 Planned 18 Pump Availability

18 Planned Pump Availability 2023/24



18 Planned Pump Availability Post Plannng) performance in the financial year of 2023/24

Whilst 100% 18 pump availability was achieved in 2023/24, the starting position each day paints an entirely different picture.

Weekend and Bank Holiday availability is always significantly better than weekday availability. Over the entire year, weekday average availability was 4.8 pumps, whilst weekend average availability was 11.2 pumps.

The month with the best average weekday starting point was January at 6.7 pumps, and the worst was August at 3.2 pumps.

There is no significant difference between any weekday, with the range in difference being 1 pump. As can be seen from the below tables, availability at Weekends and on Bank Holidays is significantly higher.

Weekday Average		Weekend & BH Average	
Monday	4.6	Saturday	9.3
Tuesday	5.4	Sunday	12.6
Wednesday	5.2	Friday	10.2
Thursday	4.3	Monday	14.6
Friday	4.5	Tuesday (Boxing Day)	17

Average Weekday and Weekend/Bank Holiday Availability for RDS Stations

12 Sickness Absences

The Service aims to encourage all its employees to maximise their attendance at work while recognising that employees will, from time to time, be unable to come to work because of ill health.

According to the National Fire and Rescue Service Sickness Absence Report for April 2023 – September 2023, the average is 4.43 duty days sickness absence per staff member, equating to 5.82%. NWFRS slightly lower than this at 5.03% for the financial year 2023/24. There are several key challenges that all emergency services face in terms of managing attendance and keeping employees in work. These include emotional and physical demands that are unique whereby operational staff may have to remain off work longer due to physically related injuries compared those in non-operational roles. Also, operational staff need to be physically fit and meet the national fitness standard to enable them to carry out their role safely and effectively. There is also the impact of an ageing workforce whereby people are living longer and more likely to suffer from health problems involving increased periods of absence.

The Service offers health and wellbeing interventions to support employees as a preventative measure, during a period of absence and to assist with returning to work. Measures include the Attendance Management Policy, Occupational Health service, Physiotherapy, Employee Assistance Programme, Safecall (independent confidential hotline), Suicide Prevention Crisis Line and other Firefighters Charity programmes.

A focus on employee wellbeing and health promotion benefits employees and their employers. It can help prevent ill health, and support individuals to balance work whilst minimising the impact of any ill health symptoms, where possible. The Service is committed to providing welfare support to staff and as well as the interventions above we have wellbeing support networks including Blue Lights Champions, Colleague Supporters, Critical Incident De-briefers, and various Staff Networks.

During the 2023/24 financial year, an average of 913 individuals were employed by NWFRS. Absences due to sickness during first half of the 2023/24 financial year equates to a total of 5.08% time lost. During Q4, the number of individuals employed by NWFRS reduced to 906 individuals and absences due to sickness equated to 4.80% of lost time. Throughout the 2023/24 year, the number of short term absence cases has risen as the year has progressed with the highest number of cases being during Q4, equating to 1.19% of time lost due to short term compared to the year to date average of 0.91%. In contrast, the number of long term sickness cases has reduced from Q1, with Q2 and Q3 remaining static and then a reduction in the number of cases during Q4.

Please note that throughout the report, the number of cases in the year to date (YTD) will not be a sum of the quarters as some individuals' absences will span across quarters.

	Q1 Cases	Q1 Lost time %	Q2 Cases	Q2 Lost time %	Q3 Cases	Q3 Lost time %	Q4 Cases	Q4 Lost time %	YTD Cases	YTD Lost Time %
Long Term Sickness	64	4.43%	66	4.21%	63	4.27%	59	3.61%	142	4.13%
Short Term Sickness	88	0.59%	123	0.93%	143	0.95%	149	1.19%	479	0.90%
Total	152	5.03%	189	5.14%	206	5.21%	208	4.80%	621	5.03%

Short term means individual periods of sickness of 27 calendar days or less.

Long term means individual periods of 28 calendar days or more

Some duty systems may see a higher percentage of lost time despite fewer cases of absence being recorded. This is caused by there being fewer staff within that duty system. The sickness absence percentage calculation is proportionate to the number of staff within that duty system.

Long Term & Short-Term Sickness	Q1 Cases	Q1 Lost time %	Q2 Cases	Q2 Lost time %	Q3 Cases	Q3 Lost time %	Q4 Cases	Q4 Lost time %	YTD Cases	YTD Lost Time %
WDS Stations	29	3.94%	44	4.87%	50	3.99%	46	4.50%	148	4.42%
RDS /On-Call	80	6.19%	92	5.68%	100	6.00%	97	5.33%	291	5.81%
Rural	2	4.30%	4	4.35%	2	4.25%	1	1.40%	8	3.58%
Control	9	8.09%	12	9.14%	12	8.37%	13	9.21%	39	8.80%
Flexi Managers	6	5.11%	6	2.91%	8	2.48%	10	2.45%	24	3.23%
Operational Depts	3	1.10%	2	2.45%	7	8.26%	4	6.06%	12	4.51%
SLT	1	0.22%	0	0.00%	2	0.29%	2	0.51%	5	0.26%
Corporate Departments	22	3.32%	30	4.73%	25	4.33%	35	3.72%	95	4.05%
Total	152	5.03%	189	5.14%	206	5.21%	208	4.80%	622	5.07%

12.1 Short Term Sickness

Short term absence led to an average of 0.91% of lost time during 2023/24.

	Q1 Cases	Q1 Lost time %	Q2 Cases	Q2 Lost time %	Q3 Cases	Q3 Lost time %	Q4 Cases	Q4 Lost time %	YTD Cases	YTD Lost Time %
WDS Stations	17	0.59%	34	1.31%	43	1.36%	36	1.46%	124	1.20%
RDS /On-Call	44	0.62%	57	0.81%	62	0.80%	64	1.10%	214	0.83%
Rural	1	0.20%	4	4.35%	1	0.79%	1	1.40%	6	1.69%
Control	7	1.49%	9	1.49%	9	1.81%	9	1.44%	33	1.33%
Flexi Managers	3	0.26%	1	0.08%	6	0.96%	8	0.72%	17	0.50%
Operational Depts	2	0.20%	0	0.00%	3	0.76%	1	0.76%	6	0.43%
SLT	1	0.22%	0	0.00%	2	0.29%	2	0.51%	5	0.26%
Corporate Depts	13	0.62%	18	1.00%	17	0.83%	28	1.36%	74	0.93%
Total	88	0.59%	123	0.93%	143	0.95%	149	1.19%	479	0.91%

Top 3 Short Term Sickness Absence Reasons

	Absence Reason	Cases	Lost Time %
1	Cold, Flu	103	0.15%
2	Respiratory - Coughs and Chest infections	37	0.07%
3	Covid-19	41	0.07%

12.2 Long Term Sickness

Long term absence led to an average of 4.17% of lost time during 2023/24.

Long Term & Short-Term Sickness	Q1 Cases	Q1 Lost time %	Q2 Cases	Q2 Lost time %	Q3 Cases	Q3 Lost time %	Q4 Cases	Q4 Lost time %	YTD Cases	YTD Lost Time %
WDS Stations	12	3.35%	10	3.55%	7	2.63%	10	3.04%	24	3.11%
RDS /On-Call	36	5.53%	35	4.87%	38	5.20%	33	4.23%	77	4.96%
Rural	1	4.10%	0	0.00%	1	3.46%	0	0.00%	2	1.89%
Control	2	6.81%	3	7.65%	3	6.56%	4	7.78%	6	7.53%
Flexi Managers	3	4.86%	5	2.83%	2	1.52%	2	1.74%	7	2.73%
Operational Depts	1	0.90%	2	2.45%	4	7.50%	3	5.31%	6	4.19%
SLT	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Corporate Depts	9	2.70%	12	3.73%	8	3.50%	7	2.36%	21	3.12%
Total	64	4.42%	66	4.21%	63	4.27%	59	3.61%	143	4.17%


Top 3 Long Term Sickness Absence Reasons

	Absence Reason	Cases	Lost Time %
1	Musculoskeletal - Lower Limb	29	0.88%
2	Failed Medical/Fitness Test	15	0.52%
3	Musculoskeletal - Back and spinal disorders	12	0.48%

Glossary

Fires	All fires fall into one of three categories – primary, secondary or chimney.
Primary Fires	<p>These are fires that are not chimney fires, and which are in any type of building (except if derelict), vehicles, caravans and trailers, outdoor storage, plant and machinery, agricultural and forestry property, and other outdoor structures such as bridges, post boxes, tunnels, etc.</p> <p>Fires in any location are categorised as primary fires if they involved casualties, rescues or escapes, as are fires in any location that were attended by five or more fire appliances.</p>
Secondary Fires	<p>Secondary fires are fires that are neither chimney fires nor primary fires. Secondary fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p> <p>Secondary fires are those that would normally occur in locations such as open land, in single trees, fences, telegraph poles, refuse and refuse containers (but not paper banks, which would be considered - in the same way as agricultural and forestry property - to be primary fires), outdoor furniture, traffic lights, etc.</p>
Chimney Fires	<p>These are fires in occupied buildings where the fire is confined within the chimney structure, even if heat or smoke damage extends beyond the chimney itself.</p> <p>Chimney fires do not involve casualties, rescues or escapes, and will have been attended by four or fewer fire appliances.</p>
Special Service Incidents	<p>These are non-fire incidents which require the attendance of an appliance or officer and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Local emergencies e.g., flooding, road traffic incidents, rescue of persons, 'making safe' etc; b) Major disasters; c) Domestic incidents e.g., water leaks, persons locked in or out etc; d) Prior arrangements to attend incidents, which may include some provision of advice and inspections.
False Alarm (general guidance)	<p>Where the FRS attends a location believing there to be an incident, but on arrival discovers that no such incident exists, or existed.</p> <p>Note: if the appliance is 'turned around' by Control before arriving at the incident it is not classed as having been attended and does not need to be reported.</p>

False Alarms - Malicious	These are calls made with the intention of getting the FRS to attend a non-existent incident, including deliberate and suspected malicious intentions.
False Alarms – Good Intent	These are calls made in good faith in the belief that the FRS really would attend a fire or special service incident.
False Alarms - AFA	These are calls initiated by fire alarm and fire-fighting equipment. They include accidental initiation of alarm apparatus or where an alarm operates and a person then routinely calls the FRS as part of a standing arrangement, i.e., with no 'judgement' involved, for example from a security call centre or a nominated person in an organisation.
Building - Dwellings	A property that is a place of residence, i.e., occupied by households, excluding hotels, hostel and residential non-permanent structures.
Building - Non-Residential	Properties such as hospitals, offices, shops, factories, warehouses, restaurants, cinemas, public buildings, religious buildings, agricultural buildings, railway stations, sheds, prisons.
Building - Other Residential	Properties such as hotels, hotels and residential institutions B&Bs, Nursing/care homes, student halls of residence.
Vehicle (Road and Other Transport)	Road vehicle, rail vehicle, aircraft, boat.
Outdoor	Fields, grassland, woodland, refuse containers, post boxes.
Wildfires	A grassland, woodland and crop fire where the incident was attended by 4 or more vehicles, or the Service was in attendance for 6 hours or more, or where there was an estimated fire damage area of over 10,000 square meters.
Short Term Sickness (STS)	Absences 27 calendar days and under.
Long Term Sickness (LTS)	Absences 28 calendar days and over.

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority	
Date	15 July 2024	
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer	
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation	
Subject	Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2029 and Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024-2025	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 i) To provide an overview of the feedback received from the public consultation on the Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2029, the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024-2025 and the associated Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA); and

ii) To seek approval of the final version of the aforementioned documents.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Under the Welsh Government Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016, one of the key objectives for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales is to continually and sustainably reduce risk and enhance the safety of citizens and communities.
- 3 The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is required by The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to make arrangements for continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions, by setting itself improvement objectives in each financial year against at least one of seven functions. The public must be consulted on these objectives.
- 4 It is a statutory requirement of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 for Public Bodies to publish annual well-being objectives and to report annually on their progress towards meeting their well-being objectives.
- 5 Welsh Government Fire and Rescue Circular W-FRSC(2024)06 confirms that the duties under the 2009 Measure and the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act (Wales) 2015 can be discharged through the publication of a single report.

- 6 In place of a new corporate plan, a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-2029 has been developed, supported by the first of five Community Risk Management Implementation Plans (CRMIP 2024-2025). The CRMP aims to identify risks facing the community and describes how the Authority will manage those risks, and continue to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies. The objectives have been written to take account of the requirements of both aforementioned pieces of legislation.
- 7 Support for each of the principles was as high as 97% (Protection) and no lower than 91% (Environment).
- 8 Free text comments have been included verbatim in the report's appendices, but there have been no fundamental changes to the draft version of each document as a consequence of the feedback.

OBSERVATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 9 Due to the proximity of the Authority meeting to the consultation closing date, this paper has not previously been before Members.

RECOMMENDATION

- 10 That Members:
 - i) Note the content of the feedback report; and
 - ii) Approve the attached CRMP 2024-2029, CRMIP 2024-25 and associated EqlA for publication.

BACKGROUND

- 11 The Authority previously outlined its improvement and well-being objectives, in its 2021-2024 Corporate Plan. This has now expired and will be reported upon in the Annual Performance Assessment later this year.

INFORMATION

- 12 Utilising best practice adopted during the Emergency Cover Review public consultation, the CRMP 2024-2029, CRMIP 2024-2025 and the associated EqlA, have all been subject to public consultation for a twelve-week period, which ended on the 16 June 2024.

- 13 A survey questionnaire, in conjunction with a number of face-to-face engagement sessions were utilised to obtain feedback on the adoption of Our Five Principles for keeping Communities Safe and the associated objectives.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The Community Risk Management Plan 2024/29 and the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024/25 contain a Well-being statement as required by the Act.
Budget	Not applicable
Legal	The Community Risk Management Plan 2024/29 and the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024/25 have been prepared in accordance with the relevant legislation.
Staffing	None
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared and updated following the public consultation.
Risks	The Community Risk Management Plan supports the Authority's risk management arrangements.



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Community Risk Management Plan

2024 – 2029



Our five principles for keeping communities safe

PEOPLE

PREVENTION

PROTECTION

RESPONSE

ENVIRONMENT

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Contents

Foreword	4
What is a Community Risk Management Plan?	6
Monitoring the Community Risk Management Plan	6
About North Wales	7
Your Fire and Rescue Service	10
Our Governance And Legislation	14
Our Demand Forecast	22
Our Performance Indicators	24
How We Assess Risk and Demand	25
Our Risks	27
Our Five Principles	32
Our People Principle	34
Service Culture	36
Our Prevention Principle	38
Our Protection Principle	40
Our Response Principle	42
Emergency Cover Review	44
Our Environment Principle	46
Our Objectives – Summary	48
Our Finances	50
Our Values	51
Have Your Say	52



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



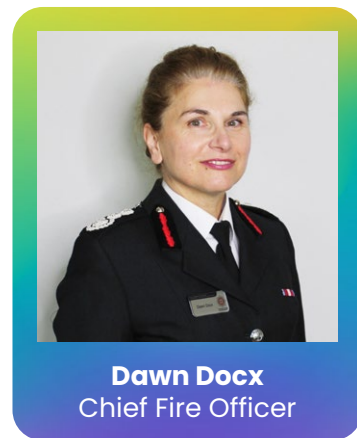
Foreword

The National Fire Chiefs Council has developed a Strategic Framework which is intended to deliver a more consistent and standardised approach to community risk management planning (CRMP) across the UK. It is intended to assist in transparent and justifiable decision-making and help Fire and Rescue Services identify collaborative opportunities with partner organisations more easily.

This CRMP replaces our 2021-2024 Corporate Plan and articulates the risks facing our communities and describes how we will address those risks, and continue to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies. This CRMP has been produced in consultation with the public, fire and rescue staff, local partners and representative bodies.

This plan will cover the five years between 2024 and 2029 and will be supported by annual action plans that will set out what we aim to achieve each year, as well as annual assessments of our progress against those plans.

Maintaining our ability, through our dedicated firefighters, to provide an effective emergency response, requires a range of different staffing models or 'duty systems', which are explained in more detail on page 10.



Dawn Docx
Chief Fire Officer



Dylan Rees
Fire Authority Chair

Currently we have guaranteed emergency cover at only eight of our fire stations, located predominantly along the A55 dual carriageway corridor in our region. Elsewhere in North Wales we rely on part time or on-call firefighters, but their availability during the day time is challenging.

We are working hard to recruit and retain these firefighters but we need to have guaranteed emergency cover in inland areas, to ensure that we can be certain of being able to provide a response crew within the optimum response times across the whole of North Wales. In an emergency, time is of the essence.

Through our Emergency Cover Review, we have been exploring scenarios for providing emergency cover in the future, with a view to improving existing cover. More details of the Emergency Cover Review can be found on page 44.

We continually strive to achieve the best culture within our organisation in accordance with our core values but recognise that no public service can afford to be complacent when it comes to ensuring the highest possible standards expected by our staff and members of the public. It is only right that we are held to account in this regard and importantly that we take on board any recommendations from others who have undergone culture reviews. The commitment to an open, inclusive and welcoming culture relates to us all.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is your fire and rescue service.



What is a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP)?

Under the Welsh Government Fire and Rescue National Framework, one of the key objectives for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales is to continually and sustainably reduce risk and enhance the safety of citizens and communities.



A Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) aims to identify risks facing the community and describes how the Fire and Rescue Authority will manage those risks, and continue to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies.

The Authority previously outlined its improvement and well-being objectives, as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, in its 2021-2024 Corporate Plan.

In line with National Fire Chiefs Council development of the Community Risk Management Planning Strategic Framework and reflecting community risk, what we have previously referred to as corporate objectives have been replaced by a set of five Principles, through which, the Authority will continue to discharge its statutory obligations under the aforementioned Acts and the Welsh Government Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016.

Our Principles are explained on page 32.

This document has been produced in consultation with the Fire and Rescue Authority, Fire and Rescue Service staff, representative bodies and local partners.

Monitoring the Community Risk Management Plan

The CRMP 2024-2029 is our long-term plan to help us deliver an effective and efficient Service. It will be monitored and reviewed annually against an updated Hazard Assessment to ensure each principle and the associated objectives remain fit for purpose, are on schedule for delivery and align with the Service priorities at the time.

We will produce and publish annual plans to demonstrate our progress.



About North Wales

Covering an area of 6,172 square kilometres and with a population of 687,000, North Wales encompasses a diverse landscape, including the mountainous Eryri National Park, coastal areas, rural communities and major urban areas. North Wales comprises six counties, Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. The A55 runs through five of the six counties and is part of one of the longest European routes, running between Holyhead and eastern Europe.

Isle of Anglesey

With much of the coastline declared an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Isle of Anglesey is a popular tourist destination as well as a gateway to and from the Republic of Ireland through the Port of Holyhead. The economy of the county is mostly based on agriculture, energy, and tourism.



Gwynedd

Home to Eryri National Park and the Llŷn Peninsula, another Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Gwynedd borders the Isle of Anglesey across the Menai Strait and Ceredigion over the Dyfi estuary to the south. The county has the highest percentage of Welsh speakers in Wales, and contains several of Wales' largest lakes and reservoirs, including the largest, Llyn Tegid in Bala.



Conwy

The coastal towns of Colwyn Bay, Llandudno with its pier and the Great and Little Ormes, and Conwy with its quay and castle are popular year-round tourist destinations. Inland the towns of Llanrwst and Betws-y-Coed offer year-round outdoor activities to residents and visitors. The geography is shaped by the River Conwy, which forms a wide valley down the western half of the county.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



Denbighshire

Denbighshire's geography is defined by the broad valley of the River Clwyd, with the towns of Denbigh and Ruthin surrounded by rolling hills on all sides except the north, where it reaches the coast, and the towns of Rhyl and Prestatyn. The hills form part of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the economy is based on agriculture, predominantly sheep rearing and dairy farming, and year-round tourism.



Flintshire

Mold is Flintshire's administrative centre and the Welsh speaking stronghold of the county. The coast along the Dee estuary is heavily developed by industry and the North coast much developed for tourism. Major manufacturing industries include a Toyota engine plant, UPM papermill and Airbus UK at Broughton. Shotwick Solar Park, Deeside is currently the largest photovoltaic solar array in the UK.



Wrexham

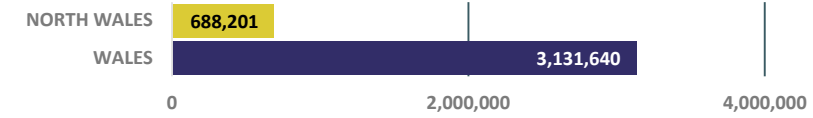
Wrexham is the only landlocked county in North Wales and is home to, Wrexham Industrial Estate, the well-known Wrexham Football Club and the UK's largest prison, HMP Berwyn. The county is part of the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct near Cefn Mawr is an important surviving piece of early industrial infrastructure and has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Berwyn mountains and the Ruabon Mountains are designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).



People Prevention Protection Response Environment

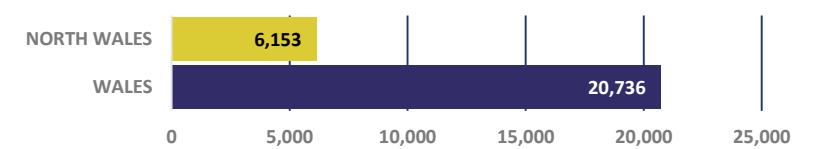
Knowing about North Wales today helps the Authority plan to make positive changes for the future.

Population



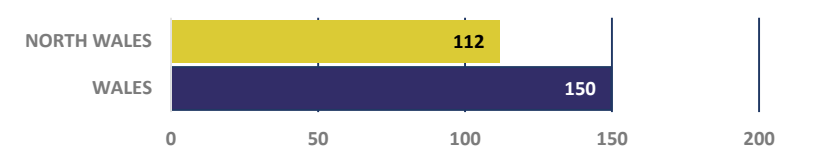
22.0%
of Wales
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

Area Km²



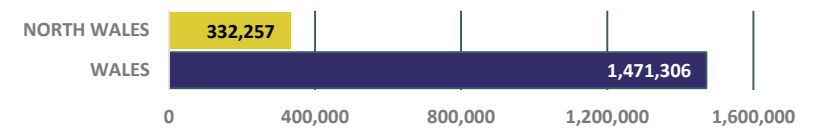
29.7%
of Wales
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

Population Density



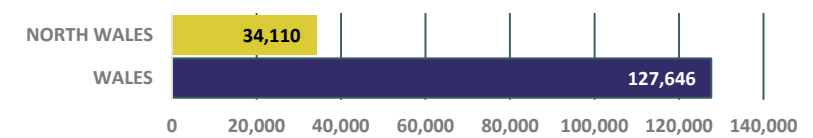
112
The Welsh average is **150**
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

Dwellings



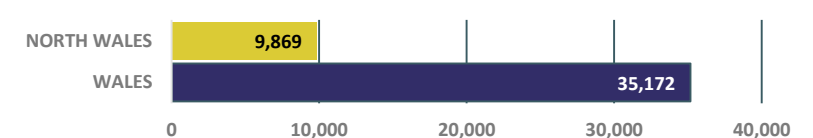
22.6%
of Wales
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

Non-domestic Properties



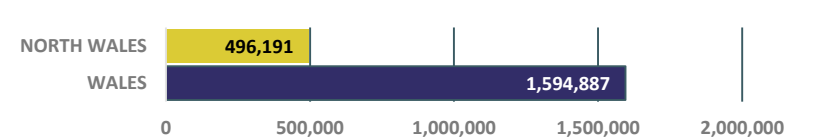
26.7%
of Wales
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

Road Length Km



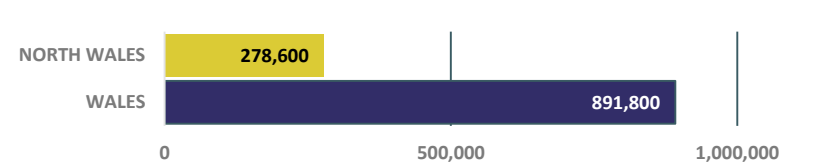
28.1%
of Wales
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

Agricultural Area Km²



31.1%
of Wales
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

Welsh Speakers



31.2%
of Wales
[Source: Welsh Government](#)

People Prevention Protection Response Environment

Your Fire and Rescue Service

Making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit

The Authority comprises 28 elected councillors from the six unitary authorities of North Wales, with the number of representatives determined by the population of the area. More information about the Authority, its members and responsibilities can be found [here](#).

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is led by a Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and a Service Leadership Team. This comprises Senior Officers and Managers who are responsible for departments looking after our Service's key operational and corporate functions.

Response – Our firefighters respond to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies from 44 fire stations across North Wales. In total we have 54 fire engines. Some of our fire stations have two fire engines. Other stations have specialist vehicles like aerial ladder platforms, incident support vehicles or boats, depending on the risk in their area.

In total we have 54 fire engines, but they are not all available at the same time. This may be because:

- crews are undertaking mandatory training,
- large incidents that require multiple fire engines, or
- because on-call fire engines have insufficient crew.

For that reason, we constantly move our firefighters around North Wales to ensure that we can get to incidents as quickly as possible regardless of where they happen. In the event of a significant or long-running incident we can also call on the support of neighbouring fire and rescue services if we need to.

We have four duty systems so we can crew our fire engines based on local risks and needs. How we currently deploy our firefighters is subject to the Emergency Cover Review, see page 44.

Wholetime Fire Engines

Firefighters operating the wholetime duty system are located at Wrexham, Deeside and Rhyl. Crews at these stations work shifts from the station at night and during the day so as to provide a 24-hour immediate response. In addition, there are also on-call firefighters based at these fire stations.

Day Crewing Fire Engines

Firefighters located at Colwyn Bay, Llandudno, Bangor, Caernarfon and Holyhead work the day crewing duty system. This shift system requires our crews to work a combination of hours on station during the day and to remain on-call from a location within five minutes of the fire station overnight in order to provide a 24-hour response. There are also on-call firefighters based at these fire stations.

Wholetime Duty Rural Firefighters

Firefighters operating the wholetime duty rural system, work 12-hour day shifts covering the region on a dynamic basis, depending on demand.

On-call Fire Engines

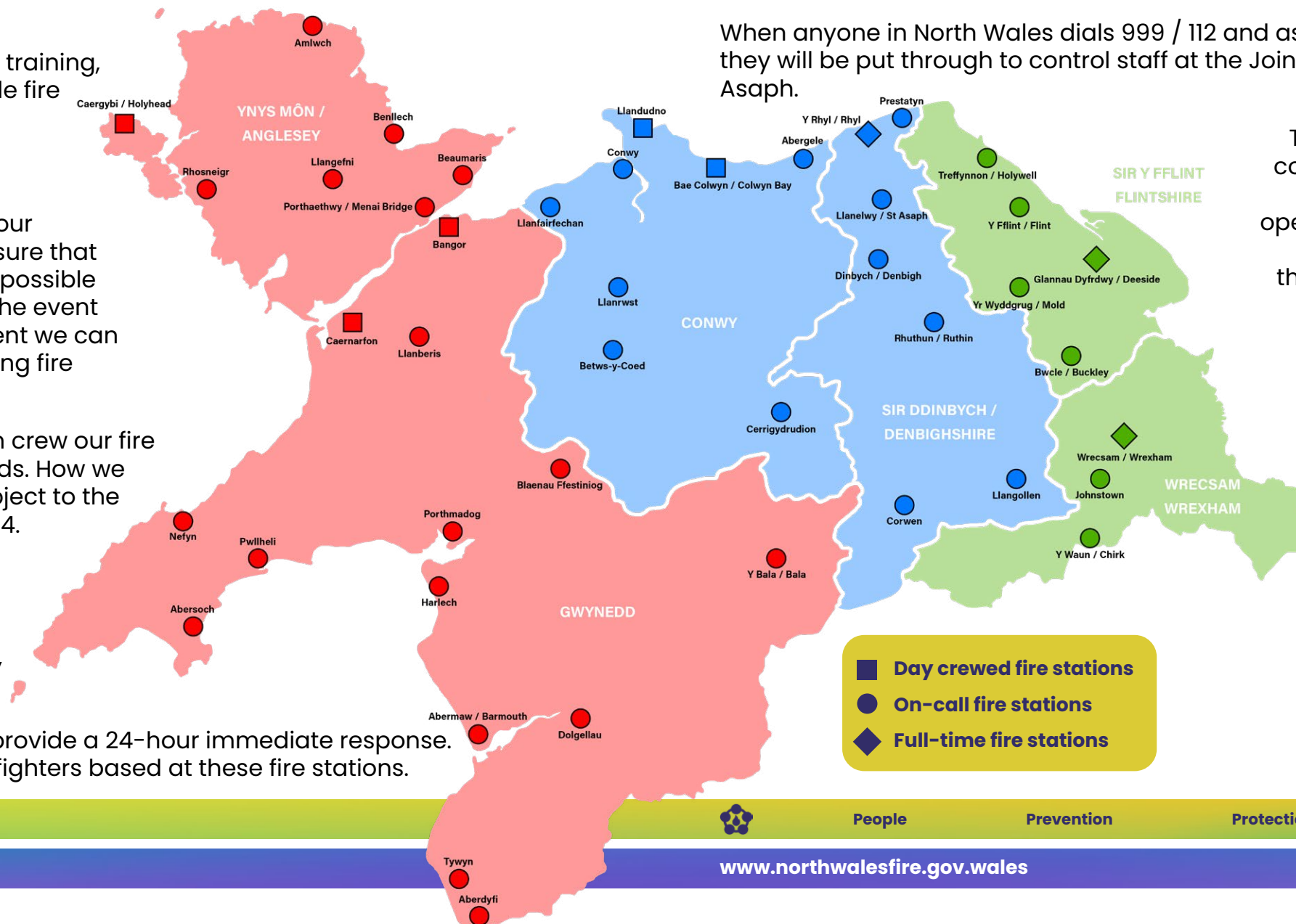
Our on-call firefighters operating the retained duty system operate across all of our fire stations but the majority are based in rural fire stations located in the region. They are required to live or work within five minutes of their fire station in order to respond to emergencies. They also attend drill nights once a week for training sessions and other pre-arranged duties.

Control Room Staff

When anyone in North Wales dials 999 / 112 and asks for the fire and rescue service, they will be put through to control staff at the Joint Communications Centre in St. Asaph.

The Joint Communications Centre is a collaborative facility where North Wales Fire and Rescue Service shares an operational floor with North Wales Police. Opened in 2008, the major drivers for this collaboration was to save lives and reduce serious injuries. It represents an innovative approach to joint emergency service working, placing North Wales at the very forefront of 999 operations.

Control staff are responsible for the immediate despatch of our firefighters across North Wales along with any specialist equipment that is required. They deal with thousands of emergency calls each year, many of which are life threatening, and are trained to deal with callers who are trapped and offer fire survival assistance.





The following are the teams that are essential to ensuring that our firefighters have the ability to respond to emergencies and deliver our community safety initiatives, as well as ensuring the Service operates within budget, and discharges its legal obligations and statutory reporting responsibilities:

Human Resources and Business Support manages recruitment, onboarding, and welfare and provides advice on employee relations, discipline, grievances, job evaluation, and legal compliance.

Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation publishes statutory long-term plans, performance assessments and monitoring reports on behalf of the Fire Authority. The team also oversees Business Continuity, Strategic Risk, and Project Management and leads strategic transformational projects such as the Emergency Cover Review.

Training and Development is responsible for training operational personnel in risk critical skills areas. It is also responsible for maintaining accreditation for awarding qualifications, Health, Fitness & Wellbeing, Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion, Development to Competent, Leadership and Management and the professional development for all staff.

Corporate Communications ensures that the Service's messages are seen, heard, and understood. The team maintains the Service's reputation with the aim of earning understanding, influencing opinion and behaviour and ensures the English and Welsh languages are treated equally, to be able to offer language choice to the public and our staff, and compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

Information and Communication Technology ensure that the Service's vital ICT infrastructure is protected from cyber-attacks and facilitates the best use of the digital tools available to Service staff.

Prevention and Protection focuses on household and community safety, and non-residential fire safety. Prevention staff deliver fire safety and health & wellbeing advice to households, road and water safety education, arson reduction initiatives, engaging with young people and managing volunteers. Protection staff ensure businesses meet their statutory fire safety obligations, through site visits, engagement and, where necessary, enforcement.

Finance and Procurement is responsible for the payment of our staff, payment of supplier invoices, the operation of the main Stores, assisting in the purchasing of goods and services, and the production of statutory information including the Statement of Accounts.

Fleet and Engineering design, purchase, maintain and repair the fleet of emergency appliances, vehicles and equipment and provide a 24-hour emergency call out service to ensure the continued availability of frontline fire appliances and equipment to respond to incidents.

Technical Operations ensure the Health and Safety of firefighters through the development, and adoption of operational policies and procedures, including National Operational Guidance, Joint Organisational Learning and Fire Standards.

Our Governance and Legislation

Like all public-sector bodies, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is required to operate in accordance with numerous pieces of legislation including:

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (Wales) Order 2007
The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009
The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
The Welsh Government Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016
The Fire and Rescue Services (Emergencies) (Wales) (Amendment) Order 2017
The Data Protection Act 2018
The Serious Violence Duty 2022
The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023



Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Statement

The sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 states “All Public Services should act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

We are committed to meeting our duties under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Throughout the development of our Community Risk Management Plan, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals were considered to ensure we contribute to their achievement.

Our Improvement and Well-being Objectives (defined under the What do we intend to do during the life of this plan? Section of Our Principles, [pages 32 to 47](#)) will help us achieve the seven well-being goals in several ways. We have ensured that the actions for our Improvement and Well-being Objectives have been developed in accordance with the sustainable development principle.

The following explains how North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has set well-being objectives in accordance with this principle.



Through our Prevention and Protection Principles we will contribute towards **a Prosperous Wales** by working innovatively to keep people safer in their homes and businesses. By reducing the costs associated with fire death, injury, damage and disruption we will enhance our support to the local economies of North Wales. Through our People Principle we will recruit, develop and retain a highly skilled, motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve and we will adopt eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions as part of our Environment Principle.



Our Environment Principle and underpinning objectives contribute towards **a Resilient Wales** by adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and by raising environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.



We will contribute to **a Healthier Wales** through our Prevention Principle by delivering safe and well checks to our most vulnerable citizens and making every contact count by sharing any health and wellbeing concerns identified with relevant partners. Through our People Principle we will support our workforce to be physically fit and mentally resilient and through our Response Principle we will improve emergency cover in our more rural, less densely populated areas.



Through our People Principle we will identify and maximise staff potential through effective people management and development, leading to a high-performance culture, where people value and respect each other, thereby contributing to **a More Equal Wales**.



Through our Prevention, Protection, Response and Environment Principles we will contribute to **a Wales of Cohesive Communities** ensuring fires in homes, businesses or on open land are either prevented or the impact is minimised as far as possible.



We will contribute to **a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language**, through our People Principle by offering access to our services and the ability to communicate with us in Welsh and supporting our staff to speak their preferred language in the workplace and to offer opportunities to staff who wish to learn Welsh. Through our Protection Principle we will work with local partners to keep heritage sites and buildings safe from fire.



We will play our part in a **Globally Responsible Wales** through our Environment and Protection Principles. We will reduce our own carbon emissions by switching our fleet of diesel Fire Engines to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, purchasing only zero or ultra-low emissions cars and vans and phasing out gas and LPG heating from our estate. Through our Protection work we will seek to avoid or limit the emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere as a result of industrial or environmental waste fires.

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also identifies the following five ways of working which we must consider and act in accordance with when planning and making decisions:



Balancing short term needs with long-term needs

Taking a longer-term view in our 2024-29 Plan allows us to consider how future trends and changes will impact the public and our services, including climate change, projected demographics of an ageing population and financial constraints affecting public services.



Putting resources into preventing problems

Our preventative activity ranges from working with businesses and building owners to make premises safe to working with individuals and groups to change behaviour, all with the aim of preventing the need for an emergency response.



Using an integrated approach, balancing social, economic, and environmental needs

Our planning process is undertaken collectively by involving various stakeholders including our staff, our partners and members of the public to ensure the impact of proposals are fully explored.



Collaborating with others to help meet well-being objectives

We work with a wide range of partners at a strategic and local level, including the Local Resilience Forum and Public Service Boards, to develop and deliver risk mitigation approaches.



Involving others to reflect the diversity of an area

Our consultation and engagement activities ensure there are opportunities for the public, locally elected politicians, partnership agencies and our staff to contribute views and ideas.

Our Socio-Economic Duty Statement

Since March 2021, public bodies in Wales have had to consider how strategic decisions affect those who live in less favourable social and economic circumstances, for example, experiencing poverty or unequal access to services such as transport. Such disadvantage can result in inequalities of outcome including poorer health, lower educational attainment, and less favourable work opportunities.

We therefore give due regard to socio-economic disadvantage in making strategic decisions, which contributes to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 goals.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

This plan has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that it is fair and does not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation during consultation and implementation.

Future Trends Report Wales 2021

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on Welsh Ministers to prepare a Future Trends Report every five years. The Report provides an overview of four big drivers of change:

- People and Population,
- Inequalities,
- Planetary Health and Limits,
- Technology

These drivers of change are likely to affect Wales' achievement of the seven well-being goals, and has been referenced during the development of this plan.

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales must make arrangements for continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions, by setting itself objectives in each financial year against at least one of seven functions.

Below, we have identified which of our improvement and well-being objectives, outlined under the *What do we intend to do during the life of this plan?* section of Our Principles, will support delivery against these functions;

Strategic Effectiveness	All of Our Principles
Service Quality	Our Prevention, Protection and Response Principles
Service Availability	Our Response Principle
Fairness	Our Prevention, Protection and Response Principles
Sustainability	Our Environment Principle
Efficiency	All of Our Principles
Innovation	All of Our Principles

The Welsh Government Fire and Rescue National Framework 2016

This Framework outlines that the overriding aim of Fire and Rescue Authorities should be to keep people, communities, businesses and the environment in Wales safe from fires and other hazards as effectively and efficiently as possible.

To support that aim the Framework specifies the following key objectives for Fire and Rescue Authorities;

- Continually and sustainably reducing risk and enhancing the safety of citizens and communities – Our Prevention and Protection Principles support the delivery of this objective.
- Responding swiftly and effectively to incidents – Our Response Principle supports the delivery of this objective.
- Being clearly and publicly accountable for delivery and funding, manifesting the highest standards of governance – Our Annual Governance Statement, Annual Performance Assessment and Publication of Authorities Statement of Accounts supports the delivery of this objective.
- Maintaining downward pressure on costs and taking all opportunities to realise efficiencies – Our Annual Governance Statement, Annual Performance Assessment and Publication of Authorities Statement of Accounts supports the delivery of this objective.
- Working effectively with partners to improve efficiency and citizen and community well-being – Our Prevention and Protection Principles support the delivery of this objective.
- Valuing and developing the workforce to the highest standards – Our People Principle supports the delivery of this objective.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 requires that the Welsh and English languages should be treated equally in the conduct of public business in Wales.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service recognises and values the rich diversity of our communities and the significance of our cultural heritage and we are committed to ensuring that in conducting public business in Wales, the Welsh and English languages are treated based on equality.

The Welsh Language Commissioner issued the Fire and Rescue Authority with their Compliance Notices on 30 September 2016. This document lists which of the Welsh Language Standards that apply to the Authority and gives details about what services citizens can expect to receive in Welsh.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority publishes an annual report which demonstrates how we maintain compliance with the Welsh Language Standards.

The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Equality Act 2010 includes a public sector equality duty that requires public sector bodies, in the exercise of their functions to have due regard for the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.

- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The Act requires public authorities to publish equality objectives, to enable the authority to better perform the general duty and must review its equality objectives every four years. North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority meets this requirement by publishing progress against its equality objectives annually.

Public Service Boards (PSBs)

In addition to the duties placed on individual public bodies, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 also requires each local authority area to form a Public Services Board (PSB).

With regard to the area covered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, three Public Services Boards have been established:

- Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd.
- Conwy and Denbighshire.
- Flintshire and Wrexham.

Each Public Services Board has published a 'Well-being Plan' to identify its priorities and how it is working to achieve those priorities in its area.

Gwynedd and Isle of Anglesey Objectives

- We will work together to mitigate the effect of poverty on the well-being of our communities.
- We will work together to improve the well-being and achievement of our children and young people to realise their full potential.
- We will work together to support our services and communities to move towards Zero Net Carbon.

Conwy and Denbighshire Objectives

- To make Conwy and Denbighshire a more equal place with less deprivation. We have also identified four key themes to support our main objective, these include:
- Well-being – Communities are happier, healthier and more resilient in the face of challenges, such as the Climate Change and Nature Emergency, or the rising cost of living.
- Economy – There is a flourishing economy, supported by a skilled workforce fit for the future.

- Equality – Those with protected characteristics face fewer barriers.
- Housing – There is improved access to good quality housing.

Wrexham and Flintshire Objectives

- Build flourishing communities by reducing inequalities across environment, education, employment, income and housing.
- Improve community well-being by enabling people of all ages to live healthy and independent lives.

We continue to work with and support the PSBs in our area. This will include benchmarking our activities against each of the above to have a better understanding of how we can be effective members of our PSBs, collaborating and taking an integrated approach to delivering services, to help people feel safe and well in their daily lives.

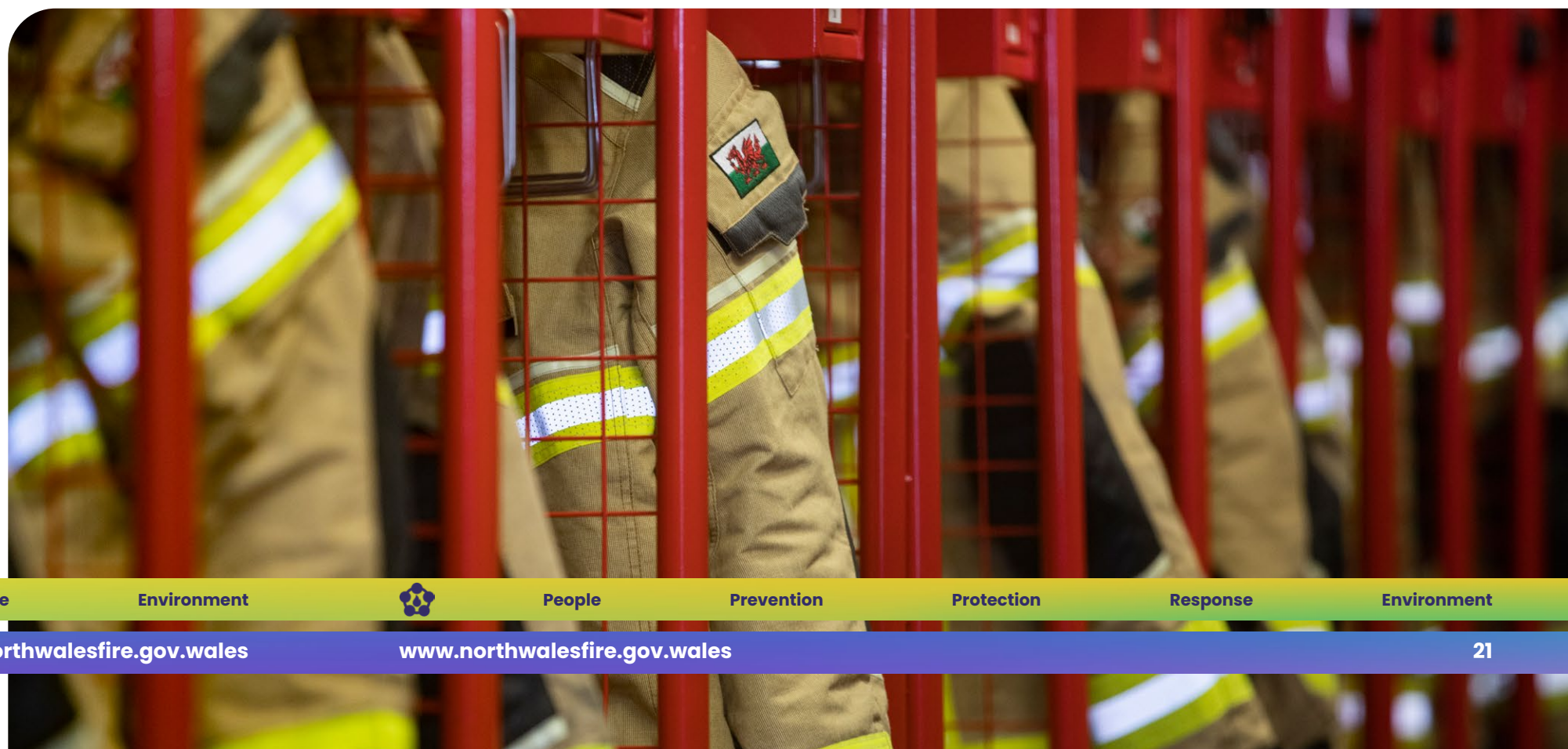
Our work with the PSBs demonstrates our commitment to the sustainable development principle of the WFGA, the seven goals of the WFGA and applying the five ways of working.

More information about the PSBs can be found by following the links below;

[Gwynedd and Anglesey Public Services Board](#)

[Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board](#)

[Flintshire and Wrexham Public Services Board](#)



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

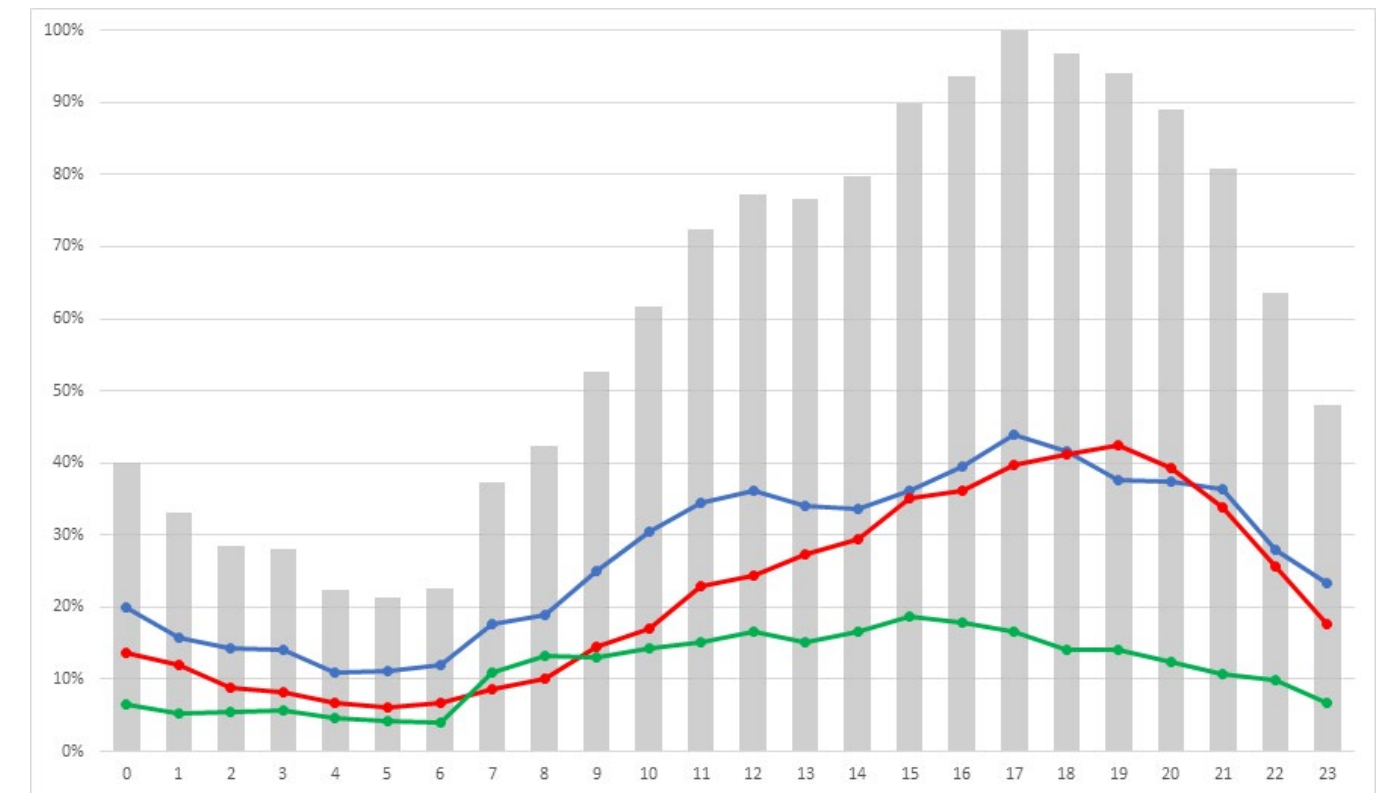
Environment

Our Demand Forecast

Forecasting is a technique that uses historical data as inputs to make informed estimates that are predictive in determining the direction of future trends. This methodology has been applied to the following activities to predict the level of demand we may face over the life time of this plan. This can also assist us to formulate our 10-year capital investment and 3-year revenue plans.

Current Average Annual Operational Demand <small>*Based on data from 2019-20 to 2022-23</small>	Category	Predicted Average Annual Operational Demand <small>2024-25 to 2028-29</small>
5,161	Incidents Attended	5,702
1,806	Fires	1,299
349	Accidental Dwelling Fires	247
200	Non-domestic Property Fires	156
498	Deliberate Fires	412
2,441	False Alarms	2,678
2,399	False Alarms by Apparatus	2,642
727	Other Emergency Incidents	1,593
188	Road Traffic Collisions	356
521	Vehicle Fires	667
87	Flooding	Unable to predict
24	Wild Fires	22
15,537	Safe and Well Checks Completed	17,500

Our Demand Profile



Average hourly incidents

Incident Category - Blue: False Alarm, Red: Fire, Green: Special Service



Our Performance Indicators

The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 outlines the duty of Fire and Rescue Authorities to collect information relating to performance and to use that information to compare their performance in previous years and with similar organisations.

Fire and Rescue Authorities are under a legal duty to collect and report data for the statutory indicators set out below.

		2022-23		2023-24	
		Total	Per 10,000	Total	Per 10,000
1	The total number of fires attended per 10,000 population.	2,011	29.27	1,657	24.08
	The total number of false alarms attended per 10,000 population.	2,674	38.92	2,901	42.15
	The total number of road traffic collisions attended per 10,000 population.	234	3.41	251	3.65
	The total number of other incidents attended per 10,000 population.	977	14.22	1,127	16.38
		Total	Per 100,000	Total	Per 100,000
2	The total number of deaths and injuries from all fires per 100,000 population.	40	5.82	44	6.39
	The total number of deaths and injuries from accidental fires per 100,000 population.	35	5.09	40	5.81
3	The percentage of dwelling fires which were contained in the room in which they originated.	86.84%		90.88%	

How We Assess Risk and Demand

In preparing our Community Risk Management Plan we reviewed a wide range of Wales and United Kingdom level information sources, such as the UK National Risk Register, the Future Trends Report Wales and the North Wales Community Risk Register.

We have reviewed our own and partnership data relating to historical reported incidents, to identify the hazards likely to have an impact upon the future delivery of Fire and Rescue services in North Wales.

This takes into account when and where incidents occur, the socio-demographic profile of people affected as well as, the nature of the buildings, vehicles or environments involved. Emerging threats, such as technology, and the evolving challenges of climate change were also considered.

We have consulted with our staff, staff representative bodies and key partners, as well as a review of our strategic risk register to determine the most significant risks in the preparation of this consultation document.

We then analysed all of this information and applied professional judgement to identify the greatest risks to our communities, staff and places. Having identified the risks, we then reviewed our existing strategies to consider how effectively they mitigated against those risks. Where there are gaps we are developing specific approaches to further mitigate those risks. This approach, closely follows the National Fire Chiefs Council Strategic Framework for Community Risk Management Planning.

Effective response to some of the risks means working in partnership with other emergency services, local authorities, health providers and partner agencies. These partners are brought together through the North Wales Local Resilience Forum to prepare and respond to a range of emergencies. We regularly test these plans in joint training exercises.



Local Resilience Forums produce a Community Risk Register (CRR), which highlights potential risks facing the area. The risks outlined in this plan include some of those identified in the CRR and the government's updated National Risk Register, as well as some more specific fire and rescue risks.



Defining Scope

Understanding what the CRMP process needs to achieve.



Hazard Identification

Describe community hazards and who is at risk.



Risk Analysis

Assess the likelihood and consequence of a risk occurring.



Decision-Making

Decide on steps to take to reduce the risk



Evaluation

Check to see if the CRMP is working as planned



In addition to the statutory requirement for reporting of performance indicators to Welsh Government, a suite of measures has been developed to monitor the effectiveness of our tactics against those risks and these are regularly reviewed by the Service Leadership Team and the Fire and Rescue Authority.

Sustainable reduction in risk related incidents can only successfully be achieved by working in partnership with our communities, local businesses and other public service partners. We are members of the Local Resilience Forum, Partnership Service Boards and the Strategic Partnership Casualty Reduction Group.

Our Risks

Tourism

The tourism and hospitality sector is a key part of the economic infrastructure of North Wales. With visitors from the rest of the UK and abroad the overall population, and therefore the risk of fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies significantly increases during the tourist season.

Accidental Dwelling Fires

Analysis of our incident data consistently concludes that the older you get the more likely you are to suffer a serious injury or die if you have a fire in your home. Over 40% of all fires in the home start in the kitchen and being distracted is the biggest human factor responsible, resulting in a smoke logged kitchen, damaged equipment or in the worst cases, serious injury or death.

This risk increases over the age of 65 and increases further if the occupant lives alone.

Other contributory factors which exponentially increase the risk of fire or accidents amongst this cohort are health conditions, such as dementia and poor mobility.

According to census data North Wales has an ageing population. The proportion of households made up of only pensioners (people aged 66 years and over) increased to 27%, which is high compared to the all Wales figure of 24.8% in 2021.

47,676 or 15.8% of all households were pensioners living alone. This has increased from 43,932 in 2011, even though the pension age was lower in 2011.



Non-Domestic Premises Fires

North Wales is home to a diverse array of industry, business and service providers. From our universities in Bangor and Wrexham, hospitals, hotels and heritage sites, to COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 2015) regulated industry and the UK's largest hydroelectric facility, in Dinorwig Power Station.

Fire in any type of business premises can have a devastating impact on lives and livelihoods. We undertake a risk-based inspection programme to ensure businesses are complying with fire safety legislation and to help them become more fire resilient, prioritising those buildings with a history of fire incidents or known fire safety concerns,



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

or those escalated to us by partner agencies or the community. We encourage and assist businesses to comply with fire safety laws or face potential enforcement action.

Many of these premises have automatic fire alarms (AFA) as mitigation measures. The growth of AFAs and the frequency of false alarms, has placed increasing resource demands on the Fire and Rescue Service, which can compromise its ability to respond to other emergencies.

Wildfires

Home to Wales' largest National park, Eryri, thousands of acres of moorland and three of the five Welsh Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, North Wales' landscape is steeped with culture, history and heritage.



Climate change is here and threatening our landscape. There has been a marked increase in severe weather events and an increase in the demand to respond to wildfires across our region.

The impact of wildfires can be devastating. Every year in Wales, fire is responsible for damaging thousands of hectares of countryside, damaging land and property, harming our wildlife and our environment, releasing carbon dioxide and pollutants into the atmosphere and water courses, affecting local communities and businesses.

Extinguishing a wildfire is very difficult and costly, requiring specialist equipment as our firefighters often face working in dangerous and difficult conditions.

The costs following a wildfire including restoration, land lost to farmers and businesses and disruption to communities is immense.

Wildfires tie up our resources which could be needed at another emergency – and due to the rural and rural-urban interface environments in which they tend to occur we've seen how wildfires put lives at risk, the lives of our communities as well as those of our firefighters.

The summer of 2022 saw record-breaking high temperatures, and a dramatic increase in the number and severity of wildfires attended in North Wales, rising from four in March and April 2021 to 20 in March and April 2022. The picture was similar across the whole of Wales.

Drowning

With a three-year average of 11 drowning deaths per annum across North Wales there is a duty on fire and rescue services in Wales to respond to flooding and inland water emergencies.

The locations of drowning incidents are diverse – from entering the sea, rivers, streams, ports and harbours to baths and hot tubs. Whilst most people enter water intentionally, up to 40% do not. Of those intending to enter it may be for recreation, commercial or everyday reasons.

Some people may be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol, which can seriously impede a person's ability to survive in water.

There is a significant gender split in relation to victims, with 88% being male.

Road Traffic Collisions

From our major trunk roads, vital to the economy, to the winding minor roads connecting communities and traversing our varied landscapes, North Wales' roads carry cars, HGV's, alternative fuelled vehicles, agricultural and recreational vehicles and more, each with its own unique risk.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service works in partnership with other organisations to promote road safety and raise awareness of the main causes of fatal road traffic collisions. The 'Fatal Five' message focuses on 'Don't drink and drive, Kill your speed, Don't get careless, Belt up, and Switch off your mobile phone'.

We attend serious road traffic collisions to assist other emergency services and work tirelessly with partner agencies to help educate drivers about the potentially fatal consequences of speeding or not paying attention while driving.

This is particularly important for younger drivers – it is well documented that drivers aged 16-24 are disproportionately likely to be casualties in road traffic collisions. In Wales, this age group makes up 11% of the population but 22% of all casualties.



Flooding

Climate change has also seen an increase in demand to respond to flooding incidents in North Wales. Severe weather events are becoming more frequent across the UK, and with hundreds of miles of North Wales coastline and over 400 miles of rivers in Eryri alone, the threat posed by coastal, surface and waterway flooding, is very real and increasing.



By 2120 there are predicted to be over 38,000 properties at risk of flooding from the sea, up from 29,000 in 2020, and over 22,500 properties at risk of flooding from rivers, up from 18,000 in 2020.

Storm surges which raise high tide levels can affect many coastal communities and lead to overtopping of existing sea defences. This results in the flooding of residential and commercial properties. There is also a risk of river flooding caused by excess rainfall.

This has led to an increase in the demand to respond to flooding incidents in North Wales. Significant storms are becoming more frequent across Wales, requiring a multi-agency emergency response.

Floods can devastate entire communities and the effects are felt long after the water has subsided. During such incidents firefighters work around the clock saving lives, helping communities and providing humanitarian support.

As the planet continues to warm the frequency and magnitude of flooding events is projected to increase. The number of people in the UK significantly at risk of flooding is projected to increase 61% by 2050, under a modest warming scenario (2°C).

[Flood Risk Management Plan for North West Wales](#)

[Flood Risk Management Plan for North East Wales](#)



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Emerging Technologies

The North Wales Energy Strategy sees an ambitious and significant shift towards newer, more sustainable energy solutions. Increased reliance on photovoltaic energy production, both at a domestic and commercial level, and the associated energy storage systems, pose new risks and challenges for fire and rescue services.

Alternative fuelled vehicles, such as electric cars, gas and hybrid HGVs, driverless or autonomous vehicles, Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems, and modern methods of construction, all present emergent, and as yet undefined risks, which will need us to adapt our response.

The proliferation of lithium-ion batteries in electric vehicles, including e-bikes and e-scooter batteries, has led to a number of serious fires. Data obtained by the insurer Zurich revealed that such fires surged 149% across the UK between 2020 and 2021. These types of fires are increasing, they are difficult to extinguish and when they do occur, they escalate quickly, generate intense heat and produce harmful smoke and vapours.

Modern methods of construction

The construction of properties using timber frames rather than brick, block and steel is increasingly being seen as a preferred method by developers due to the potential savings in time, materials and labour. It is also regarded as a more sustainable method of construction.

However, if built outside recognised standards, or subsequently modified after construction, timber framed buildings can suffer rapid and major failings of their protection measures in the event of a fire. This can present significant risk to occupants of the building as well as to firefighters.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Five Principles

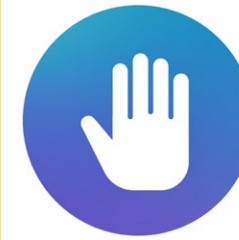
In defining the scope of the Community Risk Management Plan, we have consulted with the Fire and Rescue Authority and our staff at all levels of our organisation utilising a variety of consultation methods, including our Fire Family Staff Survey, the Emergency Cover Review consultation, Service Leadership Team and Middle Manager workshops. Based on this consultation, we have developed five principles, which will assist us to mitigate the risks to our communities and help us to focus on improvement within our Service over the next five years.



Our People Principle

Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills.

Ensuring a highly skilled workforce by recruiting, developing and retaining a motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve.



Our Prevention Principle

Working with partners to help make communities safer.

Reducing risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable, through our established intervention programmes such as Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project.



Our Protection Principle

Making businesses safer together.

Providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection to help ensure the safety of buildings, employees, and customers, thereby supporting businesses to grow. High-risk buildings are prioritised for inspections, contributing to overall public safety.



Our Response Principle

Providing an effective emergency response.

Being ready to respond when you need us: to protect what matters to you, to save lives, reduce harm, and protect homes and businesses.



Our Environment Principle

Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations.

Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our People Principle



Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills.

Ensuring a highly skilled workforce by recruiting, developing and retaining a motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve.

Why is this important?

- Our workforce is fundamental to all that our fire and rescue service does. Providing both emergency response and preventative services relies wholly on the skills, commitment and dedication of firefighters, control room staff and corporate services staff.
- The incidence of fire is in long-term decline therefore to maintain operational effectiveness, firefighters have to train more rather than rely on experience gained at actual incidents.
- In recent times, fire services across the UK have been scrutinised and criticised for their cultural failings. The public quite rightly, expect, and deserve, the very highest standards and behaviour from public bodies.

What have we done to date?

- Conducted comprehensive training programmes to enhance the skills and readiness of our employees.
- Actively recruited from diverse backgrounds to better reflect the communities we serve.
- Implemented ongoing assessments to ensure our workforce aligns with evolving professional standards.
- Implemented the All Wales Fire and Rescue Service People and Organisational Development 2021-2024 strategy to ensure there is consistency in the approach to people development and support across the three Fire and Rescue Services in Wales.
- Conducted two Fire Family Staff Surveys to provide staff with a platform to voice their opinions and concerns and use the results to identify areas for improving culture and to promote a more inclusive and supportive workplace.

What do we intend to do during the life of this plan?

- Implement the recommendations identified from the 2023 Fire Family Staff Survey.
- Undertake two further Fire Family Staff Surveys in 2025-26 and 2027-28.
- Continuously review and enhance recruitment strategies to maintain a diverse and skilled workforce.
- Aim to identify and maximise potential through effective people management and development, leading to a high-performance culture, where people value and respect each other.
- Adopt the new All Wales Fire and Rescue Service People and Organisational Development Strategy for 2024-2028 that will provide a framework for innovative thinking and working to support continued collaboration and partnership.
- Develop a business case for the construction of a new fire and rescue service training centre, ensuring it meets high standards for efficiency, safety, and technology.
- Prevention staff will receive training and awareness in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Modern Slavery, Child Exploitation and Domestic Violence to provide a more effective service to the communities we serve.
- Business Fire Safety staff and Operational Firefighters will be trained in accordance with the National Fire Chiefs Council Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators working towards registration within the Contextualised Auditor's Register.
- Operational staff will receive relevant training and qualification to enable them to undertake business safety checks in line with nationally agreed guidelines.

These actions will contribute to the following well-being goals



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A Wales
of vibrant
culture and
thriving Welsh
language



A more equal
Wales



A prosperous
Wales

We will monitor our progress through the following Governance Committees:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee
- Health Safety and Well-being Committee
- Attendance, Grievance and Discipline Committee
- Organisational Learning Committee



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Service Culture

Public sector leadership across the United Kingdom is very much in the spotlight at present, with some high-profile examples of scrutiny finding significant cultural failings.

We welcome the Welsh Government's decision to accept our proposal to independently review how we are progressing on our cultural journey, as we are wholeheartedly committed to excellence and continuous improvement and will publish a report during 2024.

We have a set of organisational values that are published and displayed across all of our premises and these can be found on page 51.

However, our Core Values are not just for posters, to be displayed and perhaps forgotten, they are the foundation of our identity and behaviour, guiding decision-making, shaping our culture, directing strategy, and providing a clear sense of purpose for our people. They are a set of guiding principles for staff, at all levels of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Our Core Values have guided us towards adopting five principles, through which we will deliver innovative and high-quality services to our communities and the people who visit and work in North Wales. It was a conscious choice to make *Our People Principle* the first of those principles.

The actions outlined under *Our People Principle* have been designed in an effort to continually improve our Service. These objectives aim to make North Wales Fire and Rescue Service an attractive place to work, by improving staff engagement, staff recognition and staff well-being, improving leadership skills, strengthen human resources and workforce planning processes so that we recruit, retain, develop and promote the best people and providing ongoing training, development support and career progression opportunities to all staff.

We have recently undertaken our second Fire Family Staff Survey, which provided staff with a platform to voice their opinions and concerns. We are currently working through the findings and will use the results to identify areas for improving culture and to promote a more inclusive and supportive workplace.

We will repeat this exercise in 2025-26 and 2027-28 to ensure that that platform for sharing opinions and concerns becomes part of business as usual.

We also have strong governance arrangements through the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee, supported by the Staff Network Groups, a Positive Action Group and Welsh Language Group. We have appointed a Member of the Fire and Rescue Authority as a Member Champion to the Steering Committee. The Joint Consultation Negotiation Committee is a forum for senior leadership to meet with trade unions and other representative bodies.

We will continue to work alongside Welsh Government to provide ongoing assurance that we have robust governance arrangements in place to ensure the workplace is safe and enables our people to bring their best self to work.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Prevention Principle



Working with partners to help make communities safer.

Reducing risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable, through our established intervention programmes such as Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project.

Why is this important?

Ensuring our communities are safe is at the heart of everything we do. Collaborating with partners and implementing targeted intervention programs is crucial to mitigating risks, particularly for vulnerable individuals. By actively engaging with our communities, we build resilience, promote well-being, and create a safer environment for everyone.

What have we done to date?

- Established strong partnerships with local organisations, agencies, and community leaders to enhance our collective impact.
- Implemented effective intervention programmes like Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project, reaching 'at risk' individuals and groups and addressing potential risks.
- Conducted outreach initiatives to raise awareness about fire prevention and safety measures within communities.
- Implemented and evaluated impactful awareness campaigns to assist residents and visitors in ensuring their safety.
- Employed a diverse range of communication channels to enhance engagement and ensure effective outreach to individuals and groups of people with different communications needs and preferences.
- To ensure we provide language choice for Welsh and English speakers in our communities and to recognise any other language requirements.

What do we intend to do during the life of this plan?

- Utilise partnership data to refine our risk-based approach to Safe and Well Checks to target those over the age of 65 who are most vulnerable from fire in the home.
- Deliver 17,500 Safe and Well Checks per annum, for the duration of this plan, to those most vulnerable to fire in the home.
- Proactively promote road safety education, engaging with partners and carrying out campaigns within the local community, to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.



- Work closely with external stakeholders to prevent accidental drowning in North Wales, providing consistent guidance for the safe enjoyment and management of activities in, on and around water.
- Our youth education programmes will continue to engage with Children and Young People. Fire Cadets, Phoenix and our new youth initiative are each designed to move a younger person's life forward, unlock their potential and for them to be inspired to make positive life choices. This will deliver against responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty.
- Promote the safeguarding of our communities. We will be active members of the Local Safeguarding Adults Board and Local Safeguarding Children's Board and work proactively to reduce the risk of abuse, harm and neglect.

These actions will contribute to the following well-being goals



A resilient Wales



A Wales of cohesive communities



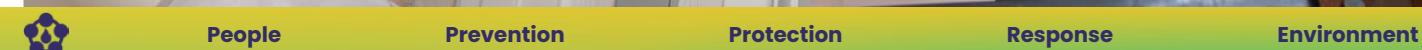
A healthier Wales



A globally responsible Wales

We will monitor our progress through the following Governance Committee:

- Prevention and Protection Performance Committee



Our Protection Principle



Making businesses safer together.

Providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection to help ensure the safety of buildings, employees, and customers, thereby supporting businesses to grow. High-risk buildings are prioritised for inspections, contributing to overall public safety.

Why is this important?

Ensuring the safety of businesses is integral to the well-being of the community. By offering specialised guidance on fire protection, we not only protect the assets and personnel of businesses but also contribute to the economic vitality of the region. Proactive inspection of high-risk buildings enhances public safety by preventing potential hazards.

What have we done to date?

- Conducted comprehensive fire protection workshops and training sessions for businesses to enhance their preparedness.
- Collaborated closely with local businesses to understand their unique needs and challenges in terms of safety.
- Implemented targeted inspections of high-risk buildings, identifying and mitigating potential fire hazards.

What do we intend to do during the life of this plan?

- Review our current Risk Based Inspection Programme and ensure we have an informed and rationalised regime that is intelligence driven to identify the relevant risk classification for all our premises across North Wales.
- Continue to deliver an intelligence led Risk Based Inspection Programme to reduce injury and death from fires in non-domestic premises.
- Scope the impact of automatic fire alarms on the use of our resources and their impact in a non-domestic environment.
- We will work in partnership with external stakeholders, land owners and land users to reduce the number of wildfire incidents.
- Working closely with multi-agency partners and the communities we serve we will tackle arson using the 4Ps approach, Prepare, Pursue, Prevent and Protect.

These actions will contribute to the following well-being goals



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A globally
responsible
Wales



A prosperous
Wales

We will monitor our progress through the following Governance Committee:

- Prevention and Protection Performance Committee



Our Response Principle



Providing an effective emergency response.

Being ready to respond when you need us: to protect what matters to you, to save lives, reduce harm, and protect homes and businesses.

Why is this important?

We want to provide the fairest possible service to the public of North Wales. No matter where you live or who you are, we aim to be there for you when you need us. This means being able to provide an equitable service across our diverse communities – diverse in terms of location and geography, in terms of the types of incidents we respond to, and also in terms of the people we serve. We aim to achieve this by managing our resources, our budget and our people as effectively as possible.

What have we done to date?

- Conducted an Emergency Cover Review, with the aim of improving rural emergency cover.
- Completed a staff led Retained Duty System (RDS) Staff Experience Review, developing a robust action plan, with 85 recommendations, to support the improvement of the experience of our staff working the RDS.
- Restructured the service to prioritise local teams working in the local area.
- Through targeted recruitment and retention activities for the second year on the run we have seen a net increase in our numbers of retained staff across North Wales.
- Ensured that we have a full establishment of trained and competent wholetime firefighters and targeted recruitment to enhance the availability of suitably trained on-call firefighters.
- Invested in three new Welfare Vehicles to support our staff at incidents.
- Prioritised the safety of our firefighters by expanding our investment in state-of-the-art Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to support the management of contaminants from fires and dedicated PPE for wildfires.
- Established a representative contamination working group to jointly prioritise the safety of firefighters in relation to fire contaminants.

What do we intend to do during the life of this plan?

- Ensure levels of wholetime recruitment and progression matches closely the need to maintain a fully crewed wholetime staffing cohort.
- Work to ensure that the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is maximised to increase the number of properties across the region that will receive an effective response as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that emergency calls continue to be handled in an effective manner through the replacement of the relevant computer system in Fire Control.
- Develop and introduce the Emergency Services Network into North Wales to ensure that we have a robust and modern communication system across the region.
- Implement the outcomes of the Emergency Cover Review, developed by a representative working group, to improve our operational response in our rural areas.
- Conduct a review of our specialist vehicles, other than fire engines, that respond to emergencies.
- Continue to prioritise firefighter safety through training, development, supplying best in class PPE and equipment and the management of contaminants.
- Develop with our staff, a new management framework to support the efficient and effective running of our fire stations to ensure we are as prepared as possible for emergencies.
- Work with staff and representative bodies to explore opportunities of broadening the role of firefighters to support the work of our partners and welfare of our communities.
- We will continue to invest in our fire engine fleet by introducing new state of the art fire engines each year as part of our vehicle replacement programme.

These actions will contribute to the following well-being goals



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A more equal
Wales

We will monitor our progress through the following Governance Committees:

- Organisational Resourcing Committee
- Organisational Learning Committee
- Health Safety and Well-being Committee



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment



Emergency Cover Review

A review of Corporate Resilience in North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority conducted by Audit Wales in April 2021, recommended that the Authority should review fire station locations to identify opportunities to optimise emergency response arrangements.

Later that year, the Chief Fire Officer presented a situational assessment to Fire and Rescue Authority Members, highlighting a number of risks in relation to maintaining sufficient day time availability of on-call firefighters working on the 36 retained duty system (RDS) stations.

In response, the Authority commissioned an Emergency Cover Review to identify options for the provision of a fair, sustainable and equitable response across the whole of North Wales.

An independent company, ORH, was commissioned to work with the Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation Team, providing technical support in relation to data analysis and modelling, to critique current emergency cover arrangements and to identify the optimum solutions for improvement. The Service also utilised National Fire Chiefs Council risk profiling, which highlighted that there were locations of higher risk in more rural areas that reinforced the need for improved equity of cover.

We worked closely with The Consultation Institute and attained a Consultation Quality Assurance Certification in November 2023. During the pre-consultation stage,

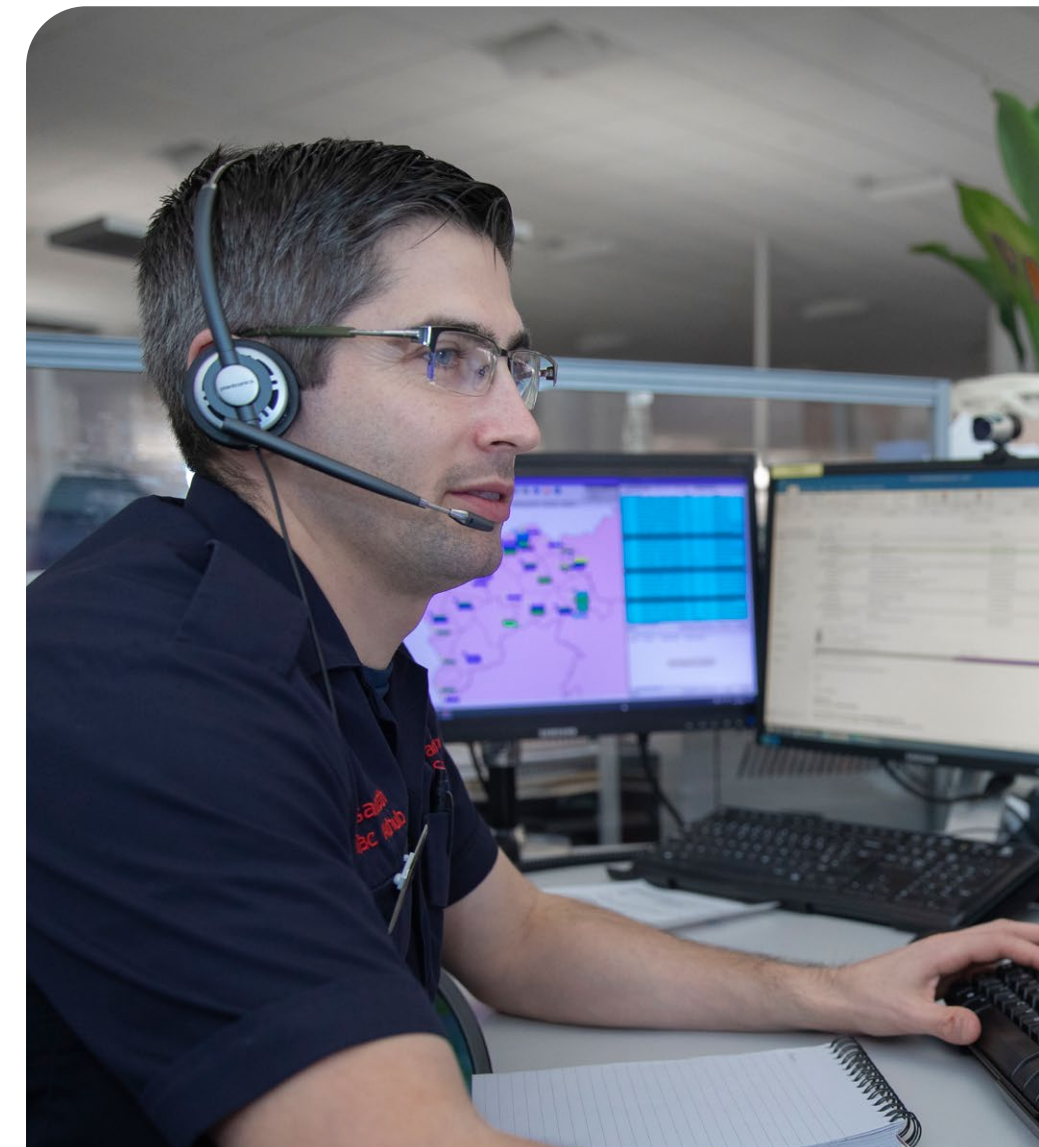
meetings with stakeholders including staff, local and national politicians, equality, diversity and inclusion groups, the public and other agencies were held, which enabled the development of three options which went to full public consultation between July and September 2023. This was our largest public consultation exercise in our history and we received an unprecedented 1,726 responses.



The feedback from the consultation was independently collated, analysed and reported to the Fire and Rescue Authority in October 2023. In their December 2023 meeting the Fire Authority decided not to progress any of the options presented during consultation, but instead directed officers to continue with the current level of emergency cover and to work with all stakeholders to develop a new permanent option taking into consideration the limits of the agreed budget.

We have already established a task and finish working group, made up of a broad range of staff from across the Service and representative bodies to work with officers in reviewing the evidence and modelling provided by ORH to develop other proposals. Should these differ significantly from those in the last consultation, further public consultation may be required during 2024-25. Once agreed the preferred option will be implemented during the life of this CRMP.

If you want to read more about the Emergency Cover Review you can access the consultation document [here](#).



Our Environment Principle



Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations.

Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.

Why is this important?

In April 2019, the Welsh Government became the first parliament in the world to declare a climate emergency at a national level.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is on the front line of many of the challenges made far more frequent by a changing climate, many of which are already having profound effects on the communities we serve. Therefore, we have a responsibility to lead by example and promote responsible stewardship of our region and our world for the generations yet to come.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 requires that we and all other public bodies in Wales consider the interests of future generations in all our strategic decisions.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets out a series of carbon budgets, detailing how Wales can be net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Under Carbon Budget 2, the Welsh public sector must be net zero emissions by 2030.

What have we done to date?

- Appointed an Environment and Climate Change Manager, with a responsibility for leading and managing our shift towards sustainability and responsible environmental stewardship.
- The Fire and Rescue Authority has developed and adopted an Environmental Strategy which sets out detailed and robust performance targets in reduction of our carbon emissions and other significant environmental impacts, without compromising the essential services we provide to the communities of North Wales.
- Established a carbon emissions baseline, against which we can measure our performance and the success of our carbon mitigation plans.
- Established an Environment and Sustainability Working Group, with representation from across the Service, which meets on a six-weekly basis to monitor our environmental performance and oversee improvement projects.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

What do we intend to do during the life of this plan?

- Switch our fleet of diesel vehicles to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, a sustainable alternative with zero Scope 1 carbon emissions.
- Where feasible, purchase only zero or ultra-low emissions cars and vans from 2025.
- Expand the existing Electric Vehicle Charging Points network on North Wales Fire and Rescue sites.
- Retrofit our estate to improve energy efficiency.
- Begin phasing out gas and Liquid Petroleum Gas from our station heating systems from 2025.

These actions will contribute to the following well-being goals



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A globally
responsible
Wales

We will monitor our progress through the following Governance Committee:

- Land and Property Committee, supported by the Environment and Sustainability Group



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Objectives – Summary

People

- Implement the recommendations identified from the 2023 Fire Family Staff Survey.
- Undertake two further Fire Family Staff Surveys in 2025–26 and 2027–28.
- Continuously review and enhance recruitment strategies to maintain a diverse and skilled workforce.
- Aim to identify and maximise potential through effective people management and development, leading to a high-performance culture, where people value and respect each other.
- Adopt the new All Wales Fire and Rescue Service People and Organisational Development Strategy for 2024–2028 that will provide a framework for innovative thinking and working to support continued collaboration and partnership.
- Develop and complete the construction of a new fire and rescue service training centre, ensuring it meets high standards for efficiency, safety, and technology.
- Prevention staff will receive training and awareness in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Modern Slavery, Child Exploitation and Domestic Violence to provide a more effective service to the communities we serve.
- Train Business Fire Safety staff and Operational Firefighters in accordance with the NFCC Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators working towards registration within the Contextualised Auditor's Register.
- Operational staff will receive relevant training and qualification to enable them to undertake business safety checks in line with nationally agreed guidelines.

Prevention

- Utilise partnership data to refine our risk-based approach to Self and Well Checks to target those over the age of 65 who are most vulnerable from fire in the home.
- Deliver 17,500 Safe and Well Checks per annum, for the duration of this CRMP, to those most vulnerable from fire in the home.
- Proactively promote road safety education, engaging with partners and carrying out campaigns within the local community, to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.
- Work closely with external stakeholders to prevent accidental drowning in North Wales, providing consistent guidance for the safe enjoyment and management of activities in, on and around water.
- Our Youth Education programmes will continue to engage with Children & Young People. Fire Cadets, Phoenix and our new youth initiative are each designed to move a younger person's life forward, unlock their potential and for them to be inspired to make positive life choices. This will deliver against responsibilities under the Serious Violence Duty.
- Promote the safeguarding of our communities. We will be active members of the Public Services Boards, Local Safeguarding Adults Boards and Local Safeguarding Children's Board and work proactively to reduce the risk of abuse, harm and neglect.

Protection

- Review our current Risk Based Inspection Programme and ensure we have an informed and rationalised regime that is intelligence driven to identify the relevant risk classification for all our premises across North Wales.
- Continue to deliver an intelligence led Risk Based Inspection Programme to reduce injury and death from fires in non-domestic premises.
- Scope the impact of automatic fire alarms on the use of our resources and their impact in a non-domestic environment.
- We will work in partnership with external stakeholders, land owners and land users to reduce the number of Wildfire incidents.
- Working closely with Multi-agency partners and the communities we serve we will tackle arson using the 4Ps approach, Prepare, Pursue, Prevent and Protect.

Response

- Ensure levels of wholetime recruitment and progression matches closely the need to maintain a fully crewed wholetime staffing cohort.
- Work to ensure that the recruitment and retention of on-call firefighters is maximised to increase the number of properties across the region that will receive an effective response as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that emergency calls continue to be handled in an effective manner through the replacement of the relevant computer system in Fire Control.
- Develop and introduce the Emergency Services Network into North Wales to ensure that we have a robust and modern communication system across the region.
- Implement the outcomes of the Emergency Cover Review, developed by a representative working group, to improve our operational response in our rural areas.
- Conduct a review of our specialist vehicles, other than fire engines, that respond to emergencies.
- Continue to prioritise firefighter safety through training, development, supplying best in class PPE and equipment and the management of contaminants.
- Develop with our staff, a new management framework to support the efficient and effective running of our fire stations to ensure we are as prepared as possible for emergencies.
- Work with staff and representative bodies to explore opportunities of broadening the role of firefighters to support the work of our partners and welfare of our communities.
- We will continue to invest in our fire engine fleet by introducing new state of the art fire engines each year as part of our vehicle replacement programme.

Environment

- Switch our fleet of diesel vehicles to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, a sustainable alternative with zero Scope 1 carbon emissions.
- Purchase only zero or ultra-low emissions cars and vans from 2025.
- Expand the existing Electric Vehicle Charging Points network on North Wales Fire and Rescue sites.
- Retrofit our estate to improve energy efficiency.
- Begin phasing out gas and Liquid Petroleum Gas from our station heating systems from 2025.

Our Finances

The majority of funding for the Fire and Rescue Service is received by way of a levy from the six constituent authorities, within North Wales, in proportion to population for each authority. The population for each local authority is set by the Welsh Government's Distribution Sub-Group on an annual basis. In addition, funding is also received from the Welsh Government by way of grants. The value of the grants has reduced significantly in recent years.

For the current financial year, 2024-25, the Authority has a revenue budget of £48.322m and a capital programme of £5.67m.

The medium-term resource strategy (MTRS) has also been approved by the Fire and Rescue Authority, which includes a 10-year capital plan. You can read more [here](#).

Our funding (£m)

2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
£35.9	£37.1	£39.4	£44.4	£48.3

What we spent it on 2022-2023

(2023-24 figures will be published following Fire and Rescue Authority approval of the Authorities' Statement of Accounts).

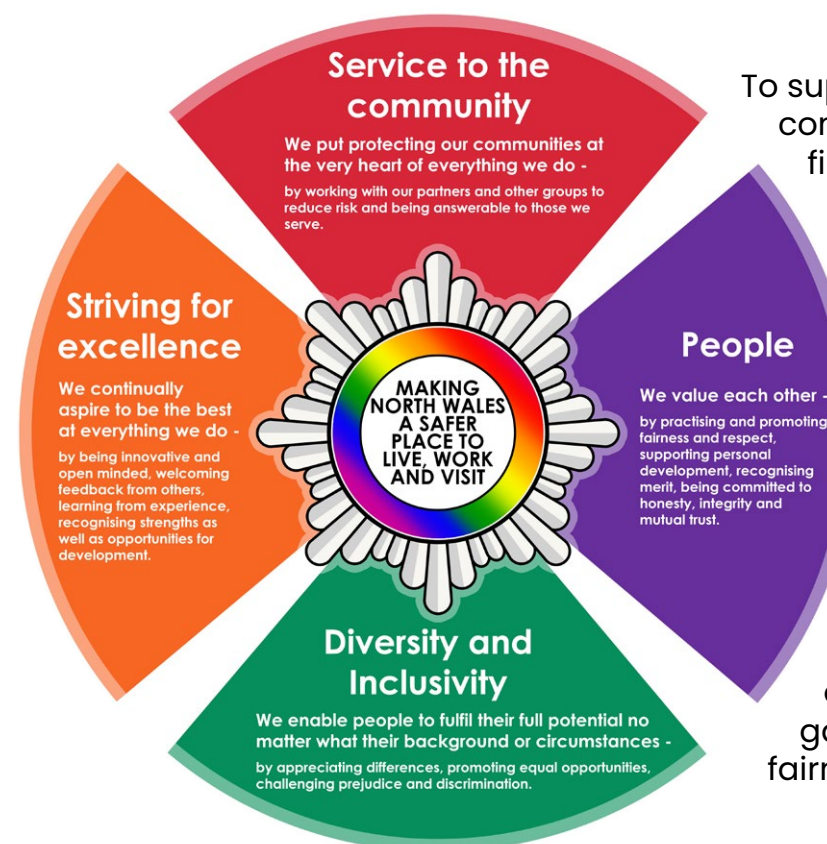
People	Premises	Transport
£30.35m	£2.99m	£1.25m
Supplies and Services	Capital Finances	Income*
£4.95m	£2.42m	£2.94m

*Predominantly Welsh Government grants

Our Values

Our mission statement is:

MAKING NORTH WALES A SAFER PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT



To support this mission, the Authority will continue to work to reduce dwelling fires across the region through a comprehensive prevention strategy, and will investigate and analyse information to reduce the risks associated with all types of fire and other hazards.

The Authority will also continue to promote education and collaboration with people living and working in North Wales. Equality of opportunity is a fundamental priority and the Authority aims to increase the employment prospects of people who might find it difficult to gain employment whilst also promoting fairness and inclusivity in the workplace.

We will be looking to align to the National Fire Chiefs Council Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services, which has been developed to support a consistent approach to ethics, including behaviours, by Fire and Rescue Services.

It will help to improve the organisational culture and workforce diversity of Fire and Rescue Services, ensuring that communities are supported in the best way.

The Core Code sets out five ethical principles, which provides a basis for promoting good behaviour and challenging inappropriate behaviour.

- Putting our communities first
- Integrity
- Dignity and respect
- Leadership
- Equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI)

Further information on the Core Code of Ethics can be found [here](#)



Have Your Say

The draft version of this Community Risk Management Plan under went a period of public consultation from 25th March to 16th June 2024.

Even though the consultation period has closed we are always looking for ways to improve our service and to present information that is meaningful. In order to help us do this we want to ensure your views are considered when delivering our activities and keeping you informed.

So, if you have any comments about this plan, or how we might improve future plans, we would still very much like to hear from you.

Write to us:

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) Fire and Rescue Headquarters
Ffordd Salesbury
St Asaph Business Park
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0JJ

Call us:

07787 578386

Send us an email:

OurFivePrinciples@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Request a Safe and Well Check

You can request A safe and well check for yourself or on behalf of someone else by contacting the Service on **0800 169 1234**.

Follow us

 @northwalesfire

 @northwalesfireservice

 @northwalesfire

 @nwalesfireservice





North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Community Risk Management Implementation Plan

Well-being and Improvement Objectives
2024 – 2025



Our five principles for keeping communities safe

PEOPLE

PREVENTION

PROTECTION

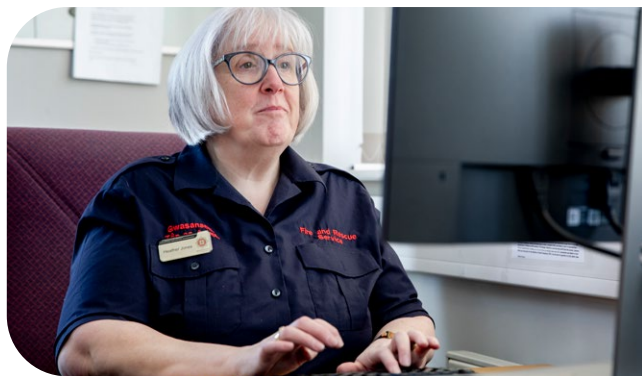
RESPONSE

ENVIRONMENT

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Contents

Introduction	3
Our Service	3
Our Staff	4
Our Service area	4
Our Governance and Legislation	5
Our Risks and Demand	6
Our Principles	6
Our People Principle	7
Our Prevention Principle	9
Our Protection Principle	10
Our Response Principle	11
Our Environment Principle	12
Have Your Say	13





Introduction

One of the key objectives for fire and rescue services in Wales is to continually and sustainably reduce risk and enhance the safety of citizens and communities.

A Community Risk Management Plan aims to identify risks facing the community and describes how the Fire and Rescue Authority will manage those risks, and continue to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies.

You can read about the purpose of our five-year plan [here](#). Our 2024-25 objectives will deliver progress against our long-term objectives.

Our Service

The Fire and Rescue Authority comprises 28 elected councillors from the six unitary authorities of North Wales, with the number of representatives determined by the population of the area. Our mission is Making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit. You can read more about our structure and governance arrangements, including the role of the Fire and Rescue Authority [here](#).

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is led by a Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive and a Service Leadership Team. This comprises senior officers and managers who are responsible for departments looking after our Service's key operational and corporate functions.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Staff

Our firefighters respond to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies from 44 fire stations across North Wales. In total we have 54 fire engines. Some of our fire stations have two fire engines. Other stations have specialist vehicles like aerial ladder platforms, incident support vehicles or boats, depending on the risk in their area.

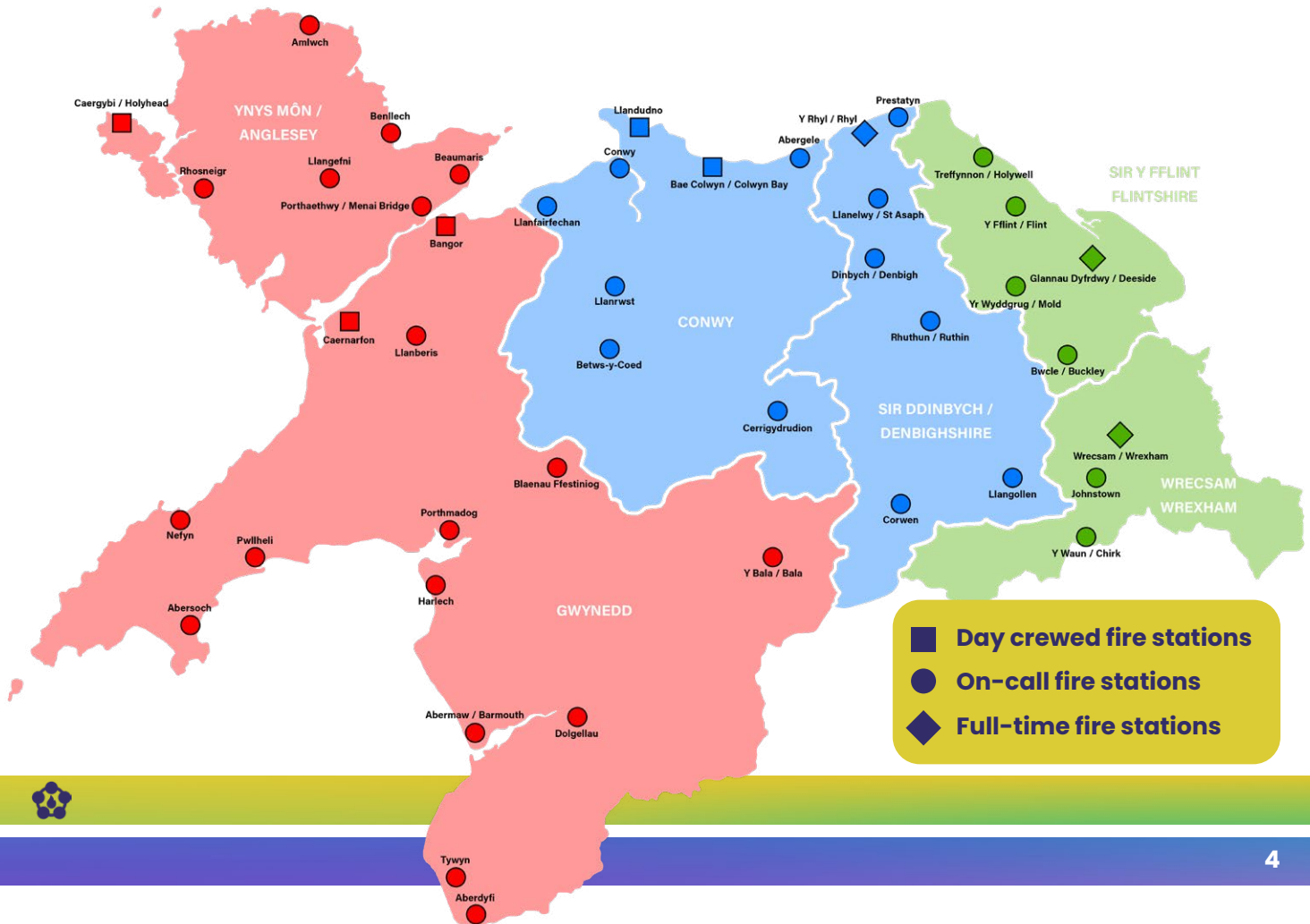
From firefighters to business area specialists, you can read more about the roles of the people that respond to emergencies and the people who keep the Service running [here](#).



Our Service area

Covering an area of 6,172 square kilometres and with a population of 687,000, North Wales encompasses a diverse landscape, including the mountains of Eryri National Park, coastal areas, rural communities and major urban areas.

North Wales comprises six counties, Isle of Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham. The A55 runs through five of the six counties and is part of one of the longest European routes, running between Holyhead and eastern Europe. You can read more about our geography and demography [here](#).



Our Governance and Legislation

Like all public-sector bodies, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is required to operate in accordance with numerous pieces of legislation. You can read more about the legislation that governs our Service [here](#).

In line with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must make arrangements for continuous improvement in the exercise of its functions, by setting itself improvement objectives in each financial year against at least one of seven functions.

Furthermore, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must consult with the public on its proposed improvement objectives. This plan was subject to public and stakeholder consultation between 25th March and 16th June.

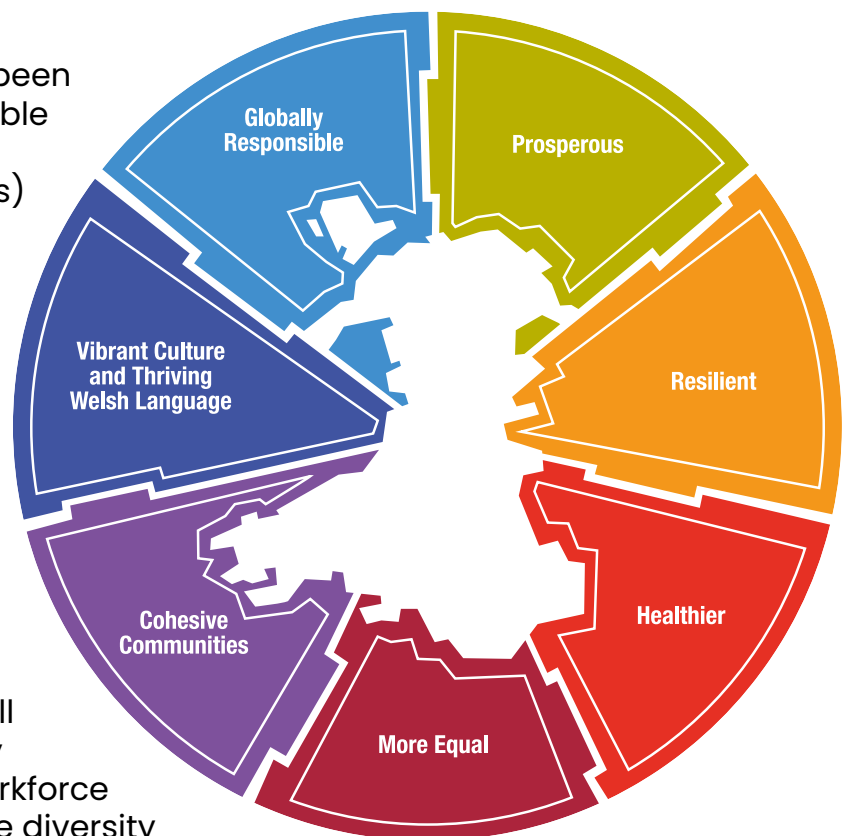
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Statement

Our 2024-25 objectives have also been developed in line with the sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Through our Prevention and Protection Principles we will contribute towards a Prosperous Wales by working innovatively to keep people safer in their homes and businesses. By reducing the costs associated with fire death, injury damage and disruption we will enhance our support to the local economies of North Wales.

Through our People Principle we will recruit, develop and retain a highly skilled, motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve and we will adopt eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions as part of our Environment Principle.

Our Environment Principle and underpinning objectives contribute towards a Resilient Wales by adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and by raising environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

We will contribute to a Healthier Wales through our Prevention Principle by delivering safe and well checks to our most vulnerable citizens and making every contact count by sharing any health and wellbeing concerns identified with relevant partners.

Through our People Principle we will support our workforce to be physically fit and mentally resilient and through our Response Principle we will improve emergency cover in our more rural, less densely populated areas.

Through our People Principle we will also identify and maximise staff potential through effective people management and development, leading to a high-performance culture, where people value and respect each other, thereby contributing to a More Equal Wales.

Through our Prevention, Protection, Response and Environment Principles we will contribute to a Wales of Cohesive Communities ensuring fires in homes, businesses or on open land are either prevented or the impact is minimised as far as possible.

We will contribute to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language, through our People Principle by offering access to our services and the ability to communicate with us in Welsh and supporting our staff to speak their preferred language in the workplace and to offer opportunities to staff who wish to learn Welsh. Through our Protection Principle we will work with local partners to keep heritage sites and buildings safe from fire.

We will play our part in a Globally Responsible Wales through our Environment and Protection Principles. We will reduce our own carbon emissions by switching our fleet of diesel Fire Engines to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, purchasing only zero or ultra-low emissions cars and vans and phasing out gas and Liquid Petroleum Gas heating from our estate. Through our Protection work we will seek to avoid or limit the emission of harmful gases into the atmosphere as a result of industrial or environmental waste fires.

Our Risks and Demand

The delivery of our one-year objectives are designed to mitigate some of the risks identified as part of the development of our Community Risk Management Plan. You can read about how we assess risk and demand [here](#).

Our Principles

Our Core Values have guided us towards adopting five Principles, through which we will deliver innovative and high-quality services to our communities and the people who visit and work in North Wales. Our Principles were developed following internal consultation and they will assist us to mitigate the risks to our communities and help us to focus on improvement within our Service over the next five years. You can read more about our Principles [here](#).



Our 2024–25 Community Risk Management Implementation Plan objectives

Our People Principle



Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills.

Ensuring a highly skilled workforce by recruiting, developing and retaining a motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve.

What do we intend to do during 2024–25?

- Implement the recommendations for improvement following the 2023 Fire Family Staff Survey.
- Adopt the new All Wales Fire and Rescue Service People and Organisational Development Strategy for 2024-2028 that will provide a framework for innovative thinking and working to support continued collaboration and partnership.
- Introduce a new 'Staff Culture Engagement Forum: Empowering Culture in our Service' – to continually evolve and develop our cultural journey.
- Provide excellent occupational health and welfare support to ensure that Attendance Management within the Service is a positive and supportive process in order to improve attendance.
- Ensure a safe and competent workforce through efficient and effective development, maintenance and circulation of operational policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all relevant operational risk information is collated, recorded, impact assessed and communicated to operational personnel.
- Provide opportunities for learning Welsh and promote activities in line with our commitment to being a bilingual organisation.
- Consult with key stakeholders to develop a design proposal for the new Training and Development Centre resulting in a final plan being submitted to the Fire Authority for approval.
- Deliver the second year of a three-year operational training strategy to all operational staff.
- Cultivate a workplace environment that embraces equality, diversity and inclusion. This will strengthen our ability to deliver a high-quality service and support to the public during emergencies.



- Improve the health, fitness and well-being of staff through the provision of advice and information, active monitoring and education.
- Review the career progression promotion gateways and implement a comprehensive appraisal process integrating 360 degree feedback.
- Prevention staff will receive training and awareness in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Modern Slavery, Child Exploitation and Domestic Violence to provide a more effective service to the communities we serve.
- Business Fire Safety Staff and Operational Firefighters will be trained in accordance with the National Fire Chief's Council Competency Framework for Fire Safety Regulators working towards registration within the Contextualised Auditor's Register.
- Operational staff will receive relevant training and qualifications to enable them to undertake business safety checks in line with nationally agreed guidelines.
- Identify and maximise potential through effective people management and development, leading to a high-performance culture, where people value and respect each other.

These actions will contribute to the following well-being goals;



A resilient Wales



A Wales of cohesive communities



A healthier Wales



A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language



A more equal Wales



A prosperous Wales

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Prevention Principle



Working with partners to help make communities safer.

Reducing risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable, through our established intervention programmes such as Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project.

What do we intend to do during 2024–25?

- Deliver 17,500 Safe and Well Checks across North Wales to those identified as being most vulnerable to fire in the home, keeping people alive and safe from fire.
- Utilise partnership data to refine our risk-based approach to Safe and Well Checks, targeting those over the age of 65 who are most vulnerable from fire in the home.
- Work with our partners to deliver effective Community safety interventions targeting our most vulnerable people in our most challenging areas.
- Develop a new youth initiative to deliver early interventions with effective outcomes, focussing on personal resilience and protective factors amongst children and young people of North Wales.
- Proactively promote road safety education, engaging with partners and carrying out campaigns within the local community, to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads.
- Work closely with external stakeholders to prevent accidental drowning in North Wales, providing consistent guidance for the safe enjoyment and management of activities in, on and around water.
- Review activity monitoring reports products and develop self-service dashboards to support delivery of our prevention, protection and response activities.

These actions will contribute to the following Well-being goals



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A globally
responsible
Wales

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Protection Principle



Making businesses safer together.

Providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection to help ensure the safety of buildings, employees, and customers, thereby supporting businesses to grow. High-risk buildings are prioritised for inspections, contributing to overall public safety.

What do we intend to do during 2024–25?

- Review our current Risk Based Inspection Programme and ensure we have an informed and rationalised regime that is intelligence driven to identify the relevant risk classification for all our premises across North Wales.
- Continue to deliver an intelligence led Risk Based Inspection Programme to reduce injury and death from fires in domestic and non-domestic premises.
- Develop Business engagement through training our staff and share industry advice to reduce incidents of fire.
- Analyse the impact of automatic fire alarms on the use of our resources and their impact in a non-domestic environment.
- Work with local communities across North Wales to reduce the number of Wildfire incidents.
- Adopt the 4Ps approach, Prepare, Pursue, Prevent and Protect, when tackling arson, working closely with Multi-agency partners and the communities we serve.

These actions will contribute to the following Well-being goals



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A globally
responsible
Wales



A prosperous
Wales

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Response Principle



Providing an effective emergency response.

Being ready to respond when you need us: to protect what matters to you, to save lives, reduce harm, and protect homes and businesses.

What do we intend to do during 2024–25?

- Continue to develop an option with staff, stakeholders and the Fire Authority, that delivers the aims and objectives of the Emergency Cover Review for implementation during 2024–25.
- Support our Firefighters to deliver an effective operational response, through the research and development of modern equipment, risk assessments and guidance.
- Cascade the benefits of Microsoft 365 to all of our people in the Service.
- Continue to develop and introduce the Emergency Services Network into North Wales to ensure that we have a secure, robust, interoperable and modern communication system across the region.
- Conduct a review of our specialist vehicles, other than fire engines, that respond to emergencies.
- Develop a new station management framework to support our Managers to deliver an efficient and effective emergency service.
- Embed and enhance the Operational Quality Assurance Process.
- Introduce the National Fire Chiefs Council National Fire Control Guidance in our Joint Control Centre, to ensure strong and resilient fire control arrangements.

These support the following Well-being goals;



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A more equal
Wales

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Service Quality, Service Availability, Fairness, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Our Environment Principle



Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations.

Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.

What do we intend to do during 2024–25?

- Review stock items and develop working practices to minimise waste.
- Develop the Social Values and Sustainable Procurement Strategy.
- Introduce necessary infrastructure for our diesel vehicles to run on Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil, a sustainable alternative with zero Scope 1 carbon emissions.
- Expand the existing Electric Vehicle Charging Points network across our estate.
- Continue to retrofit insulation to our building estate.
- Develop plans and explore funding opportunities to reduce carbon emissions from our buildings to meet Welsh Government’s 2030 Zero Carbon Emissions ambition.
- Monitor and report to Welsh Government our carbon output on Greenhouse gas in respect of energy, water and waste.

These actions will contribute to the following Well-being goals



A resilient
Wales



A Wales of
cohesive
communities



A healthier
Wales



A globally
responsible
Wales

These actions will satisfy the following 2009 Measure Improvement Objectives;

- Strategic Effectiveness, Sustainability, Efficiency and Innovation



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment

Have Your Say

The draft version of this Community Risk Management Implementation Plan under went a period of public consultation from 25th March to 16th June 2024.

Even though the consultation period has closed we are always looking for ways to improve our service and to present information that is meaningful. In order to help us do this we want to ensure your views are considered when delivering our activities and keeping you informed.

So, if you have any comments about this plan, or how we might improve future plans, we would still very much like to hear from you.

Write to us:

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) Fire and Rescue Headquarters
Ffordd Salesbury
St Asaph Business Park
St Asaph
Denbighshire
LL 17 0JJ

Call us:

07787 578386

Send us an email:

OurFivePrinciples@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Request a Safe and Well Check

You can request A safe and well check for yourself or on behalf of someone else by contacting the Service on **0800 169 1234**.

Follow us

 @northwalesfire

 @northwalesfireservice

 @northwalesfire

 @nwalesfireservice



People

Prevention

Protection

Response

Environment





Draft Community Risk Management Plan 2024-29

&

Draft Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024-25

Consultation Report

Contents

Background	2
Introduction	2
Methodology.....	2
Observations	3
Community Risk	4
Next Steps	4
Responses at a Glance	5
Community Risks.....	6
SPOTLIGHT ON ‘OUR PEOPLE PRINCIPLE’.....	7
SPOTLIGHT ON ‘OUR PREVENTION PRINCIPLE’	8
SPOTLIGHT ON ‘OUR PROTECTION PRINCIPLE’	9
SPOTLIGHT ON ‘OUR RESPONSE PRINCIPLE’	10
SPOTLIGHT ON ‘OUR ENVIRONMENT PRINCIPLE’.....	11
Other Areas in Relation to the Service we Provide	12
Equality Issues.....	12
Additional Information	13
Social Media Responses and Comments.....	16
Appendix A	17
Appendix B	20
Appendix C	25
Appendix D.....	29
Appendix E	32
Appendix F.....	37
Appendix G.....	40
Appendix H.....	44

Background

Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, Fire and Rescue services within Wales are required to consult on the arrangements they propose to put in place to secure continuous improvement and the improvement objectives and standards they intend to set themselves.

The duties under the 2009 Measure and the Wellbeing of Future Generation Act 2015 can be discharged through the publication of a single report- Source: Welsh Fire and Rescue Circular W-[FRSC\(2024\)06](#).

The previous three-year Corporate plan (2021-24) had come to the end of its reporting life-span.

During April 2021 the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) approved the 'Community Risk Management Planning' as a Fire Standard for English Fire and Rescue Services.

As part of the '[Fire Standard](#)' a fire and rescue service should 'effectively consult and engage (in line with its governance arrangements) with communities, staff and stakeholders at appropriate stages of the community risk management planning process.

All Fire and Rescue Services within Wales have adopted the NFCC guidelines to publish a CRMP.

The CRMP document tries to identify the expected risks and challenges that the Service may experience within the next five years.

Introduction

The consultation sought views on the proposal to implement five key principles:

- Our People Principle
- Our Prevention Principle
- Our Protection Principle
- Our Response Principle
- Our Environment Principle

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, an Integrated Impact Assessment was completed.

Methodology

Between the 25th March and 16th June, the draft Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2029 and the draft Community Risk Management Implementation Plan were published, in Welsh and English, on the Fire and Rescue website along with links directly to the survey questionnaire.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was also prepared and published in Welsh and English, and there was a specific question about the EqIA in the survey questionnaire.

The best practice adopted during last year's Emergency Cover Review consultation, was again followed, including the Gunning Principles.

The consultation was publicised online, internally on Hwb Tân, on social media and through paid adverts in the written press.

Bi-lingual leaflets bearing a QR Code, facilitating immediate and easy access to the online survey questionnaire, were printed and distributed during Safe and Well Check visits and made available during engagement events.

A dedicated bi-lingual e-mail address was set up to facilitate requests for additional information or hard copy questionnaires. A dedicated mobile telephone number was established to respond to any queries that could not be submitted by e-mail.

Letters, in the Chair's name, were sent to everyone on the Stakeholder Register inviting them to participate.

Face to face engagement was undertaken by the Equality and Diversity Officer.

We can demonstrate that we have engaged with around 70 different groups/partners which comprehensively covers us from 'showing due regard' and legal perspective.

Weekly reviews of the responses submitted, were used to drive additional awareness campaigns in underrepresented Local Authority areas.

In total the consultation survey received a total of **223** responses during the twelve-week period.

221 were completed in English and **2** were completed in Welsh

Observations

There is no doubt that there was a misunderstanding about the nature of the consultation, coming so soon after the largest consultation ever undertaken by the Fire Authority as part of the Emergency Cover Review. However, it remains a statutory requirement under the 2009 Measure to consult annually on improvement objectives and this was explained at the beginning of both the Management Plan 2024/2029 and the Community Risk Implementation Plan 2024/2025.

In light of the financial pressures facing public services and no doubt drawing links between the Emergency Cover Review and funding, there were comments expressing concern at the costs associated with continual consultation exercises.

There was some negativity in relation to both the Environment Principle and the Equality questions, which demonstrates a lack of appreciation of the requirement for the Fire and Rescue Authority to support Welsh Government to attain its net zero carbon targets and the Authority's statutory obligations to comply with the Equality Duty under The Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

Community Risk

People and Response Principles received the most additional comments (109 and 105 respectively) especially around:

Our People Principle	Our Response Principle
Diversity and Inclusion	Station location
Opportunities for young people	Retaining existing fire stations
Language choice	Creating new fire stations

Some of the comments and suggestions received in relation to additional activity were things that the Fire and Rescue Service already do or offer, indicating that the Service may need to promote its activities better or more widely.

For example:

- Our engagement activities with young people.
- Our programme of delivering Safe and Well Checks to those more in need.
- Working with businesses and farming communities.

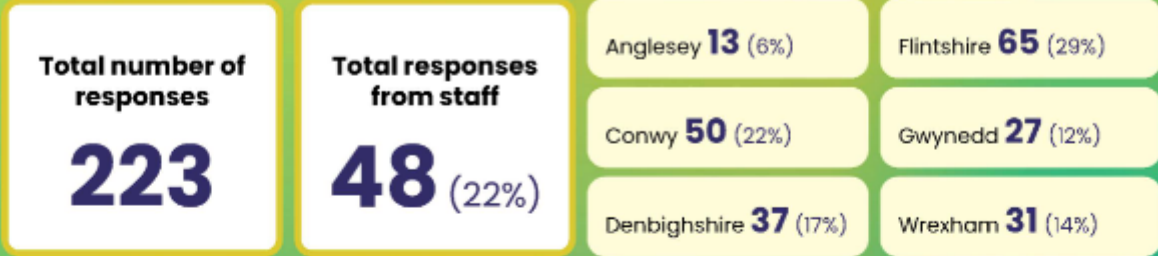
Next Steps

Any typographical errors or other minor formatting issues identified during the consultation period have been rectified. All comments have been reviewed and feedback considered. However, as the survey feedback demonstrates overwhelming support for the Principles and the Well-being and Improvement objectives, there has been no change to the Principles or the objectives.

The contents of this report will be considered by members at the next Fire Authority meeting 15 July 2024.

Responses at a Glance

Community Risk Management Plan Consultation Summary Report



Summary of responses to 'Our Principles'

	Our People Principle Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills.	92%	of responses received 'strongly' or 'somewhat agreed' with this principle.
	Our Prevention Principle Working with partners to help make communities safer.	96%	of responses received 'strongly' or 'somewhat agreed' with this principle.
	Our Protection Principle Making businesses safer together.	97%	of responses received 'strongly' or 'somewhat agreed' with this principle.
	Our Response Principle Providing an effective emergency response.	96%	of responses received 'strongly' or 'somewhat agreed' with this principle.
	Our Environment Principle Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations.	91%	of responses received 'strongly' or 'somewhat agreed' with this principle.



Email Bulletins

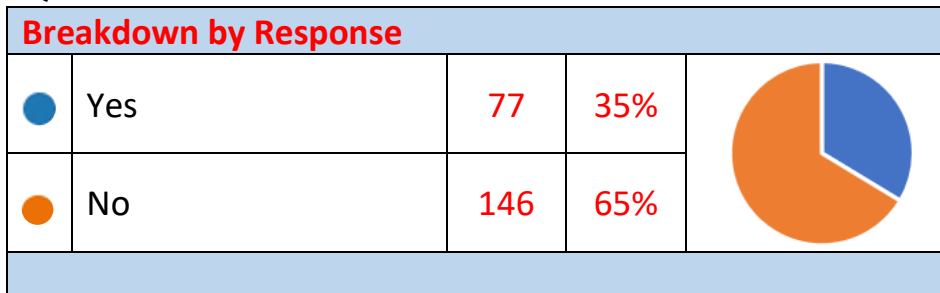
1st English bulletin (at the start): 1298 delivered, 28% unique openings	2nd English bulletin (half way): 1419 delivered, 25% unique openings
1st Welsh bulletin (at the start): 1219 delivered, 30% unique openings	2nd Welsh bulletin (half way): 1216 delivered, 26% unique openings



Community Risks

In our five year plan we highlight the risks we face. Do you feel there are any other risks we should be considering or planning for?

Question 1:



A total of 76 additional comments for this question were received. (See Appendix A)

Question 2: Summary

- Changes to demography – Increasing population; aging population; new housing; people living alone; immigration.
- Changes to infrastructure – Road layout; traffic.
- Changes to environment – climate; flooding.
- Awareness of industrial risks – Factories.
- Advancing technology – solar farms / drones / E-bikes and E-scooters.
- North Wales Fire and Rescue Service – Recruitment; succession planning; staff welfare.

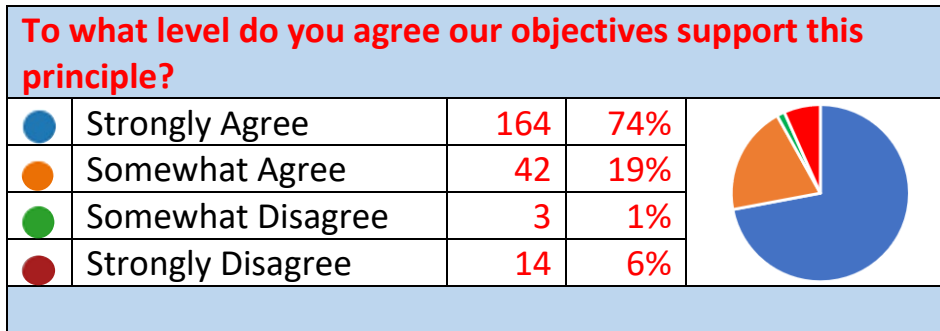


SPOTLIGHT ON ‘OUR PEOPLE PRINCIPLE’

Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills.

Ensuring a highly skilled workforce by recruiting, developing and retaining a motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve.

Question 3:



A total of 116 additional comments for this principle were received. (See Appendix B)

Question 4: Summary

- Our People Principle received the most narrative responses (116), recording a wide range of views.
- It was generally agreed that the health, safety and well-being of the workforce should be a priority, but should not be restricted to operational staff.
- There was divided opinion as to whether firefighters should be recruited solely on their ability to do the job, or to take into consideration equality and diversity characteristics.
- Improve recruitment process. Consider removing entry boundaries (GCSE requirements).
- To continue and improve on our engagement activities with young people, especially when undertaking periods of firefighter recruitment.

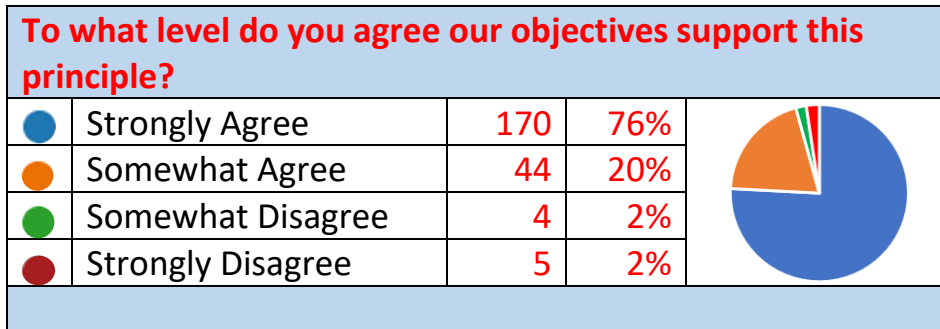


SPOTLIGHT ON 'OUR PREVENTION PRINCIPLE'

Working with partners to help make communities safer.

Reducing risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable, through our established intervention programmes such as Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project.

Question 5:



A total of 104 additional comments for this principle were received. (See Appendix C)

Question 6: Summary

- Overall responses agreed with the 'Prevention Principle'; that it is better to prevent fire from happening in the first place.
- Overall approval of the Safe and Well Check programme.
- Increase the number of fire safety staff to ensure continuation and possible expansion in this area.
- More collaboration.
- More engagement with young people.
- That fire safety staff are able to speak Welsh.

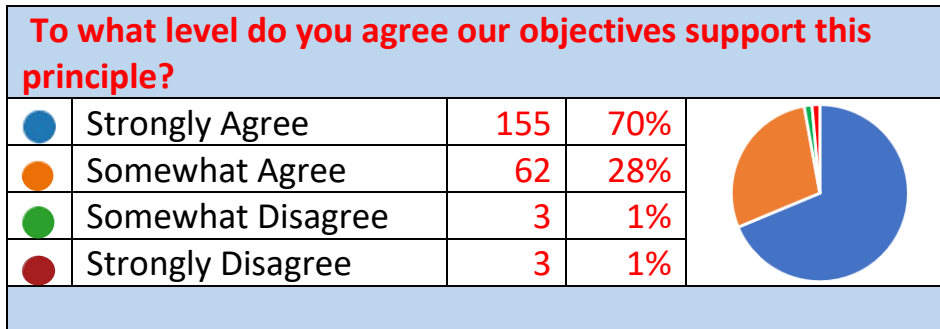


SPOTLIGHT ON 'OUR PROTECTION PRINCIPLE'

Making businesses safer together.

Providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection to help ensure the safety of buildings, employees, and customers, thereby supporting businesses to grow. High-risk buildings are prioritised for inspections, contributing to overall public safety.

Question 7:



A total of 80 additional comments for this principle were received. (See Appendix D)

Question 8: Summary

- Overall responses agreed with the 'Protection Principle', but there should be an increase to staff numbers to support this area of the Service. (Similar to feedback regarding 'Our Prevention Principle').
- To better explain the definition of 'High Risk'.
- To work with businesses in towns.
- To work with farmers.
- Check rented accommodation and ensure land lords take accountability.
- That fire safety staff are able to speak Welsh.
- Business should be held accountable and this should be funded by Business Tax.

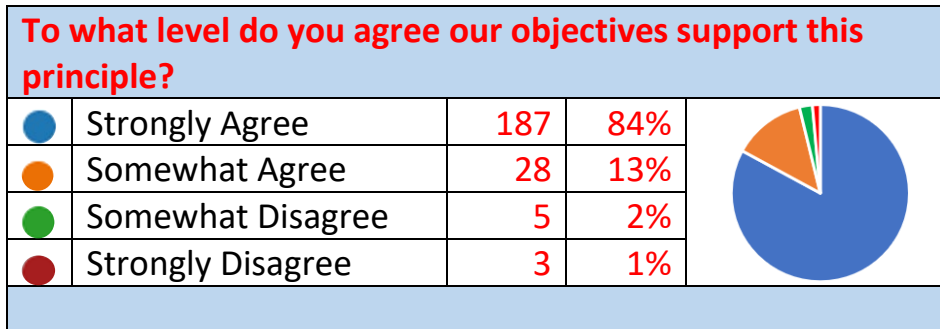


SPOTLIGHT ON ‘OUR RESPONSE PRINCIPLE’

Providing an effective emergency response.

Being ready to respond when you need us: to protect what matters to you, to save lives, reduce harm, and protect homes and businesses.

Question 9:



A total of 113 additional comments for this principle were received. (See Appendix E)

Question 10: Summary

- Overall the responses agreed with the ‘Response Principle’, but with mixed solutions on how this could be best achieved.
- Suggestions included increasing firefighter numbers and looking at changes to operational duty systems.
- Making on-call operational staff feel more valued.
- To look at the location of fire stations.

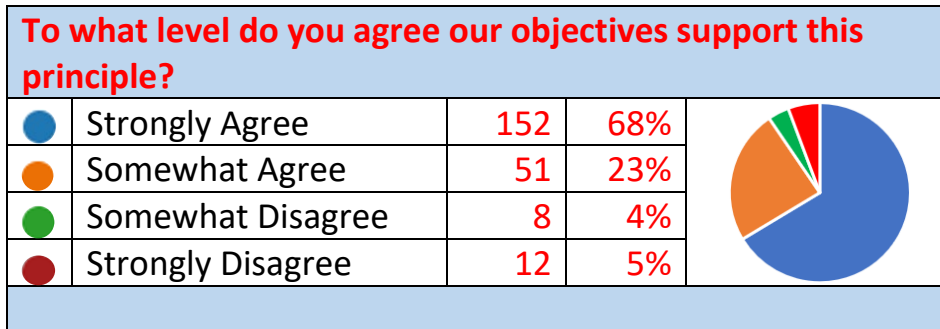


SPOTLIGHT ON 'OUR ENVIRONMENT PRINCIPLE'

Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations.

Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.

Question 11:



A total of 90 additional comments for this principle were received. (See Appendix F)

Question 12: Summary:

- Concerns at the cost and impact on our budget to achieve the aspirations of this principle.
- Comments questioning the reliability of information and guidance concerning climate change.
- Preserving the environment by reducing fires.

Other Areas in Relation to the Service we Provide

Providing a response to the following questions was optional.

Are there any other areas in relation to the services we provide that you would like us to consider?


A total of 96 additional comments for this principle were received. (See Appendix G)

Question 13: Summary

- Volunteering opportunities
- Collaboration with the Welsh Ambulance Service
- Collaboration with St. Johns Ambulance Service
- Work placement opportunities
- Fulltime stations in all areas
- Road Safety

Equality Issues

Question 14 and 15: Are there any other equality issues that we could be thinking about?

Breakdown by Response				
●	Yes	73	33%	
●	No	145	65%	
●	Did not answer	5	2%	

Additional Information

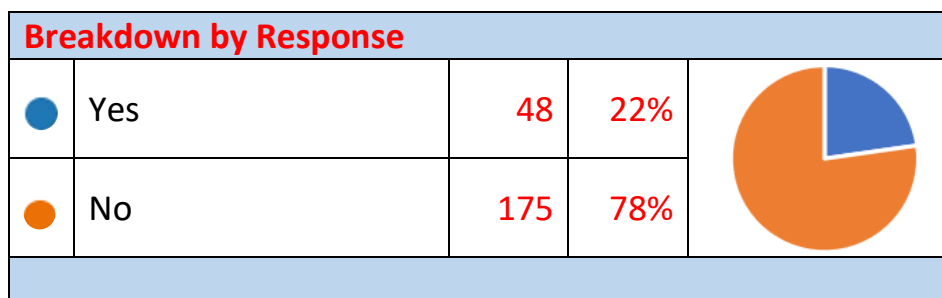
Providing a response to the following questions was optional.

Question 16: If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group please tell us who you represent and where you are based/which area you cover.

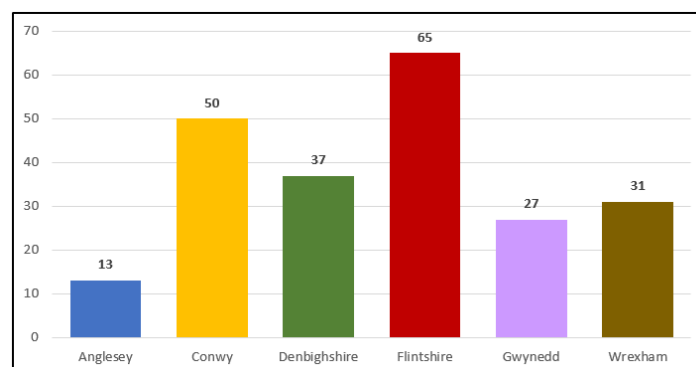
Summary of just some of the local groups that responded.

- Dementia Groups
- Brew and a Biscuits Groups
- Deeside College
- Coleg Cambria
- ESYT Groups
- Knit and Natter Groups

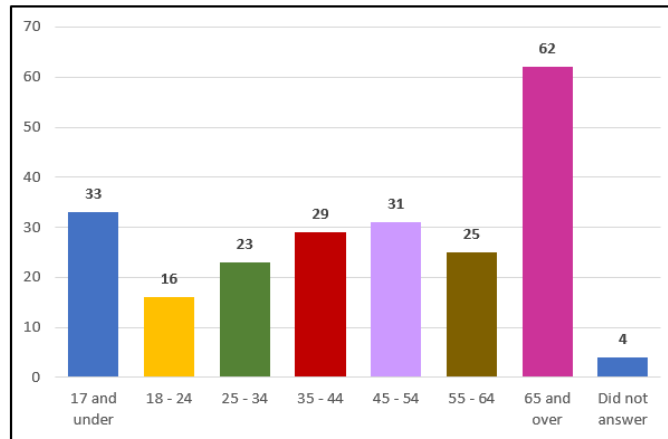
Question 17: Are you an employee of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service?



Question 18: Please choose one of the following to indicate the Local Authority area in North Wales where you live, work or are visiting.



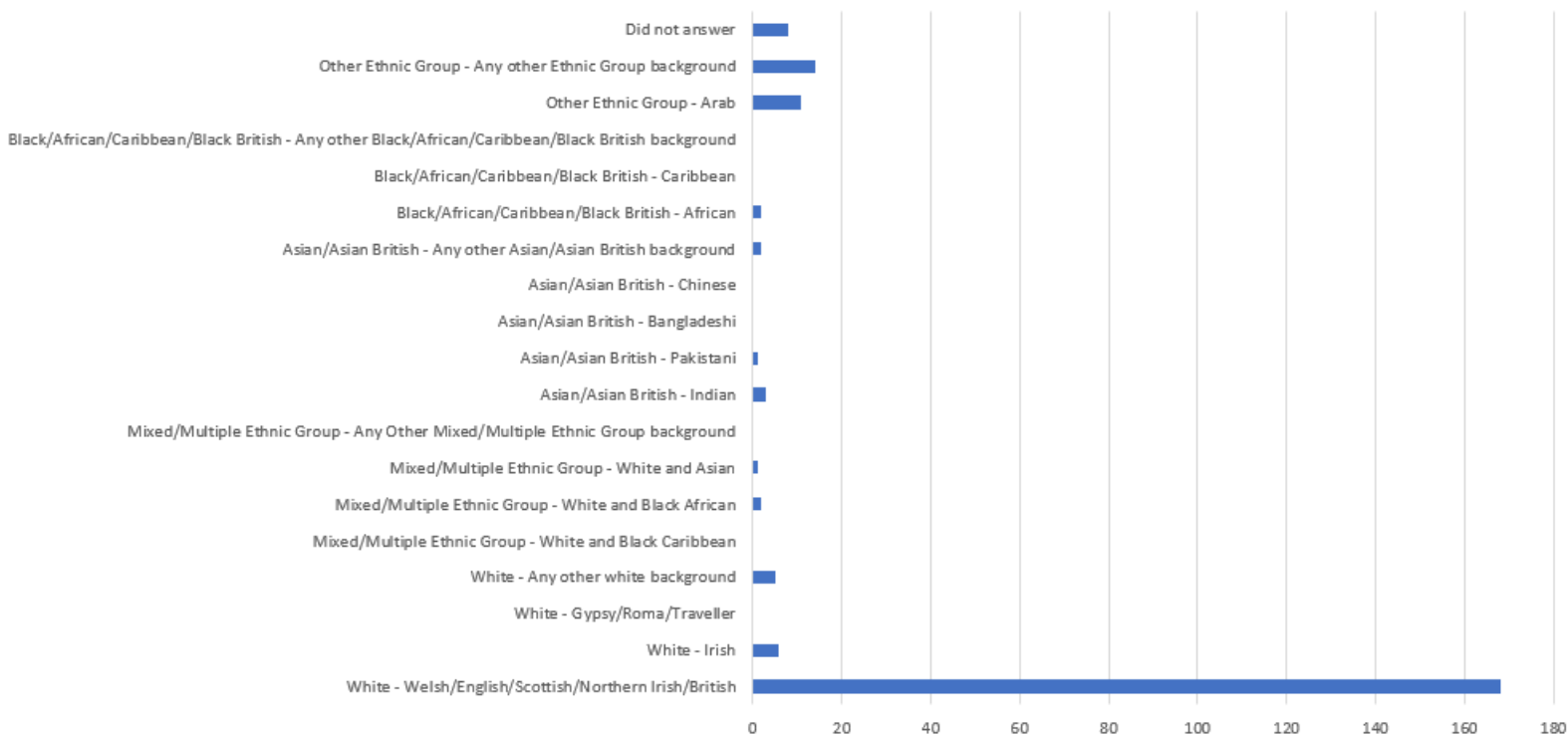
Question 19: Which age group are you?



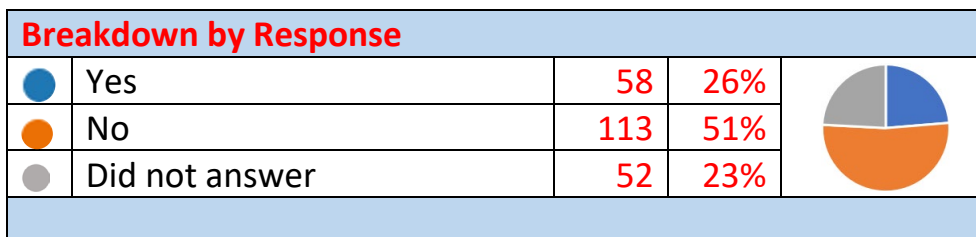
Question 20: Gender – how do you identify?

Breakdown by Response				
●	Male	71	32%	
●	Female	127	57%	
●	Other	4	2%	
●	Did not answer	21	9%	

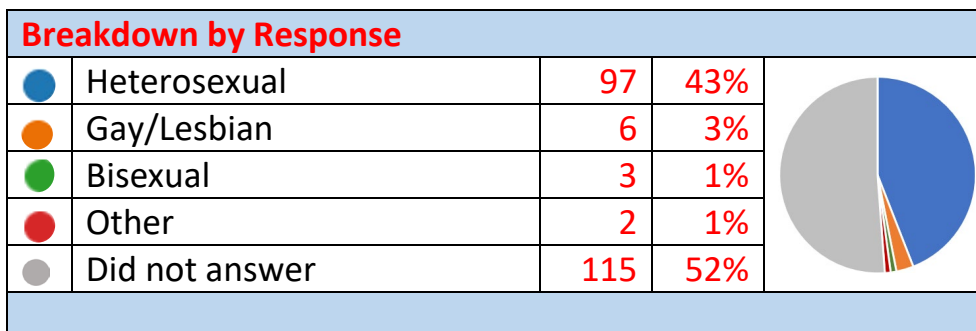
Question 21 and 22: Race/Ethnicity - which of the following best describes you?



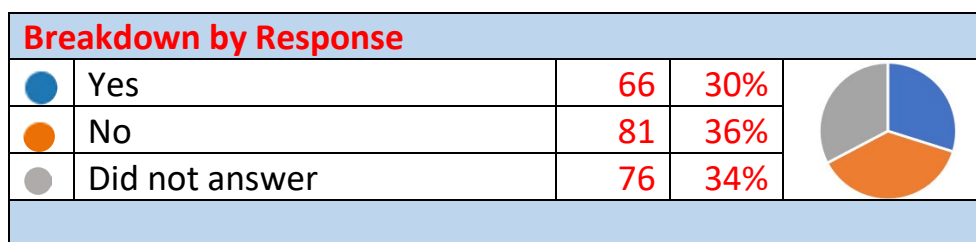
Question 23 and 24: Disability - are you disabled or have a long-term health condition?



Question 25: Sexual Orientation



Question 26 and 27: Religion and/or Belief - do you affiliate with any particular religion, faith or belief system?



Social Media Responses and Comments (See Appendix H)

Posts promoting taking part in the consultation were posted on Facebook and Twitter throughout the consultation period as well as videos from staff explaining how to take part. Paid adverts were also created on Facebook and Instagram targeting public across North Wales encouraging them to take part in the consultation.

Appendix A

Ref	OTHER RISKS – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1	The biggest risk I see with NWFRS is that you are constantly wasting time and resources on political campaigns and EDI initiatives and you are driving all the decent firefighters away
2	Health and fitness of the workforce and the community you serve
3	Wasting too much budget and running out
4	No response given
5	Drones. Impact of surface ceiling of land because of new build housing increasing problems with flash floods. Drains can't cope
6	Demographics of the local area, N Wales has an aging population and the impacts that this has on potential staffing and succession planning. This also has an impact on potential candidates working for the on - call particularly in rural areas which is seeing an increase in second home ownership and local people looking elsewhere to live and work.
7	terrorist attacks
8	Demographics, doesn't mention concerns with staffing and succession planning etc
9	Feel the risks that are identified are operationally focused, but less consideration towards the risk to the Organisation in having the right people in place to deliver the services, e.g. recruiting of the specialist skill sets to drive the service forward
10	Very operational focused. Suitable resilient workforce
11	Community Risk Management Plan 2024-29 [REDACTED]
12	Ageing population
13	Increased traffic in Wales not just affecting the tourism towns but the main artery of towns along the A55 corridor. Particularly Flintshire. Increased new housing booms to the Deeside and Rhyl towns.
14	Maybe more cover in or around our bigger towns as Rhyl and Wrexham have huge residential and commercial development over the next 5 years
15	deaths due to lack of cover/budget
16	No down grade of fire cover in whole time and day crewed stations that would worsen fire cover and turn out times for communities they serve
17	The increase in population in higher risk areas.
18	Water rescue jobs
19	Road safety, especially motor cyclists
20	Bikers and caravans
21	Recruitment appears to be a concern.
22	Your list of work is very comprehensive
23	Your plan mentions wildfire, but what about the causes of wildfire. Thousands of campers visit north Wales each week and often camp fires are made increasing risk somewhat. Although most people are careful, are the fire service doing any prevention work to advise safe practice and highlight areas [of greater risk] that people should avoid?
24	You would expect more industry risks to be included in a risk plan. There is a local paint factory [on the outskirts of Bethesda] which would be damaging if it went up [went on fire].
25	Solar farms. Lots of farmers looking to diversify and they are considering turning large fields into big solar farms, not sure if you know about these developments [and potential risks]
26	Unrelated electric scooters
27	Risk of increased demands on our services owing to greater pressures on NHS / Ambulance Service
28	Possibility more focus on drowning [water safety]
29	Specific prevention activity for refugee and asylum seekers. New arrivals not aware of the risks here.
30	Can your service consider people that are new [and emerging] because translation and interpretation is vitally important to communicate and relay important messages.

31	Not sure
32	As a youth worker, it would be good to see more public services linking in with us [EYST Charity] and you can see the massive impact we have on the young people and their families we support. We seriously lack funding, but any help you [NWFRS] can give will be helpful. Using fire station community spaces? fire staff organising activities for young people. this engagement can help you find out what are the risks and how you can tackle them.
33	More emphasis on core skills and fitness and much less or rather zero of the political PC rubbish
34	Ageing population and the lack of mobility in older age.
35	The elderly. We are an ageing population where older people are isolated and alone.
36	E bikes in the news this morning
37	Recruitment in rural areas
38	E bikes
39	Specific areas at an increased risk of wildfire could be highlighted to raise public awareness. NWFRS could really improve the way it raises awareness, communicates with public and engages with people in general. Online comms doesn't work!
40	E-bikes are a worry. In the news this morning family died in house fire caused by e-bike
41	E-bikes and e-scooters are a huge problem that society does not acknowledge. Unregulated technologies are risky.
42	Older people with mobility issues. People that use electric chairs, storage and charging them worries me.
43	People falling into water, too many people/families take risks in the sea in bad weather. People walking dogs along train tracks. A55 getting too busy, especially during the holiday season. Hot weather people get ill.
44	E-bikes and dangers with the battery. People driving whilst using their mobile phones. People speeding in town centres and built up areas. Reduced access to swimming lessons means more people cant learn to swim.
45	Consider people who live alone, especially people who have lost their husbands [or wife's/partners]
46	As a former firefighter myself, NWFRS can come along way. I am proud you haven't closed any fire stations. It was a worry when Conwy was being discussed [in ECR in 2023].
47	There doesn't seem to be anything about actual firefighting skills and development
48	There are risks associated with motor cycles passing through parts of north wales which are still a concern despite signage. The fire service should work with the police to do further work to ensure fire service staff go to fewer incidents which can enable them to focus on fires and other emergencies.
49	Agriculture, tractors getting bigger and taking more room up on the roads. Fast traffic on roads, especially A5 between Bangor, Pont and Capel Curig, people outside the area travelling on route to Snowdon.
50	I believe another Emergency Cover Review will be conducted, it is important to stress how important Conwy Fire Station is to this area and everyone I come in to contact supports the decision to keep the fire station open.
51	Tourists camping, BBQ fires and wildfire.
52	I don't feel we cover water safety as well as we could, although the stats of drowning are fairly low, we don't really cover water safety in our safety messages. I don't think our service evaluate workforce data/feedback as well as we could do across most roles, but especially regarding on-call firefighters. Our service fails to engage effectively with tourists and new emerging groups such as refugees and asylum seekers. Naturally, community engagement is best when you work in partnership with other agencies/organisations, and we need to widen the partners to engage effectively. Our internal communication is not very good, especially concerning on-call teams who rarely know anything. Different approaches are required to communicate with different people across the service. A complete review of communications is required and it would be a starting point if the communication

	department develop a plan and seek feedback on their proposed activity for the coming year and this way they would soon find out gaps and opportunities.
53	Electrical devises, continuing issues with white goods and new emerging technologies.
54	Increased flooding risk. There are so many people we come across that can't swim!
55	Consider any specific risk to women, especially young women that are vulnerable.
56	House fires because of people smoking [In other rooms within multi-occupied properties]
57	Fires involving mobile phone & hair straighteners. Everyone has a mobile phone now. People leave them on charge.
58	Continue to engage with dementia support groups and families to document risk associated with increasing issues surrounding dementia related illness.
59	People are living longer, not sure if there are risks that go with that.
60	Workplace accidents. Car crashes. Accidents on farms and building sites.
61	People living with health conditions and dementia. People in older age groups. People with poor mobility.
62	Growing and ageing population. There will be more older people in the future and risks may increase due to their health.
63	The routine collection of dementia data is poor, but the statistics that are available suggest dementia is on the increase. The importance of knowing the number of those living with dementia is vitally important because when dementia kicks in, a person can become so much more vulnerable, get lost, leave cooking unattended, forget where they are, not see danger in the same way.
64	Specific risks that impact on older people when they are starting to show signs of regression (i.e. Onset dementia). In our community centre, we see a lot of people that are lonely and they don't really go out much apart from attending our weekly meeting. Women tend to live longer than men, so it a typical household, more older women are likely to be living alone.
65	Increased risk of falls amongst older people. Lack of dropped kerbs and dangerous driving [speeding] when crossing the road.
66	Older people looking after grandchildren presents some risk. People swimming in the river dee.
67	Be prepared for more [Older] people falling in the future, especially if they live in flats. Various local businesses have a step as you enter their premises and this create a trip hazard, especially for older people.
68	The plan covers most risks. Climate change and risks that come with that.
69	RTCs caused by people on phones whilst driving their cars. Chatting to others today, huge issue with tractor drivers in Ruthin area
70	Staff wellbeing
71	There is a risk of not attracted talented people. There are so many career opportunities available to people these days, you [employers] need to really sell the job to people i.e. Young people, people thinking of changing careers.
72	Impact of the 20mph on response times.
73	How do you consider risk to people that have had a stroke?
74	Partnership data relating to historical reported incidents, yes, but consider specific risks to new and emerging communities such as refugees and asylum seekers that move in to the area with very short notice. We [EYST charity] support many families and public services could do more with early interventions.
75	Supporting care homes with prevention interventions can be one way to engage and communication with people. Disabled people who lose their independence often feel forgotten.
76	Championing human rights and trans rights in the workplace. Failure to do this will add to the pain many trans people experience when accessing public services.

Appendix B

Ref	OUR PEOPLE PRINCIPLE – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1	You need to work harder to retain RDS, please look at providing a pathway into RDS to wholetime. this is constantly spoken about but it seems to fall on deaf ears
2	They don't need to be 'champions of diversity' what utter nonsense, they just need to be skilled and competent
3	You rank skill and bilingualism above health. Health and well-being should be a priority for any person
4	Focus on skills and competency not quotas of females and minorities
5	Diversity driven recruitment and striving for equality of outcome are very much the wrong way to recruit and build a robust workforce. Recruitment should be a number. Not a name, sex or background affair. Best highest performing people for the job.
6	People should continue to be at the heart of all we do
7	You don't need to speak Welsh to put out a fire!!
8	Would be encouraging to see something about your commitment to the health and safety of all your staff
9	The bilingual requirement is limiting the size of your talent pool and creating bias towards Welsh speakers. There is absolutely no need or requirement to speak Welsh to provide a good fire service.
10	Recruit people from all backgrounds is essential. Make sure your service employs people with skills to engage effectively with young people.
11	More diversity needed
12	Recruiting the best available should be the priority not meeting numbers and tick sheets for bilingual speakers or solely to champion diversity
13	Teamwork to support individuals in the workplace
14	People should have some necessary skills, but there should be able to be room to improve. Remove GCSE requirements when you recruit as this is a barrier for people who underachieve at school
15	It is good the fire service come to the college to visit young people and talk to us about careers and your future plans.
16	Good the fire service visits us at the college.
17	Not enough diversity currently.
18	Logical, but how do you intend to get more women to join
19	More inclusion of Corporate Staff, Corporate Staff make up a large part of the workforce yet tend to be overlooked.
20	EDI, Modern Slavery, DV training should be offered to wider staff other than Prevention staff
21	I am aware that the service is working hard to improve wellness, However, I would say this requires more education. I have discussed my mental health with Members of HR and my Watch Managers, and even SM I have been sent links to Website and that been about it which shows how little they understand mental health. Also, the email Address for Bluelightinfo@mind doesn't work.
22	Why would you champion diversity, what's that got to do with the fire service? Also, why bother with a bilingual service when everyone speaks English and so few speak Welsh.
23	no diversity, rubbish.
24	Greater engagement with local companies and businesses to encourage them to release their staff so that they can provide cover during the daytime - for example the Ifor Williams factory in Corwen
25	The training area seems particularly important here, and especially vital is training colleagues as they move up the seniority scale to think like managers.
26	Put stations where the risk is and provide equal fire cover across North Wales
27	Recruiting only the best for the job.
28	More emphasis should be on the best performing individual and have nothing to do with race, sex or any other diversity agenda.

29	How important is the bilingual? I know many welsh residents that don't speak Welsh. Appreciate the need to prioritise and retain the language but feel firefighting skills and capabilities outweigh this need for this.
30	Recruit people from all age groups.
31	I want a permanent, locally based fire brigade available 24/7, not have to rely on a station in Wrexham, who might be on a call out to somewhere much further away, resulting in a very long wait. I want Deeside to be manned 24/7.
32	You should review the way you recruit because you currently fail to communicate with some groups. I have never heard about your recruitment activities and i am really active on all social media platforms and i still purchase the local newspapers and I have never seen any adverts for firefighter roles which says a lot really.
33	No
34	The current staffing locations are right for those areas any improvement in areas that require it should not be at the expense of other areas
35	You should focus on employing strong fit local lads
36	Why are you wasting time on this woke nonsense?
37	Best people for the job regardless of background
38	Important to promote part time roles to ensure Bala [fire station] can respond effectively
39	Your plan does not outline how you successfully enhance recruitment strategies to maintain a diverse and skilled workforce. To achieve this requires investment and commitment. Your plan is more of a vision or goal than a plan
40	It is good to see more women in the fire service [In recent years].
41	People that want to join will join surely. It is good that you are encouraging people from different communities to consider the job.
42	You are a good service so why wouldn't you be able to get [attract] people.
43	You should value each other
44	Having a skilled workforce that are bilingual is important to us.
45	Diversity of skills is a strength.
46	Yes.
47	Its good to know people from all races work in the fire service
48	Strongly agree with your vision to [develop workforce] reflect the community
49	Sound positive
50	I agree
51	Break down barriers for ethnic minorities to join the fire service. Ethnic staff could help deliver more inclusive services
52	Yes.
53	Strongly agree
54	You need different minds!
55	Be trans inclusive
56	I agree there needs to be more diversity needed in our public services
57	Friends who have applied say the recruitment process is slow and communication is poor.
58	What on earth are you doing wasting time on this? What does this have to do with firefighting?
59	The Welsh language is important
60	Yes, ensuring you have a highly skilled workforce will help champion the diversity of the community, but how will you do this? You don't appear to have any ethnic diversity [in your workforce], ' See it to it and all that'...
61	You should open up your 'experience days' to people under 18, this would help younger people have a go.
62	Look after older people as their needs change

63	Strongly agree
64	Bilingual isn't really vital in Llandudno
65	Employ the best people.
66	Strongly agree with opening up to diverse groups, but welsh language is not a priority, best skills should be the main priority.
67	Recruitment local people with local knowledge
68	More women required
69	I agree mostly, getting people from different backgrounds has its benefits. However, you will never achieve diversity because some people you are trying to attract don't speak welsh which you clear demand people have on their CV. There is too much focus on welsh language which can put people off from applying for roles with NWFRS
70	It's good to hear your recruiting more women and further work is planned.
71	Your plan could provide more information about how it will retain an ageing workforce, especially operational firefighters that are now required to work longer and well into their 50s or early 60s.
72	Strongly agree, welsh language is important in some parts of Conwy, not so important in other areas. It will be interesting how you retain people with disabilities because the number of disabled people that are unemployed is unacceptable and employers need to do more to support people that are 'different'.
73	Recruitment should filter out the time wasters. If your availability isn't very good, recruit people that won't let you down. Increase your wages
74	Concerning that more women don't work in the fire service. Yes, a few more are joining but not enough compared to the NHS or police.
75	Recruit more people in certain areas.
76	Target people who want to do the job, don't waste too much time on folk who want to be a nurse or chef. Some people have made up their minds.
77	The average age of firefighters is too old, you will have too many retiring in one go, get young ones in now so you can train them up ready. draw on the skills of the older firefighters.
78	All staff should receive the training on EDI etc., not just prevention staff. It's also very unclear how this contributes to a Resilient Wales. It would be useful to have a sentence on how the principle applies to each well-being goal you have listed for each principle
79	No reason to dwell on bilingual as not much talking done when rescuing people
80	You need strong fit local men - that should be your principle as strong men are who I'd want if my house was on fire
81	Your principle looks very polished, but in reality how will you actually do this. Your plan doesn't explain how you will achieve this goal. There is clearly an inability to recruit people in some areas which you highlighted in your review last year.
82	Recruitment priorities in Conwy and any other areas where you experience challenges with recruitment [of firefighters].
83	It is good to hear more women are joining the fire service, about time. Women did amazing things when the men were away at war!
84	Being highly skilled will help you do your job well
85	I completely agree the service needs to broaden the pool of people it attracts because the FRS has so much to offer. I don't feel we celebrate our successes enough and if we communicated better with our staff, then they could be part of the solution by promoting what we are doing well. So many of our staff are on-call and they don't know what is going on daily, weekly and sometimes on-call staff know any development from a strategic perspective. I believe there could be better CPD for our staff and we serious lack in soft skill development. An investment in the L&D side of things will help hugely, but I believe some middle managers don't support their staff to complete training, so SLT don't always

	get to hear what staff at the bottom of the organisation want and need. At the moment, trust is low so people don't speak up in staff surveys etc.
86	We [ethnic minority groups] can provide a different perspective and experiences.
87	Recruitment of people from diverse backgrounds will help you achieve this priority.
88	I am not so sure many women will want to be a firefighter or see this [FRS] as a career choice. Taster days would be fun.
89	It would be great to see more women in the fire service. I have never seen a female firefighter.
90	Welsh is so hard to learn. This may be a barrier for people.
91	It will be good if workforce can speak languages
92	I strongly agree.
93	I will think about this.
94	Reduce entry age to 16 or 17 can help get more people in.
95	Try to make sure you develop a highly skilled workforce that are aware of dementia and training can help you broaden knowledge.
96	I believe firefighters work longer now, that can help retain the knowledge.
97	I would encourage you to recruit directly from the military, they are disciplined and they will hit the ground running.'
98	Have you tried to recruit young farmers
99	I agree with [REDACTED], recruiting from the armed forces [i.e. Army, RAF, Navy] will filter out some good ones. Nobody wants to do 20 years in the army, so they will jump at the chance of joining the fire brigade.
100	I hope you are geared up to support people with dementia because people living with dementia are getting younger and you [employers] should be aware of this if you already know.
101	As a service North Wales Fire and Rescue do a tremendous amount for staff health and wellbeing – it would be good to reflect this in this people principle section of the plan. We support the continuous review of recruitment strategies to maintain a diverse and skilled workforce. As an anchor institution, the Fire Service should consider different approaches to engage and recruit people in areas of social deprivation and protected characteristic groups. Pleased to see the inclusion of two further Fire Safety Staff Surveys following on from implementing the recommendations from the 2023 Fire Family Staff Survey.
102	Your plan to consult with key stakeholders to develop a training centre appears very sensible. By having nice facilities and a positive place to work, people feel proud to go to work.
103	Strongly agree to all.
104	Yes.
105	Ensure your workforce is equipped to meet the demands and risks older people will present. Currently services are so under resourced, we must all be prepared to cater to an older population as people live longer. Co-responding with ambulance services may become far more regular.
106	You have an opportunity to transfer people into different roles to maximise skills.
107	Your experience days are fab. Get to see what firefighting is all about. Good that diversity is being taken seriously and people are treated on their own merit.
108	There is comprehensive cover in most areas. It would be good to see fulltime jobs down the north wales coast in the future.
109	Recruitment of people from all backgrounds. It was useful to attend your experience day today. It was useful to know what the firefighter role is all about and also see what other jobs you have.
110	Specific engagement [positive action] will help build meaningful relationships with groups. This was done in the NHs many years ago and they were great at recruiting people.
111	I strongly agree you need to develop a highly skilled workforce, but the Welsh language is a certain barrier to recruitment. I have seen this in the NHS, where in fact they have stopped looking at welsh language requirements for specific roles because they were not recruiting successfully. In some areas

	Welsh is spoken, but it very rarely required in Saltney and surrounding areas. Advertise your offer much better, your range of roles is not well known in the community. Other public services have the same issue. The NHS can teach you [The fire service] a lesson in how to recruit people.
112	I am interested to learn how the impact of the 20mph limit on your recruitment of people living in and around fire stations. I think lobbying should remove the 20mph in some areas. [20mph] Outside and entering Buckley does not make sense and this surely impacts on the fire engine getting to places.
113	Do you educate staff about communicating with people with a disability and those who have had a stroke?
114	Lots of unemployment [in the area], an opportunity to recruit good people that just haven't been given a chance.
115	By recruiting people from the middle east and different backgrounds breaks down barriers, ensure you [NWFRS] are culturally competent and communication will improve.
116	Your organisation is visible allies of LGBTQ+ rights and inclusion. This visibility will help people want to work for you.

Appendix C

Ref	OUR PREVENTION PRINCIPLE – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1	Need more staff to carry out safe and well checks
2	the move to a more preventative approach from our service over recent years should continue to be a focus
3	You CANNOT prevent incidents T which you may be required to attend by leaflets & training vulnerable people
4	Prevention is better and cheaper than reaction. It is important to plan ahead.
5	Your plan to target most vulnerable makes sense
6	Only achievable providing 24/7 cover is available in ALL areas particularly those with the largest populations and Business Parks/Industrial Estates etc
7	important to have plans in place to keep vulnerable people safe
8	Your prevention work looks amazing, but you could do far more to involve young people, especially in areas like Deeside where so many young people could get involved with activities
9	A collective view in our group that public services can do more to engage young people.
10	Recruit people that know the community. Do you have enough prevention staff? You seem very low on numbers compared to other public services.
11	Not clear how the work of other departments linking their work to this principle?
12	I believe we already do this well and the more we can do the better
13	Phoenix project is good but the safe and well checks when not requested are a waste of time and money
14	Employ a greater number of specialist Home Fire Safety advisers to carry out the SAWC's. I would like to see area based Rural safety advisers to engage with landowners and the farming community
15	Reducing cover in busy areas with the higher rates of issues due to deprivation, substance abuse and so on is non sensical.
16	I think it's more important the right level of skill and number of officers is the priority for prevention
17	Please can we you develop a cadet's programme in Deeside. Hugely populated area and cadets would help develop young people and there are volunteers that would help.
18	Your safety messages are really important, especially your road safety work. the 20mph really helps keep drivers safe, but also cyclists. In Mold and Northop the roads are really narrow so road safety helps prevent incidents for sure. People walking on roads has reduced, not if you had anything to do with this.
19	Prevention is an important part of fire cover but should replace risk-based response
20	no
21	Focus on saving lives
22	Just prepare for incidents, this is another waste of time
23	Safe and well checks are highly regarded in the community
24	Can you continue to deliver safe and well checks, especially to people with onset dementia
25	Full support for your biker down sessions
26	Your biker down provision sounds good. Better promotion of this provision is required because i hadn't heard of it before today. How are you promoting it?
27	Safe and well checks really help keep people safe
28	You appear to adopt a data driven approach which is logically and sensible. Your website and communications could do far more to promote your prevention work. Very little is known about your prevention, youth or safeguarding work, so this should be a priority going forward.
29	Your service does a fantastic job keeping people safe. Safe and well checks are important to us.
30	We received a safe and well check a few years ago and we found the experience very positive. The fire alarms you installed are very good.

31	Camp fire safety advice as discussed in the first part of this survey. Safe and well is an important service.
32	There is a general consensus that safe and well checks are important and highly valued amongst the group.
33	Keep doing safe and well checks.
34	You have a good range of prevention activities. I didn't know you organise youth [provision]. You could promote this better because there are lots of children with little opportunities in the area. Not everyone wants to play rugby.
35	Prevention is better than response.
36	Vitally important your staff can communicate in Welsh
37	Good to see your service engage with us [ethnic groups]
38	Yes
39	Prevention helps protect [us]
40	Didn't know you install fire alarms. Better promotion of this service is required
41	You could sponsor youth groups to help cohesion and safety. Safety presentations on BBQ dangers. Use us [EYST youth] to deliver presentations
42	I agree
43	Yes, but not everyone will want to join [the fire service]. But it's good to be getting out there
44	Yes. your safe and well visits sound very impactful.
45	Strongly agree
46	Prevention is more effective than the cure!
47	Your community engagement is good. You have done a lot of partnership work with us [Unique Transgender] and this helps you speak to people you need to speak to. Continue the work and the trans community will trust you. Not much trust for the public services as a whole.
48	Safe and well checks appear very popular amongst the network. I have never heard of them before today.
49	What other prevention work are you doing?
50	In principle yes, your safe well checks help ensure fire alarms are installed and people know what to do [in an emergency situation], but what happens then, how to do check these people again [duration of time between checks is not clear]. Shouldn't your criteria be wider to protect more people. employ more people if required and state your business case to the government if you need to. This is what we do all the time in Youth Work
51	Your community engagement is good and we value you listening to us [Brew & Biscuit Group]
52	Strongly agree
53	I am a huge supporter of safe and well checks.
54	Safe and well are important
55	Safe and well checks is a special service you provide.
56	Safe and wells are valuable
57	Keep people safe
58	Absolutely vital service you provide to the public.
59	I had a SAW check [last year] and it was a very positive experience
60	Safe and wells appear popular amongst the group. It is great that phoenix provision takes place. More phoenix sessions [in other areas] would add value.
61	Your established prevention interventions are well respected, especially your Safe and Well checks. You can certainly do more to promote safety amongst older people, apart from you [redacted] we don't see anyone else [from North Wales FRS].
62	There is a strong consensus that Safe and Well checks work well. Can't think of anything else at the moment.
63	SAW

64	SAW save lives. Be consistent in your messages. Don't use the chain on your door so you can escape. [REDACTED] said she had a check [SAW] and she wasn't told to lock her door.
65	Strong support to continue and grow SAW provision.
66	SAW do work. More can be done to promote other risks, do more in schools and workplaces.
67	Again, unclear how this contributes to a Resilient Wales. It also probably does apply to a More Equal Wales? It would also be good to see objectives about reaching out to seldom-heard communities and embedding EDI in this work too
68	Does Phoenix actually achieve anything?
69	Again, your plan doesn't outline how your service will actually reduce risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable. Safe and wells are not reaching people effectively and you rely far too much on other public services to refer people when they are under resourced themselves. Your service clearly doesn't invest in the relevant areas and more planning is required to target people that you class as vulnerable. I work in Wrexham and I come across hundreds of people each month that are vulnerable and your service, along with Wrexham Council fail to reach them in any way. Major failings.
70	Broaden your road safety work to cover tractors, work with farmers to get them to pull over. Different generation, they [Farmers] always used to pull over, they cause people to overtake and take risks.
71	Maximise the potential to involve youths and young people in promoting safety messages and prevention activities.
72	Work with us [EYST Youth Charity]. Tell us how to stay safe.
73	Speaking to the group [here today], the installation of fire alarms [SAW] is very popular and the service you provide makes a difference. Although, there people that don't attend this group that can benefit [from a safe and well] so it's really about how you will engage with those people isn't it.
74	It is good to support people in this way.
75	Prevention activity can help reduce risk
76	In my view we do a really good job at preventing so many different incidents, but there is more we can do. Water safety risks are evident, but we don't link in with relevant partners to raise awareness of the dangers of paddleboards in adverse weather, windy condition or when the tide has turned. I believe some wholtime staff could do more Safe and Well Checks and this would reduce the demand on the small fire safety team. Local watches could build better relationships with local community groups and when relationships are developed, store contact details in a central location so this information can be used to promote future campaigns and recruitment, logical and easy to implement and over time genuine intelligence will be captured.
77	We [Ethnic minority groups] can help public services promote their work within different communities that are seldom heard.
78	Reducing risks to our communities. This can be partly achieved by working with charities like EYST.
79	Fire alarms are great because they let you know when there is a fire.
80	Interventions are good
81	I strongly agree.
82	Could charities help install the fire alarms for you. Some charities are trusted within the community.
83	You do great work to reduce risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable. Keep doing the dementia walks and come and visit us anytime.,
84	Your prevention work is useful and makes a difference.
85	Deeside [Firefighters] came to our house a few years ago to fit some fire alarms.
86	Could you link in with the post office to send out information [safety messages]
87	Free fire alarms.
88	The dementia walks are an effective way to communicate safety advice to me and the rest of the group.

89	Fire Service staff have a unique opportunity delivery 17,500 Safe and Well Checks per annum. We would encourage you to continue to Make Every Contact Count (MECC) when carrying out Safe and Well Checks by embedding health questions / discussion prompts within the visit such as smoking, alcohol, diet. Ensure equality monitoring for all Safe and Well Checks is carried out and recorded to provide robust evidence of how the Fire Service is engaging groups most at risk. The fire service should consider how it engages with vulnerable groups including the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, Asylum Seekers and Refugees, we would encourage the continuation of the safety education messages including road safety and water safety and value the input of the Fire Service to the Public Service Boards across North Wales.
90	I like the prevention plan. Delivering Safe and Well Checks to people who are most vulnerable, but i feel you need to also focus on people who are in the early stages of being vulnerable as well. That is real prevention and our community group in Saltney can assist with referring people when we see a change in them.
91	Strongly agree to all.
92	Yes.
93	Ensure your workforce is equipped to meet the demands and risks older people will present. Prevention activity may reflect the increasing risk of falls and illness amongst older people. Currently services are so under resourced, we must all be prepared to cater to an older population as people live longer.
94	Safe and well provision.
95	I didn't know firefighters go out to people's houses. This must be rewarding and clearly helps to save lives.
96	It is good that firefighters visit people in their homes to prevent fires. It is interesting to learn firefighters work with partners to promote programmes.
97	Lack of public transport to go out, which is leaving people feeling isolated in their homes. People not using their heating because of energy costs increasing, people feeling unwell and living is damp conditions. Deprived areas.
98	In the supporting information, you delivered on average 15,000 safe and wells checks between 2019 and 2023, but you have only stated you will deliver 17,000 checks going forward. This is a low target when you consider COVID-19 restrictions were in place during this period and surely more checks can be achieved, especially in the East [Deeside, Garden City, Queensferry, Queens Park], where you have the greatest need in terms of population and deprivation.
99	Who do you consider the most vulnerable? You don't clearly state who these people are. The fireman told me older people are often categorised as most vulnerable which is good to hear, but some of us are far more vulnerable than others.
100	I strongly advice training [your staff] on subjects such as delivering services to people that have experienced a stroke.
101	The installation of fire alarms is a lifesaving service and I am delighted to see this service is included in your plan.
102	We [EYST charity] can help you spread your prevention safety materials to families we support. Very often families [Refugees & asylum seekers] don't know all the dangers, so they can be very vulnerable in terms of risk.
103	NWFRS could do more to engage with people living in care homes and care in general. Very few projects focus on people living in care settings, despite them being a vulnerable group.
104	You attend pride events and attend our Unique sessions. I trust your colleagues across the patch are also engaging and actively supporting.

Appendix D

Ref	OUR PROTECTION PRINCIPLE – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1	You are an EMERGENCY SERVICE!
2	Not sure that staff from fire stations do enough visits to businesses
3	Your protection department does not bother to reply to concerns raised by members of the public... I had to raise my issue with a senior manager and log a complaint just to get a simple response.
4	Keep businesses safe. Dodgy landlords about.
5	Keep an eye on care homes and how they store electric devises and scooters etc.
6	important businesses keep people safe to avoid disasters
7	Businesses safe.
8	Make businesses accountable.
9	Again, as per above (Not clear how the work of other departments linking their work to this principle?)
10	Finally, a principle that might actually benefit the community!
11	Employ a greater number of Compliance Officers so that more inspections can be conducted.
12	Under staffed, how can you possibly reach all the businesses that need you with the shortage of staff you currently have
13	Yes. High risk buildings should be a priority
14	The recent fire in Mold reminds us how important it is for businesses to stay safe and keep people safe.
15	Keep Deeside manned 24/7
16	Yes agree, but business should take care of themselves. You rarely hear of cases where the fire service has taken a business to court, not sure if this is a good thing or bad thing. Are you doing enough to catch business that don't comply or do you do excellent work which prevent businesses having fires and incidents. Your media team could do a far better job at communicating stories either way!
17	All fire cover should be based on the RISK and not the frequency of incidents
18	Lots of holiday homes, always a risk where alcohol is concerned especially around water
19	Keep an eye on air bb and holiday homes that cut corners and don't do checks on their visitors i.e. stag do's. Alcohol and water don't mix
20	Target caravan parks to provide safety advice to guests ahead of their travelling to Bala and through Bala. Caravans cause congestion and problems when drivers don't know how to use them. Fire service could play a huge role to improving road safety
21	Important to keep on top of dodgy business owners who take short cuts
22	Similar to your people principle, you have listed some goals, but you have failed to explain how you plan to work in partnership with external stakeholders, land owners and land users to reduce the number of Wildfire incidents. A plan should outline how you will achieve this
23	There is no reference to take away and food outlets in your plan. Surely these businesses place extra risk to the community. There is a worrying number of take-a-ways emerging in Bangor and Bethesda. I believe some of these facilities are also lived in.
24	Other people in the group have said takeaways are an issue, they may be a concern in Bethesda, but I don't think they are an issue in Caernarfon, but I may be wrong.
25	There are not that many high buildings, but it is still important to keep people safe. The university [Bangor] don't appear to have too many issues
26	Local paint factory is only worry. Food take-a-ways in town are apparently a risk too. It sounds like you [Business fire safety] keep on top on everything.
27	There are not many fires in businesses, so you [NWFRS] must be doing something right.
28	Stay connected with local farmers to know what is happening.
29	It is important that you [Business fire safety team] communicate in Welsh
30	Yes, but community fire safety is the priority for us.

31	Yes
32	Better promotion of this will help business owners know the standards, especially owners who have moved [migrated] here from away
33	I agree
34	Businesses cut corners. Fires start in kitchens
35	It is good you are planning to keep businesses and high-risk buildings safe.
36	Somewhat agree
37	Not sure this workstream is as important as the others!
38	Hugely important. We [Society] need to avoid fires like the one the other week [In Mold].
39	Agree, but businesses should keep their own house in order, so hopefully the demand on your service reduces over time.
40	Didn't even know you had experts that do this work. Maybe you should promote it better
41	I'm not convinced this should be funded by the tax payer unless its funded from business rates I think this burden should be on companies but with enforcement
42	This workstream is not very well promoted
43	I wasn't aware that the fire service did this [delivered this service].
44	Keep an eye on dodgy landlords.
45	Somewhat agree
46	I guess yes.
47	Having experts is important.
48	I hadn't heard about this work previously, you could do more to promote it in the media and through a printed newsletter.
49	Your principle is a little woolly and lacks clarity. How will you provide this service because I am not aware of one business that has received this service. You don't provide any information to define what is 'high risk'.
50	It is not clear what is 'high risk' so it is difficult to agree to something that is not clear sorry.
51	Yes, it seems to make sense.
52	I didn't know you did this type of work.
53	Legally yes keep an eye on businesses, but there are private consultants who can advise them.
54	Again, having a statement on how the well-being goals apply would be helpful
55	Business should be finding this not the tax payer
56	This principle is simply not true. You really fail to provide expert advice. Your staff don't engage with local businesses, nor do provide expert advice. I spoke to one fire officer at an event last year and they were fairly new in post, not qualified and they said they signpost people to advice, so they didn't provide it at all. Your website www.northwalesfire.gov.wales/keeping-you-safe/at-your-business/guidance-documents/ lacks basic information that other public services provide, take public health that do provide expert advice https://phw.nhs.wales/services-and-teams/dental-public-health/information-for-the-public
57	Don't really know what this is.
58	Yes, to all.
59	Nothing specific to add.
60	Unsure what you mean by supporting businesses to grow.
61	I don't know enough about this area of work to comment to be honest.
62	We [Ethnic minority groups] can help NWFRS promote their work within different businesses that are often forgotten or don't approached.
63	I strongly agree if the protection principle is a legal requirement.
64	I strongly agree.
65	This principle doesn't really impact on us too much, but it is comforting to know places we visit [Dementia Group] are safe.

66	Making businesses safer has to be a good thing.
67	Making businesses safer can improve public safety.
68	Public safety.
69	I strongly support providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection. This will help keep buildings and public safe.
70	The number and spread of 'dark' kitchens continue to rise. Dark kitchens (also known as cloud, ghost kitchens, virtual kitchens and shadow kitchens) are places where food is prepared at a premise to be delivered to consumers. The premises are not open to the public, with orders coming in from websites and apps. Dark kitchens are often on the outskirts of towns and cities in industrial estates and warehouses. Have the dark kitchen operators received the comprehensive fire protection workshop and training sessions to enhance their preparedness? As with other businesses it would be beneficial to meet with dark kitchen operators to understand their unique needs and challenges in terms of safety.
71	Small and medium businesses need all the support they can get in these challenging times.
72	Strongly agree to all.
73	Yes.
74	Currently services are so under resourced, we must all be prepared to cater to an older population as people live longer. Co-responding with ambulance services may become far more regular.
75	Clearly a strong area of work that fire services have done for many years.
76	It was interesting to learn about your business fire safety side of things.
77	Not sure.
78	Physical access is a huge concern in various buildings and businesses. Independent shops in local towns are an issue, especially if there was a fire or emergency. The staff in many shops are too small to get you out.
79	I have concerns about the accessible of shops. I heard another person mention this and it is true. Steps into shops and narrow aisles make it impossible to get out [of some shops in an emergency]
80	There is certainly overcrowding in shopping centres and this is concerning if there was an emergency [fire].

Appendix E

Ref	OUR RESPONSE PRINCIPLE – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1	This should be your main priority
2	Prioritise gaining extra funds to employ more full-time fire fighters instead of robbing Peter to pay Paul all of the time
3	Your ECR suggested moving cover from busy built up areas with large call volumes and high to rural quite areas. If cover can be provided in these areas without stripping where it is needed most then great, but moving from a risk-based model to an equitable model is nonsensical
4	We should never lose sight of the fact that regardless of all the good work the Service has done over recent years we must ensure we remain ready to respond quickly, effectively and safely through training, equipment and fire cover provision
5	We were very disappointed that Rhyl didn't change to be like other day staffed stations as it is more like Colwyn Bay etc and therefore staff could have been used better in other areas
6	Deeside fire station is in a key location.
7	There is a good spread of fire engines across the area, please don't reduce the number of fire engines or staff
8	Need prompt response in built up areas like Deeside, Shotton and Connaahs Quay.
9	Good response needed
10	Good spread of fire stations for quick response is important
11	Maximise response in all areas
12	More retained our needed, I think if there were more open days at the stations, family days, fundraising events it would make the service seem more approachable and sharing information about what we as a service and what is expected of retained.
13	Brilliant!
14	Make On-call members of staff feel better valued. This will assist with recruitment and retention in local areas
15	Still think a review of fire cover is needed, some areas are so deprived
16	Faster turnout times 24hrs a day required without downgrading current cover
17	To strive for a fair response model over a risk-based model is again. Non sensical and actually unheard of. I have worked private sector management for over 20 years and would be sacked on day one for such a ludicrous suggestion
18	It's all about having the right numbers of officers and not reducing numbers for reduction sake. Make people the priority for response.
19	For the public to assess the plan more data is required, you should provide real time data on availability and response of each appliance and not just a generic measurement. Cheshire FRS' Cover Review contained the level of data necessary, North Wales FRS was woefully inadequate.
20	Deeside is an important fire station, please ensure it continues to recruit local people that know the area.
21	Keep Deeside fully operational / manned24/7
22	You do any excellent job. By all account, your service did a good job at the Mold site recently. Will you be closing any stations in the future, it would be my preference to see all current fire stations stay active and adding value in their communities.
23	Response should always be on a risk-based analysis
24	No
25	This is the only principal you should be worried about
26	Bala [fire station] has a good reputation. Wholetime roles in the central area would improve cover
27	We fully support the creation of fulltime firefighters' roles in Gwynedd in the future
28	I support better fire cover in Bala and surrounding area helps address really busy times when we see mass visitors arrive

29	Bala and other [on-call] fire stations need full time roles to cater for local people that want to serve their community in a professional way [as a serious career choice]
30	You do a good job
31	Your service is not currently providing enough opportunities for people in Gwynedd to work whole time, so more needs to be done to address this, plus you cannot always rely on on-call firefighters and plans to create more fulltime roles [In Bala and Gwynedd more generally] is required to protect the communities
32	It is good to see you are conducting a review of your fire engines and specialist vehicles that enable you to respond effectively.
33	It is comforting to know Bangor and Caernarfon are fulltime [WDS watches], but better cover is required in other areas of Gwynedd.
34	We can't fault the fire service for the work you do. Although improved cover [In Gwynedd] would help keep people safe. You [redacted] mentioned Porthmadog and Dolgellau were proposed [In 2023] to become fulltime, this would make sense and help respond quickly to emergencies in the area. Caernarfon is a long way from Barmouth.
35	A fire station in Bethesda would reduce the demand on Bangor having to come out of the city.
36	Bangor fire station do a good job. I am surprised there is only two fire engines in Bangor and there is no fulltime firefighters in south Gwynedd. Surely you will address this gap within this plan?
37	Keep up the good work.
38	Clearly [from what you have said] the fire service needs to do more to place fulltime firefighters in Porthmadog, and lower down the coast [South Gwynedd].
39	be aware of all risks and developments to local farming, especially if the land is in areas where wildfires happen.
40	Fulltime firefighters here [Welsh speakers from Gwynedd] will help you do your jobs [respond effectively to emergencies].
41	Wrexham need to keep their fire engines, it's a city.
42	This is a deprived area [garden city] so the fire service plays a vital role to keep us safe
43	Fire service is important public service
44	Deeside fire station do a good job
45	I was surprised Deeside only has one fire engine [wholetime] to respond quickly cover such a large area. You said other fire engines are located nearby, but Deeside surely needs two [wholetime] fire engines to cover such a large area
46	Yeah responding is what you are about. Sealand has lots of fires. Kids messing around. BBQs in fields. Your responders could get to know us and bring the fire engine down [to the youth centre]
47	I definitely agree with this one
48	Yes of course
49	Quick response is important to us. There are lots of elderly [people] here [in our street] so quick responses can help them get out of a house fire. Connahs quay seems to have lots of old people that would find it difficult to get out of a house quickly.
50	Strongly agree
51	Please don't under resources your response!
52	It is good to hear Rhyl availability has improved. Still an issue to provide fire cover in some parts [of north wales]. Better incentives are needed to attract people to the firefighter role. take a leaf from RNLI, Chester Zoo and other charities that manage to recruit hundreds of volunteers. got to be worth doing. it seems like they [on-call firefighters] have to work to many hours [each week], people don't want to be tied up for days in a row. Surely worth looking at cutting back the number of hours so more people wouldn't mind [providing on-call cover]
53	This is what you do. Whichever political party gets in [After the election], makes sure you stand your ground and don't make cuts. Your on-call debate was interesting, clearly more investment is needed,

	but financial incentives are clearly missing if it is worth people being fixed to a certain geographical location for hours on end.
54	Agree more efforts required to staff Llanberis and Conwy
55	How is this not your number one priority surely this really is the ONLY principle other than prevention you should be focussed on
56	Your information doesn't really deep dive into the issues you experience with recruitment of part time firefighters. Better recruitment efforts required, or change the system to suit modern lifestyles.
57	It is good to hear Deeside fire station didn't close down. the last you [REDACTED] came [To see us] you said staff duty systems were going to change. Deeside is a highly populated area with lots of poverty, so the fire service is needed here [Deeside] not taken away. Thank you to listening to us [ECR in 2023 [year]].
58	We feel Deeside fire station is perfectly located to respond to people in that area.
59	Keep Conwy fire station open. They do a good job, particularly in the marina fire [in 2023]. Mountain fires are out of way so locals [on-call staff] know where to go and how to get there
60	Strongly agree
61	This is your bread and butter. Llandudno [wholetime watch] always support local events and bonfire night.
62	Conwy keep open
63	Do what it takes to develop Conwy fire station.
64	Hugely important quick response happens
65	Develop Conwy station
66	More work is needed to address the poor availability in Conwy and other locations that you reported last time [ECR in 2023] you visited
67	My son has just applied to join [NWFRS]. I am assuming Conwy fire station is a little worn, so upgrade facilities will improve your offer. Have open days. It is good to hear there is high rise capacity [ALP] in the area that can respond quickly if required and other ones [ALPS from Rhyl & Wrexham] that can support [A major incident]
68	Effective response is only possible if you keep fire stations open and your review [ECR] was very concerning [proposal to close Conwy fire station and other sites]. Availability needs to certain to deliver this principle. I support a review of equipment & vehicles
69	You suggest being ready to response, so surely this means you won't close any fire stations or even propose it again. You clearly need to sort out recruitment [on-call stations], it doesn't sound like you have sorted it [Following a discussion in the ECR in 2023].
70	100% support for responding effectively.
71	Address recruitment issues in Conwy to improve your response in the area.
72	Good to see you have fire stations in most towns along the coast [Conwy].
73	Do what it takes to get to us as quickly as possible, you know what you are doing.
74	Far too many firefighters who are not committed to the job. Availability was never an issue [When I was a firefighter]
75	Why is this so low on the list?
76	Your response work is your strongest feature by far. You rarely hear from the fire service not providing a good professional service. You clearly need to invest more into staffing because your officers have explained to me that some fire stations are not operating for business because their cannot recruit people. Other public services recruit perfectly well and there is a shortage of jobs and unemployment is high in Wrexham, Connahs Quay, Flint, Mold, Rhyl so there is no excuse whatsoever. Your recruitment team clearly are not using the relevant techniques.
77	A fire engine is Bethesda would be a positive move. This would create jobs for people in the village.
78	Yes, to all.
79	Recruit and enable Conwy [Fire Station] to fulfil its potential

80	Narrow roads everywhere [In Llandudno Junction] so there are huge challenges [for fire engines] to access certain areas quickly.
81	You best not close fire stations, otherwise people are unable respond
82	To enhance your ability to respond, it is clearly evident we need more wholetime fire stations, especially across North Wales. Personally, the ECR proposal to establish wholetime provision in Dolgellau, Porthmadog and Corwen made perfect sense. Our service desperately needs to develop a purpose build state-of-the-art training facility to enhance our offer and attract people in. When you look at Greater Manchester, Cheshire and other services, their facilities are genuinely impressive and when people turn up for an open day, positive action or selection day, a new training facility creates an inspiring and motivational environment. Any reviews should seriously consider dropped operational crews down to 4 from 5 because other services have done this and we manage to make it work with on-call.
83	Being ready to respond sounds good to me.
84	The emergency sector plays an important role in keeping people safe. Wrexham is a growing city with big plans to develop the university. There is a buzz surrounding the football club and we are seeing more and more people coming into the area from outside the UK.
85	Wrexham has a fire engine so this makes me happy.
86	It would be an advantage if response staff could communicate in different languages including BSL. My friend at school is not verbal so most of our communication is through using our hands and writing.
87	We need ready to respond if there is a fire in the house or at school.
88	I strongly agree.
89	Quick response is particularly important to get people with dementia out of their homes because they often get confused and some of them [People with dementia] lose their sense of direction.
90	I assume saving lives can be tricky when people are unable to get themselves out of a burning building. There are several fire stations along the coast, so that gives me confidence about your response. Deeside is our nearest station and they do a fantastic job.
91	Please do not consider closing Deeside [Fire station] again. The area needs a fire station, plus this enables you [NWFRS] to respond quickly.
92	Prompt response is paramount. Do whatever it takes to do this.
93	This can only happen if Deeside [fire station] stays open 24/7.
94	I have only needed to call you once and the service was prompt. It was a false alarm, but it was a worry at first.
95	It would be worth referencing your response to the Civil Contingencies Act and contribution to North Wales Emergency (major incident) Planning / Preparedness.
96	I like your plan to conduct a review of your specialist vehicles and fire engines which will help future proof your ability to respond. The general feeling amongst the group is to maintain all the firefighters in this area due to the risks and possible incidents. There is no way Deeside and Connahs Quay can cope without fire engines that can respond 24 hours a day.
97	Be ready to respond
98	Strongly agree to all.
99	Yes.
100	As people live longer, co-responding with ambulance services may become far more regular for the fire service. communication between services may become more relevant. .
101	It is essential that Deeside fire station sustains its current duty system to be able to respond to emergencies in the deprived areas surrounding Deeside, the Quay, Queensferry and garden city.
102	I didn't know there are so many fire stations. I will look to join soon.
103	You appear to have the best kit

104	The experience day was useful to learn about your fire service response, duty systems and shift patterns.
105	Doesn't include safety to staff
106	Do what you need to do to respond quickly.
107	Do what it takes to ensure local fire stations [Deeside, Flint, Mold, Holywell] are well resourced and ready to respond.
108	There used to be a fire station in Saltney, could reopening this be considered.
109	Absolutely.
110	Broaden the range of languages your staff speak to cater for people in the community. Lots of teachers and health workers who speak Spanish, Punjabi. Chinese is the language of the future.
111	People that are unemployment [in the area] could help you address your recruitment [for on-call roles].
112	Your provision seems to be suitable in this area [Wrexham & Flintshire] which is no surprise because they are the largest areas [population] with some areas of poverty.
113	Any review should consider the risks in care homes, especially rescuing multiple people in an emergency. Location of fire engines and staff has never been more important with more older people in Wales and more people living with disability.

Appendix F

Ref	OUR ENVIRONMENT PRINCIPLE – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1	You are spending and worrying too much on carbon footprint, yes, it's an issue but you are taking the money from where it's needed more!!!
2	More nonsense, a complete waste of time and money
3	Very vague
4	Complete waste of time and money
5	Carbon neutral by 2030 will be a big challenge
6	You are not Greta Thunberg
7	Reducing fires in rural areas is important to preserve wildlife and countryside.
8	Better awareness of protecting the countryside can help young people avoid camping and BBQ in certain areas
9	Electric is not always the best way forward! not totally safe
10	Install energy saving devises now, save in the long run
11	good ethncal purchasing
12	Better for the environment to consider impact
13	The climate hoax is such an obvious scam what are you doing wasting more time and money on this utter nonsense
14	Greater use of solar panels at Fire Service locations
15	A government brainwash
16	We all need to focus on the environment
17	Play your part in being carbon neutral
18	The climate change agenda is vitally important. You team at Wepre park told me you have make positive changes in your fire stations and moved to electric cars and you are looking at new electric fire engines for the future, sound like you are doing a lot more than the police and other public services in this area.
19	yes...
20	Waste of time
21	Complete waste of time
22	Your service is doing the right thing purchasing modern equipment, but be mindful of buying the latest electrical items which may not last as long as traditional mechanical and fuel type engines. Good idea to implement energy saving measures in your fire stations
23	Good planning can save you money in the long run
24	Very sensible planning
25	Big fat yes to lower carbon
26	Educate your staff and purchase low energy items are good steps to take
27	I agree you need to work towards net zero, but I disagree you should replace all cars with ultra-low emissions alternatives because you cannot be sure the technology will get your staff to places they need to go [implying the size and distances are too great across North Wales]
28	By conducting a review of our fire engines and specialist vehicles, I assume you will take fuel and potential impact on the environment into account [Co2 emissions]
29	Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations gets the thumbs up from me.
30	It is good that you are thinking about the environment in your plan.
31	Sensible!
32	It is positive that you are taking steps to reduce carbon emissions.
33	Yes, I support this.
34	Anything you can do to keep the air clean will help future generations.
35	100%
36	Yes.

37	Good principle to have.
38	[Your services approach] working from home helps cut carbon emissions from travelling to work. Just a thought.
39	I agree
40	It is impressive how much you are doing [concerning the protection of the environment]
41	Yes.
42	Somewhat agree
43	By taking good measures will save you money in the long term, so no brainer!
44	Everyone needs to do their bit.
45	be careful paying over the odds for new technology if it doesn't last. how will you know? let others [services] trail and see what happens.
46	Agree this is a positive step
47	This is nonsense, you wasting tax payer funds on stupid green initiatives while China burns tons of coal each day, it's laughable!
48	Standard practice to manage energy usage these days
49	It sounds like you are doing lots of positive work [concerning environment impact]
50	I think so
51	Somewhat agree
52	I guess.
53	Agree somewhat, but be mindful of dodgy technology and electric powered.
54	I don't fully support a move to electric cars/vans. My daughter has a top of the range electric car and the range is about 3-4 hours, no good for emergency workers. Plus, electric cars stop completely in a flood. Very dangerous.
55	It's not rocket science to save money regarding energy.
56	This is refreshing to hear you on this [Considering the impact on the environment].
57	Everyone needs to do their bit to protect the ozone layer.
58	Do invest too much in technology that hasn't been trailed and tested.
59	Avoid investing in technologies that won't last as long as existing technologies. Washing machines, kettles, you know, nothing lasts long anymore, so be careful.
60	Done well, this should also contribute to a Prosperous Wales (procured from Welsh businesses etc). There should also be reference to the natural environment/biodiversity. This is a key part of any environmental work and currently there is only reference to decarbonisation. What role does the service play in enhancing a biodiverse natural environment?
61	Scam
62	Yes and no to this principle, if you have been taking measures anyway, why such a push to improve things now. you can do some much, but the priority has to be staffing, recruitment and improving your service.
63	Energy saving practices make sense.
64	Yes, to all.
65	Nothing specific to add.
66	Environmental goals should be proportionate and balanced with costs. As [redacted] said, avoid buying technologies that won't last [As long as older fire engines/vans]
67	I believe this is hugely important area and we are doing an excellent job and putting things in place. Tim is excellent and he has made a positive difference to drive this workstream. The Environmental plan looks great and we can do our bit to cut emissions, reduce energy usage and lower overall carbon footprint
68	I support any measures that help protect the planet for future generations. This priority sends out a strong message.
69	We fully support this priority.

70	Yes, keep the air clean where possible. You do this when you put out fires too.
71	I strongly agree.
72	Upgrade your facilities.
73	I strongly agree with the priority to protect the natural environment for future generations.
74	Turn the heating down 1 degree. Don't waste water.
75	Use less energy, save money. Turn water taps off as soon as possible.
76	In addition to the measures included within the plan, it would be good to see a reference to how the active travel agenda can contribute to this principle. For example, signing up and embedding the North Wales Healthy Travel Charter.
77	I like your plan to review stock items and develop working practices to minimise waste. Try to purchase products with minimum packaging and reduce energy usage on fire stations and any offices you have on your estate.
78	I support eco-friendly practices.
79	Strongly agree to all.
80	Yes.
81	Share resources with other public services or community centres to save costs. Equally, you could hire out rooms in fire stations to community groups to generate funds which could be invested back into the facility upgrades and maintenance.
82	Be efficient as possible.
83	This is a responsible plan.
84	This is a passion of mine. Shared values.
85	It was interesting to learn about the projects you have i.e. recycling, purchasing certain products, ethical procurement.
86	Lack of staff means more travelling/travelling times of crews/staff, which means higher use of vehicles.
87	Any savings has to worth doing.
88	A review of your practices will help identify ways you can improve.
89	Young people understand the priority and adults needs to protect the environment for future generations.
90	Upgrading facilities should reduce your costs and be safer.

Appendix G

Ref	OTHER AREAS IN RELATION TO THE SERVICE WE PROVIDE – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1	No
2	How about having a fit, strong workforce?
3	No
4	Making rank structure fair. Control WMB vs operational WMA. Control don't manage half of the staff and are not put in extreme positions. Likewise, departmental WMA vs station WMA. They get paid the same but their responsibility is completely different.
5	Health and wellbeing
6	Scrap it, it's a hoax
7	Maintaining or even improving cover in our ever-expanding busy populated areas to best protect our firefighter's safety and the public.
8	Stop wasting money my money on stuff like this! I may need you in an emergency but I do NOT need all the "nannying"
9	Young provision is bare around Deeside, Connahs Quay and Flint, maybe the fire service could do more to get young people involved and volunteering.
10	Youth provision... cadets. Volunteering opportunities, work placement for FE students.
11	Volunteering ops for college students
12	Work placement and volunteering opportunities.
13	Your service misses the opportunity to seek volunteers which are willing to give up their time.
14	Maintaining quick response to fires in areas like Flint and Buckley
15	Volunteering and placements opportunities for students.
16	Do you have a policy for cross-border Ops with Mid-Wales, Cheshire and Shropshire?
17	Our Social Presence is small and incredibly formal. We send a unapproachable message, I think we should do more to appeal to all ages and try and show a more fun side, police social posts are frequently funny or interesting ours looks like a 50's news programme
18	How about ensure the crews are fit and strong and stop wasting time and money on political nonsense
19	Utilise our on-call staff to assist the Welsh Ambulance Service in Rural locations where possible to help reduce the pressure on them. Consider the re-introduction of the proven Community Assistance Team (CAT) to deal with the large number of 'Falls' .
20	None
21	Slimline top tier management and increase frontline staff on the ground.
22	More cover in our built-up ever-expanding areas. Not less through a bizarre effort to provide a fair service
23	Please do not cut staff or personnel. The right number of staff that are skilled and qualified to respond is critical for a competent service.
24	Cadets and link in with St John's ambulance
25	Chatting to the guy at the park run, is there not potential for service to be based in shared facilities to help get to incidents quicker. For example, can't your fire engines move to areas where you have more staff available to help address the availability issue?
26	No cuts to front line services or down grading of stations or crew numbers investment in RDS crews in rural areas and further investment in the WDSR.
27	Just focus on having a prepared service and stop all this political nonsense
28	Recruit local people in certain areas to reduce the need to travel
29	Would more capacity lead to quick responses to deliver Safe and Well Checks? The low risk people may become high risk by the time they actually get a visit. This is worth serious consideration because our [Dementia] group is evidence how ill health can come about very quickly indeed

30	The growing number of food outlets should be looked at more closely. Also, food delivery people dashing around Bangor and nearby villages places extra risk on road users and people walking across roads.
31	No.
32	Seriously consider to provide fulltime fire station in all areas.
33	Solar panels, great to produce our own energy but at what cost if there is a fire!
34	Help support refugees when they arrive
35	Open up fire station to the public. Organise youth club visits
36	You have covered a lot in your plan
37	Advice and guidance for refugees and new arrivals to the UK
38	Not really.
39	People that are new [and emerging] that will require translation and interpretation
40	So many ways to link in with young people to advance your work. volunteering ops, they can communicate your jobs and safety advice. Youth workers are well connected, so it makes sense to use them to help communicate, far more effective than Facebook etc.
41	Maybe ask charities like us to deliver training in your organisation.
42	Heritage buildings officer like other counties?
43	Broader your prevention activity will help reach more people.
44	More focus on road safety on A5 and back roads
45	I don't understand why you think you need to even worry about anything other than fighting fires and protecting people; that's your only job, what are getting involved in all this political garbage?
46	Be more visible in the community. You don't see the fire service out and about as much these days
47	Broaden safe and well checks to more people.
48	More opportunities for young people to engage with you.
49	Older people. Ageing population
50	Single parents and grandparents who are responsible for babies and young children
51	Better awareness of the dangers of e-bikes.
52	Expand your safety messages to more people. Maybe you could visit regularly, even monthly or everywhere month nobody has been seen last year [ECR]
53	Awareness campaigns need to reach us. Better community engagement techniques clearly needed. Your firefighters could be more visible, but I acknowledge you have said Conwy are part timers [on-call with limited available/capacity to attend groups/events].
54	No.
55	Just focus on prevention and response
56	Highlight the dangers with E-bikes, e-scooters, unregulated electrical items etc.
57	Keep doing what you do. Regular visits to community centres and churches.
58	Just a suggestion, produce a hard copy newsletter that we could receive to keep us informed.
59	Deliver presentations like the public health teams
60	Broader awareness campaigns to target people entering water, dog walkers and runners alongside train tracks (i.e. iPods, not listening out for danger))
61	Provide advice concerning risk associated with new and emerging technologies, but communicate with people in Llandudno junction through established community partners (i.e. Brew & biscuit)
62	Engaging with people who live alone.
63	Broaden community engagement to promote recruitment, but this time can be used to promote safety messages.
64	How could the FRS contribute to Welsh culture? Also answering here because it's not asked - the expected number of wildfires is low, even though the prediction of wildfires indicates that they are likely to increase with hotter drier summers. Why can't you predict flooding numbers? Even just to say likely to increase - which you indicate they will? I appreciate that a lot of work has gone into

	determining these but it is not at all clear that there is a relationship between your described risk and the numbers presented on page 22
65	Who on earth dreamt up this? What a waste of time, effort and no doubt money.
66	So many things. Could your firemen do more if fires have reduced. Your supporting information suggests you will have more emergencies in 2024/25 but the number of incidents are hugely low compared to us working in health. You could link in far better with health services, both Betsi Cadwaladr and public health to promote services and signpost people referrals and advice
67	Road safety messages to farmers/tractor drivers. Can NWFRS do something to prevent the speeding issues along the A5 down, especially the Bangor to Capel Curig stretch.
68	Maximise the potential to involve youths and young people in promoting safety messages and prevention activities.
69	SAW to more people. Review engagement techniques.
70	Narrow roads everywhere [In Llandudno Junction] so there are huge challenges [for fire engines] to access certain areas quickly.
71	We should revisit animal rescue, height rescue and Cardiac response and this could help build a business case for more funding in the future.
72	There is potential for NWFRS to work closer with us [EYST / Wrexham Cultures Youth Project] to enhance the lives of young people in Wrexham and Flintshire.
73	Set up a cadet's programme in Wrexham please.
74	Cadets programme and opportunities to gain work experience.
75	Maybe the fire engine can come to the youth club and school.
76	Nope.
77	Create safety video clips for YouTube and Instagram
78	keep doing what you do.
79	Your [Dementia] walks are a real treat. Thank you.
80	Tailor services to large groups like older people and people living with dementia. Support for the families.
81	Increase your prevention work to cater for the increasing number of people retiring and older people living with health conditions.
82	Consideration for people living with dementia and the complexities that can surround people living in different places, those living on multiple floor flats, living alone etc.
83	Continue with all the great work you deliver with children and young people through the Youth Education programmes. Ensuring health promoting messages are embedded throughout these programmes.
84	I am sure your existing service cover everything, but more regular engagement with community groups like ours can surely improve your ability to communicate preventative safety messages. Some members use the internet, but most of them benefit from face to face interaction.
85	You could cover the Saltney area. There is no fire station here currently.
86	Link in with other services better, health, ambulance, charities etc.
87	New risks. New training centre is positive.
88	Defo consider animal rescue in the future
89	You could take your experience days out to schools and colleges. they would have impact.
90	Not really, but increase the number of safe and well checks.
91	Open up fire station for the public to visit and see what you do.
92	Assess and advise local business about accessibility.
93	Deliver services with people that don't speak English as their 1st language in mind.
94	Refugees & Asylum seekers. Isolation of families that are new to the area. Acknowledgement that some families new to the areas don't know how to access services. New services may emerge from engaging with new and emerging groups.

95	Tailor services to cater for care homes and people living in care settings.
96	Offer up your community rooms for group to use occasionally. Possibility Llandudno or Conwy.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM – MATRICES AND PROMPTS

Equality Matrix and Scoring - the Integrated Impact Assessment is based on the RAG risk scoring as follows:

LIKELIHOOD				
Unlikely	Low Probability	Possible	High Probability	Almost Certain
1	2	3	4	5

IMPACT		
5	VH	Catastrophic – legal action (discrimination claim)
4	H	Major – a serious matter that may lead to negative publicity and disciplinary action within the Service context.
3	M	Moderate – an external complaint or internal grievance.
2	L	Minor – additional small amendments or changes to policy are required.
1	VL	Little impact – only minor considerations are required.

		IMPACT					
		VL	L	M	H	VH	
		1	2	3	4	5	
LIKELIHOOD	Almost Certain	5	5	10	15	20	25
	High Probability	4	4	8	12	16	20
	Possible	3	3	6	9	12	15
	Low Probability	2	2	4	6	8	10
	Unlikely	1	1	2	3	4	5

Overall Risk Rating	Description	Monitoring
1 – 4 Manageable	The risk may be so low that the Service chooses to accept it and instead simply records that the risk has been identified and that, due to its low likelihood or impact, no further action will be required. Alternatively, minor considerations may be needed upon implementation.	The Project Lead will maintain oversight and continue to manage locally.
5 – 10 Medium	The EIA owner will mitigate identified risks through slight amendments or implement further controls that reduce or eliminate the risk. Alternatively, the owner could confirm that all reasonable steps have been taken to mitigate the risk and no further reasonable action is possible.	
12 – 15 High	This policy, project or service cannot be rolled out until detailed external and / or internal consultation has taken place with those that this area of work affects.	Scores above 12 will require further action, at which point it is advisable to consult with the relevant project sponsor or Principal Officer.
16 – 25 Very High	High risks have been identified, so take immediate action. If legal action is likely, then the Service cannot go ahead with the policy without fundamentally changing it. If the impact remains severe even with this mitigation, then consultation with internal and / or external groups will have to take place.	

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Purpose

This Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) ensures that the Service's policies, projects and provision do not unlawfully discriminate against any person, especially those who fall under protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010. The scope of this particular EqIAs ensures our Service go beyond any legal requirements and public sector equality duties. This document sets out to identify risk(s) to people, and provides some description as to how the Service intends to mitigate such risk.

Once an EqIA has been completed, it will have to be checked and signed off by the relevant Head of Department. Anyone completing an EqIA who is unclear as to any of the content should contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer.

Title	Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) Post Consultation Phase.
Objective being addressed	<p>Our People Principle Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills. Ensuring a highly skilled workforce by recruiting, developing and retaining a motivated and bilingual workforce that represents and champions the diversity of the communities we serve.</p> <p>Our Prevention Principle Working with partners to help make communities safer. Reducing risks to our communities, especially for those people who may be more vulnerable, through our established intervention programmes such as Safe and Well Checks and the Phoenix Project.</p> <p>Our Protection Principle Making businesses safer together. Providing businesses with expert guidance on fire protection to help ensure the safety of buildings, employees, and customers, thereby supporting businesses to grow. High-risk buildings are prioritised for inspections, contributing to overall public safety.</p>

	<p>Our Response Principle Providing an effective emergency response. Being ready to respond when you need us: to protect what matters to you, to save lives, reduce harm, and protect homes and businesses.</p> <p>Our Environment Principle Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations. Adopting eco-friendly practices in our daily operations to cut down on carbon emissions and other environmental impacts and raise environmental awareness amongst our staff and our communities.</p>
Department / function carrying out the assessment	Planning Performance and Transformation.
Who is responsible for the implementation of the policy?	Project Sponsor – DCFO Stewart Forshaw
Who is involved in the impact assessment process?	AM Anthony Jones – Project Lead Gary Ashton – Corporate Planning and Performance Manager Benji Evans – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer
What are the aims / objectives / expected outcomes of the policy / initiative / service?	The post consultation EqlA documents key information and feedback that emerged from the CRMP consultation. Although key themes will be discussed and assessed in this EqlA, a full equality analysis report will be produced to produce clear direction with regards to mitigation and next steps.
Who is intended to benefit from the project?	Internal and external stakeholders.
Is the policy / initiative / service for external or internal purposes?	Internal and external.
Does this policy / initiative / service have an impact upon the On-Call duty service?	Yes, all stakeholders are directly involved in this consultation.
Are other organisations involved in the delivery? If so, please state which these may be.	The Service are working closely with the Consultation Institute to quality assure the consultation process.

<p>What information / previous experience does the Service have, i.e. a similar initiative and what did this information tell us? (information can be demographic data, i.e. census findings, research findings, comparisons between similar policies in our Service and other Services, survey data, equality monitoring data, ad hoc data gathering exercises).</p>	<p>Our Service will use the most recent demographic and population data which provides intelligence regarding different equality interest groups across the region.</p> <p>The pre-consultation EqIA highlighted different equality interest groups. Also, the service conducted a full consultation in 2023 with regards to their Emergency Cover Review, so the Service will benefit from a well-established community risk profile methodology. A comprehensive mapping exercise was conducted as part of the pre-consultation and this process helped to identify stakeholders, especially people that are seldom heard, which often include some of the most 'at-risk' people in our society.</p>
<p>Has a similar impact assessment been conducted by other Fire and Rescue Services or local authorities in respect of a similar policy? If so – is it possible to adapt / incorporate their findings?</p>	<p>Various EqIAs from other fire and rescue consultations have been shared with our service as a way of adopting best practice. Previous EqIAs help us identify risk and the Service is able to implement suitable interventions that mitigate this risk. Previous EqIAs help the Service reflect on learning of previous experiences of their own practices, but other similar organisations that have consulted with their communities.</p>
<p>Date of next review (if applicable)</p>	<p>This EqIA will be reviewed and used as part of the implementation phase of the proposed work which is included in the CRMP 2024-29 document.</p>

Equality Impact Assessment

Protected Characteristics or Equality Theme	Rationale for your decision (include / refer to evidence)
	How might this have an impact?

Age (band)			Description of age band:
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	<p>The total population across North Wales is 687,000 (ONS, 2023a). The trend of population ageing has continued, with more people than ever before in the older age groups. The ONS (2023a) states that 22.3% of the population were aged 65 years and over. Out of all local authorities across Wales, Conwy (27.4%) and the Isle of Anglesey (26.4%) have the highest percentages of people aged 65 years and over. Conwy (1.5%) has the highest percentage of people aged 90 years in Wales.</p> <p>With intersectionality in mind, it is useful to explore disability and age due to a notable difference in the data between 2011 and 2021, particularly in the younger and older age groups (ONS, 2023b). For females aged 15 to 19 years, the percentage of disability was 13.3% in 2021, 8.1 percentage points higher than in 2011 and 7.9 percentage points higher than in 2001. This trend continued into the 20- to 24-year age group, where disability prevalence increased substantially, from 6.2% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2021. For males, the increased prevalence of disability in 2021 began at earlier ages; 8.6% of males aged 5 to 9 years were disabled in 2021, compared with 5.6% in 2011 and 6.5% in 2001 (ONS, 2023b).</p> <p>A variety of themes emerged from people across all age groups. Focus groups were organised with youth groups, further education college, community groups and support sessions set up for people living with a disability and health conditions, which often included older people. The Equality Analysis report provides a comprehensive description of different themes and risks.</p>
4	1	4	

Disability		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8

According to ONS (2023c), 21.1% of the population have a disability and/or long-term health condition. Although, Gwynedd (18.1%) is one of the local authorities with the lowest proportion of disabled people in Wales, the average percentage of disabled people across North Wales region is higher than other parts of the UK. With intersectionality in mind, 22.3% of females and 19.8% of males were disabled. The percentage of those who were limited a little was 11.9% for females and 10.3% for males. A higher proportion of females than males indicated that they were limited a lot; 10.4% and 9.5% respectively (ONS, 2023b).

Disabled people are some of most disadvantaged people in our society, so we acknowledge the importance of capturing their needs, aspirations and expectations of a modern-day fire and rescue service. Focus groups were organised with community groups that had a membership mostly made up of older people that had a disability (i.e. Dementia, diabetes, CHD, OPCD, arthritis). The Equality Analysis report provides a comprehensive description of different themes and risks.

A variety of themes emerged from the feedback provided by disabled people and people with health conditions during the consultation. Concerns often centred around a disabled person's inability to escape an emergency situation, mainly because of limited mobility and the increased risk of falls. Various health care professionals and older people felt disabled people were at an increased risk because some of them were isolated and some people felt they were at more risk because they live alone. The Equality Analysis report provides a more comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.

Mental Health and Wellbeing		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	3	9

Although mental health falls under the definition of disability, NWFRS have separated this group of people due to the nature and challenges associated with targeting people from a mental health and wellbeing perspective.

Mental health and wellbeing cover a broad group of people that experience low mood, anxiety, depression etc. Very few themes emerged relating to adverse mental health, although some respondents did describe feeling more vulnerable because they feel 'isolated' and 'alone'. The incident data reports remind the service that suicide and mental health related emergencies have increased in recent years, so this area of work is important despite no many respondents raised it

			directly during the consultation. The Equality Analysis report provides a more comprehensive description of different themes and risks which may indirectly relate to mental health.
--	--	--	--

Gender		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8

According to ONS (2021a), the North Wales population is evenly split across females (51.1%) and males (48.9%). Although engagement with males and females will occur organically through contact with different equality interest groups, some specific gender-based organisations enable us to connect with gender groups with specific needs (e.g. older people, unemployed, parents).

A variety of themes emerged from the feedback provided by people across different genders. There was strong support for the service become more gender diverse, especially across operational roles. The consultation was a reminder that majority of the public still view the fire and rescue service as a career that males pursue, mostly because the respondents only see 'male fighters' in North Wales. Some respondents felt the service could do more to promote careers amongst all gender groups, specific feedback from ethnic minority groups suggest, tailored engagement and communication is required. The Equality Analysis report provides a more comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.

Pregnancy and Maternity		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8

To ensure NWFRS reach out and capture the needs of people that are pregnant and those within their maternity phase, a comprehensive mapping exercise has identified key partners to help connect with this target audience.

The focus groups enabled people from across all groups to provide feedback on employment terms and conditions, policies and other features that people may want to know. Indirectly, respondents asked questions relating to geographical locations of fire stations, work shift patterns and duty systems, but it is unknown of these questions relate to a person's need to explore childcare arrangements or for people who maybe planning to have a family in the future. The Equality Analysis report does provide a comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation which may relate to pregnancy and maternity.

Gender Re-assignment / Identity			<p>The exact number of trans and/or non-binary people in North Wales is unknown. However, Stonewall (2022) estimate between 0.5% and 1% of the population is Trans and/or non-binary which gives us some kind of indication who we need to engage with to ensure our consultation is meaningful.</p> <p>There was strong support for the service developing a more diverse workforce inclusive of people from all genders, people that identify as non-binary and non-gender conforming. Specific engagement with people via local pride events, LGBTQ+ charities and support groups helped ensure trans and non-binary people were able to provide feedback. Some respondents felt the service could do more to promote careers amongst all gender groups, specific feedback from people that identify as LGBTQ+ suggest, tailored engagement and communication is required. The Equality Analysis report provides a more comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.</p>
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
3	3	9	

Sexual Orientation			<p>Stonewall estimate between 5-7% of the population are lesbian, gay, bisexual or another sexual orientation which is other than heterosexual (See NHS, 2015). Stonewall (2022) have published more recent reports which suggest younger people are more likely to be open about sexual orientation and gender identity. North Wales has a growing LGB+ community and the emergence of new pride events, support groups and staff networks in the workplace means that engagement with this audience is more meaningful than previous years.</p> <p>With intersectionality in mind, it is useful to know the age profile of people who identified as LGB+ which tends to be younger than the overall population. More than half of those who identified as LGB+ (57.9%) were aged between 16 and 34 years (ONS, 2021d). In contrast, less than a third of the overall population were aged between 16 and 34 years (29.6%). This intelligence helps our service know who to engage.</p> <p>There was strong support for the service developing a more diverse workforce inclusive of people regardless of their sexual orientation. Specific engagement with people at local pride events,</p>
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
4	2	8	

			LGBTQ+ charities and support groups helped ensure lesbian, gay, bisexual and those that align with other diverse sexual identities were able to provide feedback. Some respondents felt the service could do more to promote careers amongst all gender groups, specific feedback from people that identify as LGBTQ+ suggest, tailored engagement and communication is required. The Equality Analysis report provides a more comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.
--	--	--	---

Marriage or Civil Partnership			48.1% people aged 16 and over are married or in a civil partnership (Stats Wales, 2020). Generally, this protected characteristic does not present any particular risks. Although, it is important to stress, people that live alone are deemed more at
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
4	2	8	<p>There was strong support for the service developing a more diverse workforce inclusive of people regardless of their relationship status. Although no specific feedback was given regarding a person's relationship status, respondents did ask a variety of questions relating to a career in the fire and rescue service regarding pay, holiday entitlement, shift patterns, duty systems, geographical location of fire stations, which may relate to considerations of partners.</p> <p>Other themes which emerged during the consultation, especially amongst the older respondents was the feeling of being 'isolated' and 'alone' in situations where a partner had passed away. Another respondent had mentioned about feeling vulnerable because they didn't feel good on their feet anymore and living alone, there is nobody to help if they fell. The Equality Analysis report provides a more comprehensive description of different themes and risks. Mitigation can be achieved through prevention activities.</p>

Religion and/or Belief		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	3	9

Our service acknowledges there is some diversity regarding people’s religious affiliations and belief systems across North Wales. Equally, it must be acknowledged that more people reported “No religion” than any single religious affiliation up from 32.1% in 2011 to 46.5% in 2021 (WG, 2022b). This data indicates approximately half the North Wales population have religious affiliations. Therefore, places of worship and faith-based organisations are a logical avenue to engage with this audience.

To ensure NWFRS reach out and captured the needs of religious people and those who observe a particular belief system, the pre-consultation mapping exercise helped to identify key partners across North Wales. During the consultation, people from different religions and faiths groups provided feedback. Indirectly, respondents asked questions relating to prevention activity which align to specific religious campaigns and the service work to date was well received. However, there was a feeling amongst some respondents that more prevention activity could take place. The Equality Analysis report does provide a comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation which indirectly relate to safety campaigns and recruitment.

Race		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	3	9

Like other regions in Wales, North Wales has become more ethnically diverse in the past decade. According to the census data in 2021, ethnic minority groups has increased from 4.4% in 2011 to 6.2% in 2021 (WG, 2022b). For clarity, ethnic minority is any ethnic group outside of white ‘Welsh, English, Scottish, Northern Irish and British’.

The largest ethnic minority group in every local authority in Wales was “Other White”. The proportion of the population identifying with this ethnic group was highest in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3%). Within the high-level “White” ethnic group, Conwy was the local authority with the highest proportion of those identifying as “Irish” (0.7%) in Wales. Interestingly, 5.3% of households were multiple ethnic group households, up from 4.2% in 2011 (WG, 2022b).

With intersectionality in mind, NWFRS acknowledge potential language, communication and cultural barriers. Nationally in Wales, 2.9 million usual residents aged three years and over spoke English or Welsh as their main language (96.7% of the population, down from 97.1% in 2011).

	<p>According to the 2021 Census, residents in Wales that did not select English or Welsh as a main language, 78% said they could speak English well or very well, while 22% could not speak English very well or at all. As in 2011, Polish was the most common main language after English or Welsh at 0.7% of the population. Arabic (0.3%) was the most common main language aside from English, Welsh or Polish in 2021. British Sign Language (BSL) was the preferred language of 900 people (which equates to 0.03%) usual residents aged three years and over across Wales.</p> <p>To ensure NWFRS reach out and captured the needs of people across different ethnic groups, the pre-consultation mapping exercise helped to identify key partners across North Wales. During the consultation, people from different ethnic backgrounds provided feedback.</p> <p>Indirectly, respondents asked questions relating to recruitment process, especially concerning criteria and ability to speak English and Welsh and opportunities for young people from ethnic backgrounds to learn more about careers. Some respondents commented on prevention activity and suggestions were given relating to the service tailoring future engagement and communication which promote equality of access to different ethnic groups. The Equality Analysis report does provide a comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.</p>
--	--

Socio-Economic Duty			<p>The Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales on March 31st 2021 and requires specified public bodies, when making strategic decisions (such as deciding priorities and setting objectives), to consider how their decisions might help reduce the inequalities associated with socio-economic disadvantage.</p>
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	<p>According to the Census 2021, some of the most deprived areas are concentrated in north Wales coastal and border towns (WG, 2021). Working does not preclude experiencing poverty. To explain further, in-work poverty has risen over the last 5 years and a total of 12.7 per cent of workers live in poverty due to low pay or limited hours (JRF, 2020).</p> <p>To ensure NWFRS reached out and captured the needs of people who meet the criteria for low economic status and deprivation, the pre-consultation mapping exercise helped to identify key partners to help connect with this target audience. During the consultation, respondents from across North Wales support the service proposal to review the emergency fire cover to ensure the</p>
3	3	9	

			<p>best possible cover is provided. Feedback from respondents in specific areas referred to the importance of having fire cover, especially in areas of deprivation (i.e. Deeside, Garden City, Kinmel Bay, Queens Park). There was support for the service to conduct a review into its special vehicles which can support emergency incidents in all areas, especially deprived urban areas. The Equality Analysis report does provide a comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation which cover prevention and people principles.</p>
--	--	--	--

Welsh Language		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
3	3	9
<p>All materials (written and verbal) relating to the CRMP consultation project were provided in Welsh and English. The census data (2021) informed the service that North Wales has 235,567 welsh speakers which equates to 34.3%. The most recent data published by the Welsh Government suggests 29.1% of people aged three and over were able to speak Welsh. This figure equates to 883,600 people and there is evidence that the Welsh language is growing in popularity as a spoken language and as a first spoken language. With intersectionality in mind, we acknowledge that the highest percentages of Welsh speakers in Wales can be found in Gwynedd (77%) and the Isle of Anglesey (67%) which are both located in North Wales (WG, 2022).</p> <p>During the consultation, 223 respondents completed the questionnaires, of which 221 were completed in English and 2 in Welsh. Focus groups were deliberated offered to partner organisations in all six counties across North Wales. There was strong support for the protection of Welsh language and the respondents were very complementary of the service commitment to promoting the welsh language. A small number of respondents felt being able to speak Welsh was a barrier for the service in recruiting some talented people. The views by some respondents reinforces the need for the service to promote careers more effectively, especially highlighting the services ability to provide welsh language training for people that speak little or no welsh language. The Equality Analysis report does provide a comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.</p>		

Geography and Location		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
5	2	10
<p>North Wales is a large geographical area which has several urban areas that are highly concentrated with diverse people and groups. In contrast, some rural areas have extremely small amount of people residing in the area.</p> <p>The region includes the localities of Wrexham, Deeside, Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, Flint, Bangor, Llandudno and Holyhead. The largest localities in North Wales are the city of Wrexham and the conurbations of Deeside, Rhyl and Prestatyn, where the main retail, cultural, educational, tourism, and transport infrastructure and services of North Wales are located. Bangor, St Asaph and Wrexham are the region's cities, Bangor is Wales' oldest city, whereas St Asaph is one of Wales' smallest and Wrexham which became a city in 2022 is the region's largest settlement.</p> <p>During the consultation, respondents from all six counties provided feedback. 12 focus groups were organised across North Wales and although focus groups were conducted in every area except Denbighshire, over 100 people from Denbighshire either responded directly via the online questionnaire or they provided feedback via one of the organised focus groups in another location. There was general support to provide better emergency cover across all areas and there was support for the service to conduct another emergency cover review. The Equality Analysis report does provide a comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.</p>		

On-Call System or Considerations for Part-Time Staff		
Likelihood	Impact	Overall
4	2	8
<p>On-call staff are directly involved in this project. On-call teams have been involved with the design and development of the Services CRMP through Heads of Departments and middle managers seminars. Naturally, on-call staff that work the retained system will be able to provide feedback that will help shape the CRMP and strategic direction of the Service between 2024-2029.</p> <p>Feedback suggests there was general support to provide better emergency cover across all areas and there was specific reference to the service needing to improve its on-call retained duty system provision in the future. There was genuine support for the service to conduct another emergency cover review which can hopefully address some of the ongoing issues with recruitment and</p>		

			retention of on-call firefighters that is evident across the whole of the UK. The Equality Analysis report does provide a comprehensive description of different themes, risks and mitigation.
--	--	--	--

Other Equality Interest Groups			<p>For all protected characteristics, there have been increases in the number of recorded hate crimes in Wales in recent years (EHRC, 2018). Very low prosecution rate in court means some victims of hate crime lack trust in uniformed public services. Although this lack of trust mostly impacts the police and community engagement teams in local councils, fire and rescue services can experience some adverse impacts too.</p> <p>The recent Culture reviews in England and Wales have highlighted cultural issues in the sector. This means there may be a lack of trust and confidence in fire and rescue services within the community. Despite some initial concerns, no respondents raised concerns relating to the medias representation of the cultural issues that surround the UK fire and rescue service.</p>
Likelihood	Impact	Overall	
4	1	4	

Do any of the above criteria have a score of 12 and above and therefore need to move to a full equality impact assessment?

Yes No

If yes, please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer via e-mail benji.evans@northwalesfire.gov.wales to proceed with the full impact assessment.

If no, and any of the criteria has a score of between 1-5 or 6-10, what additional control mechanisms or amendments can you put into place to reduce the score even further? Please identify what the score will be after the control mechanism in place.

A full consultation has been conducted and an Equality Analysis report has been produced.

What positive outcomes or changes will be taken as a result of any points identified by this impact assessment?

This EqIA demonstrates how the service have shown due regard for potential risks of discrimination to the North Wales community. There has been consideration for how the service engaged and communicated with its community members, especially equality interest groups which are often seldom heard. Intersectionality has been considered in various sections of the EqIA and Equality Analysis Report. This approach enables the service to carefully plan how it can mitigate any risks that have been identified, but also promote best practice when it comes to the implementation stage.

Post-initiative evaluation

Where applicable, please provide an overview (age range, gender, ethnicity etc.) of who attended the event(s), or were involved in or affected by the policy or initiative, and any relevant comments or complaints that were received in terms of equality and inclusion. The information should then be used to address any relevant concerns.

Before finalising, you may wish to seek advice from the services Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer. You can do this by emailing to benji.evans@northwalesfire.gov.wales for review.

Once completed please return to benji.evans@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Reference List

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2020). UK Poverty Report 2019/20. Found at: www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2019-20, Accessed: 12 April 2023.

Office for National Statistics (2023a) Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021. Found at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimateswales/census2021#:~:text=4.-,Age%20and%20sex%20of%20the%20population,men%20\(49.0%25\)%20in%20England](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimateswales/census2021#:~:text=4.-,Age%20and%20sex%20of%20the%20population,men%20(49.0%25)%20in%20England), Accessed: 13 April 2023.

Office for National Statistics (2023b) Disability by Age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Source%3A%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20-%20Census%202021,-Embed%20code&text=In%20Wales%2C%2022.3%25%20of%20females,10.4%25%20and%209.5%25%20respectively, Accessed: 13 April 2023.

Office for National Statistics (2023c) Disability, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,\(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000\)](http://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000)), Accessed: 13 April 2023.

Office for National Statistics (2023d) Sexual orientation: age and sex, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/articles/sexualorientationageandsexenglandandwales/census2021, Accessed 15th April 2023.

National Health Service (2015) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report. Found at: www.ashfordstpeters.nhs.uk/images/boardpapers/300715/Paper8e.pdf, Accessed: 4 April 2023.

Stats Wales (2020) Marital Status by Age and Sex. Found at: [Marital Status by Age and Sex \(gov.wales\)](http://gov.wales/marital-status-by-age-and-sex), Accessed: 4 April 2023.

Stonewall (2022a) Attraction, identity and connection in Great Britain in 2022. Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/rainbow_britain_report.pdf, Accessed: 4 April 2023.

Stonewall (2022b) The truth about trans. Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/the-truth-about-trans#trans-people-britain, Accessed: 12 April 2023.

Welsh Government (2021) Implementing the Socio-economic Duty A review of evidence on socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome. Found at: www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2021-11/review-of-evidence-on-socio-economic-disadvantage-and-inequalities-of-outcome-revised.pdf, Accessed: 12 April 2021.

Welsh Government (2022a) Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey: 2020. Found at: www.gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-2020, Accessed: 14 April 2023.

Welsh Government (2022b) Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion in Wales - Census 2021. Found at: [Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion in Wales \(Census 2021\) | GOV.WALES](http://gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-in-wales-census-2021), Accessed: 12 April 2023.



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Community Risk Management Plan Consultation 2024

Equality Impact Analysis



**ATAL AMDDIFFYN YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

Contents Page

Introduction	3
Background and Context of the CRMP Consultation.....	3
Equality Impact Analysis: The Legal Context.....	4
The Public Sector Equality Duty	5
Methodology.....	6
North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Area Demographics	7
Age.....	8
Disability.....	9
Gender.....	10
Sexual Orientation.....	10
Gender Reassignment	11
Pregnancy and Maternity.....	13
Race.....	13
Religion and/or Belief	15
Marriage and Civil Partnership.....	15
Welsh Language Considerations	16
Socio-economic Considerations	17
Engagement and Consultation with Specific Equality Groups.....	20
Summary of the Findings of the Equality Impact Analysis	20
People Principle	20
Prevention Principle	22
Protection Principle	23
Response Principle	24
Environmental Principle	25

Introduction

This equality Impact analysis has been developed alongside the service's consultation report concerning its Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) 2024-2029 following the consultation period between 25th March 2024 and 16th June 2024. Specific engagement with different equality interest groups during the consultation period has helped capture how different people feel about the proposed workstreams, their perceptions in terms of risk and to assess whether any of the proposed plans could place certain groups of people or communities at a disadvantage.

The overarching aim of this equality impact analysis is to highlight specific themes that emerged from the feedback during the CRMP 2024-29 consultation. From this analysis, potential risks of discrimination can be identified and mitigation can be implemented accordingly. As defined by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, this analysis will focus on the protected characteristics which fall within the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and within the Socio-Economic Duty in Wales, as well as consideration of any possible implications on the Welsh Language, according to the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

Background and Context of the CRMP Consultation

Under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and Wellbeing of Future Generation Act 2015, Fire and Rescue services within Wales are required to consult on the arrangements they propose to put in place to secure continuous improvement and the improvement objectives and standards they intend to set themselves.

The service's previous three-year Corporate Plan (2021-24) has now concluded. In its place the service has adopted a five-year CRMP with annual implementation plans, based on a strategic framework developed by The National Fire Chiefs Council. It is intended to assist in transparent and justifiable decision-making and help Fire and Rescue Services identify collaborative opportunities with partner organisations more easily. In developing this plan, there is a requirement to 'effectively consult and engage' (in line with its governance arrangements) with communities, staff and stakeholders at appropriate stages of the community risk management planning process.

The CRMP document identifies the expected risks and challenges that the Service may experience within the next five years, so it is vitally important to

capture feedback from people from all backgrounds as part of this process.

Equality Impact Analysis (EIA): The Legal Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is part of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and came into force in April 2011.

Section 149 of the Equality Act sets out the main duty and states that authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, “have due regards to the need to” eliminate any conduct that is prohibited by the Act. This includes discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to the ‘Protected Characteristics’ which include;

- Age
- Disability (Including long term health conditions)
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage & Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race (Ethnicity)
- Religion or belief
- Sex (Gender)
- Sexual orientation

Whilst ‘marriage and civil partnership’ is also a protected characteristic, under the Equality Act 2010, it is not covered by the PSED in the same manner as the other protected characteristics, listed above and is for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination. It is important to note that Section 1 of the Equality Act ‘Socio-economic duty’ came into force in Wales on 31st March 2021, and this requires the same due regard as the nine protected characteristics listed above.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is also another legal consideration which has been included in the EIA. In compliance with the Policy Making standards within the Service’s Welsh Language Standards compliance notice, it states that consideration should be made of any effects, whether positive or adverse to the Welsh Language. The EIA must include any identifiable effects on the opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the

Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The PSED has three main facets, and these are to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to 'advance equality of opportunity' between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not includes having due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by them. Having due regard also means public organisations, such as NWFRS, take measures to meet the needs of such persons where those needs are different from persons who do not have that characteristic, and encourage those who have a protected characteristic to participate in public life.

As an essential part of meeting their PSED, public authorities conduct Equality Impact Analysis. This will be documented through the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). An Equality Impact Analysis is an assessment of a proposed organisational policy, or a change to an existing one so that it can be determined whether the policy has a disparate impact on persons from the protected characteristics. Whilst there is no longer a prescriptive way of doing this, case law has provided guidance in how to undertake an equality impact analysis, namely:

- Ensure there is a written record of the equality considerations that are considered;
- Ensure any decision-making included consideration of the actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts on particular equality groups;
- Ensure the decisions made are done so on evidence; and
- Ensure the decision-making process is transparent.

Methodology

Underpinned by the three main facets of the PSED (listed earlier), this report highlights various themes which emerged from feedback in response to the exact same questions that were included online questionnaires and focus groups.

This report and the accompanying Equality Impact Assessment (EqIAs) focus on the equality related findings of the public consultation which was conducted between 25th March and 16th June 2024.

Approximately 70 different partner organisations and community groups were contacted to help promote the consultation. Amongst these partners included equality interested groups which consisted of community groups, charities and organisations that support specific groups of people (i.e. ethnic minority groups, young people, people living with dementia to name a few). Some equality interest groups were happy to complete and promote the online questionnaire amongst their members, whilst other groups wanted to organise a focus group which addressed promoted inclusion for people with limited communication skills, people that are digitally excluded and those who simply prefer to speak to a person and ask questions.

This report draws together the detail around engagement and consultation activity; the demographics of the NWFRA area, with specific reference to protected characteristics; the potential impact of the proposed activities relating to the five principles, specifically regarding equality of access; and any mitigating factors which will help to manage and mitigate any potential risks associated.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Area Demographics

North Wales has a population of circa 687,000 people spread over a geographical area of 2383 square miles (or 6,172 square kilometres). The region is made up of six counties which include Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Ynys Mon, and Wrexham. It encompasses a diverse landscape, including Eryri National Park, coastal areas, and rural communities. The region is well connected, with major highways, railways, and ports providing access to the rest of the UK and Europe.

The largest city in North Wales is Wrexham, which serves as a hub for commerce and industry, while other major conurbations include Bangor, Caernarfon, Colwyn Bay, Deeside, Llandudno and Rhyl. The region is also home to several universities and colleges, providing a strong talent pool for local and international businesses that are located here. Additionally, the region is a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world with its stunning coastline, rich history, and unique culture.

Welsh, as a language for living, remains at the heart of the modern Welsh identity. Enjoying family life, education, work and leisure all through the medium of Welsh is testimony to the importance of the language to the people of Wales.

With regards to the 687,000 people that reside in North Wales, the 2021 Census data¹ states that 22.3% of the population were aged 65 years and over. Out of all local authorities across Wales, Conwy (27.4%) and Anglesey (26.4%) have the highest percentages of people aged 65 years and over. Conwy (1.5%) has the highest percentage of people aged 90 years in Wales. With intersectionality in mind, it is useful to explore disability and age due to a notable difference in the data between 2011 and 2021, particularly in the younger and older age groups². For females aged 15 to 19 years, the 2021, particularly in the younger and older age groups². For females aged 15 to 19

¹ Office of National Statistics (2021) Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021, Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimateswales/census2021#local-authority-populations-in-wales

² Office for National Statistics (2023b) Disability by Age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Source%3A%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20-%20Census%202021,-

years, the percentage of disability was 13.3% in 2021, 8.1 percentage points higher than in 2011 and 7.9 percentage points higher than in 2001. This trend continued into the 20 to 24-year age group, where disability prevalence increased substantially, from 6.2% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2021. For males, the increased prevalence of disability in 2021 began at earlier ages; 8.6% of males aged 5 to 9 years were disabled in 2021, compared with 5.6% in 2011 and 6.5% in 2001³.

The population of North Wales is much less ethnically diverse than across England and Wales as a whole and 96.8% of the population identified as “White” in the 2021 Census. In North Wales, the highest proportions of people from “Any other White background” in 2021 were in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3.9%) and the lowest found in Anglesey (1.9%)⁴.

Age

The age of an individual, when accompanied with additional factors such as other ‘protected characteristics’ may affect their access to public services. Individuals may also experience discrimination and inequalities because of their age.

The European Social Survey 2012 found that age discrimination was the most common form of prejudice experienced in the UK, with 28% of respondents saying they had experienced prejudice based on age. In this section the age category to which most attention is given is 65+, as this is the age band that faces the most age-based discrimination. Analysis of the 2021 Census data shows that North Wales residents aged 65 or over were more likely than those under 65 to:

- Have a long-term limiting illness;
- Be in poor health;

³ Office for National Statistics (2023b) Disability by Age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Source%3A%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20-%20Census%202021,-Embed%20code&text=In%20Wales%2C%2022.3%25%20of%20females,10.4%25%20and%209.5%25%20respectively

⁴ Welsh Government (2022) Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion in Wales - Census 2021, Found at: <https://www.gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-wales-census-2021-html#:~:text=90.6%25%20of%20the%20population%20identified,to%202.3%25%20in%202011>)

- Be living on their own;

Be without access to a car;

- Be providing unpaid care of 50 hours or more a week;
- Be living in a household without central heating.

People aged 50 or over were more likely than those under 50 to:

- Be living on their own;
- Be isolated and excluded;
- Be providing unpaid care; and
- Have no qualifications.

The ageing population will have financial and resource implications, as this will likely to be the age at which the health and social care needs of individuals will increase.

Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This is consistent with the Census definition of a limiting long-term health problem.

According to 2021 Census data, North Wales has 20.7% of the total population reporting a disability and/or long-term health condition. The national average in Wales is 21.1% and for comparison purposes 17.7% in England⁵.

Disability and age are closely related, with older people being more likely to be disabled. In North Wales, Census 2021 data shows that the age group with the highest proportion of people with below average health are those ages 65 and over (12.5%), with the lowest proportion in those aged 15 years and under (0.5%). This was seen in all local authorities with some minor variation in the percentages.

⁵ Office for National Statistics (2023c) Disability, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,\(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000))

In North Wales, the highest percentage within the population aged 17 years or under with below average health were aged 16 to 17 years (1.2% of this population), and the lowest percentage in North Wales was in those aged 2 years and under (0.3% of this population). There was some variation in the local authorities although the highest percentage was in those aged 16 to 17 years in all local authorities except Denbighshire where the highest percentage was in those aged 15 years (1.7% of this population). It is not possible to compare this data with the data included in the previous report as an alternative data source was used.

Gender

According to the Census 2021 data, the North Wales population by gender is 51% female and 49% male. When combined with additional factors such as living alone, employment status, financial income, health and social care needs, research suggests that one's gender can have disproportionate outcomes. People are disproportionately affected by their gender when different concepts are explored which include Hate crime and domestic abuse⁶, gender pay gap and financial income⁷, accessing health care⁸, mental health⁹, domestic abuse¹⁰ and individuals may also experience discrimination and inequalities because of their gender¹¹.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour. According to Stonewall¹², approximately 7% of people identify as having a sexual orientation that involves being attracted to people of more than one gender.

⁶ Stop Hate (2023) Gender Based Hate Crime, Found at www.stophateuk.org/about-hate-crime/gender-based-hate-crime/

⁷ ONS (2022) Gender Pay Gap 2022, Found at www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2022

⁸ WHO (2023) Gender and Health, Found at www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/gender-and-health

⁹ Mental Health Foundation (2023) Men and Mental Health, Found at www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/men-and-mental-health

¹⁰ ONS (2021) Domestic Abuse Victims, Found at www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022

¹¹ CIPD (2023) Gender Equality Work, Found at www.cipd.org/uk/views-and-insights/cipd-viewpoint/gender-equality-work/

¹² Stonewall (2022) Rainbow Britain Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/rainbow_britain_report.pdf

According to the Census 2021¹³, 89.4% of the Welsh population identify as heterosexual or straight, 7.6% of the population 'did not answer', with 3% of the population identifying as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or 'other'.

Research investigating people's experience of accessing public services has found that people that identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or an orientation other than heterosexual, often involves inequality and restricted access. Although there is very limited research on fire and rescue services, restricted access has been highlighted in various public services including health care¹⁴ and Police and Local authorities¹⁵.

Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. This means an individual does not need to have undergone any treatment or surgery to be protected by law. Evidence shows that when transgender (41%) and/or non-binary (31%) people reveal their gender variance, they are exposed to a risk of discrimination, bullying and hate crime¹⁶.

67% of transgender people and 70% of non-binary people had experienced depression in the past year¹⁷. Almost half of the people who identified as transgender (46%) thought about taking their own life in the past year; 60% thought their life was not worth living; and 12% had made a suicide attempt.

¹³ ONS (2021) Sexual Orientation, Age and Sex in England and Wales, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/articles/sexualorientationageandsexenglandandwales/census2021

¹⁴ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain Report 2018, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf

¹⁵ Stonewall (2017) LGBT+ in Britain: Hate Crime, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_hate_crime.pdf

¹⁶ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain: Trans Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf

¹⁷ Manchester University (2018) Found at: <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/carms/2020/06/17/gender-identity-why-are-transgender-and-non-binary-people-more-at-risk-of-suicide/>

By comparison, it is estimated that around 20% of the general population experience suicidal feelings in their lifetime¹⁸ and around 13% self-harm¹⁹. Therefore, transgender and non-binary people are at a much greater risk of a range of suicidal experiences, as they face mental health problems and suicidal experiences at significantly higher rates than the general population, especially amongst younger people^{20,21}.

Research has also found that trans and/or non-binary people encounter significant difficulties in accessing and using health and social care services due to staffs' lack of knowledge and understanding and sometimes prejudice²².

Research carried out by Stonewall²³ found that a quarter of health and social care staff were not confident in their ability to respond to the specific care needs of trans and/or non-binary people patients and service users.

An increasing number of trans people are accessing Gender Identity Clinics; it is unclear if this represents an increase in the trans population or an increasing proportion of the trans population accessing Gender Identity Services²⁴.

Whilst there are no official estimates of gender reassignment at either national or regional level, Stonewall estimate²⁵ that around 1% of the population identify as trans, including people identifying as non-binary. Therefore, a logical estimation would suggest between 6,000 and 7,000 people in North Wales are experiencing some degree of gender variance.

¹⁸ Time To Change (2020). Suicidal feelings, Found at: <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health/types-problems/suicidal-feelings#toc-2>

¹⁹ Selfharm UK (2020) Self-harm statistics, Found at: <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/get-information/the-facts/self-harm-statistics>

²⁰ Stonewall (2017) School Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/school-report-2017

²¹ Transgender Trend (2016) The Suicide Myth, Found at: www.transgendertrend.com/the-suicide-myth/

²² Royal College of Nursing (2020) Fair Care for Trans and Non-Binary, Found at: www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/publications/rcn-fair-care-trans-non-binary-uk-pub-009430

²³ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain: Trans Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf

²⁴ LGBT Foundation (2017) Transforming Outcomes A review of the needs and assets of the trans community, Found at: <https://dx.fy8lrzbp.ywr.cloudfront.net/Files/acd2bcc5-a2d4-4203-8e22-aed9f4843921/TransformingOutcomesLGBTFdn.pdf>

²⁵ University of Bristol (2018) Ensuring trans people in Wales receive dignified and inclusive health and social care in later life: The Trans Ageing and Care (TrAC) project, 2016-18, Found at: www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/trans-ageing-and-care-project/

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Equality Act 2010 protects people who are pregnant, have given birth in the last 26 weeks (non-work context) or are on maternity leave (work context) against discrimination in relation to their pregnancy.

In the past 20 years, North Wales range between 7,086 and 7,826 live births each year. Over this period, the largest proportions of these deliveries were in the 25 to 29-year-old age group. The second largest proportion of births were in the 30 to 34-year-old group, whereas the over 40's group were the lowest. Over the past two decades, teenage births have made up between 4.7% to 9.6% of overall births in North Wales each year. With exception of the occasional year, teenage births have reduced year-on-year since 2003.

Race

The Equality Act 2010 states that race includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. 96.8% of people in North Wales identify as White Welsh/British. Asian or Asian Welsh/British was the second largest ethnic group (1.4%), followed by mixed or multiple ethnic groups (1.1%), other ethnic group (0.4%) and Black, British Welsh/British, Caribbean or African (0.3%).

The population of North Wales is much less ethnically diverse than across England and Wales as a whole and 96.8% of the population identified as "White" in the 2021 Census. In North Wales, the highest proportions of people from "Any other White background" in 2021 were in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3.9%) and the lowest found in Anglesey (1.9%).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on people from ethnic minority communities and recently the Welsh Government²⁶ highlighted that highlighted many people, including those who were born in Wales, still experience racism on a regular basis.

An Equality and Human Rights Commission report²⁷ from 2016 highlighted various issues that are still relevant in 2023 for people from ethnic minority

²⁶ Welsh Government (2022) Anti-Racism Action Plan, Found at: www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/an-introduction-to-an-anti-racist-wales.pdf

²⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) Healing a divided Britain, Found at: www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2021/healing-a-divided-britain-august-2016.pdf

groups that continue to experience discrimination and inequality in education, employment, housing, pay and living standards, health, and the criminal justice system.

Amongst people aged 65 and over, Asian/Asian British people and Black African/Caribbean/Black British people were more likely than people from other ethnic backgrounds to have a long-term limiting illness and to be in poor health.

People of Gypsy or Irish Traveller origin were considerably more likely to be in poor health compared with all other ethnic groups (15.9% of Gypsy/Irish Travellers compared with 4.6% of White British people). Gypsies and Travellers are still regarded as having the poorest health and lowest life expectancy in the UK.

Households headed by people from 'other White', mixed/multiple, Asian/Asian British, Black African/Caribbean/Black British and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were all more likely than households headed by people from White British backgrounds to have fewer bedrooms than was required. People from mixed/multiple and Black African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds were more likely than other ethnic groups to live in social housing. People from White British and White Irish backgrounds were less likely than other ethnic groups to be living in private rented housing.

People from all groups which were not White British were more likely than White British people to be living in a household without access to a car or van.

Amongst people aged 25-34, people from White backgrounds were less likely to be unemployed than people from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds. Amongst people aged 25-34, people from White Irish and Asian/Asian British backgrounds were more likely to have level 4 qualifications (a degree or higher) than White British people, whilst people from Black African/Caribbean/Black British, 'other' White, and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were less likely than White British people to have this level of qualification.

Amongst people aged 16-24, people from mixed multiple, White Irish, 'other' White and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were all more likely than people from White British backgrounds to have no qualifications. In the same age group, people from Asian/Asian British backgrounds were less likely than White British people to have no qualifications. The percentage of people in this age group with no qualifications was similar for Black African/Caribbean/Black British people and White British people.

Amongst people aged 25-49, people from White Irish, White British and 'other' White backgrounds were less likely to be unemployed than people from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds. Amongst people aged 25-49, White Irish and Asian/Asian British people were more likely to be in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations than White British people, whilst people from Black African/Caribbean/Black British, 'other' White, mixed/multiple, and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were less likely than White British people to be in such occupations.

Religion and/or Belief

According to the 2021 Census²⁸, Christianity is the most common religion within all ages in North Wales and represents 49.8% of the population. Whilst the next main group stated they had no religion at 41.7%, statistics show 1.8% of the population account for people who follow Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh religions. 6.7% of people chose not to state their religion or belief.

In summary, North Wales has a higher proportion of people who are Christian, have no religion, or have not stated a religion than the national figures. In contrast it has a lower proportion of people who follow a religion other than Christianity, which reflects the ethnic composition of the religion.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

As mentioned earlier in the report, marriage and civil partnership do not fall under the PSED in the same way as the other protected characteristics, however the Equality Act 2010 does protect individuals who are in a civil partnership, or marriage, against discrimination. The Service has considered this protected characteristic in the same way, mainly because a person's relationship status is one of the many factors that may place them at more 'risk' of fire in the home. For example, if people live alone, they are more at risk of experiencing fire in the home. People aged 65 and over that live alone are at even further risk.

²⁸ Office for National Statistics (2021) Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021 Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021

Evidence suggests being married is associated with better mental health²⁹, and physical health³⁰. There is less evidence on the benefits of being in a civil partnership, but it is likely the benefits will also be experienced by people in similarly committed relationship such as civil partnerships. Where heterosexual couples differ from couples in same-sex relationships and civil partnerships, they experience hate crime, discrimination, and victimisation because of their sexual orientation³¹ and this is likely to negatively impact on their mental wellbeing and sense of safety. This may also relate to a lack of public recognition and a consistent social framework on which such relationships can be built³².

Across older age groups, both men and women living as a couple were more likely to be in very good or good health compared to those not living as a couple, regardless of whether those not living as a couple lived with other people³³.

As you would expect, people aged 16-24 are the most likely to be single, while those aged 65+ are the most likely age group to be widowed or a surviving partner from a same sex civil partnership³⁴. Same sex civil partnerships are most common amongst 35–49-year-olds, where they account for 0.2% of the total age group. The proportion of people that are married, separated or divorced increases with age, until 65+ when it begins to fall, to consider the increasing proportion of people who have lost a partner.

Welsh Language Considerations

²⁹ Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. & Newton, T. L. (2001) Marriage and health: his and hers. *Psychological bulletin*, Vol 127(4), 472.

³⁰ Johnson, D.R. & Wu, J. (2002) An empirical test of crisis, social selection, and role explanations of the relationship between marital disruption and psychological distress: A pooled time-series analysis of four-wave panel data. *Journal of marriage and family*, Vol 64(1), 211-224.

³¹ King et al (2003) Mental health and quality of life of gay men and lesbians in England and Wales: controlled, cross-sectional study. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol 183(6), 552-558.

³² King, M. & Barlett, A. (2006) What same sex civil partnerships may mean for health Found at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2465551/

³³ Office of National Statistics (2021) People Population and Community, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/profileoftheolderpopulationlivinginenglandandwalesin2021andchangessince2011/2023-04-03

³⁴ Office of National Statistics (2021) People Population and Community, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/profileoftheolderpopulationlivinginenglandandwalesin2021andchangessince2011/2023-04-03

According to the 2021 Census³⁵, significantly, the highest percentages of Welsh speakers in Wales can be found in the North Wales counties of Gwynedd (64.4%) and Anglesey (55.8%). North Wales as a region is home to over a third of Wales' Welsh speaking population.

The Service is committed to promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh as a language of the workplace and community, and reports on this annually as required under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011). Alongside this, the Service supports the Welsh Government's 'Cymraeg 2050' Welsh language strategy with the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017). The strategy aims to increase both the number of Welsh language speakers and to create favourable conditions for this to happen, including increasing the use of Welsh within the workplace across all sectors.

More information is published in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission monitoring report [click here](#).

Socio-economic Considerations

According to the Census 2021, some of the most deprived areas in Wales are concentrated in North Wales coastal and border towns^{36,37}.

These areas include Rhyl and Kinmel Bay. In Rhyl South West, around 70% of households are affected by deprivation according to the map. Other areas, such as Abergele, Denbigh West and Gronant also have some high rates of deprivation, at around 60%. Around 50% of homes are affected by at least one type of deprivation in St Asaph, Dyserth and Mostyn. Caia Park Community in Wrexham lies within the 10 most deprived areas for the income, education and community safety domains. Other deprived areas include coastal communities across Flintshire such as Deeside, Delyn and Alyn. Comprehensive engagement was conducted in these deprived areas and a full breakdown is provided in full consultation report.

³⁵ Welsh Government (2022) Welsh Language in Wales, Found at: www.gov.wales/welsh-language-wales-census-2021-html

³⁶ Welsh Government (2022) Analysis of population characteristics by area deprivation (Census 2021), Found at: www.gov.wales/analysis-population-characteristics-area-deprivation-census-2021-html

³⁷ Welsh Government (2021) Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): April 2020 to March 2021. Found at: www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2021/9/2/1632824878/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-neet-april-2020-march-2021.pdf

North Wales (14.4%) has the highest proportion of young people (aged 16 to 24) who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), when compared to 13.1% in South Wales who have the lowest³⁸. With intersectionality in mind, 55.8% (26,600) of males aged 16 to 24 years old were NEET, compared to 44.2% (21,100) of females aged 16 to 24. Disabled young people are more likely to be NEET than young people that are not disabled and the proportion of disabled people who are NEET rises from 18.1% at age 16 to 18 to 41.2% at age 19 to 24³⁹.

The employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 in Wales was 73.0% in the year ending March 2023, down 0.6 percentage points on the previous year⁴⁰. Unemployment rates differ across North Wales with Gwynedd (26.4%), Denbighshire (26.1%), Conwy (24.2%), Anglesey (22.6%) (Wrexham (22.1%) and Flintshire (21.3%)⁴¹.

Employment (or working) does not preclude experiencing poverty and deprivation. Low-paid work is the biggest contributor to in-work poverty as it makes it very difficult to escape poverty, mainly because some people don't get paid enough or there are not many well-paying jobs in a particular area⁴². Pay gaps and in-work poverty affect certain groups much more than others and the risk of in-work poverty is greater for disabled and ethnic minority workers⁴³.

In terms of health, a household is classified as deprived if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled⁴⁴. A breakdown of disability can be found in the relevant section on

³⁸ Welsh Government (2023) Participation of young people in education and the labour market: 2021 and 2022 (provisional), Found at: www.gov.wales/participation-young-people-education-and-labour-market-2021-and-2022-provisional.html

³⁹ Welsh Government (2022) Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): April 2020 to March 2021, Found at: www.gov.wales/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-neet-april-2020-march-2021.html

⁴⁰ Welsh Government (2023) Labour market statistics (Annual Population Survey): April 2022 to March 2023. Found at: www.gov.wales/labour-market-statistics-annual-population-survey-april-2022-march-2023.html

⁴¹ Welsh Government (2023) Labour market statistics (Annual Population Survey): April 2022 to March 2023. Found at: www.gov.wales/labour-market-statistics-annual-population-survey-april-2022-march-2023.html

⁴² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2020) UK Poverty Report 2019/20. Found at: www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2019-20

⁴³ Welsh Government (2019) Most children in poverty living in working households. Found at: www.gov.wales/most-children-poverty-living-working-households-new-report

⁴⁴ Office of National Statistics (2021) Household deprivation variable: Census 2021, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/demographyvariables/censu

page 12, it is worth noting that 21.1% of the North Wales population have a disability and/or long-term health condition⁴⁵. Although, Gwynedd (18.1%) is one of the local authorities with the lowest proportion of disabled people in Wales, the average percentage of disabled people across the region is higher than other parts of the UK. With intersectionality in mind, 22.3% of females and 19.8% of males were disabled. The percentage of those who were limited a little was 11.9% for females and 10.3% for males. A higher proportion of females than males indicated that they were limited a lot; 10.4% and 9.5% respectively⁴⁶.

With intersectionality in mind, there is a direct link between the cost-of-living crisis and health with 60% of people in Wales saying that their health has worsened due to rising costs⁴⁷.

Life expectancy is an important consideration when exploring living standards and health. In Wales, life expectancy at birth was 82 years for women and 78 years for men for 2018-20⁴⁸. This was a slight reduction for both males and females, following higher death rates in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthy life expectancy was 62 years for females and 61 years for males in 2018 to 2020.

Welsh Government statistics⁴⁹ suggest the highest life expectancy for women in North Wales was 83.1 years in Conwy and Gwynedd, while in men it was Gwynedd (79.5). The lowest life expectancy for women in North Wales was in Denbighshire (81.1) and in men it was Denbighshire and Wrexham (78.3).

[s2021/householddeprivation#:~:text=A%20household%20is%20classified%20as%20deprived%20in%20the%20health%20dimension,or%20illnesses%20are%20considered%20disabled](#)

⁴⁵ Welsh Government (2023) Health disability and provision unpaid care Wales Census 2021, Found at: www.gov.wales/health-disability-and-provision-unpaid-care-wales-census-2021-html

⁴⁶ Office of National Statistics (2021) Disability by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021, Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20England%2C%2018.7%25%20of%20females,19.8%25%20of%20males%20were%20disabled.

⁴⁷ National Health Service (2022) 60 per cent of people in Wales say their health has worsened due to rising cost of living. Found at: www.nhsconfed.org/news/60-cent-people-wales-say-their-health-has-worsened-due-rising-cost-living

⁴⁸ Welsh Government (2022c) Wellbeing of Wales, 2022. Found at: www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-html#:~:text=Life%20expectancy%20at%20birth%20was,males%20in%202018%20to%202020

⁴⁹ Welsh Government (2022c) Wellbeing of Wales, 2022. Found at: www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-html#:~:text=Life%20expectancy%20at%20birth%20was,males%20in%202018%20to%202020

Engagement and Consultation with Specific Equality Groups

A series of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion focus groups were organised in partnership with equality interest groups across North Wales. During each focus group, an overview of the CRMP was provided and feedback was captured in line with the same questions listed in the consultation questionnaire. This approach ensured the questions posed to the community members were consistent, and feedback could be compared and contrasted.

A total of 12 focus groups were organised in partnership with equality interest groups, which included community and youth groups, charities and specific departments within local authorities that supported people that are traditionally more 'at risk' of fire and other emergencies. The 12 focus groups took place in Conwy (x 1), Flintshire (x 5), Gwynedd (x 3), Wrexham (x 2) and Anglesey (x 1).

Consultation questionnaires were completed during the focus groups and scribes assisted some people who were unable to write. Some attendees chose to take the questionnaire and information away with them to complete at a later stage. Focus groups are a very effective way of capturing feedback, especially amongst people who know very little about the fire and rescue service as they are able to ask questions and query information that is not clear.

Although 223 people responded to the consultation, some of the respondents were providing feedback on behalf of a much wider group of people (i.e. their 'community' group or charity). Amongst the 12 focus groups, over 1000 people were represented in the feedback.

Summary of the Findings of the Equality Impact Analysis

Equality related themes relating to all five principles has been included in the relevant sections. Feedback has been summarised below and mitigation can be found in **BOLD**.

People Principle

Developing diverse teams: There was a strong consensus amongst respondents that recruiting and developing diverse teams adds value and helps deliver

inclusive services. There was some specific reference to gender, ethnicity and disability.

Mitigation: To ensure the service attracts and recruits talented people from all backgrounds, a range of communication methods are adopted. The service also reviews its recruitment practices on a regular basis to ensure best practice is adopted.

Language and cultural barriers: Concerns were raised about different ethnic minority groups experiencing language barriers regarding recruitment and how religious and cultural practices could clash with recruitment activity.

Mitigation: Recruitment activity take place in response to the demands of the service, although the recruitment of firefighters is ongoing which presents multiple opportunities for people to apply around specific key dates in the annual calendar.

Communications: Feedback from respondents suggest the service's recruitment activities and associated information needs to be tailored to attract people from different background. Feedback suggests the service need to adopt a much broader range of engagement and communication methods to reach different audiences.

Mitigation: The service will take this feedback on board and communication methods are reviewed annually.

Addressing the issue of on-call recruitment: Some respondents felt the service should improve the way it recruits people into on-call roles to provide more effectively emergency cover. There was specific reference to improving cover in Gwynedd and central areas, plus there is the added benefit of creating new jobs for people in specific locations.

Mitigation: The service will conduct an emergency cover review and the outcome of the review will determine future duty systems and fire cover arrangements to ensure the best possible fire cover is provided.

Prevention Principle

Safe and Well Provision: There was huge support for Safe and Well checks, although some equality groups felt the service should conduct more Safe and Well checks each year. Many respondents reported concerns that disabled people and older people were at an increased risk regarding fire and emergencies due to being isolated, having limited mobility and their inability to escape a building quickly and independently.

Mitigation: There is an increased number of Safe and Well checks planned each year during the next strategic cycle. Safe and Well checks are delivered to people that meet an evidence-based criterion which include older people and disabled people.

Language and cultural barriers: Suggestions were made by different ethnic minority groups concerning their cultural practices and prevention and fire safety interventions should be developed according to risk profile of the region.

Population with disabilities: A significant portion of the North Wales population is disabled or they live with long-term health conditions, as highlighted by the latest Census data. Disabled people were well represented during the consultation. Disabled people felt they were more at risk of falls and they have limited mobility which restricts their ability to escape from an emergency situation. With intersectionality in mind, Disabled people that live alone were more concerned about their safety, particularly older people.

Mitigation: Prevention activities are reviewed annually and planned activity is shaped around safety campaigns and new and emerging trends that are discussed in the Campaigns Steering Group. This holistic approach ensures the services is identifying risk and developing safety messages to help prevent associated emergencies.

People living in poverty: Some respondents referred to socio-economic status with regards to people experiencing increased risk due to living in poverty and deprivation. Discussions related to people not eating healthily and people not heating their homes due to the cost of living crisis.

Mitigation: The Service refer people that are experiencing hardship. In some specific situations, the Service do help people directly by providing safe

alternatives bedding and devises. Indirectly, operational and prevention teams support various causes (i.e. food banks during the festive period).

Concerns relating to Road Safety: Some respondents, especially older people were deeply concerned about road safety, with particular reference to the 20mph speed restriction causing dangerous driving, people driving whilst being on their phones and modern agriculture vehicles taking too much space up on the roads.

Mitigation: Feedback will benefit the prevention team and partner agencies that work collaboratively to address concerns relating to road safety.

New and Emerging Technologies: Many respondents were concerned about e-bikes and e-scooters in terms of fire risk, but also how they are hazards on pathways and roads.

Mitigation: This feedback will add the growing numbers of reports which enables the service to assess concerns raises by the public and incidents data which informs risk, response and prevention activity.

Protection Principle

Strong support for the protection work: Many respondents felt the service's protection was valuable and a risk-based approach helps ensure local businesses are safe and promote public safety.

Infrastructure and access concerns: Feedback suggests many people across North Wales experience access issues in shops, older buildings, often with steps on the entrance (or exit) and narrow access. This will naturally impact on disabled people, but there is a disproportionate number of disabled people within older age groups of people. Additionally, concerns about speed restrictions impacting emergency response times were highlighted, especially in rural areas and build up urban areas with narrow access and parked cars restricting access to properties.

Mitigation: Through a risk-based inspection programme and referrals, the service advises local businesses accordingly, thus holding landlords and business owners to account for potential and actual risks to public safety.

New and Emerging Technologies: Many respondents were concerned about e-bikes and e-scooters in terms of fire risk, especially in shared accommodation. Other electrical items such as power chairs were mentioned, particularly in terms to how they are stored in care and residential homes.

Mitigation: The Service collate intelligence which help assess risk. Any specific reports are followed up by the protection team.

Response Principle

Population aging: With a significant portion of North Wales' population aged 65 and over, concerns were raised during the consultation regarding response times, particularly in geographical areas where slower emergency response times might affect their safety. There was general support for another review of emergency cover provision, strong support to maintain existing fire cover and a small group of people which proposed building new fire stations as a way of improving cover.

Infrastructure and access concerns: Feedback suggests many people across North Wales experience access issues in shops, older buildings, often with steps on the entrance (or exit) and narrow access. This will naturally impact on disabled people, but there is a disproportionate number of disabled people within older age groups of people. Additionally, concerns about speed restrictions impacting emergency response times were highlighted.

Mitigation: To ensure the service provides effective fire and emergency cover across North Wales, a comprehensive review will be conducted in partnership with the representative bodies.

Disability and age: Feedback suggests an increasing prevalence of disability in different age groups, which could affect emergency response needs and the ability of certain individuals to escape during emergencies, such as fires. More than half the respondents aged over 65 were disabled with limited mobility and reduced ability to escape from an emergency situation.

Mitigation: The service target older people, disabled people and those that meet other criteria to receive Safe and Well checks which enable people to receive advice of how to escape a building safely and quickly, as well as fire

detection systems that are installed to alert them of fire at the earliest possible stage.

General support to review specialist vehicles: A small number of respondents specifically highlighted their support for the service to conduct a review into our specialist vehicles and fire engines. Specific reference to this workstream was evident amongst older people and disabled people who felt specialist vehicles will help future proof the service to be able to respond effectively in the future.

Environmental Principle

General support to reduce carbon footprint: There was general support for this priority amongst all equality interest groups, particularly any changes that will reduce costs long term and changes that make facilities more accessible.

Mitigation: The service has planned to reduce their carbon footprint and become more energy efficient through various projects which can be seen within the service's [Environmental Strategy 2023-2030](#).

If you require this report in an alternative format,
please [contact us](#),
telephone: 01745 535250
or email us: enquiries@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation
Subject	Draft Annual Governance Statement



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To present to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) the draft Annual Governance Statement, as required by The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014. This draft was submitted to Audit Wales prior to 31 May as required by the aforementioned legislation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 requires the Authority to publish an Annual Governance Statement to demonstrate that;
 - Business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations
 - Public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for;
 - Resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people.
- 3 The draft Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 is set out in Appendix 1 and has been prepared in accordance with the principles set out in the CIPFA/Solace Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework (2016). The forward work programme for 2024/25 is contained within the draft Annual Government Statement.
- 4 The Annual Governance Statement will be published as part of the production of the statutory financial statements for 2023/24. An assessment will be made by the external auditor to confirm whether it is consistent with the financial statements and has been produced in line with the Framework.
- 5 Following this assessment, a final version of the Annual Governance Statement will be presented to the Authority for approval and subsequent internal and external publication

OBSERVATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE PANEL/AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 6 As this is the draft it has not been through Audit Committee or Executive Panel. However, the final version will be presented to the full Authority meeting in October for ratification.

RECOMMENDATION

- 7 Members are asked to:
- i) note the governance arrangements outlined within the draft 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement;
 - ii) note the forward work plan for 2024/25; and
 - iii) approve the draft 2023/24 Annual Government Statement.

BACKGROUND

- 8 All local government bodies are required, by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, to prepare an Annual Governance Statement which is published as part of the Statutory Accounts.
- 9 The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to assess and demonstrate that there is a sound system of corporate governance throughout the organisation.

INFORMATION

- 10 In 2016, CIPFA and Solace published a new governance framework, Developing Good Governance in Local Government: Framework (the Framework). The Framework is structured around seven principles of governance which enables the Authority to demonstrate its overall arrangements and set out how it has discharged its responsibilities.
- 11 The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to set out the Authority's arrangements to ensure that:
- business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations;
 - public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and
 - resources are used economically, efficiently and effectively to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people.
- 12 The draft 2023/24 Annual Governance Statement is set out in Appendix 1. It provides an overview of the governance arrangements and confirms the work plan for 2024/25.

- 13 The Annual Governance Statement is reviewed by Audit Wales to confirm that it is consistent with its knowledge of the Authority and the financial statements.
- 14 Once published, performance against the forward work plan 24/25 will be monitored through the Service Leadership Teams' Performance Board on a quarterly basis.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	No implications
Budget	No implications
Legal	Preparation and submission of the Annual Governance Statement to the Auditor General, is in compliance with The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014
Staffing	No implications
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	Compliance with Equality Duty and Welsh Language Standards is explicitly referenced in the Statement.
Risks	No implications

Annual Governance Statement 2023-2024

Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

For the year ended 31 March 2024

This Statement has been prepared in accordance with The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and the guidance produced by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE), the 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework' 2016.

The relationships between the seven principles for good governance in the public sector are illustrated below.

Achieving the Intended Outcomes While Acting in the Public Interest at all Times



Fig. 1 How Principles for good governance relate to each other.

Source: international Framework-[Good Governance in the Public Sector](#)

This Annual Governance Statement explains how the Authority has complied with the framework and its seven core principles of good governance to

ensure that resources are directed in accordance with agreed policy and priorities.

Scope of Responsibility

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is responsible for ensuring that:

- business is conducted in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations
- public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for
- resources are used economically, efficiently, effectively and equitably to achieve agreed priorities which benefit local people.

In discharging its overall responsibility, Members and Senior Officers are responsible for putting in place appropriate arrangements for the governance of the Fire and Rescue Authority's affairs and the stewardship of the resources at its disposal, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Strategic leadership is given by and discharged through the Fire Authority and its various Committees, panels and working groups, which enable Members to decide on issues affecting the running of the Fire Authority, in accordance with the principles of openness and democratic accountability.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

To fulfil its wide range of functions, the Authority must satisfy political, economic, social and environmental objectives over the short, medium and longer term. This subjects it to a different set of external and internal constraints and incentives from those found in the private sector, all of which affect its governance arrangements.

A key piece of legislation in Wales is the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires the Authority to consider the longer term in making its decisions and to work collaboratively with other public bodies to improve well-being in Wales.

Stakeholders are, therefore, interested in issues such as:

- whether the Authority's planned outputs have been delivered and outcomes achieved, and
- whether this has been done in an efficient, economic, effective and equitable manner.

To deliver good governance in the public sector, both governing bodies and individuals working for public sector organisations must try to achieve their objectives while acting in the public interest at all times, which implies primary consideration of the benefits for society, which should result in positive outcomes for service users and other stakeholders.

This Statement gives assurances that North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has complied with the governance framework for the year ended 31st March 2024.

The Governance Framework

North Wales Fire Authority comprises 28 elected councillors from the six unitary authorities of North Wales, with the number of representatives determined by the population of the area. More information about the Authority, its members and responsibilities can be found [here](#).

The Authority is required to review the effectiveness of its arrangements each year to ensure that there is a sound system of governance. The key contributors to this process include:

Having an Authority and committee structure that:

- monitors the effectiveness of risk management arrangements
- regularly reviews the governance arrangements
- considers and reviews internal and external audit strategies, plans and reports
- reviews, scrutinises and approves the annual statement of accounts.

Having an Executive Panel that:

- provides leadership on governance
- contributes to the completion and review of the Annual Governance Statement
- provides clear direction to the Service and senior managers.

The use of information from various sources to inform the governance arrangements, for example:

- improvement and performance board reports
- risk management arrangements
- external regulator reports
- internal audit reports

The Fire and Rescue Authority's normal schedule of meetings are attended remotely. The full Fire and Rescue Authority meetings are webcast in Welsh

and English simultaneously. All meetings are made available to the public to observe, should they make a request to do so.

Early in 2023, the Authority established two working-groups to support the development of two key organisational priorities:

- The Emergency Cover Review Working Group
- The new Training and Development Centre Working Group.

In addition, a member of the Fire and Rescue Authority sits on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee as a member champion.

In March 2024 the Fire and Rescue Authority approved a new draft five-year [Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\) 2024-2029](#) and a draft [Community Risk Management Implementation Plan for 2024-25](#). This replaces the Corporate Plan 2021-24. Both are currently subject to public and stakeholder consultation.

A Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) aims to identify risks facing the community and describes how the Fire and Rescue Authority will manage those risks, and continue to prevent and respond to fires and other emergencies.

The Authority has developed [five principles](#) for keeping communities safe and the CRMP;

- Acknowledges the requirements of key legislation
- Considers the ongoing work of the Public Services Boards
- Identifies the risks facing our communities
- Outlines what activity the Authority had taken to address these risks
- Explains what actions the Authority will take over the next five years to mitigate those risks
- Aligns with the Authority's revenue budget, capital plan and medium-term financial plan.



Fig 2. Committees of the Fire and Rescue Authority

The Executive Group comprising the Principal Officers, Chief, Deputy and Assistant Fire Officers, is responsible for strategic leadership.

The Service Leadership Team (SLT), includes the Principal Officers, Area Managers and Heads of Department. It meets as a Performance Board to scrutinise performance, and as an Improvement Board to provide challenge and senior oversight of programmes, projects and policies. The SLT provides organisational leadership and service delivery.

The Service Governance and Assurance Structure of committees and groups, reporting to SLT, are embedded across the organisation, demonstrating robust governance across reporting, monitoring, scrutiny and decision-making within all areas of the organisation.

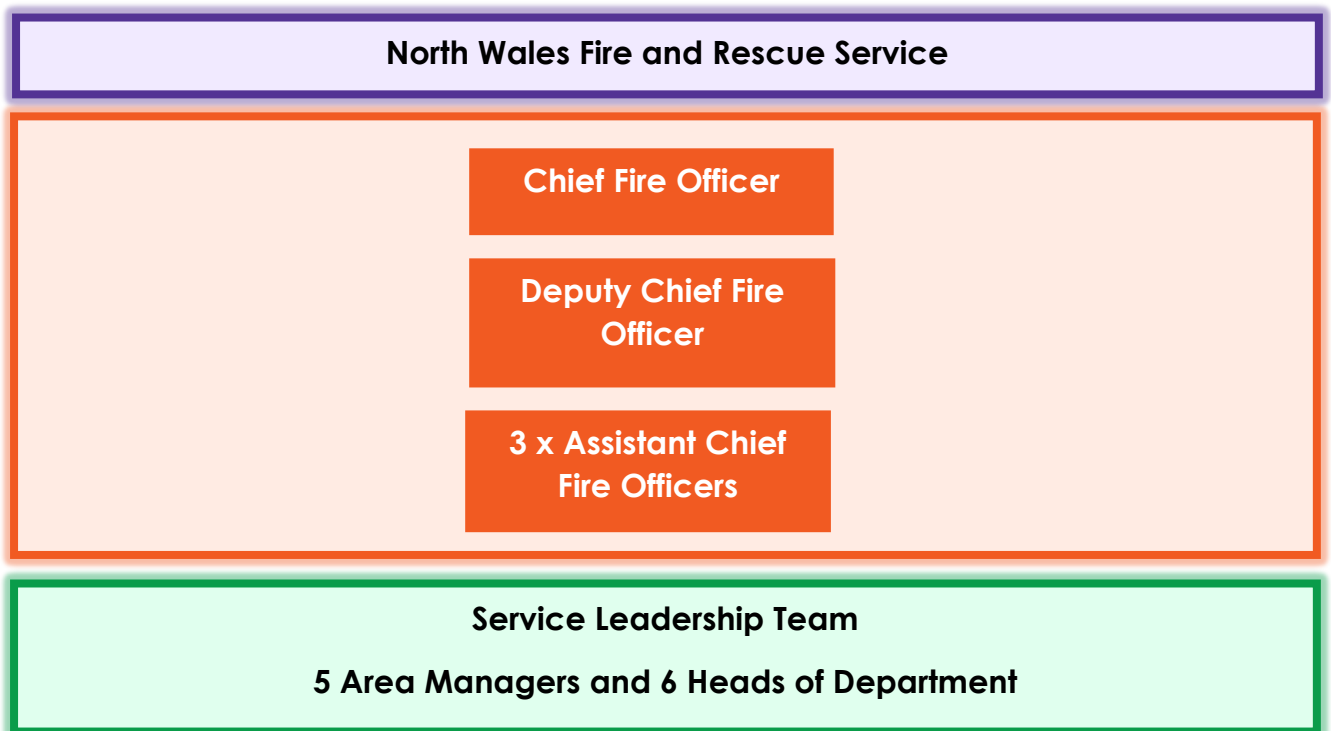


Fig 3. Service Leadership Structure

Key Contributors to Developing and Maintaining the Governance Framework

Constitution	The purpose of the Constitution is to set out in clear language how the Fire Authority works and how it makes decisions
Fire Authority	Provides the strategic leadership, political interface and corporate challenge in relation to the provision of fire and rescue services across North Wales, encouraging public participation and conducting its affairs in an open and transparent manner. It agrees the Improvement and Wellbeing Plan, and the revenue and capital budgets
Executive Panel	Monitors the performance of the Service and makes recommendations to the Authority on its key policies including the Improvement and Wellbeing Plan. The Panel reviews the strategic risk register.
Audit Committee	Provides independent review of the governance, risk management and control frameworks and oversees the financial reporting, including the Treasury Management Strategy and annual accounts.
Standards Committee	Promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by Members of the Authority and oversees the whistle-blowing policy for complaints against Members of the Authority. Also, where statute permits, to receive reports and complaints about Members and to conduct or oversee investigations and make recommendations to the Authority.
Fire Authority Working Groups	Undertake detailed work associated with the Authority's planning and budget-setting process. It submits its observations to the Executive Panel which in turn makes recommendations for improvement/risk reduction/well-being objectives to the Authority.
Executive Group	Implements the policy and budgetary framework set by the Fire Authority and provides advice to the Fire Authority on the development of future policy and budgetary issues.
Service Leadership Team	Sets and leads the implementation of the governance standards across the Service. Receives the annual improvement plan and feeds into the annual self-assessment.
Section 151 Officer	Ensures lawful and financially prudent decision making. Administration of financial affairs. Accountable for developing and maintaining the Fire Authority's governance, risk and control framework. Contributes to the effective corporate management and governance of the Fire Authority
Monitoring Officer	Reports on contraventions of any enactment or rule of law. Reports on any maladministration or injustice where the Local Government Ombudsman has carried out an investigation. Maintains and updates the Constitution. Maintains registers of member interests and gifts and hospitality. Advises Members on the interpretation of the Code of Conduct.
Internal Audit	Provides independent assurance and annual opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Fire Authority's governance, risk management and control framework. Delivers an annual programme of risk-based audit activity, including counter fraud and investigation activity. Makes recommendations for improvements in the management of risk.

CIPFA Principles - Governance Assurance

Principle A: Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

The Authority's [Mission and Values](#) are published in the Community Risk Management Plan and on the [Authority's website](#).

The [Constitution](#) sets out the responsibilities of the Fire and Rescue Authority and its committees and includes the Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

The Monitoring Officer ensures that decisions taken are within the law and comply with the provisions of the Constitution.

The Constitution includes the [Code of Conduct for Members](#) and this is monitored by the Standards Committee.

Where necessary legal advice is sought to inform decision making.

Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers are in place, which requires the declaration of business interests and recording of the receipt of gifts and/or hospitality. These are published on the Authority's website as part of each [Member's personal profile](#).

Key policies are in place to prevent and minimise the risk of fraud. Policies include: Whistleblowing Policy, [Anti-Fraud, Bribery and Corruption Policy](#) and [Financial Regulations](#) and [Contract Procedure Rules](#). Where irregularity is suspected arrangements are in place to ensure that it is thoroughly investigated.

The recruitment policy, induction and training processes incorporate personal behaviours with ethical values.

Attainment of the Public Health Wales Corporate Health [Gold](#) and [Platinum](#) awards, an award scheme run by Healthy Working Wales, on behalf of Public Health Wales. These awards allow employers to demonstrate policies and actions designed to promote happier and healthier workforces.

An Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Steering Committee was established in 2022 and a five-year [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) has been developed and published.

The implementation of the EDI strategy will be guided by a detailed annual EDI action plan, which will be performance-managed by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee which meet on a quarterly basis.

The service is committed to upholding standards and takes all concerns seriously. Disciplinary cases and any allegations of wrongdoing are

investigated in accordance with the Service's Discipline Handbook. The Service intends to recruit a dedicated grievance and discipline officer.

A [Welsh Language Standards Annual Report](#) is published on the Authority's website detailing the Authority's compliance with the Standards.

As part of our commitment to the Welsh language, all new members of staff are required to achieve a minimum of Level 2 Welsh language skills.

The Community Risk Management Plan which contains Improvement and Well-being objectives is currently subject to public and stakeholder consultation. The ratified Five-year Plan and the 2024-25 Implementation Plan will be published on the Authority's website. This meets our obligations as required by the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

A Safeguarding policy and procedure is in place to refer vulnerable people the Service come into contact with, to other agencies.

All departmental plans and policies, where applicable, demonstrate alignment to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Service has introduced a confidential reporting line 'Safecall' for staff.

The Service has adopted The Social Partnership Duty as of the 1st of April 2024 and will build on well established arrangements between the Service and staff representative bodies to consult on objectives and strategic decisions about how it intends to deliver those objectives.

Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

All meetings are advertised and full Authority meetings are webcast. Agendas and papers are available on the Authority's website.

Information is published on the Authority's website as part of the publication scheme. Read/Speak and Welsh versions of documents are provided.

Public consultation arrangements are in place to invite the views of stakeholders prior to developing and implementing key changes. This includes consultation on the Improvement Objectives contained in the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024-25.

The Authority has been recognised as achieving '[Good Practice](#)' by the [Consultation Institute](#) for all elements of the public consultation in connection with the ongoing Emergency Cover Review. This confirmed that the

consultation process met the '[Gunning Principles](#)', the recognised legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed.

The commitment to openness is also shown through;

- completion of impact assessments for all key decisions;
- the Complaints and Compliments Procedure, which includes the ability to escalate significant matters;
- the Public Engagement and Consultation Strategy;
- engagement with Employee Representative Bodies, informally and formally through the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee, which will be further strengthened by the adoption of the Social Partnership Duty in the new financial year;
- a biennial commitment to engage with staff via the 'Fire Family' staff survey.
- membership of the Welsh Local Government Association, North Wales Equality Leads Forum, The Race Council Cymru and the North Wales Inter-Faith Forum.

A variety of engagement methods are used including:

- directed communication using social media, with accounts on Facebook and X (formerly Twitter). This includes both corporate accounts as well as social media accounts run by fire station staff to widen engagement in local communities;
- the ability to sign up for email updates on specific issues via the website;
- engagement with young people via the Phoenix programme, Fire cadets and school visits;
- community safety engagement with householders and businesses;
- a Positive Action group, chaired by the ED&I officer, to plan and direct events for all firefighter recruitment;
- attendance at open days/events – for example organised events like the Eisteddfod as well as fire station events organised by staff;
- internal communications include the Weekly Brief electronic newsletter to staff;
- external communications campaigns, led by the Community Safety Managers.
- through Prevent and Recruitment activities the service engages with people of all ages and diverse backgrounds.

Partnership arrangements are in place for;

- All Wales Joint Emergency Service Group;
- Local Resilience Forums;
- the three local Public Services Boards;
- the Regional Partnership Board;

- the Strategic Arson Reduction Board;
- the Local Safeguarding Adults Boards and Local Safeguarding Children's Board;
- collaboration with other Emergency Services.

Principle C: Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

The five-year Community Risk Management Plan sets the strategic direction for the Authority and details the improvement objectives in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and well-being objectives in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Authority's policies reflect the sustainable development principle of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015.

The Medium-Term Resource Strategy, which includes a 10-year Capital Plan, and annual budget process aims to ensure that financial resources are directed to the Authority's priorities.

The Service continues to ensure the mandatory e-learning is undertaken by all staff in respect of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Act.

As a [Disability Confident](#) employer, the Service is committed to recruiting and retaining disabled people and those with health conditions.

The Service has also signed the [Armed Forces Covenant](#), which is a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families, are treated fairly. This is supported by an Armed Forces Reserves and Veterans Policy.

The Service pays [above the real living wage](#).

A Safeguarding policy and procedure are in place to refer vulnerable people the Service come into contact with, to other agencies.

The Service has a statutory duty to put in place business continuity arrangements. Plans across the Service are reviewed annually and there is ongoing collaboration with the other fire and rescue services in Wales to improve planning and consider current risks.

Key decisions are subject to an integrated impact assessment, which takes account of equality; data protection; health, safety and wellbeing; Welsh language; finance; sustainability and staffing; Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the socio-economic duty and it will also take account of the anticipated statutory Health Duty.

The Authority has developed and adopted an [Environmental Strategy](#) which sets out detailed and robust performance targets for a reduction of our carbon emissions and other significant environmental impacts.

Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes.

Public consultation is carried out as part of setting the Authority's objectives which are set out in the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan.

An [assessment of the Authority's performance](#) against its annual objectives is published in October each year.

The Authority's Strategic Risk Management Policy (which is currently being reviewed following internal audit) sets out the process used to identify and control exposure to uncertainty, which may impact on the achievement of the objectives or activities. This is reviewed throughout the year to ensure that risks are appropriately managed.

Following scrutiny from the Executive Group, performance and financial reports are presented to the Authority and its committees.

A quarterly Performance Monitoring Report is prepared for the Executive Panel and the Service Leadership Team scrutinise data relating to incident demand, emerging trends, and availability at the Performance Board, ensuring that issues are identified and appropriate interventions agreed.

The budget planning processes, involving Service leads and Authority Members, ensure budgets are allocated to support risk-based objectives whilst balancing the costs associated with maintaining estates, vehicles and equipment. The Budget, Monitoring and Procurement Committee provides the necessary strategic oversight and governance.

The Organisational Learning Committee provides strategic oversight and governance of National Operational Guidance and Joint Operational Learning available and implements any necessary changes.

Health and Safety incidents are reported, reviewed and monitored to ensure the safety of all staff is optimised and risks are minimised. The Health Safety & Wellbeing Committee has strategic oversight and governance.

The [All Wales Dwelling Fire Response Charter](#) sets out seven high-level commitments in respect of preventing and responding to dwelling fires. It is reported upon annually as part of the Authority's Annual Performance Assessment.

Principle E: Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it.

The Authority's Constitution outlines the roles of elected members and designated officers to enable shared understanding of roles and objectives. The designated posts include the Chief Fire Officer, Treasurer and Monitoring Officer.

Regional and national collaborative working exists, for example, the three Welsh fire and rescue services participate in the All Wales Fire Investigation Training Forum, supporting shared learning and promoting a consistent approach across Wales.

The Authority has adopted the All Wales People and Organisational Development Strategy 2024-2028, which underpins the commitment to lifelong learning and workplace competence.

Induction processes for Members and employees include an introduction to the organisation's core values, the standards of conduct and the role requirements.

The development needs of employees are identified through one to one meetings.

Health and wellbeing support is provided to maintain physical and mental wellbeing. This is achieved through a range of measures including HR policies and guidance documents, flexible working approach, the occupational health service and the employee assistance programme. The Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee provides strategic oversight and governance.

The Service has a dedicated training department, with competency frameworks for operational staff. Training is delivered using a variety of methods including e-learning modules which are mandatory for certain subjects e.g. Data Protection. The Organisational Learning Committee provides strategic oversight and governance.

Staff are members of relevant professional bodies and undertake the required continual professional development.

The Service aligns its promotional processes to the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) leadership framework.

Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.

The Treasurer is responsible for the proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs as required by [Section 151 Local Government Finance Act 1972](#).

The Monitoring Officer ensures compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations.

The Strategic Risk Management Policy (which is currently being reviewed following internal audit) details the process for the identification and control of risks. A corporate risk register is maintained by the Corporate Planning Department and is monitored throughout the year.

Reports to the Authority and its committees include an integrated impact assessment to inform and support decisions.

Business continuity arrangements are in place to ensure that critical services can continue to be delivered at all times and reviewed annually.

The Authority's Audit Committee ensure that recommendations for improvement made by the External Auditor, Audit Wales, and the Internal Auditor are agreed and monitored.

Members and senior management are provided with [quarterly reports](#) on Service improvement and performance against key performance indicators and milestones.

The Authority has arrangements to maintain [registers of Members' personal and business interests and a register of gifts and hospitality](#). These are published on the Authority's website as part of each Member's personal profile.

Policies for Anti-Fraud and Corruption and Whistle-blowing are in place which confirms the Authority's commitment to operating in a fair and transparent manner.

Policies and arrangements are in place to manage the handling of data. These are the Data Protection Policy, Freedom of Information Policy, Data Retention Policy and Communications and Information Security Policy. These policies are supplemented with training and the e-learning module on data protection is mandatory for all staff.

Information sharing protocols have been developed and agreed with partners.

Financial management supports the delivery of services and transformational change as well as securing good stewardship. [A financial update](#) is

presented at each Authority meeting, with [reports](#) available to the public on the website.

The Treasury Management arrangements follow professional practices and are reviewed annually by members.

The [Authority's Statements of Accounts](#) and its performance against key areas of risk and priority are subject to scrutiny by external audit.

Principle G: Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.

The Authority, with assistance from the Monitoring Officer, oversees and reviews the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance arrangements and internal control environment.

Agendas and minutes of [Fire and Rescue Authority meetings](#) are publicly available on the internet along with webcasts of the Authority meetings.

Authority reports follow a structured format which ensures that key information is presented in a clear and consistent manner to aid decision making.

The Authority complies with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, in respect of its obligation to publish certain information as part of its [publication scheme](#) and responding to requests for information from members of the public.

The Community Risk Management Plan documents the improvement and well-being objectives of the Authority and is reviewed by Audit Wales in connection with the issue of a Certificate of Compliance.

The Annual Statement of Accounts are produced in a user-friendly format. This provides clear information on income and expenditure and demonstrates the stewardship of public money for the year. The accounts are submitted for audit by the statutory deadline.

The [Annual Pay Policy Statement](#) is approved and published in accordance with the Localism Act 2011. Members' salaries are paid in accordance with the Independent Remuneration Panel decisions and reported on the internet.

Members and senior officers declare relevant interests in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK. These declarations enable the Authority to identify and report any related party transactions.

The Annual Governance Statement provides transparency on the governance arrangements and the planned governance improvement actions for the coming year.

The Auditor General is the external auditor appointed by statute and provides an opinion on the Statement of Accounts, which is published on the Authority's website. The Authority acts on recommendations and, where necessary, takes corrective action.

The Internal Audit arrangements include a risk-based approach, which provides assurance that key risks are being managed. The Authority acts on recommendations and where necessary, takes corrective action.

Following a review of internal arrangements, the Service appointed a new Internal Auditor in June 2023 to strengthen assurance arrangements.

Processes are in place to ensure that recommendations from inspection and regulatory bodies are actioned.

How the Authority addressed its 2023/24 Governance Improvement Actions.

Governance Improvement Area	Planned Action	Forum	Responsibility	Progress as at March 2024
Carbon Emissions Reduction	Respond to the recommendations found within Audit Wales Carbon Emissions Reduction – North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Report March 2022	Land and Property Committee Environmental & Sustainability Group	ACFO Operations Environmental & Climate Change Manager	<p>This action has been completed. Measures have been implemented to address all five recommendations set out by Audit Wales report into the reduction of our carbon emissions.</p> <p>These included setting a carbon baseline, preparing the Environmental Strategy 2023-2030, and drafting dedicated decarbonisation plans for fleet, heating and power.</p> <p>We have also prepared a Social Value and Sustainable Procurement Strategy, a Waste Reduction Plan, and a Residual Carbon Emissions Plan.</p>
False Fire Alarms Reduction	Respond to the recommendations found within Audit Wales False fire alarms reduction - North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Report April 2023	Prevention & Protection Performance Committee	ACFO Operations Head of Prevention and Protection	<p>This action has been completed.</p> <p>A programme of re-inspection has been developed for those at higher risk of having a fire, within five years of the initial Safe and Well Check.</p> <p>Nine years of data (2015 to 2023) of attended and non-attended Automatic Fire Alarms has been analysed to identify trends e.g. repeat locations, system faults and human error.</p> <p>A time and motion study has been undertaken, paying particular attention to time of AFA actuation (Risk v PDA v Time of day).</p> <p>Commercial and Hospital AFAs are now reviewed more frequently through a performance dashboard enabling more timely interventions.</p>

				Fire Safety staff have re-engaged with HMP Berwyn to reinvigorate the adult fire setting intervention due to high turnover amongst Prison staff.
Community Resilience and Self Resilience	Review the recommendations found within the 'Together we can' – Community resilience and self-resilience Audit Wales report for impacts and implications for NWFRS	SLT - Improvement Board	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	This action has been completed. Audit Wales have confirmed that whilst the 'Together we can - community resilience report' has some relevance for wider public services, it is primarily aimed at local authorities, and Audit Wales would not expect a formal response from NWFRS.
Service Restructure (introduced 1st April 2022)	Action through the Service Leadership Team to design an annual process that explicitly involves the SLT and Internal Audit in assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Good Governance Framework are being applied.	SLT – Improvement Board	DCFO Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	This action has not been completed. However, a Service Governance Structure which includes clear roles and responsibilities, Terms of Reference and reporting has been introduced and provides the structure for enabling the CIPFA Framework. This action will be completed during 2024/25.
Constitution	Action for the Clerk to the Authority to incorporate into the Constitution arrangements for	NWFRS	Clerk to the Fire and Rescue Authority	This action has been completed. The Clerk submitted a paper to Executive Panel on the 16th December recommending amendments to the Constitution, as described in the action, which was approved.

	pre-election periods leading up to local government elections and interregnum periods between Authorities.			
Departmental Planning	Conduct a review of the departmental planning framework has been implemented for 23/24 departmental plans, this prioritises the capturing of evidence against the building Blocks, Corporate Plan objectives and the objectives of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act.	SLT	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	This action has been completed. As well as aligning the departmental objectives, the template also captures amendments to departmental risks and workforce planning, providing a more complete overview of each department.
Community Risk Management Assessment (CRMP) and Corporate Planning	Complete a new CRMP aligned to the NFCC Community Risk Management Programme, and the objectives of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act.	SLT Improvement board	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	This action has been completed. The Community Risk Management Plan 2024-2029, and the Community Risk Management Implementation Plan 2024-2025 were published on 25 th March 2024 and are subject to a period of public consultation in line with the requirements of The Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Implementation Plan contains Well-being and Improvement objectives. Consultation will end in June and final versions of the Plans will be approved by Fire and Rescue Authority in July 2024.

<p>Emergency Cover Review Consultation</p>	<p>Working towards alignment to 'Best Practice', from The Consultation Institute, in the quality assurance of any public consultation completed on proposal from the Emergency Cover Review.</p>	<p>SLT - Performance board</p>	<p>Head of Corporate Communications Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation</p>	<p>This action has been completed. The completion of The Equality Impact Analysis and Equality Impact Assessment of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Emergency Cover Review concluded the requirements of the formal quality assurance process that has been overseen by the Consultation Institute.</p> <p>The Authority have been recognised as achieving 'Good Practice' for all elements of the consultation.</p> <p>This confirmed that the consultation process has met the 'Gunning Principles', the recognised legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed.</p>
--	--	--------------------------------	---	---

The Authority's Governance Improvement Actions 2024/25

Governance Improvement Area	Planned Action	Forum	Responsibility	For completion by
Governance Framework Review	Action through the Service Leadership Team to design an annual process that explicitly involves the SLT and Internal Audit in assessing the extent to which the principles contained in the Good Governance Framework are being applied.	SLT Performance Board	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	March 2025
Governance Arrangements	Consider the findings and recommendations arising from Audit Wales review of Governance Arrangements.	Fire and Rescue Authority	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	March 2025
Efficacy of Prevention activities	Consider the findings and recommendations arising from Audit Wales review of Prevention.	Fire and Rescue Authority	Head of Prevention and Protection	March 2025
Strategic Risk Management	Implement the recommendations from the Internal Audit review of Core Controls of Risk Management.	SLT Improvement Board	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	March 2025
Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015	The statutory obligation to ensure that the well-being objectives in the Community Risk Management Plan are kept under review to ensure the objectives are met.	SLT Performance Board	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	March 2025
The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023	Embed the principles and requirements of The Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.	Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee	Head of Corporate Planning, Performance and Transformation	March 20205

Compliance with the Financial Management Code

The CIPFA Financial Management Code (CIPFA FM Code) is designed to support good practice in financial management and to assist the Authority in demonstrating their financial sustainability. The CIPFA FM Code therefore sets the standards of financial management for the Authority.

The Code is based on a series of principles supported by specific standards and statements of practice which are considered necessary to provide the strong foundation to:

- Financially manage the short, medium- and long-term finances of the Authority
- Manage financial resilience to meet foreseen demands on services
- Financially manage unexpected shocks in their financial circumstances.

Each Authority must demonstrate that the requirements of the Code are being satisfied.

As Section 151 Officer I have the Statutory Responsibility (supported by the Service Leadership Team and Members of the Authority) for ensuring compliance with the CIPFA FM Code.

I have carried out a full assessment of compliance with the CIPFA FM Code as part of the annual review of the Annual Governance Statement and I can confirm that in my opinion the Authority is compliant with the code in the majority of areas.

Signed _____

(Treasurer) 2024

Governance Opinion and Conclusion

The Authority recognises that good governance provides the foundation for the delivery of good quality services that meet the needs of stakeholders and ensures that public money is well spent. This review confirms the governance systems and monitoring in place for 2023/24 and the steps taken to ensure that they are working effectively.

The Authority is satisfied that appropriate governance arrangements are in place and remains committed to enhancing these through the implementation of the action plan for 2024/25.

Signed

(Chair) 2024

Signed

(Chief Fire Officer) 2024



**Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru
North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority**

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Finance and Resources
Subject	Firefighters Pension Schemes Local Pension Board – Annual Report 2023/24



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To present to Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) the annual report of the Local Pension Board (the Board) which details the work of the Board during the 2023/24 financial year. The annual report is attached at [appendix 1](#).
- 2 To seek approval from Members to increase the membership of the Local Pension Board. These proposed changes are set out in the updated Terms of Reference attached at [appendix 2](#).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3 The annual report of the Local Pension Board details the work undertaken by the Board during 2023/24 and provides a work programme for 2024/25.
- 4 The Board is required to have an equal balance of employee and employer membership. The current membership is a total of eight members but due to availability one meeting was cancelled during the financial year and one deferred. It is proposed to increase the membership to ten members to ensure that the Board is able to meet on four occasions each year.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD

- 5 The Local Pension Board Annual Report 2023/24 was considered by the Board at its meeting of 18 April 2024. The report was endorsed subject to a minor amendment to confirm the membership details of the Board.
- 6 The Terms of Reference were considered by the Board at its meeting of the 24 January 2024 and were endorsed for consideration and approval by the Authority.

RECOMMENDATION

7 It is recommended that Members:

- i) **approve the Local Pension Board 2023/24 Annual Report; and**
- ii) **approve the terms of reference for the Local Pension Board, noting the increase of the membership to 10 members.**

BACKGROUND

8 This document sets out the work undertaken by the Local Pension Board of the Authority. The Authority is the Scheme Manager as defined under Section 4 of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. The Board is established in accordance with Section 5 of that Act.

9 The governance requirements around pensions were introduced as a result of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 (the Act). The Act provides for clearer governance arrangements with specific defined roles, the publication of more information on a consistent basis, and administration practices in line with those in the private sector.

10 The Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015 relating to the creation and ongoing operation of local pensions came into force on 1 April 2015. These regulations require the Authority to establish a Local Pension Board in respect of the Firefighter's Pension Scheme by 1 April 2015.

11 The role and remit of the Board is to assist the Authority in its capacity as Scheme Manager by making sure it is administering the Firefighters' Pension Scheme effectively and efficiently and is complying with relevant laws and regulations. In order to aid transparency, the Scheme Manager is required to publish the annual report of its Local Pension Board.

12 As set in the terms of reference for the Board, the annual report should include:

- a summary of the work of the Board and a work plan for the coming year;
- details of areas of concern reported to or raised by the Board and recommendations made;
- details of any conflicts of interest that have arisen in respect of individual Board members and how these have been managed;
- any areas of risk or concern the Board wish to raise with the Scheme Manager;
- details of training received and identified training needs; and
- details of any expenses and costs incurred by the Board and any anticipated expenses for the forthcoming year.

INFORMATION

- 13 The Local Pension Board Annual Report 2023/24 is set out in [Appendix 1](#). The report was considered by Members of the Board at its meeting of the 18 April 2024. Members endorsed the report and requested one amendment to include details of the Members of the Board.
- 14 The Terms of Reference of the Board were reviewed at its meeting of the 23 January 2024 and were noted to be consistent with the requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. The Board endorsed the proposed Terms of Reference noting the increase in membership to 10.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	Considered not relevant
Budget	Cost of the Local Pension Board is funded from existing Members' Services budget
Legal	The new governance requirements around pensions were introduced as a result of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013. FPS (Amendment) Governance regulations 2015.
Staffing	Considered not relevant
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	It is not considered that there are any issues that need addressing as the recommendations apply equally to all Members regardless of protected characteristics under the Single Equality Act.
Risks	All FRAs need to comply with the guidance provided by the Pensions Regulator around the governance arrangements for Local Pension Boards.

**North Wales Fire and Rescue Service
Firefighters' Pension Scheme**

**Local Pension Board
Annual Report
2023-24**

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Roles and Functions	3
3. Membership and meetings of the Board	3
4. Conflicts of Interest Policy	4
5. Knowledge and Understanding	4
6. Work Programme 2023/24	5
7. Work Programme 2024/25	7

1.0 Introduction

This is the Annual Report of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Local Pension Board (the Board), covering the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. This report includes commentary on the following:

- Details of any conflict of interest that have arisen in respect of Board members;
- Details of training received and identified training needs for Board members;
- A summary of the work undertaken by the Board during 2023/24;
- Areas of concern or risk reported to or raised by the Board; and
- The forward work programme for 2024/25.

2.0 Roles and Functions

In accordance with Section 5 and Section 30 (1) of the Public Services Pensions Act 2013 and Regulation 4A of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015, the Board was established in April 2015. The role and remit of the Board is to assist the Scheme Manager (North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, "the Authority") to secure compliance with:

- The relevant laws and regulations;
- Any other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the Scheme;
- The requirements imposed by the Regulator in relation to the Scheme; and
- To ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Scheme.

The Board is expected to complement and enhance the Authority's existing arrangements for managing the firefighter pension schemes. It does not replace the existing arrangements and it is not a decision-making body. Rather, it is designed to act as a critical friend to the Authority and its officers when they act in the capacity of scheme manager.

3.0 Membership and meetings of the Board

At its meeting of 23 January 2024, the Board membership increased to 10 as follows:

- Five employer representatives comprising of three members of the Authority, the Clerk to the Authority (or nominated deputy) and Treasurer of the Authority.

- Five employee representatives – four of whom are from each representative body officially associated with the Authority and one representing the retained duty system.

During the 2023/24 financial year there were a number of resignations from the Board and new appointees. A summary of the membership is provided below:

Name	Role	Representing	Dates (aligned to meeting dates for part year)
Bryan Apsley	FRA Member	Employer	Full year
Dafydd Edwards	Authority Treasurer	Employer	Full year
Gareth Owens	Monitoring Officer	Employer	Full year
John Brynmor Hughes	FRA Member	Employer	Full year
Richard Fairhead (Chair to 28/4/24)	Fire Leaders' Association	Employee	01/04/2023-28/04/2023
Stuart Stanley	Fire Brigades Union	Employee	01/04/2023-24/10/2023
Matt Ryan	Fire Brigades Union	Employee	01/04/2023-18/03/2024
Stuart Millington (Chair from 28/04/23 – 12/02/24)	Fire Leaders' Association	Employee	01/04/2023-12/02/2024
Gwynfor Owen	FRA Member	Employer	07/08/2024-present
Dawn Docx	Fire Leaders' Association	Employee	13/02/2024-present
Paul Kay (Chair 23/01/24)	Fire Officers' Association	Employee	23/01/2024-present
Geraint Evans	RDS Representative	Employee	23/11/2023-present
Terry Ledden	Fire Brigades Union	Employee	08/01/2024-present

In addition to Local Pension Board members, the following key officers support the Board and attend Board meetings:

- Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Finance and Resources; and
- Pensions Manager

Chair of the Board

The Chairperson of the Board is rotated every two years between a member representing employers and those representing scheme members.

ACFO Stuart Millington was elected as Chair for the period 2023/24, representing the Fire Leaders' Association. The Chair is also nominated to sit on the National Firefighters' Pension Scheme Advisory Board for Wales.

The Board was scheduled to meet on four occasions during the 2023/24 financial year and meetings were held on the following dates:

- 28 April 2023
- 11 July 2023
- 24 October 2023
- 23 January 2024

4.0 Conflicts of Interest Policy

The Public Service Pensions Act 2013 (the Act) requires that a member of a pension board does not have a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest is defined as a financial or other interest which is likely to prejudice a person's exercise of functions as a member of a pension board. The Act is clear that actual membership of one of the Firefighter Pension Schemes is not in itself a conflict of interest, so would not preclude a scheme member from serving on the Board.

The Board has a policy for the management of potential conflicts in order to ensure that they do not become actual conflicts and all members of the Board are familiar with the policy. In addition, conflicts of interest is a standing item on all Board agendas and any interests noted by Members are recorded so that appropriate action can be taken to manage the conflict.

There have been no declarations made by any Member, advisor or attendee during the relevant period.

A copy of the Conflict of Interest policy can be found here:

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

5.0 Knowledge and Understanding

It is a statutory requirement of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 that members of the Local Pension Board should have the capacity to become conversant with, and develop a knowledge of, detailed pension related issues to effectively carry out their duties.

Each individual appointed to the Board must have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions and such other matters as may be prescribed in other legislation.

A Board member should have an understanding of what is relevant to their role in the following areas:

- The Firefighter Pension Scheme regulations;
- Other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the schemes;
- Requirements imposed by the Pensions Regulator; including
- The standards and expectations set out in any relevant code of practice issued by the Pensions Regulator.

Upon appointment, Members are required to complete the online training modules available on the Pensions Regulator's website. In addition, the Authority provides both induction training to new Board members and ongoing training sessions during Board meetings for all Members to assist them in undertaking their role.

The Scheme Manager keeps appropriate records of the learning activities provided to individual Members and the Board as a whole. Members of the Board are encouraged to identify their own training needs in order that the training provided remains relevant and appropriate. Training is provided through the pensions regulator's public sector toolkit, through external events such as those provided by the LGA and also through in-house training.

A schedule detailing the training undertaken by Board members during 2023/24 is detailed below:

Date	Topics Covered
28 April 2023	Funding of the pension scheme
11 July 2023	Valuation of the pension scheme
24 October 2023	Changes to the scheme following the age discrimination
28 February 2024	Scheme overview

6.0 Work Programme 2023/24

The Board met on four occasions during the financial year and the scope its work was defined by the Terms of Reference. The Board approves and reviews the Terms of Reference on an annual basis and the most recent version was approved at the meeting of 11 July 2023. The Terms of Reference can be found via the following link:

[Local Pension Board - Fire and Rescue Authority - North Wales Fire And Rescue Service \(gov.wales\)](https://www.gov.wales/government/organisations/local-pension-board)

During the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 the following specific matters were considered by the Board:

- Review and approval of the Terms of Reference;
- Consideration of the national legal challenge relating to the transitional pension scheme arrangements (McCloud Judgment);
- Consideration of the legal matter relating to the pension arrangements for on call firefighters (O'Brien Judgment);
- An update on the Pension Fund following the 2022/23 audited accounts;
- Confirmation of the outcome of the 2020 GAD valuation;
- Knowledge and training update;
- Updates on Pension Ombudsman cases; and
- An update on the risks associated with the scheme and revision to the risk register.

Each agenda also includes the following standing items:

- Declaration of Interest;
- Minutes of last meeting;
- Firefighters' Pension Schemes Update Report which focuses on membership and internal complaints and cases referred to the Pensions Ombudsman;
- Administrators Update Report (Dyfed Pension Fund) confirming compliance with Welsh Government circulars and data quality;
- An update on legal matters affecting the scheme;
- Scheme Advisory Board Update;
- Training for members of the LPB;
- Risk Register; and
- Matters for escalation to full FRA.

Since the Local Firefighter Pension Board was set up in 2015, the work of the Board has been shaped by the Board members and by officers supporting the Board. Some regular reports have been developed and these are:

- The Firefighters' Pension Schemes Update Report which provides the Board with the latest information on areas of significant pension work, and includes both local and national issues. As well as enhancing the knowledge and understanding of Board members, this regular report serves to prompt discussion at the Board about the impact of issues on pension Scheme members and about how workloads are being managed. This helps to achieve the Board's purpose of securing effective governance and administration;
- The Dyfed Pension Fund Update Report which is produced by the administrators and provides assurance that the scheme is being properly administered. As well as providing regulatory updates, the report focuses on specific workload issues, such as, the Guaranteed Minimum Pension reconciliation, data quality, appeals, breaches and activity levels on the 'My Pensions Online' tool; and
- Specific areas of the Risk Register which are reviewed regularly by the Scheme Manager and is presented to the Board at each meeting, with any amendments highlighted. This allows the Board to keep track of the key risks and the control measures designed to manage those risks.

More detail is available in the agendas and minutes of the above Board meetings which can be accessed via following link: [Local Pension Board](#)

8.0 Work Programme 2024/25

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme Board maintains a work programme which is considered at every meeting. Now that the Board has completed a number of training activities, it will begin to select topics for in-depth analysis with a view to making recommendations to the Authority as and when necessary.

The Work Programme for 2024/25 is as set out below:

Local Pension Board Forward Work Plan 2024/25

Agenda item	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4
Review of membership and confirmation of meeting dates	X			
Service update report	X	X	X	X
Administrator's update report	X	X	X	X
Legal challenges and regulatory matters	X	X	X	X
Scheme Advisory Board Wales	X	X	X	X
Risk Register	X	X	X	X
Member Induction	This is ongoing as new members are appointed to the LPB			
Training needs analysis	X			
Training update	X	X	X	X
The Pensions Regulator – aspects of good governance		X	X	X
Annual Report	X			
Discretionary Policy update			X	
Review of Terms of Reference				X
Items of significance to be escalated to Fire and Rescue Authority	X	X	X	X

Terms of Reference for the Local Pension Board of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

1. This document sets out the terms of reference for the Local Pension Board of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Firefighters' Pension Scheme as required by the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and the Local Government (Amendment) (Governance) Regulations 2015.

Scheme Management

2. North Wales Fire and Rescue, as administering authority, is the Scheme Manager. Its functions are discharged in accordance with the Authority's scheme of delegation by the Treasurer and Chief Fire Officer.

The Local Pension Board

3. The role of the Local Pension Board is to assist North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority), as the administering authority:
 - to secure compliance with the scheme regulations and other legislation relating to the governance and administration of the scheme;
 - to secure compliance with requirements imposed in relation to the scheme by the Pensions Regulator;
 - ensure the effective and efficient governance and administration of the Firefighters' Pension Schemes for Dyfed Pension Fund;
 - the role of the Board will be oversight of these matters and not decision making;
 - in undertaking any relevant work as requested; and
 - in such other matters as the scheme regulations may specify.
4. The Local Pension Board will ensure that the Code of Practice on governance and administration issued by the Pensions Regulator is complied with. The Board will also ensure that it complies with the knowledge and understanding requirements in the Pensions Regulator's Code of Practice.
5. The Local Pension Board is accountable to the Pensions Regulator, the National Scheme Advisory Board and the Administering Authority in their role as Scheme Manager.

6. The principal functions of the Local Pension Board shall include, but not be limited to:
 - reviewing decision making processes, policies and procedures to ensure they are compliant with relevant Regulations;
 - seeking assurance that these are followed and adhered to with regard to Pensions decisions;
 - seeking assurance that administration performance is in compliance with the Authority's performance framework and that monitoring arrangements are adequate and robust;
 - considering the effectiveness of communication with employers and scheme members including a review of the Communication Strategy; considering and commenting on internal audit recommendations and external auditor reports.
7. Any complaint or allegation of a breach of the Regulations brought to the attention of the Local Pension Board shall be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Practice as published by the Pensions Regulator.

Frequency and Notice of Meetings

8. The Local Pension Board shall meet sufficiently regularly to discharge its duties and responsibilities effectively; four meetings will be scheduled during each financial year.
9. The Members' Services Officer shall give notice to all Local Pension Board members of each meeting of the Board, including the date, location and time of the meeting and shall ensure that a formal record of the Local Pension Board proceedings is maintained.
10. Papers will be provided three working days before each of the formal Local Pension Board meetings.
11. All agendas and non-confidential Local Pension Board papers and minutes of meetings will be published on NWFRA' website, together with the Board Terms of Reference and details of the Board membership.

Membership

12. The Local Pension Board shall consist of no fewer than 10 members (in total), and must include an equal balance of employer and scheme member (employee) representatives. These shall be constituted as follows:

Constituency	Definition/Constraints
Employer	To represent NWFRA
Scheme Member (employee)	To represent all members of the scheme (active, deferred and pensioner)

13. The term of office for all members of the Board will fall in line with council elections and therefore it is anticipated that the membership will remain until 2027. Members may at the end of their term, express a wish to be considered for re-election.
14. Local Pension Board members must meet key attendance and training requirements to retain their membership during this period. All members must:
 - endeavour to attend all meetings of the Board;
 - comply with the training plan produced by the Pensions Manager ; and
 - ensure compliance with the Pension Regulator's Code of Practice.
15. Each Employer Representative and Scheme Member Representative will have an individual voting right.
16. All members within the Firefighters' Pension Schemes must have an equal opportunity to be nominated for the role of member representative.
17. For the purpose of appointing employer representatives to the Board, nominations will be sought from all Fire and Rescue Authority members. The Treasurer and Monitoring Officer (or Deputy) will also provide employer representation.
18. For the purpose of appointing scheme member (employee) representatives to the Board, nominations will be requested through the Departmental Representatives and Trade Union Forum with further nominations being sought via an advert placed on the Authority's website. Where more than three nominations are received candidates will be considered, shortlisted and interviewed by a representative of the Scheme Manager who will then make recommendations to the Chief Fire Officer to formally appoint.
19. If a Local Pension Board member acting as an employer representative leaves the employment of the employer they are representing they will no longer be eligible to sit on the Board.
20. In the event of consistent non-attendance of a Board member, or for failure to meet key attendance and training requirements as set out in (13) above, the tenure of that membership will be reviewed. In the case of a member representative, this will be done by a representative of the Scheme Manager who may make recommendation for the membership to be revoked if considered necessary. In such event, there will be a right of appeal to the Chief Fire Officer prior to any recommendation. In the case of an employer representative, any such decision will be considered by the chair of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

21. If an employer or scheme member representative wishes to resign they must write to the Chief Fire Officer, giving at least one month's notice.
22. The Chairperson of the Local Pension Board will be rotated on a bi-annual basis between a member representing employers and those representing scheme members.
23. It will be the role of a representative acting as Chairperson to:
 - agree and set the agenda for a meeting of the Board
 - manage the meetings to ensure that the business of the meeting is completed in the agreed time
 - ensure that all members of the Board show due respect for process and that all views are fully heard and considered
 - strive as far as possible to achieve a consensus as an outcome
 - ensure that the actions and rationale for decisions taken are clear and properly recorded.
24. Due to the specialist nature of the work of the Board, personal attendance at all meetings is expected of all Board members with no provision for a substitute. However, deputies would be allowed, but they would be responsible for maintaining their own training to ensure they were *au fait* with pensions issues.
25. The Board may, with the approval of the Chief Fire Officer, co-opt persons who are not members to aid the Board for a period of time or for a specific task where this would provide additional skills, knowledge or experience. The co-opted members would not be permitted to vote.

Quorum

26. Six members of the Board members must be present for a meeting to be quorate. If the Chairperson is absent at a meeting and there is a quorum then the attending members must choose a Chairperson to preside over that meeting.

Knowledge and Skills

27. A member of the Pension Board must be conversant with:
 - the legislation and associated guidance of the four Firefighter Pension Schemes; and
 - any policies, procedures or decision-making processes about the administration of the Schemes adopted by NWFRA and Dyfed Pension Fund.
28. A member of the Local Pension Board must have knowledge and understanding of the law relating to pensions and any other matters which are prescribed in Regulations.

29. It is for individual Pension Board members to be satisfied that they have the appropriate degree of knowledge and understanding to enable them to properly exercise their functions as a member of the Pension Board.
30. Pension Board members are required to be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and to refresh and keep their knowledge up to date. Pension Board members are therefore required to maintain a written record of relevant training and development.
31. Pension Board members must confirm to the Pensions Manager within six months of joining the Board that they have completed the Pension Regulator training.
32. During the first meeting of the financial year, Pension Board members must consider and agree an annual training programme.

Standards of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

- 33 The role of the Local Pension Board members requires the highest standards of conduct and therefore the 'seven principles of public life' will be applied to all Local Pension Board members. Board members will be required to observe the members' code of conduct and data protection policies of the Authority. The Board is required to always act within these terms of reference. In accordance with the Public Service Pension Act 2013 a board member must not have a financial or other interest that could prejudice them in carrying out their Board duties. This does not include a financial or other interest arising merely by virtue of membership of the FPS.
- 34 As such all members of the Local Pension Board will be required to declare any interests and any potential conflicts of interest in line with the requirements of the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 and the Pension Regulator's Code. These declarations are required as part of the appointment process, as well as at regular intervals throughout a member's tenure.

Reporting

- 35 The Board is expected to produce an annual report to the Authority which should include:
 - a summary of the work of the Local Pension Board and a work plan for the coming year;
 - details of areas of concern reported to or raised by the Board and recommendations made;
 - details of any conflicts of interest that have arisen in respect of individual Local Pension Board members and how these have been managed;
 - any areas of risk or concern the Board wish to raise with the Scheme Manager;

- details of training received and identified training needs;
- details of any expenses and costs incurred by the Local Pension Board and any anticipated expenses for the forthcoming year.

36 Although the Board is only required to produce a single annual report, minutes for each meeting of the Board will be published on the Authority's website.

37 Should the Board have concerns believed to be sufficiently serious that they should be reported at a higher level than is standard (to the Pensions Manager) they should report to the Chief Fire Officer. This may include, but not be limited to, occasions where the Board feel that previous recommendations have not been acted upon. In extreme cases such as a fundamental breach of Regulations or a fundamental failure by the Administering Authority to ensure effective governance of the fund, the Board may consider reporting to the National Scheme Advisory Board and/or the Pensions Regulator.

Remuneration

38 Remuneration for members of the Local Pension Board will be limited to a refund of actual expenses incurred in attending Board meetings and training. It is expected that employers of board members will provide appropriate capacity to allow the member to perform this role within their normal working day without any reduction to pay.

39 Expense claims should be submitted no later than one month following the incursion.

Publication of Local Pension Board Information

40 Up to date information will be posted on the Authority website showing:

- names and information of the Local Pension Board members;
- how the scheme members and employers are represented on the Local Pension Board;
- responsibilities of the Local Pension Board as a whole;
- full terms of reference and policies of the Local Pension Board and how they operate; and
- Local Pension Board appointment process.

Review

41 These terms of reference were formally adopted by the Board at its first meeting on 20 April 2015 and are reviewed annually, or upon statutory or regulatory changes.

42 The Chief Fire Officer is authorised to make minor amendments, consequential upon statutory or regulatory change, or to update arrangements consequential on other external factors.

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Finance and Resources
Subject	Firefighters' Pension Scheme – update on legal challenges



PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) with an update on the statutory changes to Firefighters' Pension Scheme following significant legal challenges. These are more commonly known as the McCloud and O'Brien (Matthews 2) pension remedy exercises.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The recent legal challenges to the UK public sector pension schemes have resulted in regulatory changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. These changes are necessary to address two main issues; age discrimination following the implementation of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme 2015 (McCloud Judgment) and an historic issue relating to the pension arrangements for part time workers (O'Brien Judgment).
- 3 The changes arising from the McCloud judgment require a retrospective review of the pension benefits of eligible pension members between the period 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2022. This includes the provision of pension options for retired members, beneficiaries, deferred members and active members. The work to reconcile the payroll and pension records of staff within scope has commenced and will allow for the production of remedial service statements by the deadline of 31 March 2025. However, the processing of the choice for some retirees cannot progress due to a national tax issue.
- 4 The changes arising from the O'Brien judgment require a review of the contracts relating to eligible part time staff who express an interest in receiving pension benefits from the commencement of their employment. Staff who wish to proceed will be permitted to buy back their pension entitlement. The regulations require that this work is completed by 31 August 2025.

RECOMMENDATION

- 5 It is recommended that Members:
- i) Note the statutory requirements to implement the changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme regulations; and
 - ii) Endorse the proposals set out within this report for the management of cases impacted by the tax laws.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD

- 6 The Local Pension Board receives regular updates on progress towards implementing the changes required and has noted the complexity of the issues and the significant challenges to achieving the statutory deadlines.

BACKGROUND

- 7 The Public Service Pensions Act (2013) is the primary enabling legislation for all public sector pension schemes. As responsibility for the management of the Firefighters' Pension Scheme is a devolved function in Wales, the Senedd has responsibility for updating and maintain the regulations. The Authority is the Scheme Manager with responsibility for compliance with the underlying regulations.
- 8 There have been two significant legal challenges which are applicable to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme; the McCloud Judgment which relates to age discrimination and the O'Brien Judgment which relates to the pension arrangements for part time workers.

INFORMATION

MCCLOUD JUDGMENT

- 9 Following Lord Hutton's 2011 review of public sector pensions, the Public Service Pensions Act (2013) provided the legal framework to reform public sector pension schemes. Reforms included restricting existing final salary schemes, extending retirement ages, and introducing CARE (Career Average Revalued Earnings) Schemes.

- 10 In 2015 the majority of public service pension schemes were reformed to provide defined benefits, on a CARE basis, and extended the normal retirement age of members. The pension scheme regulations were amended to introduce these changes, with the amended regulations also providing protections for certain members of existing final salary schemes. This protection was age related and members reaching the normal pension age of 55 by 31 March 2012, were afforded full protection with other members receiving protection on a tapered basis depending on their age. This protection was known as transitional protection and members who did not qualify for protection, transitional or otherwise (unprotected), were moved out of their legacy schemes, into the new 2015 Firefighters Pension Scheme on the 1 April 2015.
- 11 In 2018 the Court of Appeal ruled that the transitional protection element of the 2015 public service pension reforms constituted unlawful age discrimination, in the Firefighters' Pension Schemes. This is now referred to as the McCloud/Sargeant case. On the back of this decision, the Government confirmed that it would remove the difference in treatment across all public service pension schemes
- 12 In October 2020 the UK Government undertook to consult the public on the way forward in relation to public service pension schemes and, in particular, how it should respond to the detail outlined in the judgement. The outcomes of the consultation were published on 4 February 2021, with an option called 'the Deferred Choice Underpin' being adopted. This means that members will make their decision between scheme benefit options shortly before their benefits are paid from the scheme, at the point of retirement. In the meantime, members will be deemed to have accrued benefits in their legacy schemes rather than reformed schemes, for the remedy period. The remedy period has been determined to be 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022.
- 13 The Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Act 2022 (PSPJO) was given Royal Assent on 10 March 2022 and provides an overarching framework to allow public service pension schemes to remedy the impact of unlawful age discrimination.
- 14 There were two distinct elements to the changes in legislation; the first came into effect on 1 April 2022 and was known as Prospective Remedy, which meant that from that date all members of the Firefighters Pension Schemes would be automatically become members of the Reformed 2015 Scheme.

- 15 The second was known as Retrospective Remedy, which came into effect on the 1 October 2023 and meant that those that had membership, in a fire scheme, during the remediable period will have the choice of taking those benefits in either the final salary legacy scheme or the reformed career average scheme.
- 16 It is these complex changes, that fall under Retrospective Remedy, that form a large part of the national remedial exercise that is currently underway. The McCloud Remedy Exercise timelines are set out in the new legislation and dictate that active pension scheme members, those that have already retired and member dependents must have received a Remedial Service Statement, no later than 31 March 2025.
- 17 The work to provide the Remedial Service Statement involves a full review of each payroll record for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2022 to determine the pensionable elements for both the legacy and career average scheme.
- 18 In order to facilitate progress through the project, members have been grouped into cohorts, with different milestones set and support provided nationally by the Local Government Association. These milestones are intended to keep the project on track, to complete on time and also assists in managing member expectations.
- 19 The changes to the pension legislation may also have a consequential tax implication for those affected and the legal updates have also included changes to tax legislation. However, it has become apparent that the current tax legislation does not sufficiently address all circumstances and requires further changes to the underlying tax legislation or Written Ministerial Statement. This was not progressed in sufficient time before the UK general election was called and a resolution is not expected until the early Autumn.
- 20 The current tax regulations do not allow for tax already paid on lump sums to be offset against sums due when the lump sum is recalculated for remedy purposes. Without a solution this will mean that a member is liable for more tax which is not currently reclaimable. This issue only affects members who have already retired and received an unauthorised lump sum when they retired (i.e. due to the scheme rules the lump exceeded the tax-free lump sum allowable under HMRC rules).

21 The table below provides an overview of cases and the risk associated with the tax issue and it is proposed that those in the green category will progress in accordance with the agreed priorities. The amber cases will be considered on a case by case basis whilst the red cases will be temporarily paused until such time as the tax implications are resolved.

Green	Amber	Red
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legacy FPS 2006 members with no eligibility for Matthews 2 or outstanding election • Legacy RDS modified members with no eligibility for Matthews 2 or outstanding election • Legacy FPS 1992 members who retired with restricted commutation (i.e. age 50 with 25 years service) • Legacy FPS 1992 members who remain within authorised limits (i.e. no lump sum or with HMRC limit) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher tier ill health (single source ill health) • Protected and *taper protected legacy FPS 1992 members who elected for maximum lump sum (i.e. paid an unauthorised tax charge) <i>*who at point of retirement had not tapered into FPS 2015</i> • Legacy FPS 2006 members with an outstanding Matthews 2 election • Legacy RDS modified members with an outstanding Matthews 2 election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unprotected and *taper protected legacy FPS 1992 members who elected for maximum lump sum (i.e. paid an unauthorised tax charge) <i>*who at point of retirement had tapered into FPS 2015</i>

22 There is a significant administrative burden arising from the changes to the regulations which has required the prioritisation of cases. All staff retiring from the Service receive the choice of taking their legacy or career average benefits for the remedy period. Thereafter, work is ongoing to achieve the deadlines set which includes the provision of remedial service statements and includes retired members, beneficiaries, deferred members and active members.

BACKGROUND – O'BRIEN

23 In April 2006, the Firefighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS 1992) was closed to new members, and the Firefighters Pensions Scheme 2007 (FPS 2007), came into force, which enabled On-Call Firefighters to be become pension scheme members from that date. Although the FPS 1992 Scheme remained unchanged for those regular firefighters who were already members.

24 Historically, On-Call firefighters were excluded from the Firefighters Pension Scheme 1992 (FPS 1992), which was challenged under the Part-Time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2000. This resulted in a determination that enabled certain On-Call firefighters, with service between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006, to become members of a pension scheme.

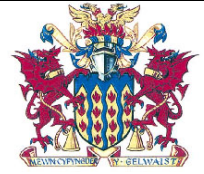
- 25 Between 2014 and 2015 an options exercise was undertaken, which gave those that were eligible the opportunity to join the firefighters' pension scheme. As the 1992 scheme had been closed to new members, the FPS 2007 scheme was modified to provide benefits analogous to the 1992 scheme (known as the 2007 modified scheme). This was the first options exercise, which is often now referred to as Matthews 1.
- 26 More recently, this judgment was challenged at the European Court of Justice in relation to fee-paid judges. The Court ruled, in that case, that service going back to the start of employment should be considered and the UK government accepted that the same principles applied to certain On-Call firefighters, whether they had made a legal challenge or not.
- 27 As a result, a second options exercise will now take place to allow eligible On-Call firefighters to buy pensionable service, backdated to the start date of their employment. As part of this exercise the following individuals are eligible for the second options exercise:
- I. On-Call firefighters employed on any date between 7 April 2000 and 30 June 2000 (inclusive);
 - II. On-call firefighters employed on any date between 7 April 2000 and 30 June 2000 (inclusive) as well as on any date between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 (inclusive); and
 - III. On-call firefighters employed on any date between 1 July 2000 and 5 April 2006 (inclusive), but not on any date between 7 April and 1 July 2000, who were eligible to take part in the first options exercise but were not given opportunity to do so.
- 28 To enable the second options exercise to proceed, the Senedd has made the necessary regulatory changes to the pension regulations. These came into force on 1 February 2024 with an 18- month timeframe for full implementation of this project.
- 29 The Service has written out to all eligible staff to confirm that they are considered to be in scope. Those wishing to be included are required to complete an expressions of interest form to facilitate a calculation of their benefits should they wish to buy back pension entitlement. This is extremely complex given that the length of service can date as far back as the 1960s. The Service has three months, from receipt, to provide the individuals with the necessary information.

- 30 Staff who are considered to be out of scope (i.e. On-Call firefighters whose service commenced between 1 July 2000 – 5 April 2006 who did not take part in the first options exercise but were given the opportunity to do so) have also been communicated with and will be dealt with on a case by case basis.
- 31 There are interdependencies between the McCloud and O'Brien Remedy exercises for some On Call firefighters which may pose some complications in meeting these timelines, on a purely individual basis.
- 32 The Government Actuary's Department has provided a calculator that enables Services to provide information on the purchase of previous service for eligible staff. This process is very complex and requires salary information for each year of employment, the calculation of contributions that should have been paid, tax and interest that applies, alongside the benefits that those individuals would be entitled to receive should they proceed in buying back this service.
- 33 There are a number of unresolved tax queries including the tax consequence of retrospective payments made in one tax year, which may have impact on an individual's tax position and rate of tax applied.
- 34 Due to the tax issues raised and the protracted discussions that are underway it is not yet clear whether the processing deadlines will be revised.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	The effective operation of the pensions schemes support staff wellbeing.
Budget	There are no budget implications directly related to these timelines.
Legal	The Authority has a statutory requirement to ensure that all legislative changes are implemented accurately and within the given timescales The Authority is required to administer the scheme in accordance with existing and new scheme regulations.
Staffing	Transparent and effective operation of the pension schemes ensures that staff are treated fairly and equitably.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	It is not considered that there are any issues that need addressing as the recommendations apply equally to all Members regardless of protected characteristics under the Single Equality Act.
Risks	Given the complexities of these projects, the resource considerations and timescales, there is a risk that the statutory deadlines may not be met.

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Helen MacArthur ACFO Finance and Resources
Contact Officer	Angharad Ellis, MIAA
Subject	Internal Audit Annual Report 2023/24



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 Under the terms of the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 Part 3 5. (2), North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is required annually to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of Internal Control. Internal Audit is an integral part of that system and is a significant contributor to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2 CIPFA's Public Sector Internal Audit Standards 2017 require the Head of Internal Audit to provide the Authority with assurance on the whole system of internal control, including the adequacy of risk management and corporate governance arrangements.
- 3 The report analyses the work of the Internal Audit Service for 2023/24 and contains the assurance statement based on the work of Internal Audit during the year ended March 2024.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 4 The Head of Internal Audit is able to provide assurance to the Authority based on the internal audit work undertaken, together with our maintained knowledge of the organisation and its procedures, that the Authority has effective corporate governance, risk management and internal control arrangements to manage the achievement of the Authority's objectives.
- 5 The audit reviews provide a substantial level of assurance upon the adequacy of the systems of internal control in place, with 23 recommendations having been made in the year to address some weaknesses. A formal follow up process is in place to ensure that the recommendations are implemented within agreed timescales.
- 6 The work of Internal Audit has not identified any weaknesses that would qualify this opinion and there are no significant issues that are relevant to the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement.

- 7 The report also provides assurance that the Internal Audit Service operates in compliance with the UK Public Sector Internal Audit Standards to enable the Authority to take assurance from this opinion.

OBSERVATIONS FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE/EXECUTIVE PANEL

- 8 This report was considered by the Audit Committee at their meeting on 17 June 2024 and it was recommended that it be approved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9 It is recommended that Members:
- i) approve the content of the Head of Audit and Procurement's Annual Report and the overall 'opinion' upon the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's framework of governance, risk management and control.

BACKGROUND

The Role of Internal Audit

- 10 Under the terms of The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, Fire Authorities have a statutory responsibility to maintain "an adequate and effective system of internal audit."
- 11 The role of Internal Audit Services is to provide management with an objective assessment of whether systems and controls are working properly. It is a key part of the organisation's internal control system because it measures and evaluates the adequacy and effectiveness of other controls so that:
- The Authority and senior management are aware of the extent to which they can rely on the whole system; and
 - Individual managers are aware of how reliable the systems and controls for which they are responsible are.
- 12 The internal control system comprises the whole network of systems and controls established to manage the Authority, to ensure that its objectives are met. It includes financial and other controls and also arrangements for ensuring that the Authority is achieving value for money from its activities.

- 13 In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards the Head of Audit is required to deliver an annual internal audit opinion and report that can be used by the Authority to inform its governance statement.

INFORMATION

Internal Audit Opinion 2023/24

- 14 The Regional Assurance Director is satisfied that the internal audit work undertaken, together with our maintained knowledge of the organisation and its procedures allows a reasonable conclusion to be made, as to the adequacy and effectiveness of the Authority's risk management, control and governance processes.
- 15 The opinion provided by the Regional Assurance Director is that there is a good system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives and this is generally being applied consistently.
- 16 In giving an audit opinion, it should be noted that assurance can never be absolute although this provides reasonable assurance based upon the work undertaken in that year, that there are no major weaknesses that need to be brought to the attention of the Authority.
- 17 The overall audit opinion may be used in the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement and the full report is included within Appendix A

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	This report links to the Authority's long-term well-being objective which is "To facilitate high quality, responsive and better integrated fire and rescue services so that prevention activity and emergency response can continue to be available when and where required, affordably, equitably and on the basis of risk."
Budget	Internal Audit Services is provided by a suitably qualified external contractor and within the agreed budget
Legal	The report supports the Authority in discharging its legal responsibilities
Staffing	N/A
Equalities / Human Rights / Welsh Language	N/A
Risks	The Statement of Assurance is submitted in compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations and the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Without such assurance from the internal auditor Members would be unaware of the adequacy and effectiveness of the corporate governance, risk management and internal control arrangements and its associated ability to achieve its objectives.

Internal Audit Annual Report & Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2023/24

North Wales Fire & Rescue Service

Contents

- 1 Executive Summary
- 2 Head of Internal Audit Opinion
- 3 Internal Audit Coverage and Outputs
- 4 Areas for consideration – your Annual Governance Statement
- 5 MIAA Quality of Service Indicators

1 Executive Summary

We are pleased to have provided your internal audit services for 2023/24. The highlights of the delivery of our services are summarised in this report.

This annual report provides your 2023/24 Head of Internal Audit Opinion, together with the planned internal audit coverage and outputs during 2023/24 and MIAA Quality of Service Indicators.

Key Area	Summary
Head of Internal Audit Opinion	<p>The overall opinion for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 provides Substantial Assurance, that there is a good system of internal control designed to meet the organisation’s objectives, and that controls are generally being applied consistently.</p> <p>This opinion is provided in the context that North Wales Fire & Rescue Service like other organisations across the public sector is facing a number of challenging issues and wider organisational factors particularly with regards to financial challenges and increasing collaboration across organisations and systems.</p> <p>In providing this opinion we can confirm continued compliance with the definition of internal audit (as set out in your Internal Audit Charter), code of ethics and professional standards. We also confirm organisational independence of the audit activity and that this has been free from interference in respect of scoping, delivery and reporting.</p> <p>The purpose of our Head of Internal Audit (HoIA) Opinion is to contribute to the assurances available to the Accountable Officer and the Fire Authority which underpin their own assessment of the effectiveness of the system of internal control. As such, it is one component that the Accountable Officer takes into account in making its Annual Governance Statement (AGS).</p> <p>The opinion does not imply that we have reviewed all risks and assurances relating to the organisation. The opinion is substantially derived from the conduct of risk-based plans generated from a robust and organisation-led assurance framework.</p>
Planned Audit Coverage and Outputs	<p>The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan has been delivered with the focus on the provision of your Head of Internal Audit Opinion. This position has been reported within the progress reports across the financial year. Review coverage has been focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The organisation’s assurance framework• Core and mandated reviews, including follow up; and• A range of individual risk-based assurance reviews.

Key Area	Summary
	<i>Please include the summary text in the table above when referring to the HoIA Opinion in your AGS.</i>
Recommendations / Management Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have raised 23 recommendations as part of the reviews undertaken during 2023/24. • Of these recommendations: 0 were critical and 1 were high risk recommendations in relation to the reviews of Cyber Organisational Controls. • During the course of the year, we have undertaken follow up reviews and can conclude that the organisation implemented 7 actions during 2023/24. • The total number of recommendations yet to be implemented as at end of March 2024 is 16, 1 of these is high risk and relate to the review of Cyber Organisational Controls. • Of the 16 actions yet to be implemented, none are overdue.
MIAA Quality of Service Indicators	<p>MIAA operate systems to ISO Quality Standards. The External Quality Assessment, undertaken by CIPFA (2020), provides assurance of MIAA’s full compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS). We also undertake regular internal assessments to ensure our ongoing compliance with requirements. In year we completed our annual self-assessment of compliance with PSIAS and can continue to confirm full compliance with these standards.</p> <p>MIAA are committed to delivering and demonstrating the highest standards of information governance and cyber security to protect not only our information and systems but to protect the data we collect and create through our audit and advisory activities with clients.</p> <p>We have consistently submitted a compliant NHS Data Security and Protection Toolkit return and we are one of only circa 20 NHS organisations certified to the Cyber Essentials Plus standard. Certification to this standard required rigorous independent testing of our cyber security controls across our devices. That we have achieved this certification is a demonstration not only of the security of our devices but also a validation of the proactive monitoring and maintenance that we have in place to protect data and systems from malicious threats.</p>

2 Head of Internal Audit Opinion

Your internal audit service has been performed in accordance with MIAA's internal audit methodology which conforms with PSIAS. PSIAS require that we comply with applicable ethical requirements, including independence requirements, and that we plan and perform our work to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence on which to base our conclusion.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Fire Authority is collectively accountable for maintaining a sound system of internal control and is responsible for putting in place arrangements for gaining assurance about the effectiveness of that overall system.

The AGS is an annual statement by the Accountable Officer on behalf of the Fire Authority, setting out:

- how the individual responsibilities of the Accountable Officer are discharged with regard to maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievements of policies, aims and objectives;
- the purpose of the system of internal control as evidenced by a description of the risk management and review processes, including the Assurance Framework process; and
- the conduct and results of the review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control, including any disclosures of significant control failures together with assurances that actions are or will be taken where appropriate to address issues arising.

The organisation's assurance framework should bring together all of the evidence required to support the AGS requirements.

In accordance with PSIAS, the HoIA is required to provide an annual opinion, based upon and limited to the work performed, on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the organisation's risk management, control and governance processes (i.e. the organisation's system of internal control). This is achieved through a risk-based plan of work, agreed with management and approved by the Audit Committee, which can provide assurance, subject to the inherent limitations described below. The outcomes and delivery of the internal audit plan are provided in Section 4.

2.2 Opinion

Our opinion is set out as follows:

- Basis for the Opinion;
- Overall Opinion; and
- Commentary

2.2.1 Basis for the Opinion

The basis for forming our opinion is as follows:

- 1 An assessment of the design and operation of the underpinning strategic governance, risk management arrangements and supporting processes.
- 2 An assessment of the range of individual assurances arising from our risk-based internal audit assignments that have been reported throughout the period. This assessment has taken account the relative materiality of systems reviewed and management's progress in respect of addressing control weaknesses identified.
- 3 An assessment of the organisation's response to Internal Audit recommendations, and the extent to which they have been implemented.

2.2.2 Overall Opinion

Our overall opinion for the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 is:

High Assurance, can be given that there is a strong system of internal control which has been effectively designed to meet the organisation's objectives, and that controls are consistently applied in all areas reviewed.	
Substantial Assurance , can be given that that there is a good system of internal control designed to meet the organisation's objectives, and that controls are generally being applied consistently.	✓
Moderate Assurance, can be given that there is an adequate system of internal control, however, in some areas weaknesses in design and/or inconsistent application of controls puts the achievement of some of the organisation's objectives at risk.	
Limited Assurance, can be given that there is a compromised system of internal control as weaknesses in the design and/or inconsistent application of controls impacts on the overall system of internal control and puts the achievement of the organisation's objectives at risk.	
No Assurance, can be given that there is an inadequate system of internal control as weaknesses in control, and/or consistent non-compliance with controls could/has resulted in failure to achieve the organisation's objectives.	

2.2.3 Commentary

The commentary below provides the context for our opinion and together with the opinion should be read in its entirety.

Our opinion covers the period 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024 inclusive, and is underpinned by the work conducted through the risk-based internal audit plan.

Risk and Assurance Framework

Our work has consisted of reviewing core risk management controls to assess whether they have been adequately designed. This included an assessment of the risk management arrangements, and gained an insight into the escalation and assurances in place.

Core & Risk-Based Reviews Issued

We issued:

Zero high assurance opinions.		Zero limited assurance opinions.	
Two substantial assurance opinions:	Key Financial Transactional Processing Controls Review Payroll and Attendance Management	Zero no assurance opinions.	
One moderate assurance opinion:	Cyber Organisational Controls	Two reviews without an assurance rating:	Risk Management – Core Controls National Fraud Initiative

Follow Up

During the course of the year we have undertaken follow up reviews and can conclude that the organisation has made **good progress** with regards to the implementation of recommendations. We will continue to track and follow up outstanding actions.

Chris Harrop

Managing Director, MIAA
March 2024

Louise Cobain

Assurance Director, MIAA
March 2024

3 Internal Audit Coverage and Outputs

The 2023/24 Internal Audit Plan has been delivered with the focus on the provision of your Head of Internal Audit Opinion. This position has been reported within the progress reports across the financial year.

Of the reviews completed in the year, assurance ratings were given in three cases. Assurance rating were not applicable for two reviews, due to the nature of this work. The audit assignment element of the Opinion is limited to the scope and objectives of each of the individual reviews. Detailed information on the limitations (including scope and coverage) to the reviews has been provided within the individual audit reports and through the Audit Committee Progress Reports throughout the year.

A summary of the reviews performed in the year is provided below:

	Review	Assurance Opinion	Recommendations Raised					Total
			Not Rated	Critical	High	Medium	Low	
1	Key Financial Transactional Processing Controls Review	Substantial	0	0	0	1	3	4
2	Payroll and Attendance Management	Substantial	0	0	0	4	3	7
3	Cyber Organisational Controls	Moderate	0	0	1	5	0	6
4	Risk Management Core Controls	N/A	6	0	0	0	0	6
5	National Fraud Initiative	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
		TOTAL	6	0	1	10	6	23

There were no high-risk recommendations overdue at the time of reporting.

We will continue to follow up progress against all recommendations as part of the 2024/25 Internal Audit Plan.

ADVISORY SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE: Areas where MIAA have supported the organisation in strengthening arrangements in respect of governance, risk management and internal control.

We reviewed several policies and procedures including the Whistleblowing policy, Anti-Fraud & Corruption and Gifts & Hospitality from an Anti-Fraud perspective. A number of recommendations were made to strengthen the policies in place.

Attendance and support at the Budget Scrutiny meetings.

CONTRIBUTION TO GOVERNANCE, RISK MANAGEMENT AND INTERNAL CONTROL ENHANCEMENTS: *Additional areas where MIAA have provided added value contributions.*

Detailed insight into the overall Governance and Assurance processes gained from liaison throughout the year with the Assistant Chief Fire Officer/ Treasurer, Senior Management Team and Officers.

Involvement and relationship with the organisation (e.g. attendance at Budget Scrutiny meetings).

Continued involvement and representation on National Bodies including the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) and CIPFA enabling us to be proactive in sharing best practice, wider benchmarking and providing early insights on national issues.

4 Areas for Consideration – your AGS

The Head of Internal Audit Opinion is one source of assurance that the organisation has in providing its AGS other third party assurances should also be considered. In addition the organisation should take account of other independent assurances that are considered relevant.

We have identified a number of other strategic challenges that should be considered by the Accountable Officer on behalf of the Fire Authority when drafting the AGS. Whilst the scope of the Internal Audit Plan would have considered elements of these, it is important that the Fire Authority reflects more widely on how these should be factored into the AGS. Areas for consideration include:

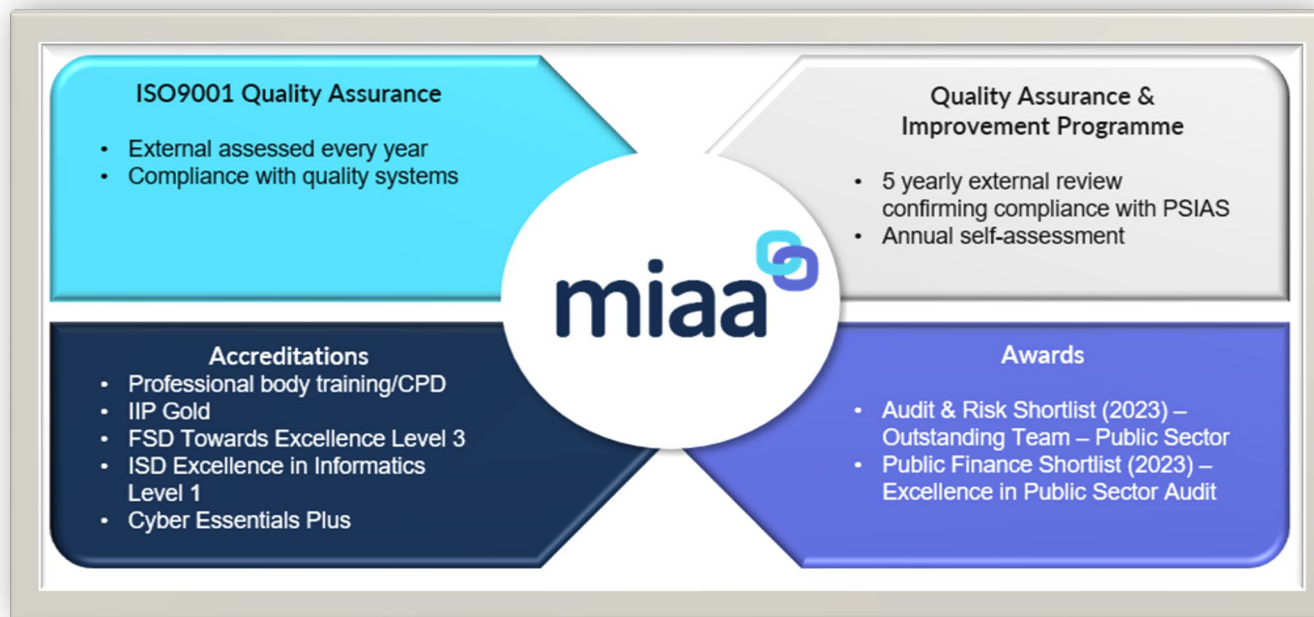
- Wider partnership/ collaborative working and engagement across the North Wales Footprint.
- Changes to governance, risk management and internal control arrangements (including the impact on decision making processes).
- Service leadership, including any significant changes to the Senior Management Team.
- Workforce capacity, engagement, wellbeing and development.
- Ensuring there is a fit for purpose infrastructure.
- Cyber security, information governance risks and any associated reportable incidents to the Information Commissioner.
- Relationship and management of 3rd party providers upon which the organisation places reliance, and the provision of assurances from these.
- Compliance with all relevant laws, standards, regulations and Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales 2016.
- Inspections and feedback during 2023/24 including any actions taken to address any areas of development.
- Organisation performance, including challenges in achieving financial duties, delivery of Priority Based Budgets and service pressures managed in year.
- Wider partnership working risks and challenges.

5 Ensuring Quality

MIAA's strategy has quality at the heart of everything we do and our overall approach to quality assurance includes ISO9001:2015 accreditation, compliance with PSIAS, the quality of our people and how we supporting them, staffing levels, compliance and outcome measures.

Professional Standards and Accreditations

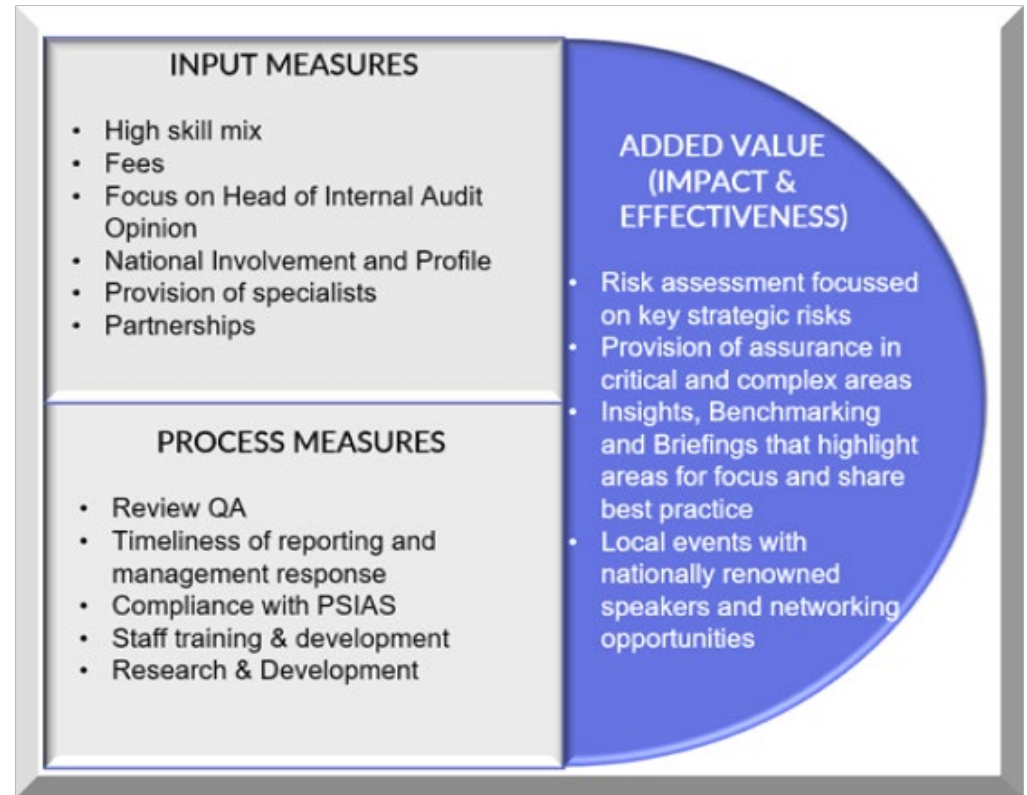
MIAA comply fully with professional best practice, internal audit standards and legal requirements.



Service delivery and outcome measures

It is important that client organisations ensure an effective Internal Audit Service, and whilst input and process measures offer some assurance, the focus should be on outcomes and impact from the service. The infographic on this page confirms the measures that we believe demonstrate an effective service to you.

MIAA regularly report on input and process KPIs as part of our Audit Committee Progress reports, and the impact and effectiveness measures can be assessed through the HOIA Opinion.



Anne-marie Harrop

Regional Assurance Director

Tel: 07920150313

Email: Anne-marie.Harrop@miaa.nhs.uk

Angharad Ellis

Senior Audit Manager

Tel: 07469378328

Email: Angharad.Ellis@miaa.nhs.uk

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Dafydd Edwards, Treasurer to the Authority
Contact Officer	Helen Howard, Head of Finance and Procurement
Subject	Statement of Accounts 2023/24



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 The purpose of this report is to confirm the year-end outturn position for 2023/24 and to present the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 (attached as Appendix A). Members are also asked to note the timetable for the audit of the statement of accounts.
- 2 The report provides confirmation on other financial matters relating to 2023/24, including North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) position for usable reserves, write-offs of bad debts and the full year prudential indicators.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3 The net budget requirement of £44.394m was approved on 16 January 2023, when the Authority also approved non-recurring measures to address the underlying deficit, which included deferring expenditure and utilising reserves.
- 4 Actual expenditure for 2023/24 was £44.300m which includes costs relating to various projects, national pay settlements above the budget provision, and general inflationary pressures. The use of earmarked reserves, the general fund, and provisions have mitigated the additional costs.
- 5 The 2023/24 capital budget of £6.532m included £3.00m for the purchase of land relating to the proposed training centre, which is now anticipated to complete during 2024/25. The capital programme experienced cost pressures, therefore schemes were prioritised, in order to remain within the funding available. Year end expenditure was £2.182m with a requirement to roll over funding of £3.951m.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6 Members are asked to:
- i) note the unaudited revenue and capital outturn position for the 2023/24 financial year, including the earmarked reserves set out in the report;
 - ii) note the unaudited 31/03/2024 balance sheet position;
 - iii) receive and note the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 contained within Appendix A;
 - iv) note the prudential indicators as at quarter four of 2023/24; and
 - v) note the write offs approved by the Treasurer, in accordance with the financial regulations.

OBSERVATIONS FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

- 7 The Audit Committee received a verbal update on the production of the statement of accounts at its meeting of the 17 June 2024. Bad debts written-off have been subject to scrutiny through the Budget Scrutiny Working Group.

NATIONAL REGULATORY BACKGROUND

- 8 The Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 require the Authority to prepare and publish a statement of accounts on an annual basis. The pre-Covid timescales prescribed within the Regulations require a draft statement of accounts to be issued by 31 May, with an audit deadline of 31 July each year.
- 9 The Welsh Government, following consultation with the Society of Welsh Treasurers and Audit Wales, confirmed that the draft statement of accounts for 2023/24 should be prepared no later than 30 June 2024, and that the statement of accounts should be audited by the 30 November 2024.

THE AUTHORITY'S APPROACH

- 10 Finance officers have voluntarily endeavoured to adhere to the original accounts closure timescales prescribed within the 2014 Regulations, as early closure allows them to subsequently focus on other management accounting duties which add more value.
- 11 The Authority's unaudited outturn position, for both revenue and capital expenditure, was finalised and the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 was signed by the Treasurer and submitted to Audit Wales on 31 May. The draft Statement of Accounts is attached as Appendix A, for information.

REVENUE BUDGET

- 12 Each year the Authority is required to set a balanced revenue budget which must be approved by a full Authority meeting. The final budget for 2023/24 was approved by the Authority at its meeting of the 16 January 2023. This confirmed a net revenue budget requirement of £44.394m to be funded by the constituent local authorities. This included changes to the funding flow of £1.08m of Welsh Government support for firefighters' pensions. Previously this had been directly funded to the Authority, but for 2023/24 this grant was 'passport'ed to FRAs via constituent local authorities' final RSG settlement.
- 13 The final position for 2023/24 was an underspend of £0.094m, including transfers to and from reserves.
- 14 The main expenditure headings and draft outturn position are set out below:

2023/24	Budget (£000)	Outturn (£000)	Use of Reserves (£000)	CERA Cont'ns (£000)	Final Outturn (£000)	Variance (£000)	Variance (%)
Employees	31,902	31,369			31,369	(533)	-2%
Premises	3,616	3,297			3,297	(319)	-9%
Transport	1,273	1,390			1,390	117	9%
Supplies	5,453	5,392	833		6,226	773	14%
Third Party Payments	342	319			319	(23)	-7%
Capital							
Finance & Charges	3,129	2,165	(130)	1,101	3,136	7	0%
Income	(1,321)	(1,437)			(1,437)	(116)	9%
Outturn	44,394	42,496	704	1,101	44,300	(94)	-0.2%

EMPLOYEE COSTS

- 15 Employee costs form a significant element of the budget (72%) and include pay, pension costs, cost of recruitment and training and employee services, such as occupational health services. As part of the final budget approval in January 2023 a range of measures were approved by Members to contain staff expenditure. These are not recurring in nature and included measures such as delaying recruitment to the approved structure and limiting the anticipated increase in recruitment to retained stations.

- 16 The out-turn position for employee costs is an underspend of £0.533m and the table below provides the analysis thereof. This includes a refund of £0.503m from Clwyd Pension Fund in respect of employer contributions following the actuarial revaluation.

Employee Costs	£000
Pay award above budget	730
In-year vacancy savings	-1290
Additional hours to cover operational duties	863
Other employee costs	-323
Projected pension costs	-513
Projected Underspend	-533

- 17 The higher than anticipated pay award has been partially mitigated through in-year vacancy savings, although it has been necessary to use overtime and additional hours to maintain operational capacity.
- 18 Action continues to be taken to increase the number of retained duty firefighters to address and maintain availability issues, mindful of the budget constraints. A process will take place in the first half of 2024/25 for wholetime firefighter recruitment, to replace staff that have retired throughout the year and are due to retire in 2024/25.

NON-PAY COSTS

- 19 The non-pay budget experienced significant pressures, with an overspend of £0.548m. This included fuel costs and the availability and costs of other commodities such as building supplies, ICT equipment and fleet parts are also of concern, given the complexity of supply chains and global uncertainty.
- 20 Since the last report a number of departments, including Facilities, ICT and Operations, have reported that goods and services expected to be delivered/completed in 2023/24 have been delayed. This has therefore reduced the outturn position for this year, but will put pressure on the 2024/25 budget.

Premises

- 21 Premises costs were projected to be overspent by £0.370m, however the final position was an underspend of £0.319m. This underspend is largely due to a reduction in gas and electricity costs in the last quarter of the financial year, and building maintenance works not being completed as anticipated. The Authority has benefited from a reduction in national non-domestic rates following successful rating appeals.

Transport

- 22 The transport budget was overspent by £0.117m compared to the predicted overspend of £0.357m. This was mainly due to a reduction in the spend on fuel (oil, diesel and petrol), the availability of vehicle parts and the completion of repairs, as well as a year-end technical accounting adjustment for the fleet stock.

Supplies

- 23 The net supplies budget is £5.453m with a year-end overspend of £0.773m (overspend from last report: £1.141m). This area of expenditure includes business-critical areas, such as operational equipment and PPE purchase, essential ICT licences, the Firelink contract, and insurances.
- 24 Significant inflationary pressures have been experienced in a number of business-critical areas and action has been taken to contain and mitigate these, where possible.
- 25 One of the largest elements of expenditure relates to the national Firelink contract. This is the emergency service contract which enables mobilisation to incidents, communication and interoperability between emergency partners. Legal proceedings are currently ongoing in relation to this contract. Motorola who are in contract with the Home Office to provide this Service have appealed a decision by the Competition and Market Authority to impose a price cap in July 2023. In 2023/24, as a result of the price cap, there was a reduction in costs of £0.262m, however as the Court of Appeals decision is not known, this amount has been set aside in earmarked reserves, in the event that this has to be refunded.
- 26 Significant expenditure has also been incurred in the purchase of additional fire kit, due to the contaminants review, totalling £0.474m. Ongoing discussions have been taking place, across Wales, with the supplier of the fire kit, due to the delays being experienced with delivery. The supplier has now acknowledged that the majority of the fire kit will not be delivered until 2024/25, therefore the £0.447m has been ringfenced in an earmarked reserve at year end to fund these costs in 2024/25.

Third Party Payments

- 27 Third party payments relate to service level agreements with partners, including Conwy County Borough Council, Flintshire County Council, Carmarthenshire County Council, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and North Wales Police. The agreements include the provision of legal services, monitoring officer services, pension administration and support, and facilities management. At year end there was an underspend of £0.023m.

Capital Financing

- 28 The capital financing budget sets aside revenue funding to finance capital expenditure, and includes the minimum revenue provision and interest costs on borrowing
- 29 Due to the volatile economic position, the cost of borrowing has continued to increase. However, it has not been necessary to take out further borrowing, as capital expenditure to date has been significantly slower than anticipated.
- 30 Year end expenditure was £3.136m, compared to a budget of £3.129m.

INCOME

- 31 As well as the levy from constituent local authorities, the budget also includes expected income from fees and charges, and grants. Fees and charges largely relate to the recharges for buildings shared with other bodies and training fees for apprenticeships.
- 32 Other income has increased due to an increase in recharges to other bodies and the disposal of vehicles and equipment, where the receipt was less than £10k and therefore could be treated as a revenue receipt.

Grant Funding

- 33 The total of 2023/24 Welsh Government grant funding allocations is £0.891m, which is analysed below. All grants are carefully monitored throughout the financial year, to identify any variances and to enable remedial action to be taken.

Grant	Allocation £'000
Arson Reduction	169
Home Safety Equipment	240
All Wales National Resilience	322
Youth & Young People Engagement	141
Operation Ugain	14
Cyber Essentials	5
TOTAL	891

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 34 The capital budget requirement was assessed as £6.532m and approved by the Authority at the meeting of 16 January 2023. Since that time, slippage in the 2023/24 programme has resulted in schemes of £3.951m being carried forward into 2024/25, including the purchase of the land for the proposed training centre.

- 35 Due to ongoing delays, building projects agreed in 2023/24 have not been completed, with works totalling £0.612m due to be completed within the first quarter of 2024/25.
- 36 As was the case with the revenue budget, the capital programme experienced cost pressures, with increased costs in relation to the purchase of vehicles and building works. This was managed by prioritising the delivery of operationally critical projects.
- 37 Rollover of funding of £3.951m is required, as detailed below, due to delays in the completion of building works and the purchase of land. Five fire appliances are on order; however, stage payments are expected to extend into 2024/25, due to delays in the availability of build slots with the supplier.
- 38 Details of the schemes are below:

Scheme	Revised Allocation £000	Actual Spend £000	Rollover £000
Fire appliances	475	475	960
Multi- purpose vans	189	268	-
Electric Van pilot	-	107	-
Welfare Units	150	150	-
National Resilience Vehicles	-	71	-
Command & Control refresh	600	-	-
Minor Building works	100	52	48
Training Towers	250	-	-
Fleet - fall arrest system and roof works	126	-	134
Appliance bay doors	180	165	19
Llandudno Heating upgrade	150	-	150
Dolgellau Smokehouse works	365	256	-
Proposed training centre land	3,000	-	2,630
Unallocated	947	-	-
Total : Capital Plan	6,532	1,544	3,941
Rollover 2022/23			
Training Towers	307	318	10
Multipurpose station vans	160	162	-
Buildings - Minor works	158	158	-
Total: Rollover	625	638	10
Total	7,157	2,182	3,951

BORROWING

- 39 Capital expenditure is largely funded via external borrowing, but in the short term the Authority utilises surplus revenue cash, known as 'internal borrowing' and where available, usable reserves.

- 40 The Authority continues to utilise internal borrowing. This means that the capital borrowing needed, as calculated by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), has not been fully funded with external loan debt as cash supporting the Authority's reserves, balances and cash flow has been used as a temporary expedient to fund capital spend and generate revenue savings. However, as reserves are utilised, it will be necessary to replace the internal borrowing with external borrowing.
- 41 No new external borrowing has been required in 2023/24. The interest paid, during the year, on current loans, amounted to £0.692m.

USE OF THE GENERAL FUND AND EARMARKED RESERVES

- 42 The aim of the Authority's financial reserves is to provide funding for investment in future activities, and to act as a safety net in case of short-term financial challenges arising from activity demands, or unforeseen pressures. As at 31 March 2024, the total usable reserves amounted to £8.620m

	Balance 31 March 2023 £'000	Transfers (in/)/out 2023/24 £'000	Balance 31 March 2024 £'000
Earmarked Reserves	(6,222)	(703)	(6,925)
General Fund	(1,480)	(94)	(1,574)
Capital Grants Unapplied	(85)	37	(48)
Capital Receipts Reserve	(34)	(39)	(73)
Total Usable Reserves	(7,821)	(799)	(8,620)

- 43 No new earmarked reserves have been set up in 2023/24.
- 44 In 2023/24, there has been a requirement to increase reserves. As noted above, an increase in earmarked reserves of £0.708m has been included in relation to the PPE kit and the Airwave contract. All movements on the earmarked reserves are detailed below.

	Balance 31 March 2023 £'000	Transfers (in/)/out 2023/24 £'000	Balance 31 March 2024 £'000
Service Reserves			
Pension Reserve	(545)	0	(545)
Capital Financing Reserve	(300)	0	(300)
Fire Hydrant Repairs	(90)	0	(90)
PPE Uniform / Stock	(250)	(447)	(697)
Transformational Change	(851)	0	(851)
Facilities Improvement	(651)	0	(651)
Legal Liability	(186)	(124)	(310)
Training	(250)	0	(250)
Major Incidents	(150)	0	(150)
System Improvements	(711)	0	(711)
Inflation	(250)	0	(250)
Capital & Grant Reserves			
Capital projects	(1,043)	129	(914)
Radio Scheme	(750)	(261)	(1,011)
Fire Safety Grant Reduction	(195)	0	(195)
Total Earmarked Reserves	(6,222)	(703)	(6,925)

PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS – 2023/24

- 45 The Authority measures and manages its capital expenditure and borrowing with references to the following indicators. It is now a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code that these are reported on a quarterly basis. The Indicators are calculated based on the information in the 2023/24 Capital Strategy, that was approved by the Authority at its meeting on 24 March 2023.

Capital Expenditure

- 46 The Authority has undertaken and is planning capital expenditure as summarised below:

	2022/23 actual £m	2023/24 actual £m	2024/25 budget £m	2025/26 budget £m
General Fund services	3.366	2.182	5.887	6.424
Proposed Training Centre	0	0.000	2.630	0.000
Total	3.366	2.182	8.517	6.424

- 47 Further details of the General Fund capital projects to date are detailed within the Capital Programme section of this report, above.

Capital Financing Requirement

- 48 The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt.

	31.03.23 actual £m	2023/24 actual £m	2024/25* forecast £m	2025/26* forecast £m
General Fund Services	28.877	27.949	32.215	38.666

*The table above does not include the costs for the proposed training centre building.

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

- 49 Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short term. The Authority has complied and expects to continue to comply with this requirement in the medium term as is shown below.

	31.03.23 actual	31.03.24 actual	2024/25 budget	2025/26 budget
Debt (incl. Finance Leases)	26.650	17.780	24.493	28.508
Capital Financing Requirement	28.877	27.949	32.215	38.666

Debt and the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary

- 50 The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the Authorised Limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

	Maximum debt Q2 2023/24 £m	Debt at 31.03.24 £m	2023/24 Authorised Limit £m	2023/24 Operational Boundary £m	Complied Yes/No
Borrowing	26.650	17.780	30.999	28.990	Yes

- 51 Since the operational boundary is a management tool for in-year monitoring, it is not significant if the boundary is breached on occasions due to variations in cash flow, and this would not be counted as a compliance failure. However, 2023/24 borrowing remained within the operational boundary.

Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

- 52 Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from the levy and general government grants.

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 actual £m	2024/25 budget £m	2025/26 budget £m
Financing costs (£m)	2.351	2.605	3.189	3.968
Proportion of net revenue stream	5.96%	5.87%	6.60%	7.53%

Treasury Management Indicators

- 53 These indicators are within the Treasury Management Report Q4 2023/24, which is reported to the Audit Committee.

BALANCE SHEET

- 54 The Balance Sheet provides further information on the Authority's long-term financial position and includes both assets and liabilities.

FIXED ASSETS AND BORROWING

- 55 Fixed assets relate to items with a cost in excess of £10,000 which are expected to be used over a period exceeding 12 months. The Authority's fixed assets include land and buildings, vehicles, operational equipment and ICT equipment. The estimated value as at 31 March 2024 is £57.184m (2022/23: £57.062m).
- 56 Station buildings were revalued at 31 March 2024. This resulted in a net decrease in value of £0.589m. The Authority's land and buildings account for 82% of total assets with a net book value of £45.797m as at 31st March 2024.

- 57 The Authority is permitted to enter into borrowing arrangements to fund the purchase of fixed assets. At as 31 March 2024 the value of borrowing, excluding interest was £17.78m (2022/23: £26.46m).

CURRENT ASSETS AND CURRENT LIABILITIES

- 58 The Authority must maintain adequate resources to ensure that it is able to meet its obligations. This is achieved through the management of cash alongside debtor and creditor balances. As at the balance sheet date the Authority recorded a balance of £4.25m (2022/23: £9.22m) relating to cash and debtors. This is offset by £5.95m (2022/23: £4.29m) relating to amounts owed by the Authority to creditors.
- 59 The cash balance, at year end was £2.97m. £2.32m of this balance relates to the Pension Top Up grant provided by the Welsh Government in 2023/24, which has not been utilised, due to the number of firefighter retirements being lower than anticipated.

PENSION LIABILITIES

- 60 The Authority is required to account for the estimated liabilities relating to its pension schemes. The Authority has two schemes; the Firefighters' Pension Scheme and the Local Government Pension Scheme. The value of future liabilities is calculated by the actuary for each scheme and estimated to be £230.37m as at 31 March 2024 (2022/23: £227.14m). This valuation includes the actuarial assessment of the costs of national legal challenges including the McCloud judgment relating to age discrimination in public sector pension schemes and the O'Brien judgment relating to discrimination of part time workers.

BAD DEBT WRITE OFFS

- 61 During the year, in line with the Financial Regulations, 18 bad debts totalling £1,492.34 were approved by the Treasurer, for write off, due to being uneconomical to pursue.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	This report links to the Authority's long-term well-being objectives. Funding for the Service benefits the communities of North Wales and ensures there is sufficient investment in infrastructure to enable the service to provide emergency responses and prevention work well in to the future.
Budget	Budget is set annually in accordance with the proposed service delivery which includes emergency response and prevention work.
Legal	It is a legal requirement that the Authority produces the Statement of Accounts in accordance with the prescribed standards.
Staffing	Effective financial management supports the long-term workforce strategy to ensure that the Authority is able to discharge its responsibilities
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	None
Risks	Income and expenditure are closely monitored to ensure that deviations from the approved budget are properly identified and reported to Members.

Statement of Accounts

2023-2024



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service



[This page is left intentionally blank]

DRAFT

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS	PAGE
Narrative Report	2-11
Statement of Responsibilities	12
Independent Auditors Report	13-16
Expenditure and Funding Analysis	17
Core Financial Statements	18-22
Notes to the Core Financial Statements	23-57
Firefighters Pension Fund Accounts	58-59
Accounting Policies	60-74

The maintenance and integrity of the Authority's website is the responsibility of the Authority; the work carried out by auditors does not involve consideration of these matters and accordingly auditors accept no responsibility for any changes that may have occurred to the financial statements since they were initially presented on the website.

NARRATIVE REPORT

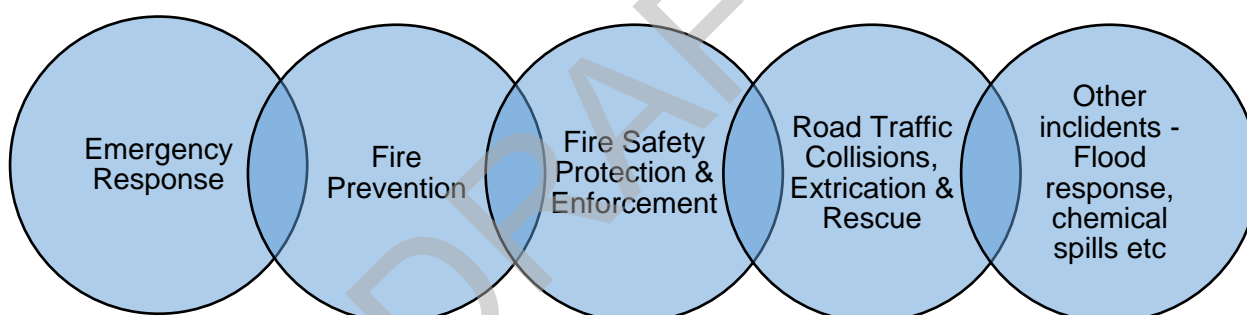
The purpose of the narrative report is to offer interested parties' clear information about the financial position and the financial performance of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) for the financial year 2023/24.

ORGANISATION OVERVIEW

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) is made up of 28 Elected Members nominated by each of the six local authorities and provides direction and governance for the day to day activities delivered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS).

NWFRS serves the communities within the counties of Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, Conwy and Denbighshire and Wrexham and Flintshire.

NWFRA is responsible for providing adequate resources to enable the Fire and Rescue Service to undertake a range of activities as detailed below.



The Service deals with a wide-range of emergencies, from fire incidents and road traffic collisions, to floods and chemical spills. Extensive work is carried out with schools, businesses and local communities to promote fire safety and prevention and to help keep people and property safe.

The Authority is financed by contributions from the six constituent authorities, in proportion to population for each authority.

Details of our service area, funding and activities can be found on the following pages.


About Our Service Area



Resources

 **44** fire stations

 **54** front line fire appliances

 **39** special appliances including rescue boats and aerial ladder platforms

 **909** staff of which **20%** are fluent welsh speakers

Prevention and Protection activities

 **19,859** safe and well checks completed

 **482** business audits conducted

 **216** safety talks with **20,837** children and young people

 **22** phoenix courses with **190** participants completing the programme

Responding activities

 **12,743** emergency calls handled

 Attended **5935** emergency incidents

 **1656** fires attended of which **14** were wildfires

 **2900** false alarms

THE AUTHORITY'S IMPROVEMENT AND WELLBEING OBJECTIVES

Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales are required to publish improvement objectives in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, and well-being objectives in accordance with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. For the purposes of the Authority's planning processes these are treated as one and the same.

These long-term objectives are changes that the Authority wants to help bring about in North Wales that will contribute to improving local well-being and to moving Wales closer to achieving its well-being goals. Having identified these long-term objectives, the Authority has a duty to take all reasonable steps to pursue them and to report publicly after the end of each financial year on the progress it has made.

In March 2021 the Authority published its Corporate Plan for 2021- 2024 with a set of seven long-term objectives:

- Work towards making improvements to the health, safety and well-being of people in North Wales
- Continue to work collaboratively to help communities improve their resilience
- Operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, making the best use of the resources available
- Continue to identify opportunities to encourage greater engagement with people, communities, staff and stakeholders
- Maintain a suitably resilient, skilled, professional and flexible workforce
- Develop ways of becoming more environmentally conscious in order to minimise the impact of our activity on the environment
- Ensure that social value and sustainability are considered, including during procurement processes

The following link provides information relating to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service activity and performance against improvement objectives over the last twelve months-[Activity and Performance](#)

The statutory deadline for publishing an Annual Performance Assessment is 30th September 2024. The Annual Performance Assessment will be available on the website at [Corporate Plan and Annual Performance Assessment](#)

SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

During 2023/24, the Authority approved its Environmental Strategy for the period 2023 -2030. The Environment and Sustainability Working Group, chaired by the Environment and Climate Change Manager, has developed detailed decarbonisation plans following a series of Working Groups with Authority members over the course of the year, aligning with our goal to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030. These plans cover fleet, estates and procurement.

To begin the process of decarbonising our fleet, an operational trial of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil as a sustainable alternative to diesel, has been carried out. This trial

was successful and there will shortly be a station-based operational trial, before rolling out tanks and dispensing equipment around our estate.

In addition, the Fleet Department, procured four fully electric vans which are currently on trial, across various departments, to test their viability in relation to service requirements.



Image: EV Van in workshop

Working closely with Welsh Government Energy Service a plan has been developed to decarbonise our heating systems. This will form the basis of a programme of rolling heating system replacements over the coming years, prioritised as funding and operational requirements permit.



Image: Colwyn Bay Fire Station

Numerous biodiversity enhancement schemes have been carried out, including installation of swift nesting boxes, on some of our sites, in partnership with the North Wales Wildlife Trust and Conwy County Borough Council.

Work is continuing on developing a bespoke Environmental Management System based on the ISO:14001 standard. This is a system that will help with the identification, management, monitoring and control of the impact the service has on the environment. This will help improve environmental performance through the more efficient use of resources and reduce waste.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to continuing to provide excellent fire safety prevention and enforcement services and a comprehensive emergency response. The Authority remains committed to playing its part in building stronger and safer communities, but also acknowledges that for the future the financial situation means that being able to sustain service delivery will require a great deal of flexibility and innovation.

In order to secure financial sustainability for the Authority and maintain service levels, Members agreed a 3 year medium term financial strategy. Members agreed for 2023/24 to increase the contributions from the constituent authorities by 9.9%, to £44,394k. When setting the 2023/24 budget, Members also approved a range of non-recurring measures necessary to achieve financial balance within 2023/24 which impacted on both service delivery and corporate capacity. These included deferring expenditure and where necessary the use of earmarked and general reserves; actions necessary to address the loss of grant income of £0.4m from the Welsh Government

in respect of the Airwave contract, other known pressures and also uncertainty relating to national pay negotiations.

In June 2023, the staffing structure was refined, however it has continued to be challenging to appoint to specialist corporate roles and retained firefighters. During 2023/24 work continued on implementing the recommendations arising from the review of the retained duty system (RDS), taking account of the national discussion regarding terms and conditions, which has superseded some elements of the review.

During 2022/23 the Authority commissioned an Emergency Cover Review to consider future service delivery models to address availability issues within rural communities and to consider future risks. During 2023/24, the Authority undertook a consultation on a number of models, the results of which were considered by the Authority in December 2023. The Authority did not progress with the recommendations and further work is ongoing to develop a new option in 2024/25.

Higher than anticipated pay awards and inflation for non-pay costs, particularly utilities, building costs, fuel and ICT costs have put significant pressure on the budget. However, these cost pressures have been largely mitigated by the savings bought about by the staff vacancies, exceptional in year income receipts and delayed expenditure. Departments continue to monitor the impact of the economic situation recognising that changes on both revenue and capital may materialise over the coming months and years.

The Authority's position over the medium term will require careful attention to be paid to all expenditure but in particular cost pressures relating to pension and payroll costs.

REVENUE PERFORMANCE

The Authority reported an underspend of £94k in 2023/24. The breakdown of expenditure is detailed below.

2023/24	Budget £000	Outturn £000	Use of Reserves £000	CERA Cont'ns £000	Total £000	Variance £000	Variance %
Employees	31,902	31,370			31,370	(532)	-2%
Premises	3,616	3,297			3,297	(319)	-9%
Transport	1,273	1,390			1,390	117	9%
Supplies	5,453	5,392	833		6,225	772	14%
Third Party Payments	342	319			319	(23)	-7%
Capital Finance & Charges	3,129	2,165	(130)	1,101	3,136	7	0%
Income	(1,321)	(1,437)			(1,437)	(116)	9%
Outturn Position	44,394	42,496	703	1,101	44,300	(94)	-0.2%

USABLE RESERVES

Usable reserves increased in 2023/24, by £0.703m to cover ongoing service requirements including insurance claims and fire kit. It is envisaged that reserves will reduce in future years. Further information is available in Note 8.

Usable Reserves	Balance 31 March 2023 £000	Transfers (in)/out 2023/24 £000	Balance 31 March 2024 £000
Earmarked Reserves	(6,222)	(703)	(6,925)
General Fund	(1,480)	(94)	(1,574)
Capital Grants Unapplied	(85)	37	(48)
Capital Receipts Reserve	(34)	(39)	(73)
Total Usable Reserves	(7,821)	(799)	(8,620)

CAPITAL PERFORMANCE

Capital expenditure for 2023/24 amounted to £2,182k, details of the various schemes are in the below table.



Image: Welfare Unit in the Workshop

Ongoing supply chain issues and inflationary pressures remain and it has been necessary to review and revise the capital programme to reflect projects that could be delivered in year.

The Fleet Department procured various vehicles to assist with service delivery, including 3 welfare vehicles and 8 multi use station vehicles.

A particular area of challenge relates to the provision of replacement towers. Whilst the tenders have been awarded there have been delays due to design amendments, supplier capacity and planning permission.

A total of five replacement towers were scheduled for completion during 2023/24. Of these three will now be completed in the first quarter of 2024/25.



Image: Multi-purpose station vehicle

There is a requirement to rollover funding of £3,951k to complete ongoing projects, as detailed below.

Scheme	Revised Allocation £000	Actual Spend £000	Rollover £000
Fire Appliance replacement	475	475	960
Multi- purpose vans	189	268	-
Electric Van pilot	-	107	-
Welfare Units	150	150	-
National Resilience Vehicles	-	71	-
Command & Control refresh	600	-	-
Minor Building works	100	52	48
Training Towers	250	-	-
Fleet - fall arrest system and roof works	126	-	134
Appliance bay doors	180	165	19
Llandudno Heating upgrade	150	-	150
Dolgellau Smokehouse works	365	256	-
Proposed training centre land	3,000	-	2,630
Unallocated	947	-	-
Total : Capital Plan	6,532	1,544	3,941
Rollover 2022/23			
Training Towers	307	318	10
Multipurpose station vans	160	162	-
Buildings - Minor works	158	158	-
Total: Rollover	625	638	10
Total	7,157	2,182	3,951

The financing of the capital plan is as follows:

Funding	Amount £000
Internal Borrowing	1,010
Grant Funding	71
Contributions	1,101
Total	2,182

TREASURY MANAGEMENT

The Authority has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management which ensures the Authority has measures in place to manage financial risks. The Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 was formally approved at the Authority meeting on 20 March 2023. The Strategy sets out the Prudential Indicators (PI's) for the year. During the year quarterly reports detail the progress against the strategy.

At year end, a final report sets out how the Authority has performed during the year. How the Authority manages risks arising from financial instruments is detailed in the treasury reports presented to the Audit Committee and can be accessed from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website - www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

This confirmed that the Authority had achieved its prudential indicators, with year end borrowing of £17.78m. The Authority will continue to monitor the impact of increased interest rates when setting future budgets.

PENSION COSTS

Firefighters' Pension Scheme

During 2023/24 employer normal contributions to the Pension Fund amounted to £4.055m (2022/23: £3.893m). The total value of payments to retired members amounted to £9.005m with cash support received from the Welsh Government.

The scheme is unfunded and the liability in terms of future pension commitments has increased to £231.610m (2022/23: £225.390m). This was due to a change in the actuarial assumptions.

The results of the 2020 formal valuation of the pension fund will result in an increase in employer contributions from 27.3% to 31.0%, from 1 April 2024.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) plans are statutorily prescribed and have a specified routine process for the determination of employer contributions. This process is carried out for the pension fund as a whole, but separate contribution rates are set for each employer. Rates are set for a three-year period, based on actuarial advice having regard to the most recent triennial valuation. The rates for each employer are formally separated into:

- primary rates, which meet the cost of ongoing accrual for current active members, and
- secondary rates, which mainly reduce deficit or reduce surplus over a given period.

The secondary rate increases or reduces the employer contribution based on factors specific to that employer. The secondary rate mainly serves to:

- reduce deficits in the employer's pension provision by providing additional contributions to the fund, or
- reduce surpluses in the employer's pension provision by reducing the level of contributions to the fund.

From 1 April 2023, the employer's primary rate of contributions increased from 17.0% to 18.3%. In 2023/24, employer contributions to the Pension Fund, based on the primary contribution rate amounted to £1.112m. (2022/23: £1.02m).

However, the level of contributions paid to the pension fund were lower due to a secondary rate reduction of £503k.

The actuarially assessed liability as at 31 March 2024 was £1.238m (2022/23: £1.753m). The decrease was due to a change in actuarial assumptions used to re-measure the schemes liabilities.

Note 30 and the Firefighter's Pension Fund Account provide further information.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional information about these accounts is available from the Treasurer. Interested members of the public have a statutory right to inspect the accounts before the audit is completed. Availability of the accounts for inspection is advertised on the website for North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority - [Financial - Fire and Rescue Authority](#) and a notice is displayed in the Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Ffordd Salesbury, St Asaph, LL17 0JJ.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

THE AUTHORITY'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Authority is required:

- to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Authority, that officer is the Treasurer.
- to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and to safeguard its assets.
- to approve the Statement of Accounts.

AUTHORITY'S CERTIFICATE

I approve the Statement of Accounts of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority as at 31 March 2024.

Signed: _____ Dated: _____

Chairman, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

THE TREASURER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

The Treasurer is responsible for the preparation of the Authority's Statement of Accounts in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code).

In preparing the Statement of Accounts, the Treasurer has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently.
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent.
- complied with the Code of Practice.
- kept proper accounting records which were up-to-date.
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

TREASURER'S CERTIFICATE

I certify that the Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the arrangements set out above, and presents a true and fair view of the financial position of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority as at 31 March 2024 and the Authority's income and expenditure for the year then ended.

Signed: Ad Edwards Dated: 31-05-2024

Treasurer, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

[Independent Auditors Report to be inserted here]

DRAFT

[Independent Auditors Report to be inserted here]

DRAFT

[Independent Auditors Report to be inserted here]

DRAFT

[Independent Auditors Report to be inserted here]

DRAFT

EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

This statement shows how annual expenditure is used and funded from resources (grants, contributions etc.) by local authorities compared to resources consumed or earned by authorities in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices. It also shows how this expenditure is allocated for decision making purposes according to the type of expenditure incurred. Income and Expenditure accounted for under generally accepted accounting practices (GAAP) is presented more fully in the CIES.

2022/23				2023/24		
Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund £'000	Adjustments Between the Funding and Accounting Basis £'000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Exp Statement £'000		Net Expenditure Chargeable to the General Fund £'000	Adjustments Between the funding and Accounting Basis £'000	Net Expenditure in the Comprehensive Income & Exp Statement £'000
38,797	(3,081)	35,716	Provision of Fire Services	43,596	(7,682)	35,914
(39,412)	8,805	(30,607)	Other Income & Expenditure	(44,394)	10,557	(33,837)
(615)	5,724	5,109	Deficit or (Surplus) on Provision of Services	(798)	2,875	2,077

2022/23				2023/24		
General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked General Fund Reserves £'000	Total General Fund £'000		General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked General Fund Reserves £'000	Total General Fund £'000
(1,520)	(5,805)	(7,325)	Brought Forward	(1,480)	(6,341)	(7,821)
(615)		(615)	(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	(798)		(798)
	153	153	Transfer between General Fund Balance and Capital Grants Unapplied		37	37
655	(689)	(34)	Transfer between General Fund Balance and Earmarked General Fund Reserves	703	(742)	(39)
(1,480)	(6,341)	(7,821)	Closing General Fund Balance	(1,575)	(7,046)	(8,621)

COMPREHENSIVE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

This statement shows the accounting cost in the year of providing services in accordance with GAAP, rather than the amount to be funded from contributions. The Authority's expenditure is funded by contributions from the six Local Authorities in North Wales in accordance with regulations; this may be different from the accounting cost. The contribution position is shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

2022/23				2023/24			
Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000		Note	Gross Expenditure £'000	Gross Income £'000	Net Expenditure £'000
38,640	(2,925)	35,715	Provision of Fire Services		37,351	(1,437)	35,914
38,640	(2,925)	35,715	Cost of Services		37,351	(1,437)	35,914
(11)	0	(11)	Other Operating Expenditure		(14)	0	(14)
9,130	(61)	9,069	Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure	9	11,071	(429)	10,642
0	(39,664)	(39,664)	Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income	10	0	(44,465)	(44,465)
		5,109	(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services				2,077
0	(9,832)	(9,832)	(Surplus) or Deficit on Revaluation of Property, Plant & Equipment Assets	18	557	0	557
		(109,388)	Remeasurement of the Net Defined Benefit Liability	18			(142)
		(119,220)	Other Comprehensive (Income) & Expenditure				415
		(114,111)	Total Comprehensive (Income) & Expenditure				2,492

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

This statement shows the movement in the year on the different reserves held by the Authority, analysed into 'usable reserves' (i.e. those that can be applied to fund expenditure or reduce contributions from the Constituent Authorities) and other reserves. The Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services line shows the true economic cost of providing the Authority's services, more details of which are shown in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. These are different from the statutory amounts required to be charged to the General Fund Balance which is funded by contributions from the six Constituent Authorities. The Net Increase / Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves line shows the statutory General Fund Balance before any discretionary transfers to or from earmarked reserves undertaken by the Authority.

2023/24	Note	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked and Grant Reserves £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Earmarked Capital Receipts £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Authority Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2023		(1,480)	(6,222)	(85)	(34)	(7,821)	199,227	191,406
Movement in Reserves during 2023/24								
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services		2,077	0	0	0	2,077	0	2,077
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		0	0	0	0	0	415	415
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		2,077	0	0		2,077	415	2,492
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	7	(2,877)	0		0	(2,877)	2,877	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		(800)	0	0	0	(800)	3,292	2,492
Other Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	8	705	(703)	37	(39)	0	0	0
Increase/(Decrease) in 2023/24	6	(95)	(703)	37	(39)	(800)	3,292	2,492
Balance as at 31 March 2024		(1,575)	(6,925)	(48)	(73)	(8,621)	202,519	193,898

MOVEMENT IN RESERVES STATEMENT

2022-23	Note	General Fund Balance £'000	Earmarked and Grant Reserves £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Earmarked Capital Reserves £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Unusable Reserves £'000	Total Authority Reserves £'000
Balance at 31 March 2022		(1,520)	(5,567)	(238)	0	(7,325)	312,842	305,517
Movement in Reserves during 2022/2023								
Surplus or (Deficit) on the Provision of Services		5,109	0	0	0	5,109	0	5,109
Other Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		0	0	0	0	0	(119,220)	(119,220)
Total Comprehensive Income & Expenditure		5,109	0	0		5,109	(119,220)	(114,111)
Adjustments between accounting basis & funding basis under regulations	7	(5,605)	0		0	(5,605)	5,605	0
Net (Increase)/Decrease before Transfers to Earmarked Reserves		(496)	0	0	0	(496)	(113,615)	(114,111)
Other Transfers to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	8	536	(655)	153	(34)	0	0	0
Increase/(Decrease) in 2022/23	6	40	(655)	153	(34)	(496)	(113,615)	(114,111)
Balance as at 31 March 2023		(1,480)	(6,222)	(85)	(34)	(7,821)	199,227	191,406

BALANCE SHEET

The Balance Sheet shows the value as at the Balance Sheet date of the assets and liabilities recognised by the Authority. The net assets of the Authority (assets less liabilities) are matched by the reserves held by the Authority. Reserves are reported in two categories. The first category of reserves are usable reserves, i.e. those reserves that the Authority may use to provide services, subject to the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves and any statutory limitations on their use (for example the Capital Receipts Reserve that may only be used to fund capital expenditure or repay debt). The second category of reserves is those that the Authority is not able to use to provide services. This category of reserves includes reserves that hold unrealised gains and losses (for example the Revaluation Reserve), where amounts would only become available to provide services if the assets are sold; and reserves that hold timing differences shown in the Movement in Reserves Statement line 'Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulations'.

31 March 2023 £'000		Note	31 March 2024 £'000
56,841	Property, Plant & Equipment	11	56,044
222	Intangible Assets	11	141
33	Long Term Debtors	14	62
57,096	Long Term Assets		56,247
638	Inventories	13	614
5,041	Short Term Debtors	14	1,275
0	Short Term Investments	15	0
4,177	Cash & Cash Equivalents	15	2,973
9,856	Current Assets		4,862
(8,868)	Short Term Borrowing	12	(3,925)
(273)	Provisions	17	(217)
(4,287)	Short Term Creditors	16	(5,947)
(13,428)	Current Liabilities		(10,089)
(227,143)	Pension Liability	18	(230,372)
0	Long Term Provisions	17	(473)
(17,787)	Long Term Borrowing	12	(14,073)
(244,930)	Long Term Liabilities		(244,918)
(191,406)	Net Assets		(193,898)
(7,821)	Usable Reserves	8	(8,621)
199,227	Unusable Reserves	18	202,519
191,406	Total Reserves		193,898

CASH FLOW STATEMENT

The Cash Flow Statement shows the changes in cash and cash equivalents of the Authority during the reporting period. The statement shows how the Authority generates and uses cash and cash equivalents by classifying cash flows as operating, investing and financing activities. The amount of net cash flows arising from operating activities is a key indicator of the extent to which the operations of the Authority are funded by way of contributions and grant income or from the recipients of services provided by the Authority. Investing activities represent the extent to which cash outflows have been made for resources which are intended to contribute to the Authority's future service delivery. Cash flows arising from financing activities are useful in predicting claims on future cash flows by providers of capital (i.e. borrowing) to the Authority.

2022/2023 £'000		Note	2023/24 £'000
5,109	Net (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services		2,077
(7,889)	Adjustments to Net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services for Non-Cash Movements	19	(11,788)
(404)	Adjustments for Items Included in the net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities	19	(263)
(3,184)	Net Cash Flows From Operating Activities	19	(9,974)
3,356	Investing Activities	20	2,240
(1,816)	Financing Activities	21	8,937
(1,644)	Net (Increase) or Decrease in Cash and Cash Equivalents		1,203
(2,533)	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		(4,177)
(4,177)	Cash and Cash Equivalents at the End of the Reporting Period	15	(2,974)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The notes present information about the basis of preparation of the financial statements and the specific accounting policies used. They provide information not presented elsewhere in the financial statements and are relevant to an understanding of the accounts.

1 ACCOUNTING STANDARDS THAT HAVE BEEN ISSUED BUT NOT YET ADOPTED

Where a new Standard has been published but has not yet been adopted by the Code, the Authority is required to disclose information relating to the impact of the accounting change. The changes that are introduced by the 2024/25 Code are:

- a) **IFRS 16 Leases** issued in January 2016, to be implemented by the Authority in 2024/25. See Note 29 for further information.
- b) **Classification of Liabilities as Current or Non-current (Amendments to IAS 1)** issued in January 2020. The amendments:
 - specify that an entity's right to defer settlement must exist at the end of the reporting period
 - clarify that classification is unaffected by management's intentions or expectations about whether the entity will exercise its right to defer settlement
 - clarify how lending conditions affect classification, and
 - clarify requirements for classifying liabilities an entity will or may settle by issuing its own equity instruments.
- c) **Lease liability in a Sale and Leaseback (Amendments to IFRS 16)** issued in September 2022. The amendments to IFRS 16 add subsequent measurement requirements for sale and leaseback transactions.
- d) **Non-current Liabilities with Covenants (Amendments to IAS 1)** issued in October 2022. The amendments improved the information an entity provides when its right to defer settlement of a liability for at least 12 months is subject to compliance with covenants.
- e) **International Tax Reform: Pillar Two Model Rules (Amendments to IAS 12)** issued in May 2023. Pillar Two applies to multinational groups with a minimum level of turnover. The amendments introduced:
 - a temporary exception to the requirements to recognise and disclose information about deferred tax assets and liabilities related to Pillar Two income taxes, and
 - targeted disclosure requirements for affected entities.
- f) **Supplier Finance Arrangements (Amendments to IAS 7 and IFRS 7)** issued in May 2023. The amendments require an entity to provide additional disclosures about its supplier finance arrangements. The IASB developed the new requirements to provide users of financial statements with information to enable them to:
 - assess how supplier finance arrangements affect an entity's liabilities and cash flows, and
 - understand the effect of supplier finance arrangements on an entity's exposure to liquidity risk and how the entity might be affected if the arrangements were no longer available to it.

It is likely that though they provide clarifications, items b), c) and d) will not have a significant impact on the amounts anticipated to be reported in the financial statements. There will be limited application of items e) and f).

2 CRITICAL JUDGEMENTS IN APPLYING ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting policies are the specific principles, bases, conventions, rules and practices applied by an authority in preparing and presenting financial statements.

In applying the accounting policies set out in Appendix 1, the Authority has had to make certain judgements about complex transactions or those involving uncertainty about future events. The critical judgement in the Statement of Accounts are:

- There is a high degree of uncertainty about future levels of funding for local government.

However the Authority has determined that this uncertainty is not sufficient to provide an indication that the assets of the Authority might be impaired as a result of the need to reduce levels of service provision.

3 ASSUMPTIONS MADE ABOUT THE FUTURE AND OTHER MAJOR SOURCES OF ESTIMATION AND UNCERTAINTY

The statement of accounts contains estimated figures that are based on assumptions made by the authority about the future or that are otherwise uncertain. Estimates are made taking into account historical experience, current trends and other relevant factors. However, because balances cannot be determined with certainty, actual results could be materially different from the assumptions and estimates.

The main items in the Authority's Balance Sheet at 31 March 2024, for which there is a significant risk of material adjustment in the forthcoming financial year are as follows:

Property, Plant and Equipment - The Authority revalues its assets every 5 years. It is possible that property values could continue to fluctuate especially during times of economic uncertainty. Valuations are based on assumptions about asset conditions, useful lives, residual values and market conditions. These judgements are underpinned by the best available information and made by qualified valuers.

The last full revaluation was completed on 31 March 2023. Due to the availability of further data in relation to the valuation of fire stations, a review has been completed, of all station buildings, as at 31 March 2024.

Pension Liability - Estimation of the net liability to pay pensions depends on a number of complex judgements relating to the discount rate used, the rate at which salaries are projected to increase, changes in retirement ages, mortality rates and, for the Local Government Pension Scheme, the expected return on pension fund assets.

Consulting actuaries are engaged to provide the Authority with expert advice about the assumptions to be applied. Further information is provided within the pension fund account.

4 EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

The Statement of Accounts was authorised for issue by the Treasurer on 21 October 2024. Events taking place after this date are not reflected in the financial statements or notes.

Where events taking place before this date provided information about conditions existing as at 31 March 2024, the figures in the financial statements and notes have been adjusted in all material respects to reflect the impact of this information.

There have been no material events after the Balance Sheet date.

5 NOTE TO THE EXPENDITURE AND FUNDING ANALYSIS

2023/24	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net Charge for Pensions Adjustments £'000	Other Adjustments £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Provision of Fire Services	(1,217)	(7,008)	543	(7,682)
Net Cost of Service	(1,217)	(7,008)	543	(7,682)
Other Income & Expenditure				
Other Income & Expenditure from the expenditure and funding analysis	(85)	10,379	263	10,557
Differences between the General Fund surplus and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement surplus on the provision of services	(1,302)	3,371	806	2,875

2022/23	Adjustments for Capital Purposes £'000	Net Charge for Pensions Adjustments £'000	Other Adjustments £'000	Total Adjustments £'000
Provision of Fire Services	(3,444)	367	(4)	(3,081)
Net Cost of Service	(3,444)	367	(4)	(3,081)
Other Income & Expenditure				
Other Income & Expenditure from the expenditure and funding analysis	(264)	8,666	403	8,805
Differences between the General Fund surplus and Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement surplus on the provision of services	(3,708)	9,033	399	5,724

Adjustments for capital purposes – this column adds in depreciation and impairment and revaluation gains and losses in the services line, and for:

- Other operating expenditure – adjusts for capital disposals with a transfer of income on disposal of assets and the amounts written off for those assets.
- Financing and investment income and expenditure – the statutory charges for capital financing i.e. minimum revenue provision and other revenue contributions are deducted

from other income and expenditure as these are not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices.

- Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure – capital grants are adjusted for income not chargeable under generally accepted accounting practices. Revenue grants are adjusted from those receivable in the year to those receivable without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied throughout the year. The taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure line is credited with capital grants receivable in the year without conditions or for which conditions were satisfied in the year.

Net change for the pensions adjustments - Net change for the removal of pension contributions and the addition of IAS 19 Employee Benefits pension related expenditure and income:

- For services this represents the removal of the employer pension contributions made by the authority as allowed by statute and the replacement with current service costs and past service costs.
- For financing and investment income and expenditure – the net interest on the defined benefit liability is charged to the CIES.

Other Adjustments - Other adjustments between amounts debited/credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and amounts payable/receivable to be recognised under statute:

- For financing and investment income and expenditure the other statutory adjustments column recognises adjustments to the General Fund for the timing differences for premiums and discounts.
- The charge under Taxation and non-specific grant income and expenditure represents the difference between what is chargeable under statutory regulations that was projected to be received at the start of the year and the income recognised under generally accepted accounting practices in the Code. This is a timing difference as any difference will be brought forward in future Surpluses or Deficits on the General Fund.

6 EXPENDITURE AND INCOME ANALYSED BY NATURE

2022/23 £000		2023/24 £000
	Expenditure	
30,194	Employees	24,476
8,522	Other Operating Costs	10,079
419	Support Services	318
(11)	Gain on the disposal of assets	(14)
9,131	Financing and Investment Expenditure	11,071
(495)	Capital Financing Costs	2,478
47,760	Total Expenditure	48,408
	Income	
(540)	Fees, Charges & Other Service Income	(546)
(61)	Interest and Investment Income	(429)
(39,412)	Levies from Constituent Authorities	(44,394)
(2,638)	Government Grants and Contributions	(962)
(42,651)	Total Income	(46,331)
5,109	(Surplus)/Deficit on Provision of Services	2,077

7 ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN ACCOUNTING BASIS AND FUNDING BASIS UNDER STATUTE

This note details the adjustments that are made to the total comprehensive income and expenditure recognised by the authority in the year in accordance with proper accounting practice to arrive at the resources that are specified by statutory provisions as being available to the authority to meet future capital and revenue expenditure.

The following sets out a description of the reserves that the adjustments are made against.

General Fund balance

The General Fund is the statutory fund into which all the receipts of an authority are required to be paid and out of which all liabilities of the authority are to be met, except to the extent that statutory rules might provide otherwise. These rules can also specify the financial year in which liabilities and payments should impact on the General Fund balance, which is not necessarily in accordance with proper accounting practice. The General Fund balance therefore summarises the resources that the authority is statutorily empowered to spend on its services or on capital investment (or the deficit of resources that the authority is required to recover) at the end of the financial year.

Capital receipts reserve

The capital receipts reserve holds the proceeds from the disposal of land or other assets, which are restricted by statute from being used other than to fund new capital expenditure or to be set aside to finance historical capital expenditure. The balance on the reserve shows the resources that have yet to be applied for these purposes at the year-end.

Capital grants unapplied

The capital grants unapplied account (reserve) holds the grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the authority has met the conditions that would otherwise require repayment of the monies but which have yet to be applied to meet expenditure. The balance is restricted by grant terms as to the capital expenditure against which it can be applied and/or the financial year in which this can take place.

2022/23					Adjustments between Accounting Basis and Funding Basis under Regulations	2023/24				
General Fund Balance £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Earmarked Capital Reserves £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Total Unusable Reserves £'000		General Fund Balance £'000	Capital Grants Unapplied £'000	Capital Receipts Reserves £'000	Total Usable Reserves £'000	Total Unusable Reserves £'000
(2,089)	0	0	(2,089)	2,089	Depreciation and impairment	(2,446)	0	0	(2,446)	2,446
0	0	0	0	0	Prior year adjustment - buildings	0	0	0	0	0
2,584	0	0	2,584	(2,584)	Revaluation losses/Gains on Property	(32)	0	0	(32)	32
11	0	(34)	(23)	23	Disposal of non-current assets	14	0	(39)	(25)	25
525	0	0	525	(525)	Capital expenditure financed from earmarked reserve/CERA	1,101	0	0	1,101	(1,101)
253	(36)	0	217	(217)	Capital expenditure funded from grants	71	0	0	71	(71)
1,959	0	0	1,959	(1,959)	Financing Capital (MRP)	1,902	0	0	1,902	(1,902)
3,243	(36)	(34)	3,173	(3,173)		610	0	(39)	571	(571)
9,386	0	0	9,386	(9,386)	Employers Pension contributions and payments to pensioners	10,532	0	0	10,532	(10,532)
(18,419)	0	0	(18,419)	18,419	Reversal of retirement benefits in the CIES	(13,903)	0	0	(13,903)	13,903
(9,033)	0	0	(9,033)	9,033		(3,371)	0	0	(3,371)	3,371
0	189	0	189	(189)	Adjustment to Grants Reserve	0	37	0	37	(37)
66			66	(66)	Movement in Accumulated Absence accrual	(114)			(114)	114
(5,724)	153	(34)	(5,605)	5,605	Adjustments between accounting basis and funding basis under regulation	(2,875)	37	(39)	(2,877)	2,877

8 USABLE RESERVES

This note sets out the amounts set aside from the General Fund in earmarked reserves to provide financing for future expenditure plans and the amounts posted back from earmarked reserves to meet General Fund expenditure in 2023/24.

Reserve	Purpose of the Reserve	Balance 1 April 2022 £'000	Transfers (in) / out 2022/23 £'000	Balance 31 March 2023 £'000	Transfers (in) / out 2023/24 £'000	Balance 31 March 2024 £'000
Service Reserves						
Pension Reserve	Additional pension costs relating to changes to pension rules	(85)	(460)	(545)	0	(545)
Interest Reserve	Offset increases in interest rates that would impact on the revenue budget	(300)	0	(300)	0	(300)
Fire Hydrant Repairs	Funding of the backlog of hydrant repairs	(90)	0	(90)	0	(90)
PPE Uniform / Stock	Increased uniform costs due to changes in legislation	(250)	0	(250)	(447)	(697)
Transformational Change	Funding for the delivery of transformational change projects	(851)	0	(851)	0	(851)
Facilities Improvements	Ensure buildings meet required standard and improve energy efficiency	(1,323)	672	(651)	0	(651)
Legal Liability	Funding of future legal liabilities for known/expected claims	(225)	39	(186)	(124)	(310)
Training	Implement changes to training provision as required by legislation	(250)	0	(250)	0	(250)
Major Incidents	Offset costs of major incidents in excess of budget	(150)	0	(150)	0	(150)
System Improvements	A fund set aside to meet the cost of system improvements	(848)	137	(711)	0	(711)
Inflation	Offset costs of inflation in excess of budget	(250)	0	(250)	0	(250)
Capital & Grants Reserves						
Capital Projects	A fund set aside for delayed schemes and retention costs	0	(1,043)	(1,043)	129	(914)
Radio Scheme	Emergency Service Network upgrade - offset some of the additional costs	(750)	0	(750)	(261)	(1,011)
Grant Reduction	Offset reduction in Fire Safety funding from Welsh Government	(195)	0	(195)	0	(195)
Total Earmarked Reserves		(5,567)	(655)	(6,222)	(703)	(6,925)
General Fund	Available for general purposes and to provide operational resilience	(1,520)	40	(1,480)	(95)	(1,575)
Capital Receipts Reserve	Holds receipts from the sale of assets, available to finance future capital expenditure	0	(34)	(34)	(39)	(73)
Capital Grants Unapplied	Holds grants and contributions received towards capital projects for which the Authority has met the conditions that would otherwise require repayment of the monies but which have yet to be applied to meet expenditure	(238)	153	(85)	37	(48)
Total Usable Reserves		(7,325)	(496)	(7,821)	(800)	(8,621)

9 FINANCING AND INVESTMENT INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
464	Interest payable and similar charges	692
(61)	Interest receivable and similar income	(429)
8,666	Net Interest on the net defined benefit liability	10,379
9,069	Total	10,642

10 TAXATION AND NON SPECIFIC GRANT INCOME

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
6,631	Conwy County Borough Council	7,478
3,916	Anglesey County Council	4,403
7,018	Gwynedd Council	7,914
5,381	Denbighshire County Council	6,064
8,814	Flintshire County Council	9,936
7,652	Wrexham County Borough Council	8,599
39,412	Levies from Constituent Authorities	44,394
252	Capital Grants and Contributions	71
39,664	Total Taxation and Non Specific Grant Income	44,465

In 2023/24, the contributions received from the constituent Local Authorities includes £1.081m previously received as grant from Welsh Government in relation to Firefighter Pension Scheme Employer Contribution Costs.

11 PROPERTY PLANT AND EQUIPMENT AND INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Movements on Balances

2023-2024	Land and Buildings £'000	Vehicles and Equipment £'000	Assets Under Construction £'000	Property Plant & Equipment Total £'000	Intangible Assets Total £'000	Assets Held for Sale Total £'000
Gross Book Value at 1 April 2023	47,289	24,721	85	72,095	431	0
Re-categorisation of assets	0	36	(36)	0	0	0
Additions	414	758	1,011	2,183	0	0
Revaluation increase / (decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	(1,352)	0	0	(1,352)	0	0
Revaluation increase / (decreases) recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	(95)	0	0	(95)	0	0
Derecognition - Disposals	(3)	(1,303)	0	(1,306)	0	0
Derecognition - Other	0	(83)	0	(83)	(198)	0
Gross Book Value at 31 March 2024	46,253	24,129	1,060	71,442	233	0
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairment						
At 1 April 2023	(4)	(15,250)	0	(15,254)	(209)	0
Depreciation/Amortisation charge	(897)	(1,468)	0	(2,365)	(81)	0
Depreciation written out of the Revaluation Reserve	795	0	0	795	0	0
Depreciation written out to the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	63			63		
Derecognition - Disposals	0	1,280	0	1,280	0	0
Derecognition - Other	0	83	0	83	198	0
Accumulated Depreciation at 31 March 2024	(43)	(15,355)	0	(15,398)	(92)	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2024	46,210	8,774	1,060	56,044	141	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2023	47,285	9,471	85	56,841	222	0

2022/2023	Land and Buildings	Vehicles and Equipment	Assets Under Construction	Property Plant & Equipment	Intangible Assets	Assets Held for Sale
	£'000	£'000	£'000	Total £'000	Total £'000	Total £'000
Gross Book Value at 1 April 2022	34,836	22,250	1,027	58,113	672	0
Re-categorisation of assets	0	1,027	(1,027)	0	0	0
Additions	696	2,461	85	3,242	125	0
Revaluation increase / (decreases) recognised in the Revaluation Reserve	9,173	0	0	9,173	0	0
Revaluation increase / (decreases) recognised in the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,584	0	0	2,584	0	0
Derecognition - Disposals	0	(1,004)	0	(1,004)	0	0
Derecognition - Other	0	(13)	0	(13)	(366)	0
Gross Book Value at 31 March 2023	47,289	24,721	85	72,095	431	0
Accumulated Depreciation & Impairment						
At 1 April 2022	0	(14,948)	0	(14,948)	(446)	0
Depreciation/Amortisation charge	(663)	(1,297)	0	(1,960)	(129)	0
Depreciation written out of the Revaluation Reserve	659	0	0	659		0
Depreciation written out to the Surplus / Deficit on the Provision of Services	0	0	0	0	0	0
Derecognition - Disposals	0	982	0	982	0	0
Derecognition - Other	0	13	0	13	366	0
Accumulated Depreciation at 31 March 2023	(4)	(15,250)	0	(15,254)	(209)	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2023	47,285	9,471	85	56,841	222	0
NET BOOK VALUE AT 31 MARCH 2022	34,836	7,302	1,027	43,165	226	0

Depreciation

Depreciation is based on the Beacon Approach, for buildings, where an estimate is made of the components of the building and the useful life of each component.

Other assets are recognised at historic cost which is a proxy for current cost on short life assets and depreciated over their useful lives.

Revaluations and Impairments

The authority ensures that all property, plant and equipment required to be measured at current value is revalued sufficiently regularly so that their carrying amount is not materially different from their current value at the year-end, and as a minimum every five years. All valuations were carried out internally. Valuations of land and buildings were carried out in accordance with the methodologies and basis for estimation set out in the professional standards of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

A review of all fire station buildings was undertaken, as at 31 March 2024, following advice from the valuers that the replacement cost had reduced. Fire stations are valued at depreciated replacement cost. Office accommodation and workshops were revalued in 2022/23 and are valued at existing use value.

Valuations of vehicles, plant and equipment were based on current prices where there was an active second-hand market or latest list prices adjusted for the condition of the asset.

CAPITAL COMMITMENTS

The Authority is committed to capital expenditure in future periods arising from contracts entered into at the Balance Sheet date. Capital expenditure committed at the 31 March 2024 for future periods equates to £3,804k (2022/23: £942k). The commitments relate to the following:

Description	£'000
Building Works	214
Land purchase	2,629
Fire Appliances	961
Total	3,804

SURPLUS ASSETS (Non operational property, plant and equipment)

The Authority does not have any material surplus assets.

12 FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Categories of Financial Instruments

The following categories of financial instruments are carried in the Balance Sheet:

	Non Current		Current	
	31 March 2023 £'000	31 March 2024 £'000	31 March 2023 £'000	31 March 2024 £'000
Financial Assets at Amortised Cost:				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	0	0	4,177	2,973
Debtors	33	62	5,041	1,275
Financial Liabilities at Amortised Cost:				
Interest Accrued	0	0	(194)	(211)
Borrowings	(17,787)	(14,073)	(8,674)	(3,714)
Total Borrowing	(17,787)	(14,073)	(8,868)	(3,925)
Creditors	0	0	(4,287)	(5,947)

Financial Instruments Gains/Losses

The gains and losses recognised in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement in relation to financial instruments are made up as follows:

	2022/23		2023/24	
	Financial Liabilities	Financial Assets	Financial Liabilities	Financial Assets
	Measured at amortised cost £'000	Loans and receivables £'000	Measured at amortised cost £'000	Loans and receivables £'000
Interest expense	464		692	
Total expense in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services	464		692	
Interest income		(61)		(429)
Total income in Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services		(61)		(429)
Net gain/(loss) for the year	464	(61)	692	(429)

Fair Value of Assets and Liabilities carried at Amortised Cost

Financial liabilities and financial assets represented by loans and receivables are carried on the Balance Sheet at amortised cost (in long term assets/liabilities with accrued interest in current assets/liabilities). Their fair value can be assessed by calculating the present value of the cash flows that take place over the remaining life of the instruments, using the following assumptions:

- For loans from the PWLB and other loans payable, borrowing from the PWLB has been applied to provide the fair value under PWLB debt redemption procedures;
- For loans receivable prevailing benchmark market rates have been used to provide the fair value;
- No early repayment or impairment is recognised;
- Where an instrument has a maturity of less than 12 months or is a trade or other receivable the fair value is taken to be the carrying amount or the billed amount;
- The fair value of trade and other receivables is taken to be the invoiced or billed amount.

The fair values calculated are as follows:

	31-Mar-23		31-Mar-24	
	Carrying amount £'000	Fair value £'000	Carrying amount £'000	Fair value £'000
PWLB debt	(20,460)	(18,630)	(17,787)	(17,118)
Non-PWLB debt	(6,000)	(6,000)	0	0
Total Debt	(26,460)	(24,630)	(17,787)	(17,118)

The fair value has been calculated with direct reference to published price quotations in an active market. In the case of the Fire and Rescue Authority they are based on premiums that would be payable if PWLB loans were surrendered and provides an estimate of the additional interest payable compared to the same loan at current market rates discounted back to the current period.

13 INVENTORIES

	Main Stores		Fleet Stock		Totals	
	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000
Balance at start of year	420	451	181	187	601	638
Purchases	101	314	203	229	304	543
Write offs/adjustments	(15)	(50)	(1)	(1)	(16)	(51)
Recognised as an Expense in year	(55)	(302)	(196)	(214)	(251)	(516)
Balance outstanding at year end	451	413	187	201	638	614

14 DEBTORS

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
	Long Term	
33	Prepayments	62
33	Total Long Term	62
	Short Term	
372	Other Receivable Amounts	286
3,692	Trade Receivables	488
977	Prepayments	501
5,041	Total Short Term	1,275
5,074	Total Long and Short Term Debtors	1,337

15 CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

31-Mar-23 £'000		31-Mar-24 £'000
4,167	Cash and Bank Balances	1,483
0	Short Term Deposits	1,480
10	Petty Cash Imprests	10
4,177	Total	2,973

16 CREDITORS

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
(811)	Other Payables	(3,364)
(3,476)	Trade Payables	(2,583)
(4,287)	Total	(5,947)

17 PROVISIONS

At 31 March 2024 the Authority held a provision with a value of £690k relating to employee liabilities. This provision will be utilised to offset revenue expenditure, when it occurs.

	Opening Balance £'000	Movements In £'000	Movements Out £'000	Closing Balance £'000
Short Term Provisions	(273)	(25)	81	(217)
Long Term Provisions	0	(473)	0	(473)
Total	(273)	(498)	81	(690)

18 UNUSABLE RESERVES

31-Mar-23 £'000		31-Mar-24 £'000
(18,175)	Revaluation Reserve	(17,304)
(10,013)	Capital Adjustment Account	(10,935)
227,143	Pensions Reserve	230,372
272	Accumulated Absences Account	386
199,227	Total	202,519

18a Revaluation Reserve

The Revaluation Reserve contains the gains made by the Authority arising from increases in the value of its Property, Plant and Equipment.

The balance is reduced when assets with accumulated gains are:

- revalued downwards or impaired and the gains are lost;
- used in the provision of services and the gains are consumed through depreciation or disposed of and the gains are realised.

The Reserve contains only revaluation gains accumulated since 1 April 2007, the date that the Reserve was created. Accumulated gains arising before that date are consolidated into the balance on the Capital Adjustment Account.

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
(8,550)	Balance at 1 April	(18,175)
(9,832)	Upward revaluation of assets	0
0	Downward revaluation of assets and impairment losses not charged to the surplus/deficit on the provision of services.	557
0	Prior Year Adjustment	0
57	Adjustment from Capital Adjustment Account	0
150	Difference between fair value depreciation and historical cost depreciation	314
(18,175)	Balance at 31 March	(17,304)

18b Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for the consumption of non-current assets and for financing the acquisition, construction or enhancement of those assets under statutory provisions.

The Account is debited with the cost of acquisition, construction or enhancement as depreciation, impairment losses and amortisations are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (with reconciling postings from the Revaluation Reserve to convert fair value figures to a historical cost basis). The Account is credited with the amounts set aside by the Authority as finance for the costs of acquisition, construction and enhancement. The Account contains accumulated gains and losses on Investment Properties and gains recognised on donated assets that have yet to be consumed by the Authority.

The Account also contains valuation gains accumulated on Property, Plant and Equipment before 1 April 2007, the date that the Revaluation Reserve was created to hold such gains.

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
(6,444)	Balance at 1 April	(10,013)
2,089	Charges for depreciation & impairment of non-current assets	2,445
23	Amount of non current asset written off on disposal or sale	25
(57)	Prior Year Adjustment - transfer between CAA and RR	0
(2,584)	Adjustment relating to the revaluation of assets	32
(150)	Adjusting amounts written out of the Revaluation Reserve	(314)
(679)	Net written out amount of the cost of non-current assets consumed in the year	2,188
(216)	Capital grants & contributions credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement that have been applied to capital financing	(71)
(525)	Capital expenditure charged against the General Fund/ Earmarked reserves	(1,101)
(189)	Application of grants to capital financing from the capital grants unapplied account	(36)
(1,960)	Statutory provision for the financing of capital investment charged against the General Fund	(1,902)
(2,890)	Capital Financing Applied in year	(3,110)
(10,013)	Balance at 31 March	(10,935)

18c Pensions Reserve

The pensions reserve absorbs the timing differences arising from the different arrangements for accounting for post-employment benefits and for funding benefits in accordance with statutory provisions. The authority accounts for post-employment benefits in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as the benefits are earned by employees accruing years of service, updating the liabilities recognised to reflect inflation, changing assumptions and investment returns on any resources set aside to meet the costs. However, statutory arrangements require benefits earned to be financed as the authority makes employer's contributions to pension funds or eventually pays any pensions for which it is directly responsible. The debit balance on the pensions reserve therefore shows a substantial shortfall in the benefits earned by past and current employees and the resources the authority has set aside to meet them. The statutory arrangements will ensure that funding will have been set aside by the time the benefits come to be paid.

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
327,498	Opening Balance 1 April	227,143
(109,388)	Re-measurement of the net defined benefit liability	(142)
18,419	Reversal of Items related to retirement benefits debited to the Provision of Service in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	13,903
(9,386)	Employer's pensions contributions and direct payments to pensioners payable in the year	(10,532)
(100,355)	Movement on Pension Reserve	3,229
227,143	Balance at 31 March	230,372

18d Accumulated Absences Account

The Accumulated Absences Account absorbs the differences that would otherwise arise on the General Fund balance from accruing for compensated absence earned but not taken in the year, e.g. annual leave entitlement carried forward at 31 March. Statutory arrangements require that the impact on the General Fund Balance is neutralised by transfers to or from the Account.

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
338	Balance at 1 April	272
(338)	Settlement or cancellation of accrual made at the end of the preceding year	(272)
272	Amounts accrued at the end of the current year	386
272	Balance at 31 March	386

19 CASH FLOW STATEMENT - OPERATING ACTIVITIES

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
5,109	Net (Surplus)/Deficit on the Provision of Services	2,077
	Adjustment to net (surplus)/deficit for non-cash movements	
38	Increase/(Decrease) in Inventories	(26)
1,310	Increase/(Decrease) in Debtors	(3,737)
(1,240)	(Increase)/Decrease in Creditors	(1,659)
(2,089)	Depreciation Charge	(2,446)
34	Contributions Received/Capital Receipts	39
(9,033)	IAS 19 Pension Adjustments	(3,371)
2,584	Impairment Charge/Revaluation of Assets	(32)
(23)	Carrying amount of Non Current Assets sold or derecognised	(25)
464	Contribution (to)/from Various Provisions	(417)
0	Other non-cash items charged to the net surplus or deficit on the provision of services	0
66	Accumulated Absences Reserve	(114)
(7,889)	Less Total	(11,788)
	Adjustments for Items Included in the net (Surplus) or Deficit on the Provision of Services that are Investing and Financing Activities	
(465)	Interest paid	(692)
61	Interest Received	429
(404)		(263)
(3,184)	Net Cash Flow From Operating Activity	(9,974)

20 CASH FLOW STATEMENT – INVESTING ACTIVITIES

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
3,367	Purchase of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	2,183
(11)	Proceeds from the sale of property, plant and equipment, investment property and intangible assets	(14)
0	Other receipts from investing activities	71
3,356	Net cash flow from investing activities	2,240

21 CASH FLOW STATEMENT – FINANCING ACTIVITIES

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
(13,000)	Cash receipts of short-term and long-term borrowing	0
10,780	Repayments of short-term and long-term borrowing	8,674
404	Other payments for financing activities	263
(1,816)	Net cash flow from financing activities	8,937

22 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Authority paid the following amounts to members of the Authority during the year:

2022/23 £		2023/24 £
73,317	Elected Members' Allowances	84,804
1,226	Elected Members' Expenses	2,209
910	Co-opted Members' costs	2,390
75,453	Total	89,403

The 2022/23 figures have been adjusted to reflect the change in how the allowances are reported.

DRAFT

23 OFFICERS' REMUNERATION

The remuneration paid to the Authority's senior employees is as follows:

Post Title	Year	Salary (Inc Fees & Allowances) £	Expenses Reimbursed £	Benefit in Kind £	Total (Excluding Pension Contributions) £	Pension Contributions £	Total Remuneration £
Chief Fire Officer: Dawn Docx**	2022/23	138,685	57	0	138,742	23,576	162,318
	2023/24	160,231	0	0	160,231	15,348	175,579
Deputy Chief Fire Officer	2022/23	110,948	5,565	1,380	117,893	30,289	148,182
	2023/24	127,594	0	0	127,594	34,833	162,427
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (retired June 2023)	2022/23	105,795	126	1,896	107,817	28,882	136,699
	2023/24	31,348	21	0	31,369	6,888	38,257
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (seconded March 2024)*	2022/23	104,014	0	1,595	105,609	17,682	123,291
	2023/24	104,335	0	0	104,335	28,483	132,818
Assistant Chief Fire Officer**	2022/23	104,014	0	0	104,014	28,396	132,410
	2023/24	120,176	0	0	120,176	11,511	131,687
Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer (appointed March 2024)	2022/23	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2023/24	6,523	7	0	6,530	1,421	7,951
Treasurer - Section 151 Officer (15 days per Year)	2022/23	8,020	251	0	8,271	0	8,271
	2023/24	8,180	0	0	8,180	2,860	11,040

The above figures include backpay of £38k, from January 2022, due to the settlement of the Brigade Managers pay award agreed in May 2023.

*Assistant Chief Fire Officer temporarily seconded to South Wales Fire and Rescue Service as Chief Fire Officer, with effect from 12 February 2024. Salary costs from this date, totalling £23,589 have been met by South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

**In 2023/24, there was a lump sum reduction in the Local Government Pension Scheme secondary rate. For those officers that are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme the employers contribution includes an apportionment of the reduction, based on a percentage of total pensionable pay.

The Monitoring Officer is provided by Flintshire County Council as part of a Service Level Agreement so no costs for an individual are shown in the table above. Further details on the Monitoring Officer costs can be found within Note 27 – Related Parties.

The Authority's other employees receiving more than £60,000 remuneration for the year (excluding employer pension contributions) were paid the following amounts:

REMUNERATION BAND	2022/23 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	2023/24 NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
£60,000 - £64,999	9	19
£65,000 - £69,999	7	6
£70,000 - £74,999	0	6
£75,000 - £79,999	4	1
£80,000 - £84,999	0	0
£85,000 - £89,999	0	2
£90,000 - £94,999	0	1

The following table gives the ratio between the Chief Fire Officer's remuneration and the median remuneration of Fire and Rescue Service staff:

2022/23 £		2023/24 £
138,685	Chief Fire Officer	152,034
34,501	Median	36,226
4.02	Ratio	4.20

The staff that are employed under Retained Duty System Contracts have been included in the calculation on their Full Time Equivalent scale point rather than actual earnings. The above data includes total salary paid (excludes pension contributions).

There were no redundancies and hence no exit packages in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

24 EXTERNAL AUDIT COSTS

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
	Fees payable to the Auditor General for Wales with regard to external audit services carried out by the appointed auditor	
56	Financial Audit work	60
16	Performance Audit work	16
72	Total	76

25 GRANTS

2022/23 £'000	Credited to Services	2023/24 £'000
416	Firelink Service Fees	0
179	Arson Reduction	169
226	Home Safety Equipment	240
10	Ask and Act	0
314	All Wales National Resilience	322
147	Youth & Young People Engagement	141
1,081	Firefighter Pension Scheme Employer Contribution Costs	0
2	Heating Survey	0
10	Security Information Event Management	0
0	Operation Ugain	14
0	Cyber Essentials	5
2,385	TOTAL	891
	Credited to taxation and non-specific income & expenditure	
133	All Wales National Resilience	71
120	Electric Vehicle Charging Points	0
253	TOTAL	71

26 AGENCY SERVICES

The Authority acts as an agent on behalf of Welsh Government in administering two grant schemes for all the Fire and Rescue Services in Wales. The approved grants are paid to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service who are then responsible for distributing the grants to the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The Authority acts as an agent for the Local Resilience Forum. This is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others. Contributions from the various public bodies, are paid to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. This funding is utilised to pay for the expenditure of the Forum. As at 31 March 2024, the Authority held funds of £36k relating to the Forum.

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
2,545	All Wales National Resilience	3,144
247	Youth and Young People Engagement	266
129	Local Resilience Forum	135
2,921	Total	3,545

27 RELATED PARTIES

The Authority is required to disclose material transactions with related parties – bodies or individuals that have the potential to control or influence the Authority or to be controlled or influenced by the Authority. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the Authority might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's ability to bargain freely with the authority.

Welsh Government

The Welsh Government has significant influence over the general operations of the Authority – it is responsible for providing the statutory framework within which the authority operates, provides the majority of its funding in the form of grants (the Revenue Support Grant is paid to constituent authorities) and prescribes the terms of many of the transactions that the authority has with other parties. Directly received grant receipts are shown in Note 25 and constituent authority contributions are shown in Note 10.

Members

Members of the authority have direct control over the authority's financial and operating policies. The total of members' allowances paid in 2023/24 is shown in Note 22.

22 Members completed a declaration of interest with related parties return for the year 2023/24. 6 members failed to return their forms, despite repeated requests. For the 6 members that failed to return their form, a review of information held by their constituent authority was completed. Apart from allowances and expenses no other transactions were identified. Nothing was paid by the Authority during 2023/24 under such arrangements (2022/23: nil), and no income was received by the Authority during 2023/24 (2022/23: nil).

A list of Elected Members' interests is maintained by the Monitoring Officer and is available to view on the website - <https://www.northwalesfire.gov.wales/fire-and-rescue-authority/members/>

Senior Officers

The Senior Officers completed a declaration of interest with related parties return for the year 2023/24. Senior Officers' remuneration is shown in Note 23.

An Assistant Chief Fire Officer declared an interest as a trustee with DangerPoint. The independent charity runs an education activity centre based in North Wales. Payments of £12,844 have been made to DangerPoint in 2023/24, as part of Welsh Government grant funding (2022/23: £5,450). In addition funding is provided for the cost of an administrator, which amounted to £32,258 (2022/23: £29,287).

For the period April to June 2023, the Treasurer was also employed by Gwynedd Council as Director of Gwynedd Pension Fund, and by Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park Authority as S.151 Officer.

No income was received by the Authority during 2022/23 and 2023/24.

Other Public Bodies

Flintshire County Council provide the role of Monitoring Officer. This post is held by the Chief Officer (Governance)/Monitoring Officer and payments amounted to £19k (2022/23: £18k).

Conwy County Borough Council provided legal services for which payments amounted to £12k (2022/23: £12k). As at 31 March 2024, £12k remained outstanding.

From 1 April 2023 Mersey Internal Audit have provided internal audit services for which payments amounted to £24k. As at 31 March 2024 there was no outstanding balance.

Carmarthenshire County Council, acting on behalf of the Dyfed Pension Fund, manage the payments made to firefighter pensioners on behalf of the Authority. They are also responsible for managing the records of current pensioners and active members of the scheme. Transactions in the year amounted to £91k (2022/23: £98k). As at 31 March 2024 nothing remained outstanding.

With effect from February 2024, a secondment agreement commenced with South Wales Fire & Rescue Service, to provide a Firefighter's Pension Lead, for which payments amounted to £2k. This balance was outstanding at year end.

There are joint arrangements with North Wales Police and Crime Commissioner as well as a shared control room. The Authority's contribution towards facilities management amounted to £220k (2022/23: £219k) and for procurement advice which amounted to £7k (2022/23: £7k). As at 31 March 2024 £117k remained outstanding.

28 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND CAPITAL FINANCING

The total amount of capital expenditure incurred in the year is shown in the table below (including the value of assets acquired under finance leases and PFI contracts), together with the resources that have been used to finance it. Where capital expenditure is to be financed in future years by charges to revenue as assets are used by the authority, the expenditure results in an increase in the capital financing requirement (CFR), a measure of the capital expenditure incurred historically by the authority that has yet to be financed.

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
28,401	Opening Capital Financing Requirement	28,877
	Capital Investment	
3,366	Property, Plant & Equipment	2,267
	Sources of Finance	
(406)	Government Grants & Contributions	(107)
(1,959)	Sums set aside from revenue	(1,902)
(525)	Direct Revenue Contributions	(1,101)
28,877	Closing Capital Financing Requirement	28,034
476	Increase/(decrease) in underlying need to borrow (unsupported by government financial assistance)	(843)
476	Increase/(decrease) in Capital Financing Requirement	(843)

29 LEASES**Finance Leases**

The Authority acquired Wrexham Fire Station under a finance lease in 2016/17. The asset acquired under the lease is carried on the Balance Sheet under Property, Plant and Equipment with a net value of £6,663k. The lease payment for Wrexham Fire Station is a peppercorn rent, therefore there is no reconciliation between the total of future minimum lease payments and the present value.

Operating Leases

The Authority has acquired vehicles and equipment by entering into operating leases with typical lives of four years.

In addition the Authority leases three buildings with typical lease periods of five years.

The future minimum lease periods due under non cancellable leases in future years are:

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
362	Not later than 1 year	444
644	Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	1,182
59	Later than 5 years	72
1,065	Total	1,698

Implementation of IFRS16 Leases

IFRS 16 will lead to a change in the treatment of leases in the financial statements of the Authority.

IFRS 16 will require leases previously held as operating leases to be recognised on the balance sheet through a 'right to use' asset, meeting the definition of capital expenditure.

The anticipated impact of the implementation of IFRS16 is detailed in the table below, where the costs of the current operating leases have been split to show the element of the lease that will be treated as a capital asset.

2023/24 Current Operating Leases £000		2023/24 Transfer to Right of Use assets £000	2023/24 Service Costs charged to revenue £000	2023/24 Low value leases excluded from IFRS16 £000
444	Not later than 1 year	273	169	2
1,182	Later than 1 year and not later than 5 years	607	575	0
72	Later than 5 years	70	2	0
1,698		950	746	2

30 DEFINED BENEFIT PENSION SCHEMES

Participation in Pension Schemes

As part of the terms and conditions of employment of its officers, the Authority makes contributions towards the cost of post-employment benefits. Although these benefits will not actually be payable until employees retire, the Authority has a commitment to make the payments (for those benefits) and to disclose them at the time that the employees earn their future entitlement.

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) is operated under the regulatory framework for the Local Government Pension Scheme and the governance of the scheme is the responsibility of Clwyd Pension Fund, Flintshire County Council. Policy is determined in accordance with the Pensions Fund Regulations. The investment managers of the fund are appointed by the pensions committee of Flintshire County Council. The principal risks to the authority of the scheme are the longevity assumptions, statutory changes to the scheme, structural changes to the scheme (i.e. large-scale withdrawals from the scheme), changes to inflation, bond yields and the performance of the equity investments held by the scheme. These are mitigated to a certain extent by the statutory requirements to charge to the General Fund and the amounts required by statute as described in the accounting policies note. We recognise the cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions.

However, the charge we are required to make against levy is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment / retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund Balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

Discretionary post-retirement benefits on early retirement are an unfunded defined benefit arrangement, under which liabilities are recognised when awards are made. There are no plan assets built up to meet these pension liabilities.

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme is an unfunded defined benefits scheme, meaning that no investments are held to fund the liabilities. Contributions, at a rate set by the Welsh Government, made by the employer and employees are held in a pension fund account, benefits paid are charged to the account with any balance on the account being received from, or paid to the Welsh Government.

O'Brien

Following a lengthy legal process, the judgment in the case of O'Brien vs Ministry of Justice was issued during 2019. This found that the decision to limit the period from which a part-time employee could join the pension scheme was erroneous and eligible employees should be permitted to join the relevant scheme with effect from the start of their contracts.

This judgment has national implications for staff who are employed as retained firefighters whose contract of employment commenced before 1 July 2000 or those who have not yet received the full opportunity to purchase past service to which they were entitled.

The Welsh Ministers have made amendments to the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2007

(Modified) to provide a mechanism for this matter to be addressed. The Firefighters' Pension Schemes and Compensation Scheme (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2024, was made and laid in January and came into force on 1 February 2024. All eligible persons will be afforded the opportunity of buying back pension entitlements within the timescales specified within the order (i.e. to be completed by 31 July 2025).

The full financial impact of the updated regulations cannot be fully calculated although an estimate has been included within the 2020 valuation of the Authority's pension scheme liabilities undertaken by the Government's Actuary Department (GAD).

Guaranteed Minimum Pension equalisation and indexation

The Government has published a consultation on indexation and equalisation of Guaranteed Minimum Pensions (GMP), with the proposal being to extend the "interim solution" to those members who reach State Pension Age after 5 April 2021.

A past service cost was included within the 2019/20 disclosures for extending the equalisation to all future retirees. There was also a further court ruling on 20 November 2020 regarding GMP equalisation. The court ruled that scheme trustees are required to revisit past Cash Equivalent Transfer Values (CETVs) to ensure GMP equalisation. This may result in additional top-ups where GMP equalisation means that members did not receive their full entitlement. For public service pension schemes, the expectation is that this ruling will be taken forward on a cross scheme basis and will need legal input.

This may require revisiting past CETV cases for members with State Pension age after 5 April 2016 and who took a CETV from the scheme before CETV were equalised. The scope of any costs are yet to be determined. Data on historic CETVs is not available to estimate the potential impact. It is expected that this will be a relatively small uplift for a relatively small subset of members (i.e. those who took a CETV and are in scope for a top up).

McCloud and 2016 valuation cost control

Following the Court of Appeal, the McCloud judgment was handed down in December 2018 which concluded that the transitional protections introduced in 2015 were discriminatory on the basis of age. The UK Government subsequently announced plans to address the discrimination across the UK public sector pension schemes including the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. The cap mechanism for the 2016 valuation has since been un-paused and the calculations completed, with the outcome being no changes to benefits or contributions.

It also announced that the outstanding issues arising from the 2016 actuarial valuation will be addressed and that the McCloud costs would fall into the 'member cost' category of the cost control element of the valuations process. By taking into account the increased value as a result of the McCloud remedy the scheme cost control valuation outcomes will show greater costs than otherwise would have been expected.

The past service costs have been estimated to take into account the impact of the McCloud judgment and have been included within the Pension Fund since 2018/19. These estimates have been updated to reflect the remedy outlined by the UK Government and the requisite changes to the Firefighters' Pension Scheme Regulations laid down by Welsh Ministers which came into force on 1st October 2023.

LGPS	FFPS		LGPS	FFPS
2022/23 £'000	2022/23 £'000	General Fund Transfers	2023/24 £'000	2023/24 £'000
		Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
		Cost of Services		
		Service Cost comprising:		
2,295	7,170	Current Service Cost	1,055	1,620
0	0	Past Service Costs	0	0
46	0	Administration Expenses	49	0
		Financing & Investment Income & Expenditure		
396	8,270	Net Interest Expense	69	10,310
0	0	Transfers out of scheme	0	0
0	220	Transfers in to scheme	0	800
22	0	Curtailments	0	0
2,759	15,660	Total Post Employment Benefits Charged to Provision of Services	1,173	12,730
		Other Post Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement		
		Remeasurement of the net defined benefit/liability comprising:		
4,634	0	Return on Plan Assets (excluding Interest)	(1,852)	0
4,966	(10,560)	Actuarial (Gains)/Losses arising on Changes in Demographic Assumptions	(331)	0
(24,238)	(101,710)	Actuarial (Gains)/Losses arising on Changes in Financial Assumptions	(1,359)	(4,410)
0	17,520	Actuarial (Gains)/Losses - experience	0	7,810
(14,638)	(94,750)	Total Post Employment Benefits Charged to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement	(3,542)	3,400
		Movement in Reserves Statement		
(2,759)	(15,660)	Reversal of net charges made to the surplus or deficit on the Provision of Services for Post Employment Benefits in accordance with the Code	(1,173)	(12,730)
		Actual amounts charged to the General Fund for pensions in the year		
0	8,470	Retirement Benefits payable to Pensioners	0	9,910
916	0	Employer Contributions Payable to the scheme	622	0

The amount included on the Balance Sheet arising from the Authority's obligation, in respect of its defined benefit plans are as follows:

LGPS 2022/23 £'000	FFPF 2022/23 £'000	Pension Assets and Liabilities Recognised in the Balance Sheet	LGPS 2023/24 £'000	FFPF 2023/24 £'000
(40,312)	(225,390)	Present value of the defined benefit obligation	(40,392)	(231,610)
(40,312)	(225,390)	Sub Total	(40,392)	(231,610)
38,559		Fair Value of plan assets	41,630	
(1,753)	(225,390)	Net liability arising from defined benefit obligation	1,238	(231,610)

LGPS 2022/23 £'000	FFPF 2022/23 £'000	Movement in the Value of Scheme Assets	LGPS 2023/24 £'000	FFPF 2023/24 £'000
41,971	0	Opening Fair Value of Scheme Assets	38,559	0
1,176	0	Interest Income	1,837	0
		Remeasurement Gain/Loss		
(4,634)	0	The return on plan assets, excluding the amount included in the net interest expense	1,852	0
916	10,270	Contributions from employer	622	11,520
369	0	Contributions from employees into the scheme	419	0
(1,193)	(10,270)	Benefits/transfer Paid	(1,610)	(11,520)
(46)	0	Administration Expenses	(49)	0
38,559	0	Closing value of scheme assets	41,630	0

LGPS 2022/23 £'000	FFPF 2022/23 £'000	Movement in the Fair Value of Scheme Liabilities	LGPS 2023/24 £'000	FFPF 2023/24 £'000
(56,519)	(312,950)	Opening Balance as at 1 April	(40,312)	(225,390)
(2,295)	(7,170)	Current Service Cost	(1,055)	(1,620)
0	(220)	Transfers In	0	(800)
(1,572)	(8,270)	Interest Costs	(1,906)	(10,310)
(369)	(1,800)	Contributions from scheme participants	(419)	(1,610)
		Remeasurement Gains and losses		
0	(17,520)	Actuarial Gains/losses- experience	331	(7,810)
(4,966)	10,560	Actuarial Gains/losses arising from changes in demographic assumptions	1,359	4,410
24,238	101,710	Actuarial Gains/losses arising from changes in financial assumptions	1,610	11,520
1,193	10,270	Benefits/ transfers paid	0	0
(22)	0	Curtailments	0	0
0	0	Past Service Cost	0	0
(40,312)	(225,390)	Balance at 31 March	(40,392)	(231,610)

Local Government Pension Scheme: Assets Comprised Of:

Quoted 2022/23 £'000	Fair Value of Scheme Assets	Quoted 2023/24 £'000
	Cash & Cash Equivalents	
1,697	Cash Accounts	2,122
0	Temporary Investments	0
1,697	Subtotal Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,122
	Equity Securities	
2,236	Global Quoted	5,787
1,967	Emerging Markets	0
4,203	Subtotal Equities	5,787
	Bonds	
3,933	Overseas Other	4,205
10,604	LDI	10,990
14,537	Subtotal Bonds	15,195
	Property	
2,044	UK	1,748
308	Overseas	167
2,352	Subtotal Property	1,915
	Alternatives	
2,776	Hedge Funds	2,040
5,013	Private Equity	6,119
2,236	Infrastructure	2,498
193	Timber and Agriculture	167
4,511	DGF	4,746
1,041	Private Credit	1,041
15,770	Subtotal Alternatives	16,611
38,559	Totals Assets	41,630

All scheme assets have quoted prices in active markets

Basis for Estimating Assets and Liabilities

Liabilities have been valued on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method which assesses the future liabilities of the fund discounted to their present value.

The Firefighters' Scheme has been valued by the Government Actuary's Department.

The LGPS liabilities have been valued by Mercer, an independent firm of actuaries and are based on the latest full valuation of the scheme as at 1 April 2023.

2022/23	LGPS	2023/24
	Mortality Assumptions	
	Longevity at retirement for current pensioners:	
21.4	Men	21
23.8	Women	23.5
	Longevity at retirement for future pensioners	
22.9	Men	22.4
25.6	Women	25.3
	Other Assumptions	
2.7%	Rate of Inflation	2.6%
4.0%	Rate of Increase in Salaries	3.9%
2.8%	Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.7%
4.8%	Rate of Discounting Scheme Liabilities	4.9%
2.7%	CARE Revaluation Rate	2.6%

2022/23	Firefighters Pension Scheme	2023/24
	Mortality Assumptions	
	Longevity at retirement for current pensioners:	
21.2	Men	21.3
21.2	Women	21.3
	Longevity at retirement for future pensioners	
22.9	Men	22.9
22.9	Women	22.9
	Other Assumptions	
2.6%	Rate of Inflation	2.6%
3.9%	Rate of Increase in Salaries	3.9%
2.6%	Rate of Increase in Pensions	2.6%
4.7%	Rate of Discounting Scheme Liabilities	4.8%
3.9%	CARE revaluation rate	3.9%

The estimation of the defined benefit obligations is sensitive to the actuarial assumptions set out in the above tables.

The sensitivity analyses below have been determined based on reasonably possible changes of the assumptions occurring at the end of the reporting period and assumes for each change that the assumption analysed changes while all the other assumptions remain constant. The assumptions in longevity, for example, assume that the life expectancy increases or decreases for men and women. In practice, this is unlikely to occur, and changes in some of the other assumptions may be interrelated. The estimations in the sensitivity analysis have followed the accounting policies for the scheme, i.e. on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method. The methods and types of assumption used in preparing the sensitivity analysis below did not change from those used in the previous period.

Impact of Assumptions on the obligation - LGPS

	As Reported	+0.5% p.a. discount	+0.25% p.a. inflation	+0.25% p.a. pay growth	1 year increase in life expectancy	+/-1% change in 2023/24 investment returns	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	+1% £000	-1% £000
Liabilities	40,392	37,228	42,073	40,711	41,380	40,392	40,392
Assets	(41,630)	(41,630)	(41,630)	(41,630)	(41,630)	(42,043)	(41,217)
Deficit (surplus)	(1,238)	(4,402)	443	(919)	(250)	(1,651)	(825)
Projected Service Cost for next year	982	851	1,053	982	1,008	982	982
Projected Net Interest Cost for next year	(75)	(254)	7	(59)	(27)	(96)	(55)

	As Reported	Discount rate on liabilities 0.5% increase	Increase in salaries 0.5% increase	Life expectancy 1 year increase	Increase in pensions 0.5% increase
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
FFPS	Impact (231,610)	-6.50% (216,555)	1% (233,926)	6.50% (246,665)	2% (236,242)

Impact on the Authority's Cashflow

The cost of retirement benefits in the reported cost of services is recognised when they are earned by employees, rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions. However, the charge that is required to be made against the levy is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of post-employment/ retirement benefits is reversed out of the General Fund via the Movement in Reserves Statement. The following transactions have been made in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement and the General Fund balance via the Movement in Reserves Statement during the year.

31 NATURE AND EXTENT OF RISKS ARISING FROM FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The Authority has adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management which ensures the Authority has measures in place to manage financial risks. The Authority's Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24 was formally approved at the Authority meeting on 20 March 2023. The Strategy sets out the Prudential Indicators (PI's) for the year. During the year quarterly reports detail the progress against the strategy and if necessary a revision of the PI's.

At year end, a final report sets out how the Authority has performed during the year. How the Authority manages risks arising from financial instruments is detailed in the treasury reports presented to the Audit Committee and can be accessed from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website - www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

The authority's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks, including:

Credit Risk

This is the possibility that other parties might fail to pay amounts due to the Authority.

The highest credit risk is for investments and these are managed through the Treasury Management Strategy, which sets out the parameters for the management of risks associated with Financial Instruments and emphasises that priority is to be given to security and liquidity, rather than yield. The Authority's policy on treasury investments is to place short term cash surpluses into bank call accounts until required. The Authority does not have long term investments. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, with selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss.

Liquidity Risk

This is the possibility that the Authority might not have funds available to meet its commitments, to make payments.

The Authority monitors its cash balance to ensure that cash is available as needed. The Authority has ready access to borrowings from the Public Works Loan Board and so there is no perceived risk that the Authority will be unable to raise finance to meet its commitments, under financial instruments. Instead, the risk is that the Authority will be bound to replenish a significant proportion of its borrowings at a time of unfavourable interest rates.

Market Risk

This is the possibility that financial loss might arise for the Authority as a result of changes in such measures as interest rates and stock market movements.

As at 31 March 2024, the Authority did not hold any market loans.

The Authority is exposed to interest rate movements on its borrowings and investments. Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the Authority, depending on how variable and fixed interest rates move across differing financial instrument periods. For instance, a rise in variable and fixed interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise;
- Borrowings at fixed rates – the fair value of the borrowing will fall (no impact on revenue balances);
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement will rise; and
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall (no impact on revenue balances).

Borrowings are not carried at fair value on the balance sheet, so nominal gains and losses on fixed rate borrowings would not impact on the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services or Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure. However, changes in interest payable and receivable on variable rate borrowings and investments will be posted to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services and affect the General Fund Balance.

32 CONTINGENT LIABILITY

Legal Claims

There are legal claims currently being dealt with by the Authority where there is less than 50% likelihood of settlement. The Authority has a sum of £0.310m reserved for insurance in relation to current emerging claims not currently recognised. The value of known legal cases are £0.063m.

Pension Claims

Following a lengthy legal process, the judgment in the case of O'Brien vs Ministry of Justice was issued during 2019. This found that the decision to limit the period from which a part-time employee could join the pension scheme was erroneous and eligible employees should be permitted to join the relevant scheme with effect from the start of their contracts.

This judgment has national implications for staff who are employed as retained firefighters whose contract of employment commenced before 1 July 2000 or those who have not yet received the full opportunity to purchase past service to which they were entitled.

The Welsh Ministers have made amendments to the Firefighters Pension Scheme 2007 (Modified) to provide a mechanism for this matter to be addressed. The Firefighters' Pension Schemes and Compensation Scheme (Amendment) (Wales) Order 2024, was made and laid in January and came into force on 1 February 2024. All eligible persons will be afforded the opportunity of buying back pension entitlements within the timescales specified within the order (i.e. to be completed by 31 July 2025).

The full financial impact of the updated regulations cannot be fully calculated although an estimate has been included within the 2020 valuation of the Authority's pension scheme liabilities undertaken by the Government's Actuary Department (GAD).

Airwave Emergency Service Contract

In October 2021, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) opened an investigation into mobile radio network services amid concerns that the market might not be working well. The investigation found that UK emergency services currently have no choice but to continue using Motorola's Airwave Network, due to a lack of alternative providers. As such, Motorola charged the Home Office – which negotiates contracts on behalf of emergency services – prices well above competitive levels, resulting in higher costs to the emergency services.

To reduce these costs, the CMA imposed a price cap in July 2023, which brought the price down to a level that would be expected in a well-functioning and competitive market.

This decision was appealed by Motorola Solutions Limited and in December 2023, the Competition Appeal Tribunal, in a unanimous decision, has upheld the CMA's finding that Motorola was excessively pricing due to its virtually unconstrained monopoly on providing communications network services to the UK emergency services.

Motorola Solutions has appealed the matter to the UK Court of Appeals. As at 31 March 2024 there has been no decision.

In 2023/24, as a result of the price cap, there was a reduction in costs of £261,518.93, however as the Court of Appeals decision is not known, this amount has been set aside in earmarked reserves, in the event that this has to be refunded.

33 CONTINGENT ASSET

Truck Cartel Litigation

In July 2016 the European Commission fined European truck manufacturers 2.926 billion Euro for price fixing and other cartel activities between 1991 and 2001. DAF, Daimler, Iveco, MAN, and Volvo/Renault acknowledged their guilt (Scania is still being investigated) and confirmed they did the following:

- At Senior HQ management level, fixed gross and sometimes net list prices.
- Aligned gross list prices in Europe including the UK at the start of the cartel.
- Reduced rebates when the Euro was introduced.
- Delayed introduction of more fuel efficient Euro 3, 4, 5 and 6 technologies.
- Agreed the cost that operators should pay for Euro technologies.

This involves any trucks of 6 tonnes and over, purchased outright, financed or leased between 1997 and 2011. A legal action is now ongoing to recoup some of the money lost due to this cartel price fixing. No specific value or percentage has been discussed as yet and the legal action may take several years to complete.

Under the Litigation Funding Agreement, only the VAT is payable by the Authority for the legal costs.

Current payments under the Litigation Funding Agreement (VAT payable only) for 2023/24 totalled £67 (2022/23: £52).

FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION FUND ACCOUNT

Firefighters Pension Fund Account for the year ended 31 March 2024

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
	Contributions Receivable:	
(3,893)	Employer normal contributions	(4,055)
(135)	Employer ill health charge	0
0	Employer backdated contributions	0
(1,822)	Members normal contributions	(1,928)
(100)	Members backdated contributions	(122)
(221)	Transfers In	(798)
(6,171)	Total Contributions	(6,903)
	Benefits Payable:	
8,246	Pension Payments	9,005
2,381	Commutation of Pensions and Lump Sum retirement benefits	1,596
67	Backdated Commutation Payments	0
	Payments to and on account of leavers:	
413	Transfers out	195
11,107	Total Benefits	10,796
4,936	Deficit for the year before grants receivables from the Welsh Government	3,893
(4,936)	Top Up grant payable to/(from) Welsh Government	(3,893)
0	Net Amount (Payable)/Receivable for Year	0

Net Assets Statement as at 31 March 2024

2022/23 £'000		2023/24 £'000
	Current assets	
2,616	Amount owed (from)/to the General Fund	(2,320)
2,616	Total Current Assets	(2,320)
	Current Liabilities	
0	Prepayment to Pensioners	0
(2,616)	Top Up grant payable to/(from) Welsh Government	2,320
(2,616)	Total Current Liabilities	2,320

Notes to the Firefighters' Pension Fund Account

The Fund was established on 1 April 2007, under the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Wales) Order 2007, and covers the 1992, 2007 and 2015 Firefighters' Pension Schemes and is administered by the Authority. The scheme is an unfunded scheme with no investment assets and any difference between benefits payable and contributions receivable is met by Top Up Grant from the Welsh Government.

Employee and employer contributions are paid into the Fund, from which payments to pensioners are made. Employee's and employer's contribution levels are based on percentages of pensionable pay set nationally by the Welsh Government and subject to triennial revaluation by the Government Actuary's Department (GAD).

Transfers in to the scheme are a transfer of pension benefits from another pension scheme, for new or existing employees and transfers out are transfer of benefits for employees who have left the Authority and joined another pension scheme.

The Authority is responsible for paying the employer's contributions into the fund. These are the costs that are included in the accounts for the Authority.

At the beginning of the financial year an assessment is made as to the amount of Top Up grant required from the Welsh Government. The estimate includes an assessment of the number of firefighters due to retire within the year, based on age and years' service.

Contribution Rates

On 1 April 2022, all scheme participants were transferred into the 2015 scheme. Under the Firefighters' Pension Regulations the employer's contribution rate for the 2015 scheme was 27.3% (2022/23: 27.3%) of pensionable pay with employee's rate as per the pensionable pay banding detailed below:

Pensionable Pay Band	2023/24 Contribution Rate %
Up to £27,818	11.0
£27,819 to £51,515	12.5
£51,516 to £142,500	13.5
More than £142,501	14.5

The Firefighters' Pension Fund Account does not take account of liabilities for pensions and other benefits after the period end as this is the responsibility of the Authority. Details of the long term pension obligations can be found in Note 30 to the core financial statements.

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The Statement of Accounts summarises the Authority's transactions for the 2023/24 financial year and its position at the year-end of 31 March 2024. The Authority is required to prepare an annual Statement of Accounts by the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014, which require the accounts to be prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices. These practices, under section 21 of the Local Government Act 2003, primarily comprise of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2023/24 supported by International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The accounting convention adopted in the Statement of Accounts is principally historical cost, modified by the revaluation of certain categories of non-current assets and financial instruments.

2. ACCRUALS OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

In the revenue accounts, income and expenditure are accounted for net of VAT (unless the VAT is irrecoverable) in the year in which they arise, not simply when cash payments are made or received.

- Expenses in relation to services received (including services provided by employees) are recorded as expenditure when the services are received rather than when payments are made. Amounts due from customers are accounted for as income at the date the Authority provides the relevant goods or services.
- Supplies are recorded as expenditure when they are consumed – where there is a gap between the date supplies are received and their consumption they are carried as inventories on the Balance Sheet.
- Interest receivable on investments and payable on borrowings is accounted for on the basis of the effective interest rate for the relevant financial instrument rather than the cash flows fixed or determined by the contract.
- Where revenue and expenditure have been recognised but cash has not been received or paid, a debtor or creditor for the relevant amount is recorded in the Balance Sheet. Where debts may not be settled, the balance of debtors is written down and a charge made to revenue in financing and investment income and expenditure for the income that might not be collected.

3. CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash is represented by cash in hand and deposits with financial institutions repayable without penalty on notice of not more than 24 hours. Cash equivalents are investments

that mature in no more than three months or less from the date of acquisition and that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash with insignificant risk of change in value.

In the Cash Flow Statement, cash and cash equivalents are shown net of bank overdrafts that are repayable on demand and form an integral part of the Authority's cash management.

4. PRIOR PERIOD ADJUSTMENTS, CHANGES IN ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND ESTIMATES AND ERRORS

Prior period adjustments may arise as a result of a change in accounting policies or to correct a material error. Changes in accounting estimates are accounted for prospectively, i.e. in the current and future years affected by the change and do not give rise to a prior period adjustment.

Changes in accounting policies are only made when required by proper accounting practices or the change provides more reliable or relevant information about the effect of transactions, other events and conditions on the Authority's financial position or financial performance. Where a change is made, it is applied retrospectively (unless stated otherwise) by adjusting opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period as if the new policy had always been applied. Material errors discovered in prior period figures are corrected retrospectively by amending opening balances and comparative amounts for the prior period.

5. CHARGES TO REVENUE FOR NON-CURRENT ASSETS

Services, support services and trading accounts are charged an accounting estimate of the cost of holding non-current assets during the year. This comprises:

- depreciation attributable to the assets used by the relevant service
- revaluation and impairment losses on assets used by the service where there are no accumulated gains in the revaluation reserve against which the losses can be written off
- amortisation of intangible assets attributable to the service.

The Authority is not required to raise a levy to fund depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses or amortisation. However, it is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement (equal to an amount calculated on a prudent basis determined by the Authority in accordance with statutory guidance). Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses, and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution in the General Fund balance - MRP, by way of an adjusting transaction with the capital adjustment account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

6. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Benefits payable during employment

Short-term employee benefits are those due to be settled wholly within 12 months of the year-end. They include such benefits as wages and salaries, paid annual leave and paid sick leave, bonuses and non-monetary benefits (e.g. cars) for current employees and are recognised as an expense for services in the year in which employees render service to the Authority. An accrual is made for the cost of holiday entitlements (or any form of leave, e.g. time off in lieu) earned by employees but not taken before the year-end that employees can carry forward into the next financial year. The accrual is made at the wage and salary rates applicable in the following accounting year, being the period in which the employee takes the benefit. The accrual is charged to surplus or deficit on the provision of services, but then reversed out through the Movement in Reserves Statement to the accumulated absences account so that holiday entitlements are charged to revenue in the financial year in which the holiday absence occurs.

Post-Employment Benefits

Employees of the Authority are members of two separate pension schemes:

- the Firefighters' Pension Scheme, administered by Dyfed Pension Fund, Carmarthenshire County Council
- the Local Government Pensions Scheme, administered by Flintshire County Council.

Both schemes provided defined benefits to members (retirement lump sums and pensions), earned as employees worked for the Authority.

Firefighters' Pension Scheme (FFPS)

The Firefighters' Pension Scheme is accounted for as an unfunded defined benefits scheme, the scheme has no assets and no investment income:

- The liabilities of the Fund are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method — i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc, and projections of earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate of based on Government bond yields of appropriate duration plus an additional margin. The change in the net pension liability is analysed into the following components:

Service cost comprising:

- Current service cost — the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year — allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked.

- Past service cost — the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years — debited to the Surplus or Deficit on the Provision of Services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.
- Net interest on the net defined benefit liability, i.e. net interest expense for the Authority — the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability that arises from the passage of time charged to the Financing and Investment Income and Expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement — this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability at the beginning of the period — taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

Remeasurements comprising:

- Actuarial gains and losses — changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions — charged to the Pensions Reserve as Other Comprehensive Income and Expenditure.
- Contributions paid to the Fund — cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund Balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension funds or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are transfers to and from the Pensions Reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the Pensions Reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)

The Local Government Pension Scheme is accounted for as a defined benefits scheme:

- The liabilities of the Clwyd Pension Fund attributable to the Authority are included in the Balance Sheet on an actuarial basis using the projected unit method – i.e. an assessment of the future payments that will be made in relation to retirement benefits earned to date by employees, based on assumptions about mortality rates, employee turnover rates, etc, and projected earnings for current employees.
- Liabilities are discounted to their value at current prices, using a discount rate based on the indicative rate of return on corporate bonds.
- The assets of Clwyd Pension Fund attributable to the Authority are included in the Balance Sheet at their fair value:
 - quoted securities – current bid price

- unquoted securities – professional estimate
- unlisted securities – current bid price
- property – market value.

The change in the net pensions liability is analysed into the following components:

Service cost comprising:

- current service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement to the services for which the employees worked
- past service cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of a scheme amendment or curtailment whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – debited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement [note that the treatment of past service costs will depend on the decisions of the Authority about how they are allocated to service segments]
- net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset), i.e. net interest expense for the Authority – the change during the period in the net defined benefit liability (asset) that arises from the passage of time charged to the financing and investment income and expenditure line of the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement – this is calculated by applying the discount rate used to measure the defined benefit obligation at the beginning of the period to the net defined benefit liability (asset) at the beginning of the period – taking into account any changes in the net defined benefit liability (asset) during the period as a result of contribution and benefit payments.

Remeasurements comprising:

- the return on plan assets – excluding amounts included in net interest on the net defined benefit liability (asset) – charged to the pensions reserve as other comprehensive income and expenditure
- actuarial gains and losses – changes in the net pensions liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged to the pensions reserve as other comprehensive income and expenditure.
- contributions paid to the Clwyd pension fund – cash paid as employer's contributions to the pension fund in settlement of liabilities; not accounted for as an expense.

In relation to retirement benefits, statutory provisions require the General Fund balance to be charged with the amount payable by the Authority to the pension fund or directly to pensioners in the year, not the amount calculated according to the relevant accounting standards. In the Movement in Reserves Statement, this means that there are transfers to and from the pensions reserve to remove the notional debits and credits for retirement benefits and replace them with debits for the cash paid to the pension fund and pensioners and any such amounts payable but unpaid at the year-end. The negative balance that arises on the pensions reserve thereby measures the beneficial impact to the General Fund of being required to account for retirement benefits on the basis of cash flows rather than as benefits are earned by employees.

Discretionary Benefits:

The Authority also has restricted powers to make discretionary awards of retirement benefits in the event of early retirements. Any liabilities estimated to arise as a result of an award to any member of staff are accrued in the year of the decision to make the award and accounted for using the same policies as are applied to the Local Government Pension Scheme.

7. EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

Events after the Balance Sheet reporting period are those events, both favourable and unfavourable, that occur between the end of the Balance Sheet date and the date when the statement of accounts are authorised for issue. Two types of events can be identified:

- those that provide evidence of conditions that existed at the end of the reporting period – the statement of accounts is adjusted to reflect such events.
- those that are indicative of conditions that arose after the reporting period – the statement of accounts is not adjusted to reflect such events, but where such a category of events would have a material effect, disclosure is made in the notes of the nature of the events and their estimated financial effect.

Events taking place after the date of authorisation for issue are not reflected in the statement of accounts.

8. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

A Financial Instrument is defined as 'any contract that gives rise to a financial asset of one entity and a financial liability or equity instrument of another'. Financial liabilities (loans) and financial assets (investments) are initially measured at fair value and carried at their amortised cost. The annual interest paid and received in the Income and Expenditure account is based on the carrying amount of the loan or investment multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For all of the loans and investments the Authority has, the amounts presented in the Balance Sheet are the principal outstanding plus any accrued interest for the year.

Financial liabilities are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value and are carried at their amortised cost. Annual charges to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement (CIES) for interest payable are based on the carrying amount of the liability, multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. The effective interest rate is the rate that exactly discounts estimated future cash payments over the life of the instrument to the amount at which it was originally recognised.

For most of the borrowings that the Authority has, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal repayable (plus accrued interest); and

interest charged to the CIES is the amount payable for the year according to the loan agreement.

Financial assets

Financial assets are classified based on a classification and measurement approach that reflects the business model for holding the financial assets and their cash flow characteristics. The Authority holds financial assets measured at:

- amortised cost, and
- fair value through profit or loss (FVPL)

The Authority's business model is to hold investments to collect contractual cash flows. Financial assets are therefore classified as amortised cost.

Financial assets measured at amortised cost

Financial assets measured at amortised cost are recognised on the Balance Sheet when the Authority becomes a party to the contractual provisions of a financial instrument and are initially measured at fair value. They are subsequently measured at their amortised cost. Annual credits to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the CIES for interest receivable are based on the carrying amount of the asset multiplied by the effective rate of interest for the instrument. For most of the financial assets held by the Authority, this means that the amount presented in the Balance Sheet is the outstanding principal receivable (plus accrued interest), and interest credited to the CIES is the amount receivable for the year in the loan agreement.

Any gains and losses that arise on the derecognition of a financial asset are credited or debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the CIES.

9. FOREIGN CURRENCY TRANSACTIONS

Where the Authority has entered into a transaction denominated in a foreign currency, the transaction is converted into sterling at the exchange rate applicable on the date the transaction was effective. Where amounts in foreign currency are outstanding at the year-end, they are reconverted at the spot exchange rate at 31 March. Resulting gains or losses are recognised in the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

10. ACCOUNTING FOR GOVERNMENT GRANTS

Whether paid on account, by instalments, or in arrears, government grants and third party contributions and donations are recognised as due to the Authority when there is reasonable assurance that:

- the Authority will comply with the conditions attached to the payments, and
- the grants or contributions will be received.

Amounts recognised as due are not credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement until conditions attached to the grant or contribution have been satisfied.

Monies advanced as grants and contributions for which conditions have not been satisfied are carried in the Balance Sheet as creditors. When the conditions are satisfied, the grant or contribution is credited to the relevant service line (attributable revenue grants and contributions) or Taxation & Non-specific Grant Income (non-ring fenced revenue grants and all capital grants) in the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement.

Where capital grants are credited to the Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement, they are reversed out of the General Fund Balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement. Where the grant has yet to be used to finance capital expenditure, it is posted to the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve. Where it has been applied, it is posted to the Capital Adjustment Account. Amounts in the Capital Grants Unapplied Reserve are transferred to the Capital Adjustment Account once they have been applied to fund capital expenditure

11. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Expenditure on non-monetary assets that do not have physical substance but are controlled by the Authority as a result of past events (e.g. software licences) is capitalised when it is expected that future economic benefits or service potential will flow from the intangible asset to the Authority.

Intangible assets are measured initially at cost. Amounts are only revalued where the fair value of the assets held by the Authority can be determined by reference to an active market. In practice, no intangible asset held by the Authority meets this criterion, and they are therefore carried at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment loss. The depreciable amount of an intangible asset is amortised over its useful life to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. An asset is tested for impairment whenever there is an indication that the asset might be impaired – any losses recognised are posted to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Any gain or loss arising on the disposal or abandonment of an intangible asset is posted to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where expenditure on intangible assets qualifies as capital expenditure for statutory purposes, amortisation, impairment losses and disposal gains and losses are not permitted to have an impact on the General Fund balance. The gains and losses are therefore reversed out of the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement and posted to the capital adjustment account and (for any sale proceeds greater than £10,000) the capital receipts reserve.

12. INVENTORIES

Inventories are included in the Balance Sheet at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The cost of inventories is assigned using the FIFO costing formula.

13. LEASES

Finance Leases

Leases are classified as finance leases where the terms of the lease transfer substantially all the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the property, plant or equipment from the lessor to the lessee. All other leases are classified as operating leases.

Property, plant and equipment held under finance leases is recognised on the Balance Sheet at the commencement of the lease at its fair value measured at the lease's inception (or the present value of the minimum lease payments, if lower). The asset recognised is matched by a liability for the obligation to pay the lessor. Initial direct costs of the Authority are added to the carrying amount of the asset. Premiums paid on entry into a lease are applied to writing down the lease liability.

Contingent rents are charged as expenses in the periods in which they are incurred.

Lease payments are apportioned between:

- a charge for the acquisition of the interest in the property, plant or equipment – applied to write down the lease liability, and
- a finance charge (debited to the financing and investment income and expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement).

Property, plant and equipment recognised under finance leases is accounted for using the policies applied generally to such assets, subject to depreciation being charged over the lease term if this is shorter than the asset's estimated useful life (where ownership of the asset does not transfer to the Authority at the end of the lease period).

The Authority is not required to raise a levy to cover depreciation or revaluation and impairment losses arising on leased assets. Instead, a prudent annual contribution is made from revenue funds towards the deemed capital investment in accordance with statutory requirements. Depreciation and revaluation and impairment losses are therefore substituted by a revenue contribution in the General Fund balance, by way of an adjusting transaction with the capital adjustment account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Operating Leases

Rentals paid under operating leases are charged to the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as an expense to the services benefitting from use of the leased property, plant or equipment. Charges are made on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease, even if this does not match the pattern of payments (e.g. there is a rent-free period at the commencement of the lease).

IFRS16 - draft accounting policy that will be applicable for the 2024/25 accounts set out below to provide context as to what that estimate for 2023/24 will be based on

The Authority's IFRS16 policy will apply to those leases where the Authority is the lessee.

Low-cost exemption

In line with the Code of Practice 2023/24 paragraph 4.2.2.33 and paragraphs B3 to B8 of IFRS16, NWFRA has assessed what it believes a low value asset should be classed as. A summary of this assessment is as follows.

The original value for low-cost exemption within IFRS16 is £5,000. For use within the UK rather than converting this into pounds sterling every time a lease is reviewed it is easier to assume it was £5,000 at the time the standard was set.

The standard was issued in January 2016 (with initial application from 1 January 2019 dependent on adoption). Given that this was several years ago and the recent rise in inflation it makes sense to initially rebase this £5,000 to take into account the impact of inflation. Over the period since January 2016 (up to May 2023) the CPI index has moved from 99.5 to 131.3. This converts to inflation of 31.96% over that period. If you were to apply this inflation to £5,000 this would now equate to £9,896.99.

It has been confirmed by CIPFA that the level the low-cost exemption is set at is a local decision for each Authority to make. Based on this rebasing the proposal for this part of the leasing accounting policy is that the low-cost exemption is set initially at £10,000 and then reviewed each year and where required rebase using the March CPI rate each year (rounded to the nearest £1,000). This will take into account the time-effect on money especially during periods of high inflation.

Use of portfolio of leases with reasonably similar characteristics

Following a review of existing lease type arrangements within the Authority it has been determined that it should apply the portfolio expedient (Code of Practice 2023/24 paragraph 4.2.2.31) for photocopiers and similar machines (MFDs, franking machines etc). The reasoning for this is that the Authority does not expect that this will differ materially from applying IFRS16 to individual leases within that portfolio. They all also have similar characteristics in function, cost and leases agreements. On this basis they will all fall within the low cost exemption.

Existing contracts at date of implementation

Based on the Code of Practice 2023/24 paragraph 4.2.1.5 NWFRA will not reassess any existing contracts as at the date of implementation to determine whether it contains a lease. Going forward from the initial implementation date (1 April 2024) all new contracts will need to be assessed to determine whether they contain a lease type arrangement.

Leases for intangible assets

The Authority will not apply IFRS16 to lease type arrangement for intangible assets (software licences etc) as outlined in the Code of Practice 2023/24 paragraph 4.2.1.3.

Leases with less than 1-year remaining life as at implementation date

The Authority will apply the short life exemption to all existing leases with a remaining life of less than 1 year at the implementation date. This is in line with the Code of Practice 2023/24 paragraph 4.2.1.5. In this case the existing accounting treatment will continue for

the remaining life of the lease, unless there is a modification following the implementation date where upon the requirements in paragraph 4.2.2.35 will apply, where upon the lease will be considered a new lease

14. PROPERTY PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods or services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes and that are expected to be used during more than one financial year are classified as Property, Plant & Equipment.

Recognition

Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of Property, Plant & Equipment is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that it is probable that the future economic benefits or service potential associated with the item will flow to the Authority and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure that maintains but does not add to an asset's potential to deliver future economic benefits or service potential (i.e. repairs and maintenance) is charged as an expense when it is incurred.

A de-minimus expenditure level of £10,000 has been set for Property, Plant & Equipment, below which expenditure will not be subject to capital accounting requirements. Where an asset is revalued below £10,000, any associated expenditure and depreciation will normally be written out and the asset removed from the Fixed Asset Register.

Measurement

Assets are initially measured at cost, comprising:

- the purchase price
- any costs attributable to bringing the asset to the location and condition necessary for it to be capable of operating in the manner intended by management
- an initial estimate of the costs of dismantling and removing the item and restoring the site on which it is located

The Authority does not capitalise borrowing costs incurred while assets are under construction. The cost of assets acquired other than by purchase is deemed to be its fair value.

Assets are carried on the Balance Sheet using the following measurement bases:

- Land & Buildings: Offices/Workshops – current value (Existing Use Value)
- Land & Buildings: Fire Stations – current value (Depreciated Replacement Cost)
- Assets under construction - historical cost
- All other assets - current value, determined as the amount that would be paid for the asset in its existing use (existing use value - EUV).

Where there is no market-based evidence of current value because of the specialist nature of an asset, depreciated replacement cost (DRC) is used as an estimate of current value.

Where non-property assets have short useful lives or low values (or both), depreciated historical cost basis is used as a proxy for current value.

Increases in valuations are matched by credits to the revaluation reserve to recognise unrealised gains. [Exceptionally, gains might be credited to the surplus or deficit on the provision of services where they arise from the reversal of a loss previously charged to a service.]

Where decreases in value are identified, they are accounted for by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the revaluation reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- where there is no balance in the revaluation reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Impairments

Assets are assessed at each year-end as to whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. Where indications exist and any possible differences are estimated to be material, the recoverable amount of the asset is estimated and, where this is less than the carrying amount of the asset, an impairment loss is recognised for the shortfall.

Where impairment losses are identified, they are accounted for by:

- where there is a balance of revaluation gains for the asset in the revaluation reserve, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against that balance (up to the amount of the accumulated gains)
- where there is no balance in the revaluation reserve or an insufficient balance, the carrying amount of the asset is written down against the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement.

Where an impairment loss is reversed subsequently, the reversal is credited to the relevant service line(s) in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, up to the amount of the original loss, adjusted for depreciation that would have been charged if the loss had not been recognised.

Depreciation

Depreciation is provided for all property, plant and equipment assets, by systematic allocation of their depreciable amounts over their useful lives.

Useful Economic Life of Assets

Land	Infinite (no depreciation)
Buildings	Useful life of the property (as estimated by the valuer)
Buildings (leased)	Term of lease
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	5 - 20 years
Intangible Assets	5 years

Depreciation is provided on a straight-line basis, with acquisitions being depreciated in the year following purchase. A full year's depreciation is charged in the year of disposal.

Buildings are depreciated using the Beacon Approach. An estimate is made of the components of the building and the useful life of each component. The weighted average method is then used to determine the depreciation charge. The percentages used are:

Buildings – fire stations	2.12% - 2.22%
Buildings – offices/workshops	2.22% - 2.23%

Depreciation is charged within the income and expenditure account. This amount is credited to the General Fund Balance and has a neutral impact on the contributions made by the constituent authorities.

The Authority is required to make an annual contribution from revenue towards the reduction in its overall borrowing requirement. Depreciation, revaluation and impairment losses and amortisation are therefore replaced by the contribution from General Fund Balances (MRP) by way of an adjusting transaction with the Capital Adjustment Account in the Movement in Reserves Statement for the difference between the two.

Revaluation gains are also depreciated, with an amount equal to the difference between current value depreciation charged on assets and the depreciation that would have been chargeable based on their historical cost being transferred each year from the revaluation reserve to the capital adjustment account.

Disposals

When it becomes probable that the carrying amount of an asset will be recovered principally through a sale transaction rather than through its continued use, it is reclassified as an asset held for sale. The asset is revalued immediately before reclassification and then carried at the lower of this amount and fair value less costs to sell. Where there is a subsequent decrease to fair value less costs to sell, the loss is posted to the other operating expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. Gains in fair value are recognised only up to the amount of any previously recognised losses in the surplus or deficit on the provision of services. Depreciation is not charged on assets held for sale.

When an asset is disposed of or decommissioned, the carrying amount of the asset in the Balance Sheet (whether property, plant and equipment or assets held for sale) is written off to the Other Operating Expenditure line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement as part of the gain or loss on disposal.

Receipts from disposals (if any) are credited to the same line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement also as part of the gain or loss on disposal (i.e. netted off against the carrying value of the asset at the time of disposal). Any revaluation gains accumulated for the asset in the revaluation reserve are transferred to the capital adjustment account.

Amounts received for a disposal in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. The balance of receipts remains within the capital receipts reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment [or set aside to reduce the Authority's underlying need to borrow (the capital financing requirement)]. Receipts are appropriated to the reserve from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

The written-off value of disposals is not a charge against the levy, as the cost of non-current assets is fully provided for under separate arrangements for capital financing. Amounts are appropriated to the capital adjustment account from the General Fund balance in the Movement in Reserves Statement.

15. PROVISIONS, CONTINGENT LIABILITIES AND CONTINGENT ASSETS

Provisions

Provisions are made where an event has taken place on or before the Balance Sheet date:

- that gives the Authority a present obligation
- that probably requires settlement by a transfer of economic benefits or service potential, and
- where a reliable estimate can be made of the amount of the obligation.

If it is not clear whether an event has taken place on or before the Balance Sheet date, it is deemed to give rise to a present obligation if, taking account of all available evidence, it is more likely than not that a present obligation exists at the Balance Sheet date. The present obligation can be legal or constructive.

Provisions are charged as an expense to the appropriate service line in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement when the Authority has an obligation, and are measured at the best estimate at the Balance Sheet date of the expenditure required to settle the obligation, taking into account relevant risks and uncertainties. Estimated settlements are reviewed at the end of each financial year. Where it becomes less than probable that a transfer of economic benefits will now be required (or a lower settlement than anticipated is made), the provision is reversed and credited back to the relevant service.

Where some or all of the payment required to settle a provision is expected to be recovered from another party (e.g. from an insurance claim), this is only recognised as income for the relevant service if it is virtually certain that reimbursement will be received if the Authority settles the obligation.

Contingent Liabilities

A contingent liability arises where an event has taken place that gives the Authority a possible obligation whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Authority. Contingent liabilities also arise in circumstances where a provision would otherwise be made but either it is not probable that an outflow of resources will be required or the amount of the obligation cannot be measured with sufficient reliability.

Contingent liabilities are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts.

Contingent Assets

A contingent asset arises where an event has taken place that gives the Authority a possible asset whose existence will only be confirmed by the occurrence or otherwise of uncertain future events not wholly within the control of the Authority.

Contingent assets are not recognised in the Balance Sheet but disclosed in a note to the accounts where it is probable that there will be an inflow of economic benefits or service potential.

16. RESERVES

The Authority sets aside specific amounts as reserves for future policy purposes or to cover contingencies. Reserves are created by transferring amounts out of the General Fund balance. When expenditure to be financed from a reserve is incurred, it is charged to the appropriate service in that year to score against the surplus or deficit on the provision of services in the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement. The reserve is then transferred back into the General Fund balance so that there is no net charge against the levy for the expenditure.

Certain reserves are kept to manage the accounting processes for non-current assets, financial instruments, retirement and employee benefits and do not represent usable resources for the Authority – these reserves are explained in the relevant policies.

17. VAT

VAT payable is included as an expense only to the extent that it is not recoverable from HMRC. VAT receivable is excluded from income.

[This page is left intentionally blank]



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service



Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	15 July 2024
Lead Officer	Gareth Owens, Clerk
Contact Officer	Gareth Owens, Clerk (01745 535286)
Subject	Appointment of the Proper Officer for s.36 Freedom of Information Act 2000



Purpose of Report

1. To appoint the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk as the proper officer, known as the "qualified person", able to apply the exemption under section 36 Freedom of Information Act 2000 ("FOIA")

Executive Summary

2. The FOIA requires information held by public authorities to be made available on request. Some categories of information (e.g. commercially sensitive or information relating to the prevention or detection of crime) are subject to exemptions and can be withheld. One such exemption under section 36, information which might prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs, can only be exercised by the "qualified person". In England those officers who can act as the "qualified person" are designated by statutory instrument but in Wales, public authorities must designate the "qualified person" themselves.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that Members:
 - i) designate the Chief Fire Officer and Clerk as the qualified persons for the purpose of applying the exemption in section 36 Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Observations from the Executive Panel/Audit Committee

4. This paper has not previously been considered by the Audit Committee or Executive Panel.

Background

5. The FOIA requires public authorities to provide, on written request, any information within their possession provided it is not exempt. There are many categories of exemption and they include information which is commercially sensitive or information relating to the prevention or detection of crime. All of the exemptions, bar one, can be delegated in the usual way. The exemption under section 36, prejudice to effective conduct of public affairs, is unusual in that it may only be applied by the "qualified person".

Information

6. The FOIA itself specifies in relation to arrange of public bodies who is designated as the "qualified person". In England, a statutory instrument defines the qualified person as the Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer and Monitoring Officer. No such statutory instrument exists in Wales and so the Authority must designate its own "qualified person".
7. The exemption may be applied where
"in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure of the information under this Act—
(a)...
(b)would, or would be likely to, inhibit—
 (i)the free and frank provision of advice, or
 (ii)the free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation, or
(c)would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs."
8. Detailed guidance has been issued by the Information Commissioners' Office on the application of the exemption but broadly speaking it requires a judgement on whether revealing information would be likely to disrupt how advice is given to councillors or the way in which the authority functions. In other words, would officers be able to give and would councillors be able receive full and proper advice if there is the possibility that the advice will at some point be published? Whilst this is more commonly an issue for constituent authorities there are occasions where councillors want to be able to ask questions and seek advice, for example on policy formation, in a "safe space".
9. Clearly, the Fire Authority is very open and transparent in the way that it works. The exemption has been and will be applied extremely rarely, if at all; however, the designation is important as a contingency. By limiting the number of qualified persons the Authority can have the assurance that it will be judiciously applied.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	Considered not relevant
Budget for 2024/25	The designation of qualified persons will have no impact on the budget
Legal	The Authority would have to exercise the function itself if it is not delegated.
Staffing	Considered not relevant
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The report has been produced in bilingual format
Risks	If the section 36 exemption cannot be applied then all records of advice given to councillors would potentially be subject to disclosure under the FOIA.