

AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU



NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

A meeting of the **EXECUTIVE PANEL** will be held **MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2023** virtually via **Zoom** commencing at **14:00 hrs.**

Yours faithfully,
Gareth Owens
Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies

2. Declaration of Interests

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 18 September 2023

5. Matters Arising

6. Budget Setting 24/25

7. Performance Monitoring Report Q2 23/24

8. Strategic Risk Management (Risk Register)

9. Healthy Travel Charter

10. Revision to Constitution

11. 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 3 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.

None.

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE PANEL

Minutes of the **Executive Panel** of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority held on Monday 18 September 2023 at St Asaph Fire and Rescue Headquarters and virtually via Zoom. Meeting commenced at 14.00hrs.

Councillor

Cllr Dylan Rees (Chair)
Cllr Paul Cunningham (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Chris Hughes
Cllr Gareth Sandilands
Cllr Carol Beard
Cllr Chrissy Gee
Cllr Dale Selvester
Cllr Gareth A Roberts
Cllr Rondo Roberts
Cllr Rob Triggs
Cllr Paul Rogers
Cllr John Ifan Jones

Representing

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

Also present:

Dawn Docx
Stuart Millington
Helen MacArthur
Anthony Jones
Paul Kay

Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Area Manager
Area Manager

Dafydd Edwards
Tracey Williams
Gareth Owens
George Jones
Ffion Evans
Steve Morris

Treasurer
Head of Corporate Communications
Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Atebol - Translator
Executive Assistant
Head of ICT

1 **APOLOGIES**

Councillor

Representing

ABSENT

Councillor

Representing

Cllr Alan Hughes

Denbighshire County Council

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest to record.

3 NOTICE OF URGENT MATTERS

3.1 There was no notice of urgent matters.

4 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2023

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2023 were submitted for approval.

4.2 **RESOLVED to:**

- i) approve the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held.**

5 MATTERS ARISING

5.1 There were no matters arising.

Agenda item 11 from the previous meeting had been raised by the FBU representatives in the pre-meeting with the Chair and Chief and they had asked for an update on pensions.

ACFO McArthur responded that WG have considered all of the responses to the consultation and have drafted the final legislation moving pensions into the new format. NWFRS are in the process of communicating with individual members and will be pulling together FAQ.

6. EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW – RESPONSES TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION

6.1 AM Jones presented the paper to the Members and explained that the purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the progress and the activities of the emergency cover review. AM Jones proceed to go through the report for the Members and updated Members that the Public Consultation had been extended until the 30th of September 2023. This was the result of meeting the governance arrangements of councils, in addition to requests from the public.

6.2 Members were updated that the group had met on five occasions between March 2023 and June 2023.

6.3 Background update of the consultation was provided. The Service has engaged The Consultation Institute, which is a not for profit organisation. The Institute have provided us with advice and guidance,

enabling us to provide best practice. We are on track to gain “Good” in quality assurance. The Consultation Institute has provided positive feedback thus far.

- 6.4 Members were updated on the 3 options that the Fire Authority agreed to consult on.
- 6.5 Members were informed that the draft consultation report would be presented to the ECR Fire Authority Working Group on the 5th of October. With the final report being presented to Members at the meeting of the full Authority on the 16th of October 2023.
- 6.6 CFO Docx updated Members that as of last week the final Public meeting had been held. CFO Docx gave appreciation to local communities for their support and engagement and to everyone who has publicised the events.
- 6.7 **RESOLVED to:**
i) Members noted the contents of this report

7. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ASSURANCE REPORT

- 7.1 ACFO Millington presented the report to Members. The purpose of the report was to provide assurance to the Executive Panel that the Service's processes for handling information requests submitted under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 is robust and minimises the risk of a data breach involving personal information.
- 7.2 ACFO Millington gave Members background to the report and updated Members that there had been a number of significant and serious data breaches by public authorities recently.
- 7.3 ACFO Millington went through the processes that we have in place; and brought to Members attention that we have a Data Protection Officer in place whom is the initial point of reference. Members attention was drawn to point 5 i) through to iii) which gave details on the FOI process.
- 7.4 Members were informed that the DPO was pleased to be able to advise that there have been no NWFRS data breaches reported as a result of inappropriate release of personal data in response to an FOI request.
- 7.5 **RESOLVED to:**
i) Members noted the contents of the report

8. DRAFT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 22/23

- 8.1 AM Jones presented the draft assessment to Members for approval of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's performance during the period of 2022/23. This is in relation to progress towards achieving its long-term Improvement and Well-Being objectives, medium-term Equality Objectives; and the compliance with applicable Welsh Language standards. Members were informed that the Performance Assessment 22/23 would be publicised on the Authority's website by the 30th of September.
- 8.2 AM Jones went through the assessment with Members and drew their attention to point 7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14 and 15.
- 8.3 Cllr Rob Triggs praised the work that had been carried out by Safe and Well Check teams in the local area after an incident in Tal-y-Bont. He wished to pass on his congratulations to everyone.
- 8.4 Cllr John Ifan Jones enquired what "some" Welsh Language skills actually meant, and what steps have been taken to improve upon this. His question was answered by Tracey Williams Head of Corporate Communications and Welsh Language.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED to:**
- i) Members approved the draft assessment of the Authority's performance in 2022/23 (subject to minor additions and corrections if required) for publication on the Authority's website by 30 September; and**
 - ii) note the Service's intention to publish a simple summary version of the key elements of the assessment report.**

9. PERFORMANCE MONITORING Q1 REPORT 23/24

- 9.1 AM Kay provided Members with an overview of the Performance Monitoring report.
- 9.2 AM Kay provided information on incident activity and brought paragraphs 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9 and 10 to Member attention.
- 9.3 Members were informed that 4,439 Safe and Well Checks had been carried out across North Wales during this quarter.
- 9.4 Members were updated that there had been zero deaths due to accidental fire in quarter 1.
- 9.5 Members were updated that there had been a decreased number of attendance of Wildfires

- 9.6 Members were informed that several campaigns had been running during quarter 1 which had been successful.
- 9.7 Chair Dylan Rees brought paragraph 11 to the Members attention with regards to pump availability and the target is to have 18 a day, and that has been met. Chair raised that it doesn't show all of the hard work and re deployment that goes in behind the scenes everyday to achieve this level of emergency cover.
- 9.8 Item number 12 Sickness Absence it was noted that this data is a new item. Something that members need to be aware of. Members were informed that Internal Audit are currently undertaking an audit of the Sickness Absence processes.
- 9.9 Members highlighted to what additional overtime expenditure had resulted from the sickness absence in terms of providing any cover that was required. ACFO McArthur stated that she didn't have those figures to hand but would look into it.
- 9.10 Cllr Rob Triggs wished to praise the fabulous work that has been carried out by Lee Parson with regards to the "Biker Down" project and asked if it would be possible to send thanks from the Fire Authority. CFO Docx stated that this would be possible.
- 9.0 **RESOLVED to:**
i) **Members noted the contents of the Report**

10 URGENT MATTERS

- 10.1 There were no urgent matters to raise.

Thanks, were given to Members for their attendance.

Meeting closed: 14:38 hrs

Report to	Executive Panel
Date	18 December 2023
Lead Officer	Dafydd Edwards, Authority Treasurer
Contact Officer	Helen MacArthur, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Subject	Budget Scrutiny Working Group



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members of the Executive Panel with an update on the current financial planning assessment to set a balanced budget for 2024/25, and to seek endorsement to confirm the indicative levy with constituent local authorities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) is required to provide indicative figures for the 2024/25 financial levy to constituent local authorities by 31 December 2023, and confirm the final figures by 16 February 2024. To achieve this, the Authority will consider the revenue budget for 2024/25 at its meeting on 22 January 2024. The budget planning process has been subject to scrutiny by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and the current planning assessment of £49.194m (£44.4m for 2023/24) has been confirmed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3 Members are asked to:
 - (i) Note the findings of the Budget Scrutiny Working Group, including the planning assumptions being used to develop the revenue budget for 2024/25;
 - (ii) Note the current financial planning assessment of a budget requirement of £49.194m for 2024/25;
 - (iii) Note the proposal to seek further work to identify opportunities for the further reductions in expenditure for the 2024/25 financial year and/or utilisation of reserves; and
 - (IV) endorse the communication of the draft financial levy to each constituent local authority.

BACKGROUND

- 4 Each year the Authority is required to set a balanced revenue budget which must be approved by the full Authority. The indicative financial levy must be communicated to constituent local authorities by the 31 December each year and the final levy confirmed by the 16 February before the commencement of the financial year. To achieve these timescales, the 2024/25 proposed revenue and capital budgets and the medium-term financial plan will be presented to the Authority at its meeting on 22 January 2024.
- 5 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) requires that organisations have financial plans which demonstrate how expenditure will be funded over the short and medium term. The Authority's financial sustainability is, therefore, underpinned by knowledge and understanding of the key cost drivers and evaluation of risks and uncertainties.
- 6 To support the development of the strategic vision and service delivery models, the Authority has undertaken an Emergency Cover Review (ECR) during 2023. As part of this work, an initial high-level financial assessment was undertaken during February 2023 which estimated the year on year budget increase at circa £6m (Appendix 1). This represents a 13.5% increase, 5% of which addresses the underlying deficit arising from the 2023/24 budget setting process. The actions taken during the budget setting processes for 2023/24 are not sustainable as they require the use of reserves on an ongoing basis.
- 7 As part of the ECR, the Authority approved a number of options for consultation including two options with structural changes that reduced expenditure on a recurring basis by up to £2.4m. Following the outcome of the consultation exercise, the Authority confirmed that Option 1 was the preferred option which required a budget uplift of £6m.
- 8 Although the final budget approved by Members will be based on the final outcome of the ECR, the budget setting process has assumed a service delivery model based on costs associated with Option 1, or a cost-equivalent variant thereof, being the final option.
- 9 The process has been overseen by the Budget Scrutiny Working Group (the Group) which was established to provide scrutiny of the budget setting process, including all areas of income and expenditure. With membership from each local authority, the Group has met on four occasions between October and November 2023, with a further feedback session to all Members as part of the Emergency Cover Review Working Group meeting on 4 December.

INFORMATION

- 10 The Group was established by the Authority with representation from each constituent local authority. The Group has met on four occasions and considered all areas of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's (the Service) expenditure. The meetings focused on direct pay expenditure, non-pay expenditure, capital financing, interest and leases.
- 11 The detailed budget planning work has been undertaken in accordance with the key planning assumptions, risks and uncertainties outlined in Appendix 1.
- 12 The initial planning assessment undertaken during February 2023 indicated that an increase of £6m to £50.4m would be required for the 2024/25 financial year, including addressing the deficit brought forward from 2023/24.
- 13 The initial work undertaken as part of detailed budget planning identified further unavoidable pressures, which have since been mitigated through the work of the Group. The final draft assessment is a budget requirement of £49.194m, representing a 10.8% increase in the local authority levy. A draft breakdown by each constituent local authority is set out within Appendix 2.
- 14 Work is ongoing to identify further savings to reduce the budget requirement or identify reserves which can be utilised to fund non-recurring expenditure.
- 15 The table below confirms reductions of £1.912m identified through the work of the Group. This includes the removal of posts including two senior roles and the planned direct entry scheme. Further reductions were achieved within the non-pay expenditure headings and revised capital financing assessments.

£'m	23/24	Feb-23	Oct-23	Dec-23	Reductions via Budget Scrutiny
Employees	31.826	35.312	35.729	35.209	-0.520
Non-Pay	13.567	16.055	16.321	15.054	-1.267
Income	-0.999	-0.944	-0.944	- 1.069	-0.125
Total	44.394	50.423	51.106	49.194	-1.912
% Increase		13.5%	15.1%	10.8%	

- 16 The employee costs are in excess of 70% of net expenditure and the draft assessment for 2024/25 is 35.2m. This includes £34.2m of direct payroll costs relating to 971 staff with the current planning assessment of a 4% in year pay awards. However, this remains a key area of uncertainty and risk with a cost pressure of £0.34m for each 1% increase. The planning assessment also assumes an additional net cost pressure of £0.4m in relation to employer contributions towards the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. The actual increase is expected to be in the region of £0.7m and although financial support from the Welsh Government is anticipated it is not yet confirmed.
- 17 The analysis of the direct payroll costs is provided below which confirms that £34.392m relate to employees working in service delivery roles. The budget planning includes provision to support the growth in the retained duty personnel to support operational response capacity and resilience.

Analysis of Direct Pay Costs	2024/25 £'m
Response Services	28.915
Protection and Prevention Services	2.779
Corporate Services	2.698
Staffing Budget Requirement	34.392

- 18 The draft budget assessment for non-pay is £15.054m including £2.8m for capital financing costs including interest. The remaining non-pay elements have been subject to scrutiny across all departments to reduce and contain expenditure. Significant inflationary pressures are being experienced in a range of expenditure headings including technical operations, ICT, fleet and facilities. Further work continues to be undertaken in this area to identify opportunities to contain costs and utilise reserves for non-recurring items.
- 19 The current planning assessment includes capital financing costs of £2.8m, made up of interest costs £0.9m and a £1.9m minimum revenue provision. Interest rates are anticipated to remain similar to current levels through most of 2024. The planning assessment for future loans is an interest rate of 5.25%, based on the advice of the Authority's treasury management advisors. Interest costs include the need to refinance loans reaching maturity in the next financial year, as previously reported via the Treasury Management update reports. The capital financing costs in relation to the training centre have been removed from the original assessment giving rise to a reduction of £1.1m against the initial planning assessment.

FURTHER WORK

- 20 The draft financial planning assessment will be subject to further review and refinement and updated in the final assessment presented to the Authority at its meeting on 22 January 2024. This includes identifying further opportunities for budget reductions and potential non-recurring expenditure that can be funded from useable reserves.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	This report links to the Authority's Improvement and Well-being Objectives. It reports on the financial viability of the Authority.
Budget	The initial planning assessment indicated a budget requirement of £50.4m. Following the detailed planning work, the current assessment is £49.194m.
Legal	The Authority has a legal duty to set a balanced budget based on realistic planning assumptions.
Staffing	Over 70% of expenditure relates to staff costs and therefore is a material factor when considering future financial stability. The risks identified by the Chief Fire Officer include ongoing pay negotiations as well as the need to recruit further retained duty staff and build corporate resilience.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	These issues will be factored into budget setting proposals.
Risks	The key risks and uncertainties to the 2024/25 budget have been outlined in Appendix 2.

Initial financial planning assessment 2024/25

£'m	2023/24	Deficit	Pay Award	FPS Provision	Inflation & Growth	Interest Rates	Training Centre	2024/25 Total
Pay	31.824	1.745	1.343	0.400				35.312
Non-Pay	10.384	0.200			0.741			11.325
Capital Financing and Interest	3.130					0.500	1.1	4.730
Income	-0.944							-0.944
Levy	44.394	1.945	1.343	0.400	0.741	0.500	1.100	50.423

Summary of planning assumptions and risks

Heading	Planning assumptions used in budget setting	Risks/Uncertainties
Employee costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staffing budgets have been formulated on the staffing models required to deliver Option 1. At the time of setting the budget for the 2023/24 financial year, the national pay awards for firefighters for the 2022/23 & 2023/24 financial years had not been finalised. The final budget for 2023/24 assumed 5% and 4% respectively but the actual pay award was settled at 7% and 5%. The increased costs associated with this have been built into the base budget and a planning assessment of 4% for national pay awards in 2024/25 has been made for all staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The nationally agreed pay awards for 2024/25 have not been agreed but for each percentage point above the 4% planning assessment the financial risk is circa £0.34m The budget planning assumes normal levels of activity. If spate conditions occur budget pressures will be experienced. The working assumption is that the General Fund would be utilised in the first instance. The valuation of the firefighters' pension scheme was undertaken during 2020 and the provisional results indicate a significant increase with a potential cost pressure of £0.7m. The current planning assessment anticipates that financial support will be received to partially mitigate this increase although this is not yet confirmed. A residual financial risk of £0.3m exists.

<p>Non-Pay</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The initial planning assessment has confirmed that the non-pay budgets will be formulated on existing service delivery models, updated for the outcome of the Emergency Cover Review. The demands on the non-pay budget are further exacerbated by the inflationary impact inherent within existing and future contracts and supply chain issues in a number of business-critical areas. These include the supply of firefighting kit and the sourcing of replacement parts for operational vehicles. • Unavoidable costs associated with industry specific health and safety matters have been included within the non-pay budget. These include costs associated with the management of contaminants for our operational firefighters following national work. • Budgets have been formulated using the knowledge and professional judgement of budget managers and underlying contractual obligations but through necessity include a large degree of estimation. Where costs pressures can be quantified these have been separately identified and included. • During 2023/24 the Welsh Government removed its financial support of £0.4m for the existing national emergency services communication network (Firelink). The full contract price of £1m is now funded directly from core funding. Due to the fixed nature of this contract these costs are unavoidable and the contract includes an annual inflationary increase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the Service continues to review non-pay costs and strives to manage cost pressures within the planned budget this remains an area of risk due to ongoing pressures within the supply chain arising from price rises and availability issues. This position is being carefully managed but due to significant volatility it is not possible to fully quantify the impact. • The cost of gas and electricity has been a known cost pressure since 2022/23 due to global cost pressures. The position appears to have stabilised and the budget for 2024/25 is predicated on best estimates at this time. However, volatility in the market continues and this remains a known uncertainty and risk. • Specific provision has not been made within the budget for carbon reduction but is included within anticipated non-pay costs. For example, the move away from diesel vehicles is included in future fleet costs.
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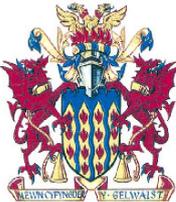
Heading	Planning assumptions used in budget setting	Risks/Uncertainties
Capital Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The capital financing requirement for 2024/25 includes the revenue charge for the minimum revenue provision for existing assets and an estimate of the interest charges arising from borrowing. These costs are influenced by historical capital expenditure, the need to borrow for the 2024/25 capital programme and the impact of interest rate increases when re-financing maturing loans. • The initial planning assessment will assume that all future borrowing will be at the prevailing PWLB rate at the time of budget setting. • The capital plan now excludes potential costs associated with a new training centre. At this time the business case has not been considered by the Authority and, therefore, it is assumed that capital costs will be incurred from 2025/2026 onwards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increase in interest rates is a key risk area given the economic uncertainty at this time. Financial modelling will be undertaken to assess the sensitivity of the Authority's financial position and performance to existing interest rates and reported as part of the budget setting. • The timing of any costs associated with a new training centre are unknown at this stage as the business case has not been considered by the Authority. Although it is not anticipated that any building works will commence during 2024/25 it may be necessary to make provision for costs associated with detailed planning applications should approval be given.
Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Income budgets have been reviewed and set in line with previous years. • Welsh Government grant income reduced significantly during 2023/24 due to the removal of the Firelink Grant (£0.4m) and incorporation of the Scape Grant (£1.08m) into the RSG paid to local authorities. • The draft budget assumes that remaining Welsh Government grant funding will be received at 2023/24 levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific risks have been identified over and above the grant income from the Welsh Government for which inflationary uplifts are not anticipated.

Appendix 3

Draft financial levy by local authority

Authority	2023/24 Contribution £	Population*	Apportionment %	Budget Requirement £	Increase £	Increase %
Anglesey County Council	4,402,621	69,842	10.00%	4,878,683	476,062	10.8%
Gwynedd County Council	7,913,586	125,539	18%	8,769,293	855,707	10.8%
Conwy County Borough Council	7,477,749	118,625	17%	8,286,328	808,579	10.8%
Denbighshire County Council	6,064,021	96,198	14%	6,719,732	655,711	10.8%
Flintshire County Council	9,936,251	157,626	22%	11,010,670	1,074,419	10.8%
Wrexham County Borough Council	8,599,427	136,419	19%	9,529,295	929,868	10.8%
Total	44,393,655	704,249	100%	49,194,000	4,800,345	10.8%

Population estimates based on 23/24 figures (to be finalised)

Report to	Executive Panel	
Date	18 December 2023	
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer	
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation	
Subject	Performance Monitoring: April – September 2023	

Purpose of Report

- 1 To provide information about incident activity during the first half (Q1 and Q2) of 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 first half of the 2023/24 financial year, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) attended 3186 emergency incidents. This is a decrease of 7.7% compared with the same period of the 2022/23 financial year (3453).
- 3 The number of accidental fires in the home (ADFs) attended during the reporting period slightly decreased to 160, compared to 162 during 2022/23. There were however, three accidental fatalities in dwelling fires in the first half of 2023/24. The three cases are explored further within this report.
- 4 There was also an increase in the number of serious injuries, from two to five compared to 2022/23. 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 13 in the number of wildfires that were attended by a combined total of 54 vehicles for over 476 hours.
- 6 There were 1,512 false alarms attended during the reporting period, an increase of 3.6% from the first half in the previous year. This was due to a 10.9% increase in attendances at fire alarms due to apparatus from 836 to 927. The Service received 773 calls to AFAs at commercial premises, of which 5 (6.5%) were attended and 768 (93.7%) were not attended in line with our policy.

- 7 The Authority has an embedded policy that determines its attendance to automatic fire alarms. NWFRS 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, 300 hospital AFA calls were received, of which 134 (44.7%) were attended and 166 (55.3%) were not attended.
- 9 There was an increase in the number of fires attended at HMP Berwyn from 8 during the first half of 2022/23, to 13 during the first half of this year.
- 10 Pump availability in accordance with the 18 pump availability target was met at 100% during the reporting period.

Recommendation

- 11 It is recommended that:
 - i. Members note the content of the performance monitoring report.

Information

- 12 **All Incidents**

There was a decrease in the total number of incidents attended, with 7.7% fewer incidents attended during the first half of the financial year. 3,186 incidents were attended compared with 3,453 during the same period of the previous year.
- 13 **Fires**

Fires attended during the reporting period decreased 22.0% to 1,011 compared with 1,296 during the same period of 2022/23.
- 14 **Grassland, Woodland and Crop Fires**

Grassland, woodland and crop fires decreased 52.7% (412 to 195) during the same period last year. Secondary accidental grassland, woodland and crop fires decreased (272 to 130), with 'grassland, pasture, grazing etc.' (84 to 34), and 'heathland or moorland' (100 to 44) being the main contributors. Decreases were also recorded in 'hedge' (26 to 18), and 'tree scrub (includes single trees not in garden' (25 to 9), although there was an increase in 'Railway trackside vegetation' (Zero to four).
- 15 **Wildfires**

During the reporting period, there was a decrease in attendance at wildfires (34 to 13) 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.

16 **Primary Fires**

Primary fires decreased 5.0% (462 to 439) compared with the same period of 2022/23, and were 4.8% below the three-year average of 461. Accidental primary fires decreased 2.4% (372 to 363), and were 2.9% below the three-year average of 374. The number of deliberate primary fires decreased (90 to 76) compared to the previous financial year, and were 15.6% below the three-year average of 87.

17 **Secondary Fires**

Secondary fires, which were 14.2% below the three-year average of 647, decreased 31.3% (808 to 555), primarily due to a 35.8% decrease in accidental secondary fires (525 to 337). Decreases were recorded in secondary accidental 'grassland, woodland and crops' fires (272 to 130) and 'other outdoors (including land)' (158 to 116).

Deliberate secondary fires decreased 23.0 % (283 to 218), primarily due to a 52.9% reduction in 'grassland, woodland and crops' (119 to 56). However an increase in 'Outdoor structures' fires (33 to 41) was recorded.

18 **Chimney Fires**

Chimney fires decreased 34.6% compared with the same period of 2022/23 (26 to 17). This is 54.1% below the three-year average of 37.

19 **Accidental Dwelling Fires (ADFs)**

The Service attended 1.2% fewer ADFs (162 to 160) during the first half of 2022/23. This is a result of a decrease in ADFs within 'House – single occupancy' (94 to 78). However there was been a rise in 'Bungalow – single occupancy' (17 to 29), ADFs remain 14.0% below the three-year average of 186. ADFs in 'purpose built flat/maisonette – multiple occupancy' also decreased (37 to 33).

The main contributors to causing ADFs were 'cooking – other cooking', (40 to 32), 'combustible articles too close to heat source (or fire)' (33 to 25); 'fault in equipment or appliance (14 to 26), and 'careless handling – due to careless disposal' (remained at 14). The main source of ignition was 'cooking appliance' which decreased (85 to 78) compared with the same period of 2022/23.

20 **Fatalities/Casualties in ADFs**

There were three fatalities in ADFs during first half of 2023/24, all of which occurred in Q2, compared to zero over the same period of 2022/23. The number of casualties in ADFs decreased from 47 to 41, with 5 people sustaining serious injuries compared to 2 during 2022/23.

21 **Fatalities overview**

Case 1: Local Authority Area – Flintshire

The deceased was a 72-year-old man who lived alone. The property involved was a low rise self-contained flat.

The time of call was 16:10 and 1st appliance was in attendance at 16:20. Fire detection was fully hard wired, and the system was monitored.

The incident involved a smouldering fire caused by discarded cigarettes in two separate locations.

Following the incident, a level 4 Hot spotting campaign was carried out on 18/07/2023:

- 28 SAWCs completed
- 105 properties leafleted
- 1 hard of hearing alarm fitted

Case 2: Local Authority Area - Gwynedd

The deceased was an 87-year-old woman who lived alone. The property involved was a detached bungalow. NWFRS had no previous engagement occupier. Smoke alarms were fitted and linked to Galw Gofal (monitoring company) who called NWFRS.

The time of call was 14:24 and the first appliance was in attendance at 14:43. The incident involved an incense burner catching alight to the casualties clothing.

Following the incident, a level 4 Hot spotting campaign was carried out 06/09/2023:

- 66 SAWCs completed
- 27 Smoke alarms fitted
- 1 CO detector fitted
- 1 Hoarder identified

Case 3: Local Authority Area – Conwy

The deceased was an 80-year-old man who lived alone. The property involved was a semi-detached residence.

The time of call was 23:04 and 1st appliance was in attendance at 23:14. Smoke alarms were fitted and linked to Galw Gofal (monitoring company) who called NWFRS.

The incident involved a fully developed fire in the kitchen.

Following the incident, a level 4 Hot spotting campaign was carried out on 29/09/23:

- 110 SAWCs completed
- 65 Smoke alarms fitted
- 27 CO detectors fitted
- 7 other interventions fitted

22 **Smoke Detectors – ADFs**

Smoke/heat detectors were present at the majority of accidental fires in dwellings during the reporting period (85.6%). ADFs where a smoke/heat detector was fitted, operated and raised the alarm, increased from 81 to 85.

23 Where a smoke/heat detector was fitted - operated but did not raise the alarm, incidents reduced from 21 to 20.

24 ADF's where no detector was fitted increased from 19 to 23, and where a detector was fitted and did not operate, the number of incidents decreased to 19 from 32.

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

Deliberate primary fires in non-residential buildings increased from 29 to 31 with 13 occurring at HMP Berwyn.

26 **False Alarms**

The upward trend in false alarms continued with the Service attending 1512 false alarms – 3.6% more than in the same period of 2022/23 (1459), and 13.4% more than the three-year average of 1,333. Those originating from AFA systems increased 10.9% (836 to 927) and represented 61.3% of false alarm attendances.

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

Non-Residential AFAs increased 11.8% (152 to 170). The main causes of activation in non-residential AFAs were 'faulty' (68 to 89); 'dust' (9 to 15), and 'accidentally/carelessly set off' (25 to 13).

28 **Other-Residential AFAs**

There was a 23.2% decrease in 'other-residential' AFAs (69 to 53), with 'nurses'/doctors' accommodation' showing a significant decrease (17 to 8). 'Residential home' however, increased (6 to 16).

Although the main cause of activation in 'other-residential' was 'faulty', which had a slight increase (15 to 16), 'cooking/burnt toast' saw a significant reduction compared with the same period last year, dropping (20 to 14).

'Dust' and 'accidentally/carelessly set off' also reported reductions from (seven to four), and (eight to two) respectively.

29 **Dwelling AFAs**

AFAs in dwellings continued on an upward trend, increasing by 14.3% (615 to 703), with 'purpose built flat/maisonette – multiple occupancy' being the lead contributor to the total number of incidents, rising (198 to 234), followed by 'bungalow – single occupancy' which rose (179 to 231).

'House – single occupancy' increased (171 to 180), and 'Converted flat/maisonette – multiple occupancy' also saw an increase (23 to 25). Decreases were recorded however in 'self-contained sheltered housing', (39 to 26).

Of the 703 dwelling AFAs, 'cooking/burnt toast' was the main cause of activation, increasing (313 to 411). Slight increases were also recorded in 'faulty' (137 to 145), and 'dust' (17 to 24), and 'smoking' (12 to 17) 'Accidentally/carelessly set off' and 'steam' saw a significant reductions (34 to 23 & 18 to 15) respectively.

30 **Good Intent False Alarms**

Good intent false alarms decreased by 5.9% (594 to 559), due to decreases in across various categories with Grassland, woodland and crops seeing the largest decrease (77 to 47). 'Other outdoors (including land) also reduced (150 to 126), and 'false alarm – property not found' (57 to 38). However, there was an increase in 'dwelling' (118 to 236) and 'outdoor equipment and machinery' (9 to 14).

'Dwelling' false alarms made with good intent increased 25.5% (118 to 236) this is as a result of increases in 'house – single occupancy' (74 to 98). As well as 'purpose built flat/maisonette - multiple occupancy' (70 to 85).

'Other outdoors (including land)' good intent false alarms decreased 16.0% (150 to 126) this is as a result of decreases in 'loose refuse (including in garden)' (139 to 117).

'Grassland, woodland and crops' false alarms made with good intent decreased 39.0% (77 to 47) due to decreases in 'grassland, pasture, grazing etc' (22 to 11), and 'healthland or moorland' from (eight to two).

Good intent false alarms for 'outdoor equipment and machinery' increased 55.6% (9 to 14), with 'other outdoor equipment/machinery' increasing (three to seven).

31 **Malicious False Alarms**

The number of malicious false alarms decreased from 29 to 26 compared to the same period last year.

- 32 **Special Service Calls**
Special service calls decreased by 5.0% from 698 to 663 during the same period of the previous financial year, and were 46.0% above the three-year average of 454. 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.
- 33 **Road Traffic Collisions (RTC) Incidents**
The Service attended 18.6% more RTCs (118 to 140), where 33 (23.6%) involved the extrication or release of persons. Where the Service was called upon to make a vehicle or scene safe, attendance increased 31.7% (83 to 63).
Although the Service attended more RTCs, the percentage of RTCs which involved the release or extrication of persons decreased (34.7% to 23.6%), which is below the three-year average of 34.1%.
- 34 **SSC 'Other than RTC'**
SSC 'Other than RTC' decreased 9.8% (580 to 523). The main contributor to the decrease was 'other rescue/release of persons' which decreased 45.1% (71 to 39).

Decreases were also recorded in 'effecting entry/exit' (58 to 52); 'no action (not false alarm)' (26 to 15), and 'lift release' (53 to 22). There were increases however in 'animal assistance incidents', which saw a 80.0% increase (25 to 45), as well as in 'Assist other agencies' (195 to 214) and 'flooding', (28 to 35).
- 35 **Safe and Well Checks (SAWCs)**
The Service completed 9,358 SAWCs, of which 2868 (30.6%) were high priority SAWCs. Of the high priority SAWCs completed, 1547 (53.9%) were referrals from a partner agency.
- 36 **Station Performance**
Planned 18 pump availability was achieved on all 183 days (100%) of the first half of 2023/24.
- 37 **Sickness Absence**
A total of 297 cases of sickness absence were reported during the first half of 2023/24. This equates to 5.06% sickness absence 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 first half

April – September 2023

Figures are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

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1 All Incidents

1.1 During the first half of the 2023/24 financial year, the Service attended 3,186 emergency incidents and false alarms, a 7.7% decrease on the same period in the previous year (3,453).



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	1,635	1,551			3,186	↓	2,934	↑ 8.6%
	2022-23	1,575	1,878			3453	7.7%		
Total fires	2023-24	600	411			1011	↓	1,146	↓ 11.8%
	2022-23	577	719			1296	22.0%		
Total special service incidents	2023-24	332	331			663	↓	454	↑ 46.0%
	2022-23	327	371			698	5.0%		
Total false alarms	2023-24	703	809			1,512	↑	1,334	↑ 13.3%
	2022-23	671	788			1,459	3.6%		

*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 1,011 fires were attended; a 22.0% decrease from 1,296 in 2022/23.

2.2 Primary fires – There was a 5.0% decrease in primary fires (462 to 439) compared with the same period in the previous financial year, which was 5.0% below the three-year average of 461.

2.3 Secondary fires – There was a 31.3% decrease in secondary fires (808 to 555), which was 14.2% below the three-year average of 647.

2.4 Chimney fires – The number of chimney fires decreased (26 to 17) during the same period in the previous financial year, which was 54.1% below the three-year average of 37.



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	231	208			439	↓ 5.0%	461	↓ 5.0%
	2022-23	226	236			462			
Secondary fires	2023-24	356	199			555	↓ 31.3%	647	↓ 14.2%
	2022-23	332	476			808			
Chimney fires	2023-24	13	4			17	↓ 34.6%	37	↓ 54.1%
	2022-23	19	7			26			

*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 previous quarter

There has been a reduction in relation to primary fires and accidental incidents attended which remains below the three-year average figure. Secondary accidental fires remain below the three-year average. A result of:

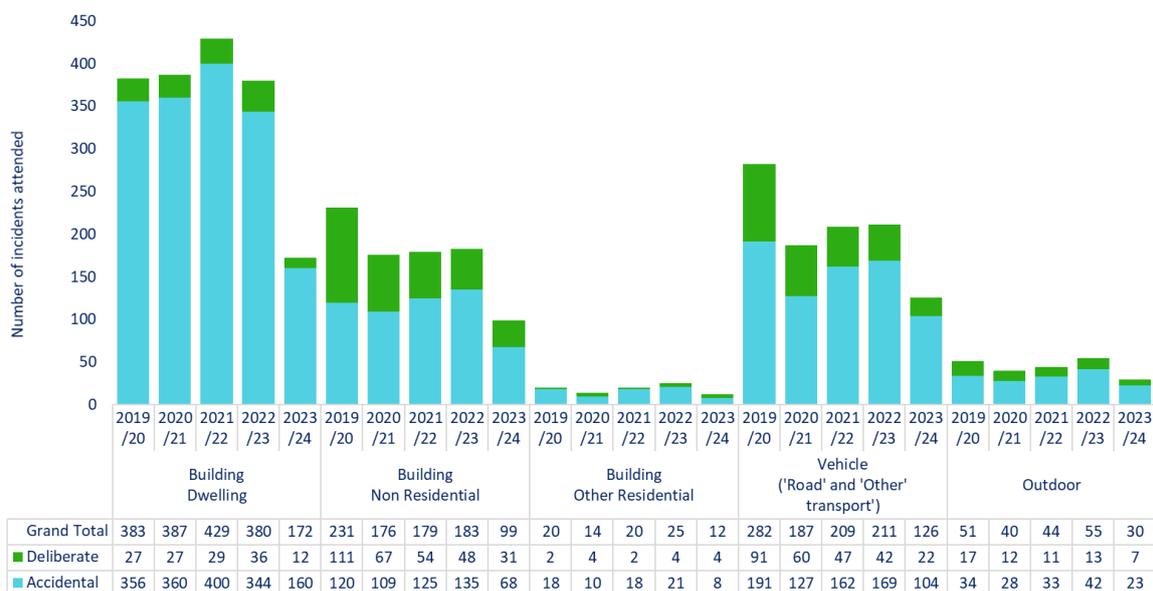
- 4,919 SAWCs being delivered across North Wales during Q2, the current overall figure is 9,358 which is above the annual target.
- Partnership managers continuing to foster relationships with external agencies to encourage high quality referrals such as student kitchen talks within Bangor university, and the freshers fair whereby over 100 students completed fire safety quizzes. NWFRS enhanced its collaboration with St. Johns ambulance, who are currently working directly with the NHS transporting patients to and from hospital.
- Partnership managers conducting training for 57 managers within the Domiciliary care sector.
- The community teams attending various housing associations' collaborative events across the summer months.
- Fire safety teams attending fire station open days providing fire safety advice to local communities.
- Fire Safety staff attending numerous national and regional agriculture shows engaging with local communities providing fire safety advice.
- Launching the reviewed hot spotting process following house fires.
- Fire safety teams now undertaking morning meetings three times a week to discuss current incidents and to assign post incident activity.
- A weekend of multiagency (NRW, NWP, DCC & NWFRS) activity taking place at targeted Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) sites which resulted in significant interaction with the public.
- Campaign Steering Group (CSG) continuing to work with Corporate Communications to proactively promote safety and Wildfire messaging across all media platforms.

- Deliberate fire setting intervention schemes continuing to be facilitated in-house and by DangerPoint; 3 FACE (Fire Awareness Child Education) delivered by the Arson Reduction and Team, 15 Firesafe delivered by DangerPoint and one adult intervention.
- Educational and school visits continuing with 35 schools visited with 3,786 young people provided with fire safety advice.
- Phoenix delivering four courses at fire stations with 42 participants. Two courses were delivered at Llanfairfechan, one at Mold and one at Chirk.

3 Primary Fires, by Property Type and Motive

3.1 During the first half of 2023/24, 31 primary fires were started deliberately, compared with 29 during 2022/23.

3.2 There were 13 deliberate fires at HMP Berwyn, compared with eight over the same period of the previous financial year. Of these fires we attended, NWFRS extinguished one, the remaining 12 were extinguished prior to our arrival by the prison staff.

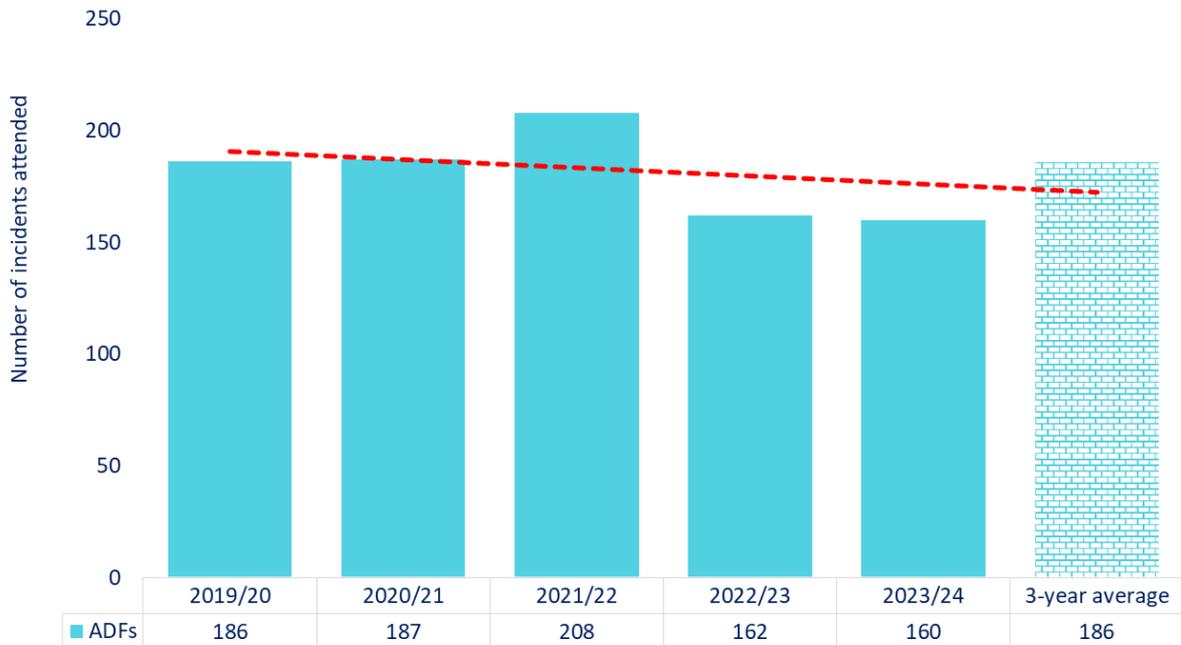


Category	Year	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Year-to-Date (YTD)	% change YTD	Average of 3 previous years	% change YTD / Average of 3 previous years
All deliberate primary fires	2023-24	40	36			76	↓ 15.6%	87	↓ 12.6%
	2022-23	41	49			90			
All accidental primary fires	2023-24	195	168			363	↓ 2.4%	374	↓ 2.9%
	2022-23	185	187			372			

*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 160 accidental dwelling fires during the reporting period; 2 (1.2%) less than the same period of the previous year (162). ADFs this half of the year remained 14.0% below the three-year average of 186.



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	69			160	↓ 1.2%	186	↓ 14.0%
	2022-23	81	81			162			
*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 quarter:

- Data sharing agreement has been signed (Over 65 data) with NHS digital to allow NWFRS access to addresses of persons over 65 which will assist in targeting prevention activities delivered by operational crews.
- 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.
- Ongoing work with regional hoarding groups to identify people at risk.
- Local and National (Wales & NFCC) campaigns have been supported in line with our own Campaign Steering Group (CSG) calendar.
- Proactive hot spotting campaigns following significant incidents produced SAWC referrals, and community reassurance following incidents.

5 Fatalities and Casualties from Accidental Fires in Dwellings

5.1 There were three ADF fatalities during the first half of the 2023/24 year, compared to zero during the same period of the previous year. There were five serious, and 13 slight injuries, compared with two and 19 respectively. The number of precautionary checks decreased (12 to 7), and the number of people requiring first aid at the scene also decreased (14 to 13).

Severity of Injury	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Precautionary Check	9	18	22	12	7
First Aid	22	11	22	14	13
Injuries - Slight	12	12	19	19	13
Injuries - Serious	3	0	3	2	5
Fatality	1	3	3	0	3
Total	47	44	69	47	41

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	28	13			41	↓ 12.8%	53	↓ 22.6%
	2022-23	10	37			47			
Deaths from accidental fires in dwellings	2023-24	0	3			0	↑ 300%	2	↑ 33%
	2022-23	0	0			0			

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 23 of the ADFs, no detector was fitted.
- 6.2 Of the 160 ADFs, 145 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			85	↑ 4.9%	88	↓ 3.4%
	2022-23	36	45			81			
Smoke detector fitted which operated but didn't raise the alarm	2023-24	16	4			20	↓ 4.9%	31	↓ 11.4%
	2022-23	17	4			21			
Smoke detector didn't operate	2023-24	17	15			32	↓ 22.0%	42	↓ 23.8%
	2022-23	22	19			41			
Smoke detector not fitted	2023-24	10	13			23	↑ 21.1%	24	↓ 4.2%
	2022-23	6	13			19			

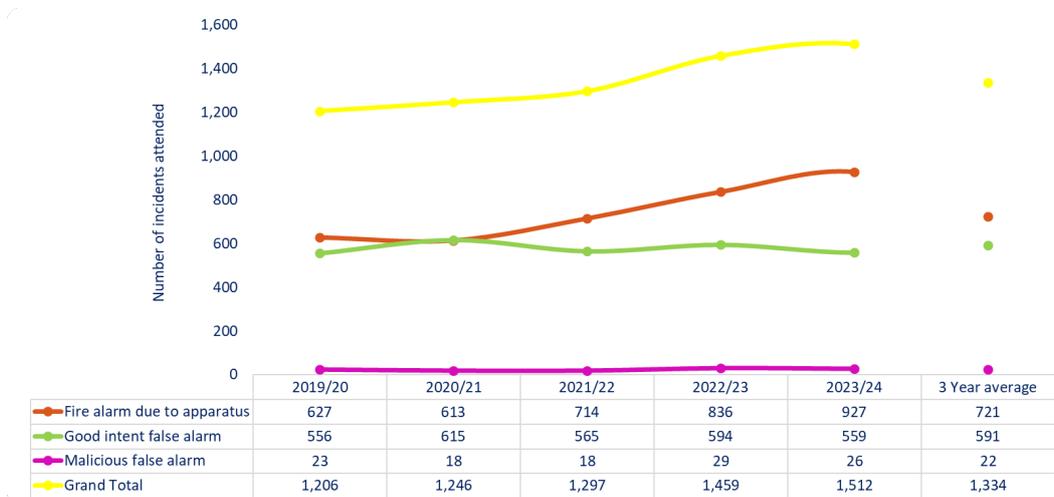
*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

Actions taken to support communities by increasing smoke alarm ownership and safety education during the previous quarter:

- 4,919 SAWCs have been delivered across North Wales during Q2, and 9,358 in the first half. This is projected to exceed the annual target of 17,500.
- Social media is continually utilised by the Comms Department to promote smoke detector ownership; Continue to promote regular testing of smoke alarms using all media platforms.
- Renewal of and promotion of the hot spotting activity ensures that occupiers receive home fire safety advice following every domestic AFA and ADF.
- Continue to work with partners to identify the most vulnerable people in our communities and provide them with suitable advice and interventions.
- Educationalists continue to promote smoke alarm ownership and testing as part of the delivery across North Wales schools.

7 False Alarms

7.1 In the first half of the year false alarms increased by 3.6% (1,459 to 1,512). There was a 10.9% increase in AFAs (836 to 927). False alarms made with good intent decreased by 5.9% (594 to 559).



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	810			1,512	↑ 3.6%	1,334	↑ 13.3%
	2022-23	671	788			1,459			
AFA	2023-24	407	520			927	↑ 10.9%	721	↑ 28.6%
	2022-23	416	420			836			
False alarms made with good intent	2023-24	281	278			559	↓ 5.9%	591	↓ 5.4%
	2022-23	241	353			594			
Malicious	2023-24	14	12			26	↓ 10.3%	22	↑ 18.2%

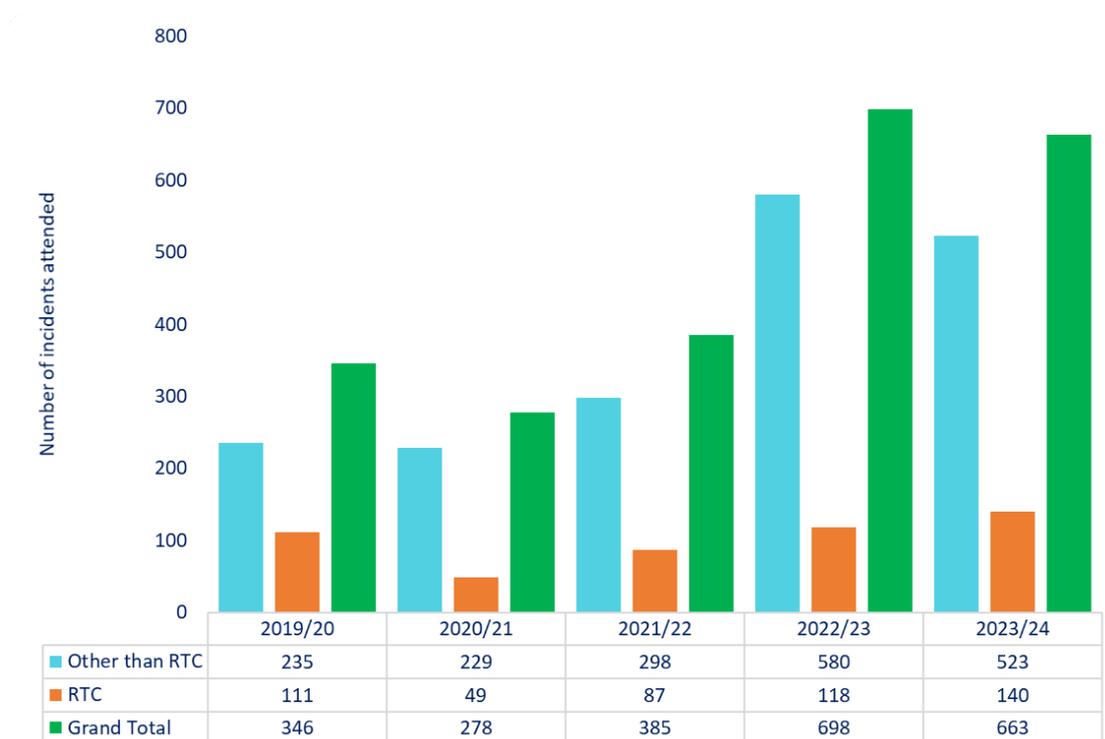
*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

Actions taken to reduce Hospital AFAs during the previous quarter:

- The Protection Department are currently conducting a review into all AFAs at Hospitals. These findings, once produced will be shared with the NHS.

8 Special Service Calls

8.1 Special service calls (SSCs) decreased 5.0% (698 to 663), compared with the same half of the previous year. Road traffic collisions increased 18.6% (118 to 140), whilst 'other than RTC' incidents decreased 9.8%, (580 to 523). 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			663	↓ 5.0%	454	↑ 46.0%
	2022-23	327	371			698			
Road traffic collisions (RTC)	2023-24	77	63			140	↑ 18.6%	85	↑ 64.7%
	2022-23	53	65			118			
Other than RTC	2023-24	255	268			523	↓ 9.8%	369	↑ 34.4%
	2022-23	274	306			580			

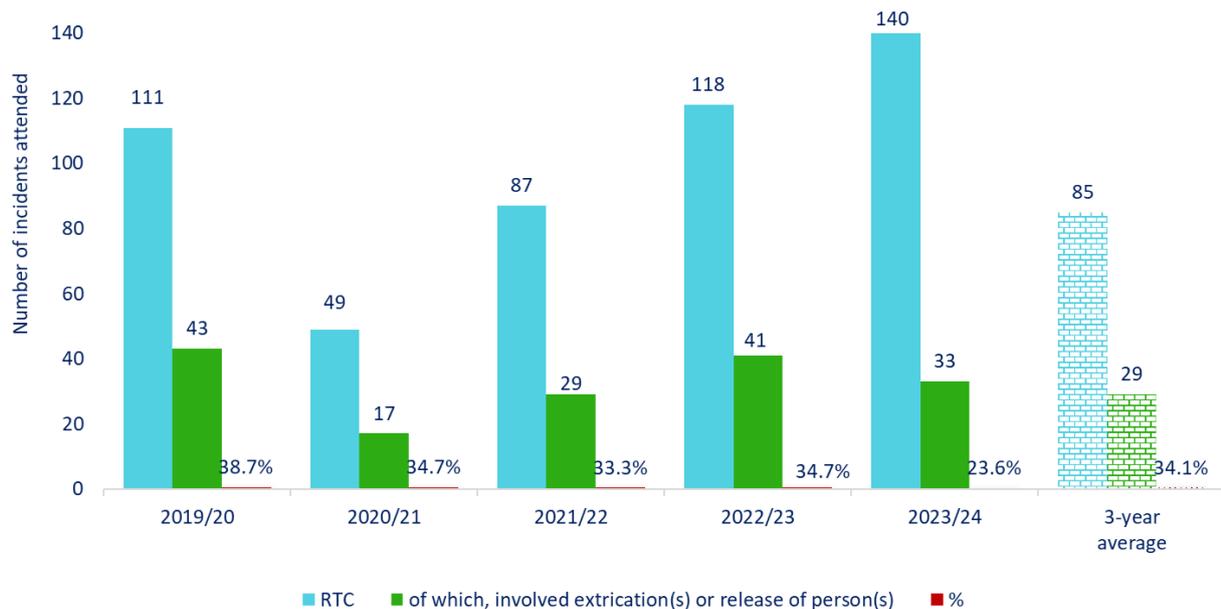
*The final two columns show: the average of the three previous financial years (based on the equivalent reporting period); the percentage change based on the difference between the current financial year and the three-year average.

Actions taken to reduce Special Service Calls during the previous quarter:

- All Gaining Entry incidents are reviewed in the three weekly Prevention meetings to determine if prevention activity has been undertaken, with appropriate follow up visits being actioned where applicable.

9 Traffic Collisions and Extrications/Release

9.1 Of the 140 road traffic collisions attended in the first half, 33 (23.6%) involved the Service using equipment to extricate at least one casualty from the vehicle. Whilst 79 incidents resulted in injuries, the majority of casualties sustained slight injuries.



140	RTC incidents attended
79	incidents where people sustained injury
33	incidents involved extrication / release

Severity of Injury *	Number of people
Precautionary check	21
First Aid	30
Injuries - Slight	57
Injuries - Serious	29
Fatalities	8
*RTC injuries - where available are recorded in the IRS in the same categorisation as fire injuries	

Actions taken to reduce RTCs during the previous quarter:

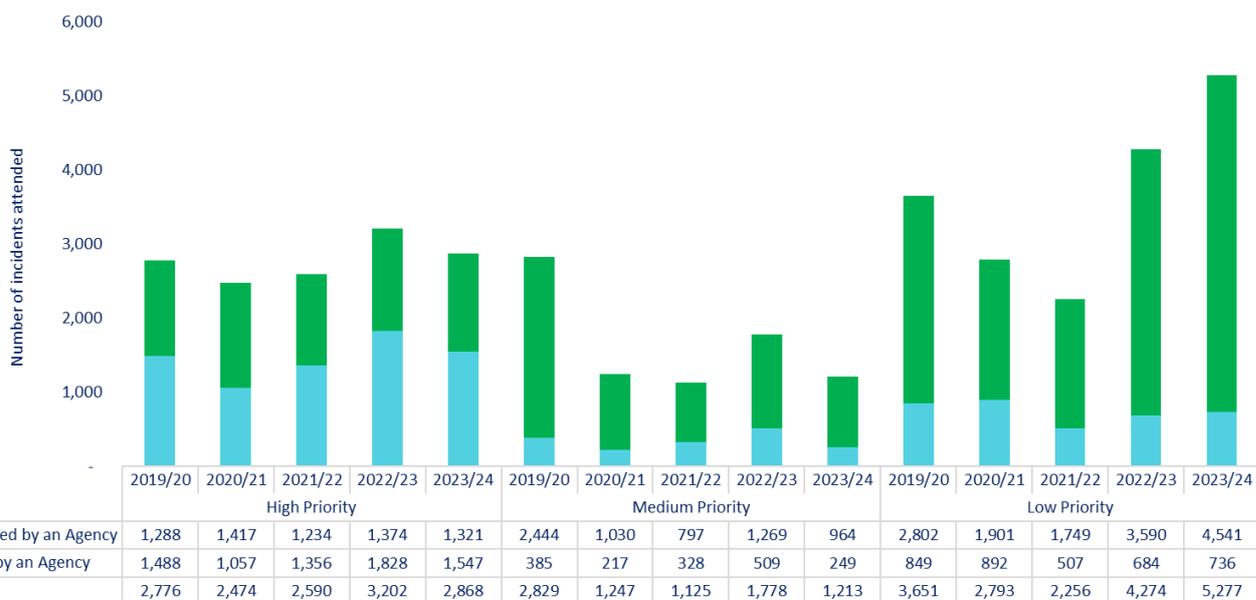
- Continue to deliver the Road Safety educational packages.
- Olivia's story was delivered to 80 students.
- Three sessions of Biker down was delivered to 67 attendees.
- 30:20 options, two sessions delivered in conjunction with NWP.
- FRS staff continue to attend local and regional road safety groups.

10 Monitoring against Improvement and Well-being Objective One

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

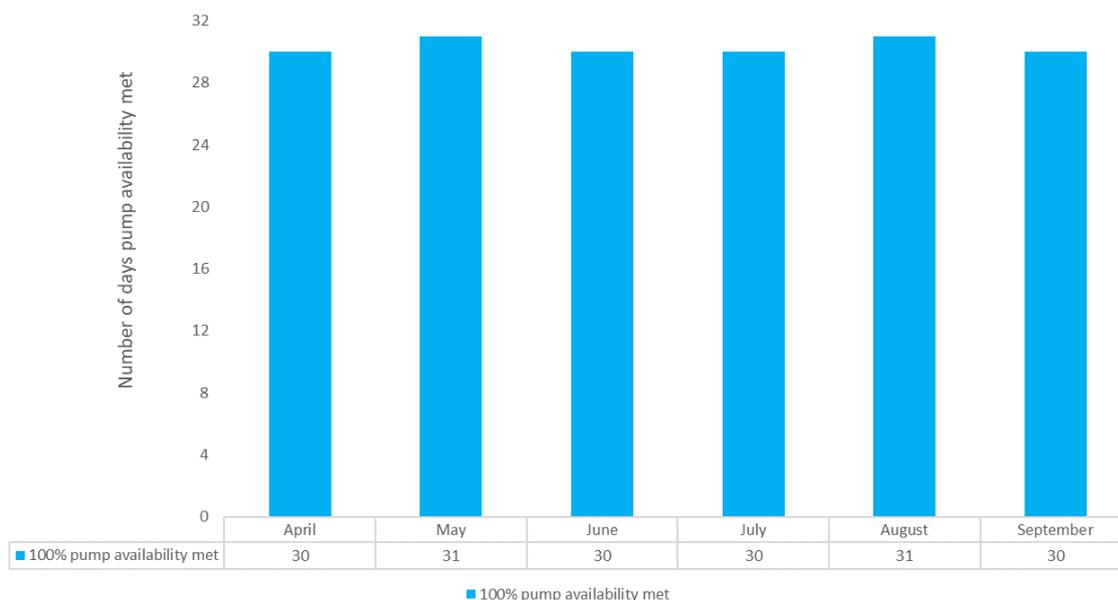
10.1 Safe and Well Checks

The Service completed 9,358 Safe and Well Checks during the first half, of which 2,532 (27.1%) 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%			30.5%	↓ 13.4%	33.9%	↓ 10.0%
	2022-23	35.2%	30.2%			35.2%			

*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 previous quarter:

- Reduction in high priority SAWC in comparrison to 2022/23 corresponds to a reduction in Home Fire Safety Support Worker Staff (2.5 post reduccution).
- Social media is continually utilised by Corporate Communications to promote smoke detector ownership. NWFRS continue to promote regular testing of smoke alarms using all media platforms.
- Renewal, and promotion of the hot spotting activity ensures that occupiers receive home fire safety advice following every domestic AFA and ADF.
- Continue to work with partners to identify the most vulnerable people in our communities and provide them with suitable advice and interventions.
- Educationalists continue to promote smoke alarm ownership and testing as part of the delivery across North Wales schools.

11 Planned 18 Pump Availability

11.1 NWFRS has 44 fire stations with 54 response pumps, as eight stations have two pumps and Wrexham has three. Pre-planning takes place each day to deploy resources to ensure 18 are made available between 06:00 and 18:00. Short notice changes can sometimes result in a reduction that cannot be immediately rectified.

11.2 During the first half of the 2023/24 financial year, the threshold of 18 pumps was all 183 days. As this is the first year that the threshold has been lowered to 18 pumps, no comparable data is available.

12 Sickness Absences

- 12.1 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.
- 12.2 The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported for 2022, the sickness absence rates were 3.6% for public sector workers. This is lower than what NWFRS have reported for Q1 and Q2 (5.06%) however there are 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.
- 12.3 As stated in Q1, 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 such as the Attendance Management Policy, Occupational Health, Physiotherapy, Employee Assistance Programme (new provider Vivup with effect from 1st October 2023), and the Firefighters Charity programmes for example.
- 12.4 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 support networks including Blue Lights Champions, Colleague Supporters, Critical Incident De-briefers, and various Staff Networks.
- 12.5 During the first half of the 2023/24 financial year, a total of 916 individuals were employed by NWFRS. Absences due to sickness during first half of the 2023/24 financial year equates to a total of 5.06% (5.03% for Q1 and 5.09 for Q2).
- 12.6 Please note that throughout the report, the number of cases in the year to date (YTD) will not be a sum of Q1 and Q2 and some individuals' absences will span across both quarters.

Sickness Absences table

	Q1 Cases	Q1 Lost time %	Q2 Cases	Q2 Lost time %	YTD Cases	YTD Lost Time %
Long Term Sickness	64	4.41%	62	4.08%	87	4.25%
Short Term Sickness	89	0.62%	128	1.01%	210	0.8%
Total	153	5.02%	190	5.09%	297	5.06%

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> <ol 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	Executive Panel	
Date	18 December 2023	
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer	
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Corporate Planning	
Subject	Strategic Risk Management	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide members with a mid-year update on the content of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) strategic risk register in accordance with the Strategic Risk Management Policy.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2. Departmental plans for 2023/24 have been reviewed for Q1 and Q2 by heads of department including risks associated to the delivery of their objectives after mitigation. These risks have been scored 1-25, categorised as Very High, High, Medium and Low and collated into a combined list of 74 departmental risks.
3. The majority of risks have remained the same, however, some risks have either increased or decreased within departments during these reviews.
4. Following these reviews, no new Very High or High Risks have been identified and no existing Very High or High risk have been reduced within the strategic risks. Therefore, the Strategic Risk Register remains the same.
5. To collate the Strategic Risk Register, the 74 departmental risks have been grouped into nine themes in Fig1. which mirror the departmental score to identify the cumulative risk to the organisation. The areas of highest risk to the organisation being cyber-attack, financial challenges, impact of climate change, the recruitment and retention of sufficient staff to maintain an effective and efficient response and any disruption to the IT systems in use by all departments.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. It is recommended that:
 - i. Members note the identified strategic risks that are facing the Authority following mid-year review.

BACKGROUND

7. The Authority's adopted Strategic Risk Management Policy defines strategic risk as "an event that, should it occur, would impact on the achievement of the Authority's planned outcomes and/or the delivery of its core functions".
8. The Authority's Strategic Risk Register lists known risks that could potentially prevent the Authority from achieving its planned outcomes and/or delivering its core functions. Register entries are ascribed risk scores that are regularly re-evaluated by officers to reflect the current state and the predicted effect of planned countermeasures.
9. Under this policy, the Executive Panel receives a summary report on strategic risks at least twice a year. Between times, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority are able to view the full detail of the register with officers.
10. The Strategic Risk Register records both current risk levels and future risk levels (based on an assumption that planned countermeasures will have had the desired effect).
11. Risk levels are based on an evaluation of the likelihood that something might happen and the consequences if it did. Descriptions are provided for information at Appendix 2.

INFORMATION

12. Officers continue to review and update the risk register, adding, removing and re-scoring risks as appropriate. As a minimum this is undertaken during the quarterly updates to departmental plans.
13. A summary of the current register entries is provided at Appendix 1.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	Maintaining the register and taking action to manage risk increases the likelihood that the Authority's well-being objectives will be achieved.
Budget	Maintaining the register helps prioritise spending decisions that would reduce risk levels.
Legal	Maintaining the register helps to ensure the Authority's compliance with laws that define its functions and how it operates.
Staffing	No specific implications identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	No specific implications identified.
Risks	An accidental release of the register could expose the Authority to harm.

Appendix 1

Strategic Risk Register

1. A total of 74 risks are included in Departmental Plans for 2023/24 which are collated into nine themes which form the basis for identifying their overarching risk to the organisation:

Risks from Departmental Plans for 2023/24 grouped into Strategic Themes

Strategic Risk Ref	Risk	Very High 20-25	High 12-16	Medium High 8-10	Medium Low 4-6	Low 1-3	Total from dept. plans
1	Cyber Attack	1	3				4
2	Financial		4	12	1		17
3	Climate		1				1
4	Legal			6	1		7
5	Reputational			3	1		4
6	Response			2	6		8
7	Staffing resource		8	11	5		24
8	Supply Chain			2			2
9	IT Systems		1	2	4		7
Totals		1	17	38	18		74

2. Details of the Very High and High Risks and their countermeasures are as follows:
 - i. Only one overarching risk scores as Very High, this being around cyber security. With proactive work continuing to reduce the likelihood. This could reduce to High when Cyber Essential accreditation is achieved.

Very High Risk	Countermeasures
Cyber attack on Information, Communication and Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continual monitoring of global threats and review of cyber security defences • Progress towards achieving CE (Cyber Essential) and CE+ (Cyber Essentials Plus) accreditation • Endeavor to attract personnel with the requisite skillset to support compliance with best practice • Conduct preventative maintenance and review resilient technologies

The 17 High level risks identified by Departments in relation to delivering their objectives are grouped within the four Strategic Risk themes below and are likely to remain at High, despite the below countermeasures.

Strategic Risk	Countermeasures
Impact of climate change, including demand on resources and environmental challenges with estate and vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance structure in place to monitor and report • Environment and Sustainability Strategy in place
Financial challenges arising from insufficient funds to deliver core services or to maintain risk-critical systems. This includes risks linked to Pension changes following recent rulings and the impact of changes following the revoking of EU law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget already allocated in the Capital programme with all variations to be approved by the SPOC • All Wales technical lead for Pensions to be appointed to support the Senior Pensions Officer to process changes arising from the pensions legislation changes with audit process in place • Continue collaboration of partnership work with NWFRA • Continue dialogue with Welsh Government and Local Authorities particularly around grant funding. • Ensure Business Continuity Plans are in place and regularly reviewed. • Monitor changes to employment law that could impact on increased budget pressure following the revoking of EU law
Recruitment and retention of sufficient staff to maintain service delivery with specific challenges around maintaining emergency response cover in rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement improved, effective and efficient response standards through the Emergency Response Review Project. • Proactively recruit on rural stations with continuous efforts to recruit the right staff in the right place to provide cover at the right time • Prioritisation of workloads and upskilling/training of staff • Mentoring and coaching staff where possible to enhance resilience • Work to reduce single points of success and knowledge silos including continuing to recruit against vacancies. • Review lessons learned from planning for industrial action in 2022/23 • Ensure Business Continuity Plans are in place and regularly reviewed covering loss of staff in all departments • Monitor changes to employment law that could impact on increased budget pressure following the revoking of EU law

Disruption or loss of IT systems bespoke to departments and/or the wider service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work to ensure there are replacement contracts with suitable suppliers to maintain systems and migrate to alternatives• Ensure all relevant staff are suitably and sufficiently trained• Ensure Business Continuity Plans are in place and regularly reviewed.
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Risk analysis

LIKELIHOOD	5 Almost certain	5	10	15	20	25
	4 Likely	4	8	12	16	20
	3 Possible	3	6	9	12	15
	2 Unlikely	2	4	6	8	10
	1 Very unlikely	1	2	3	4	5
		1 Insignificant	2 Minor	3 Moderate	4 Significant	5 Major
		CONSEQUENCE				

Risk priority scale

Value	Priority scale
20-25	Very high - risk is intolerably high
12-16	High - risk is substantial
8-10	Medium high - risk is moderate
4-6	Medium low - risk is tolerable
1-3	Low

Report to	Executive Panel
Date	18 December 2023
Lead Officer	Stuart Millington, Assistant Chief Fire Officer Environment
Contact Officer	Tim Christensen, Environment and Climate Change Manager
Subject	North Wales Healthy Travel Charter



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This paper sets out for Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) the obligations as prescribed in the North Wales Healthy Travel Charter, and the practical considerations of implementing them.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2 It is recommended that Members:
 - i) endorse the ratification of the North Wales Healthy Travel Charter, for consideration at a future meeting of the Authority, 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 Stuart Millington.

BACKGROUND

- 3 In 2021, the Welsh Government launched Llwybr Newydd, the Transport Strategy for Wales. The strategy aims to achieve a transferal shift by displacing private car journeys with walking, cycling and public transport. This strategy has been further supported by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.
- 4 Due to the significant public health benefits of active travel the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Public Health Team have led on the development of a Healthy Travel Charter for North Wales (attached).

- 5 The Charter was developed in partnership with key organisations in North Wales, including the six Local Authorities, Sustrans, Natural Resources Wales and Transport for Wales. The Charter provides organisations with a range of areas against which to act, including leadership and communication, public transport, walking and cycling, agile working and ultra-low emission vehicles.
- 6 Oversight of public sector signatories within the region is undertaken through local Public Service Boards.
- 7 The 15 commitments set out in the Charter align well with our Environmental Strategy 2023-2030, particularly with the commitment to encourage modal shifts in transportation.
- 8 For commitments where there is no existing policy, practical means to achieve compliance have been agreed by the Service Leadership Team (SLT), and are set out in this report.

INFORMATION

- 9 The Charter commitments which meet existing or otherwise planned policy are set out in [Table 1](#) below. [Table 2](#) (overleaf) sets out how we propose to meet those commitments not already met, or planned to be satisfied.

Table 1: Charter commitments met by existing policy

Charter Commitment	Existing Policy
Agree and use regular and consistent communications messages with the public, visitors and staff on healthy travel and reducing unnecessary travel, including targeting people of different backgrounds, gender, age, abilities and disabilities	Environmental Strategy
Promote and consider healthy travel options and benefits across wider functions, such as: procurement, conferences, and when advertising roles in our organisations	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (<i>Draft</i>)
Review our travel expense policies and journey planning processes for staff, to align with the sustainable transport hierarchy	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (<i>Draft</i>)
Support staff driving fleet vehicles to be responsible and considerate road users (e.g. driving within speed limits and not parking in cycle lanes), to enable safe walking and cycling	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (<i>Draft</i>)

Charter Commitment	Existing Policy
Explore discounts for staff on Transport for Wales rail services and with local transport providers	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (<i>Draft</i>)
Offer the cycle to work scheme to all staff, including e-bikes	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (<i>Draft</i>)
Assess and provide secure and accessible cycle storage, showers and lockers at all suitable sites	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (<i>Draft</i>)
Provide flexible working options for staff wherever possible, including home and/or hub working, and promote a culture of agile working across public sector sites	Environmental Strategy
Review the current and future need for electric vehicle (EV) and e-bike charging infrastructure on our sites	Environmental Strategy
Review our fleet and procurement arrangements (where applicable) for introduction of ultra-low emission vehicles, including e-cargo and e-bikes where appropriate	Fleet Decarbonisation Plan (<i>Draft</i>)

Table 2: Charter commitments not met by existing or planned policy

Charter Commitment	Proposed action
Establish a network of proactive sustainable travel champions, including senior staff, managers and where relevant, elected Members, who routinely promote and model active and sustainable travel behaviour, in line with the sustainable travel hierarchy	This action will be carried out through the Environment and Sustainability Working Group
Collaborate with partners and provide strategic leadership and planning on healthy and sustainable travel, including infrastructure and services where relevant	Environment and Climate Change Manager to work with peers through the North Wales Decarbonisation Group
Make information easily available on how to get to our main site(s) by walking, cycling and public transport links, for example by contributing to an interactive map	Public website station pages to be updated to include this information

Charter Commitment	Proposed action
Improve access to bicycles at work where appropriate, e.g. pool bikes, hire bikes and cargo bikes	To be assessed case-by-case where appropriate
Explore and promote cycle training and maintenance sessions where appropriate	Videos and educational materials to be published on service intranet (Hwb Tân)

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	Direct implications towards meeting the Authority's long-term improvement and well-being objectives
Budget	No known budgetary implications.
Legal	Supports compliance with improvement planning, well-being and environment legislation
Staffing	No known impact on staffing levels
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	The impact of specific actions on these aspects will be assessed at the appropriate point in their development
Risks	Reduces the risks of legal non-compliance

North Wales Healthy Travel Charter

Communications and leadership
Establish a network of proactive sustainable travel champions, including senior staff, managers and where relevant, elected members, who routinely promote and model active and sustainable travel behaviour, in line with the sustainable travel hierarchy
Agree and use regular and consistent communications messages with the public, visitors and staff on healthy travel and reducing unnecessary travel, including targeting people of different backgrounds, gender, age, abilities and disabilities
Promote and consider healthy travel options and benefits across wider functions, such as: procurement, conferences, and when advertising roles in our organisations
Review our travel expense policies and journey planning processes for staff, to align with the sustainable transport hierarchy
Collaborate with partners and provide strategic leadership and planning on healthy and sustainable travel, including infrastructure and services where relevant
Support staff driving fleet vehicles to be responsible and considerate road users (e.g. driving within speed limits and not parking in cycle lanes), to enable safe walking and cycling
Public transport
Explore discounts for staff on Transport for Wales rail services and with local transport providers
Walking, cycling and public transport
Make information easily available on how to get to our main site(s) by walking, cycling and public transport links, for example by contributing to an interactive map
Cycling and walking
Offer the cycle to work scheme to all staff, including e-bikes
Assess and provide secure and accessible cycle storage, showers and lockers at all suitable sites
Improve access to bicycles at work where appropriate, e.g. pool bikes, hire bikes and cargo bikes
Explore and promote cycle training and maintenance sessions where appropriate
Agile working
Provide flexible working options for staff wherever possible, including home and/or hub working, and promote a culture of agile working across public sector sites
Ultra low emission vehicles (battery electric or hydrogen)
Review the current and future need for electric vehicle (EV) and e-bike charging infrastructure on our sites
Review our fleet and procurement arrangements (where applicable) for introduction of ultra-low emission vehicles, including e-cargo and e-bikes where appropriate

Report to	Executive Panel
Date	18 December 2023
Lead Officer	Gareth Owens, Clerk and Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer	Gareth Owens, Clerk and Monitoring Officer (01745 535286)
Subject	Delegation of powers following elections



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To include within the Constitution a standing delegation of powers from the end of office of the present Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) to the first meeting of the Authority following elections.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Members of the Authority are appointed for differing terms based on the preference of their constituent council e.g. some are appointed annually and others for the whole of the council term. In all cases however the terms will end four days after the next elections in May 2027, even for councillors who are re-elected. There will then be a short period between the elections and the Annual Meeting of the Authority where there will be no office holders, during which time authority to act needs to be delegated to the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) in respect of a decision which cannot be delayed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3 It is recommended that:
 - i) all the powers of the Authority, its committees and its office holders be delegated to the CFO, in consultation with the Clerk and Treasurer, for the period between ordinary elections and the first meeting of the Authority thereafter;
 - ii) these delegations shall apply only so far as such powers relate to decisions that cannot reasonably be delayed until the date of that first meeting; and
 - iii) that this delegation be recorded in the Authority's constitution.

BACKGROUND

- 4 Members are appointed to the Authority by their constituent councils for varying terms of office. Some are appointed for the whole of a council term and others are appointed annually. In each case, however, the term cannot extend beyond the Member's own term of office as a councillor. So, all Members will cease to be Members of the Authority four days after the next ordinary elections in May 2027, even if they are re-elected. If they are re-elected and wish to serve on the Authority again then they must be re-appointed by their constituent council. This means that there is always a short period after elections when the Authority has no body of Members ("the interregnum").
- 5 The length of the interregnum depends on how quickly the constituent councils make appointments in accordance with articles 12 and 13 of the combination order. Such appointments will not necessarily be made at the first meetings of the new councils, particularly if the appointments are executive functions delegated to cabinets.
- 6 Members cannot assume or resume any office with the Authority unless the Authority itself so resolves at its first meeting after the elections. This applies not only to the Chair/Deputy Chair of the Authority, but also to members of the Executive Panel, Audit Committee and to the two Authority Members who serve on the Standards Committee.
- 7 Thus, between ordinary elections and the annual meeting, usually in June, there is no mechanism by which any decisions that would normally fall to elected members may be taken by them. In the past the Authority has overcome this interregnum by making temporary delegations to the CFO before each election. There is a risk that such a temporary delegation may be forgotten leaving the Authority without the ability to make important decisions. In order to mitigate that risk the Authority agreed to seek this delegation on a permanent basis, and consequently added it as an action in its Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

INFORMATION

Advice

- 8 It would be helpful if a standing delegation in the same terms as the usual temporary delegation could be put in place to cover the interregnum. The delegation would only be capable of being exercised if the decision couldn't be delayed until after councillors are appointed at the first annual meeting. The delegation would cover all powers vested in Members, including those exercised by the Executive Panel and the Chair and Deputy Chair.

IMPLICATIONS

Wellbeing Objectives	The delegation will enable the Authority to continue to contribute towards its well-being objectives
Budget	No additional cost over and above the existing allocated budget
Legal	The recommendation will enable the Authority to make lawful decisions until new Members are appointed
Staffing	Not considered relevant
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	No direct implications arising out of the recommendation
Risks	The delegation will enable the Authority to manage any unforeseen emergency until new Members are appointed