



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Our Estates Strategy 2026–2036

Safe · Inclusive · Operationally Effective · Financially Sustainable · Future Ready

Summary

This document summarises the key themes, priorities and commitments within the Estates Strategy. It is supported by a detailed technical Estates Strategy, which contains the full evidence base, condition assessment, investment prioritisation methodology, delivery programme and governance arrangements.

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An introduction from our Chief Fire Officer, Dawn Docx

The North Wales Fire and Rescue Service estate is a critical operational asset. It supports emergency response, prevention, protection, resilience and community engagement across North Wales. Our buildings are where our people work, train, prepare, respond and recover. They are also places where we welcome partners, engage with communities and deliver services that help keep people safe.

This strategy sets out how our estate will develop between 2026 and 2036. It recognises that many of our buildings have served the Service and local communities well for decades. It also recognises that the way we work has changed. Our buildings now need to support modern emergency response and provide safe, healthy, and welcoming places for people to work and our communities. They also need to make use of digital system, help reduce carbon emissions, and improve asset management.

The full technical strategy has been developed through detailed reviews of our buildings, digital systems and carbon emissions as well as feedback from staff and partners. This document summarises that work. It explains our plans, why investment is needed, and how we will make sure decisions are evidence-based, transparent and fair.

The challenges are significant. We need to address a backlog of maintenance, improve contamination management, modernise welfare and training facilities, support a more diverse workforce and reduce carbon emissions. Some of this important work is already under way. This includes, planning for priority stations and the Hwb Awen Training and Development Centre. In addition to improved asset data and a review of how facilities are managed in the future. This strategy is about more than buildings. It is about how our estate helps us create a safe, inclusive, sustainable and effective Fire and Rescue Service for future generations.

**Dawn Docx,
Chief Fire Officer**





1. Why our estate matters

Our estate is the physical foundation that supports North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. It includes full-time fire stations, day crewed stations, nucleus stations on-call stations, headquarters, training facilities, workshops, storage and other operational support buildings. Each facility has a role in helping our people prepare for incidents, maintain equipment, deliver training, support prevention and protection work, and provide emergency response across the region.

Investment in the estate cannot be based on building age alone. The full strategy makes clear that decisions must be linked to operational demand, community risk, staff wellbeing, legal duties, environmental responsibilities, and long-term value for money. A building may require attention because of condition, but it may also require investment because its layout no longer supports modern firefighting, because welfare areas are not suitable, because contamination controls are difficult, or because the site is critical to resilience.

This link between evidence, priorities and investment is described in the technical strategy as the “golden thread”. It means that every major estate decision should be traceable back to a clear reason. For example, a project may reduce operational risk, improve statutory compliance, support inclusive facilities, reduce carbon emissions, or address urgent deterioration in building fabric or mechanical systems.

The estate also has a public value. Fire stations are visible community assets. They support local identity, operational readiness and public confidence. The strategy therefore focuses on making the existing estate the best version of itself, while keeping future opportunities under review where circumstances change.



2. North Wales and the communities we serve

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service operates across Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Conwy, Sir Ddinbych, Sir y Fflint, and Wrexham. The area includes major towns, rural and agricultural communities, coastal settlements, industrial and commercial areas, transport links and the upland environments of Eryri. This geography shapes every estate decision.

In rural areas, travel distances and local coverage are important. In coastal areas, stations may face seasonal population changes, tourism pressures, flooding risk and exposure to weather. In urban and industrial areas, stations must support different incident patterns, prevention activity and partnership working. The estate must therefore be flexible enough to support varied local needs while still meeting consistent service-wide standards.

The full strategy identifies a number of demand drivers that influence estate planning. These include population trends, incident trends, the Community Risk Management Plan risk profile, climate change, tourism and seasonal population changes, appliance utilisation, workforce expectations, prevention and protection activity, and future operational requirements.

These drivers show why our estate must be planned strategically. Fire and rescue services now respond to a broad range of incidents beyond traditional fires, including road traffic collisions, flooding, wildfire and specialist rescue activity. Buildings must provide the right space, systems and infrastructure to support that wider role.



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GWASANAETH TAN AC ACHUB

**FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
HEADQUARTERS**

3. What our estate includes

The NWFRS estate is broad and diverse. The stock condition assessment considered 49 sites. The operational fire station network includes 44 fire stations, made up of 3 full time stations, 5 day crewed station, 2 nucleus station and approximately 34 on-call or community stations. The estate also includes headquarters at St Asaph, the designated backup headquarters and secondary control room at Rhyl Community Fire Station, principal training sites, fleet workshop, shared facilities, storage and ancillary buildings.

Each part of the estate supports a different function. Full time stations require facilities that support continuous operational use, welfare, rest areas, training, fitness, equipment storage, contamination control and administration. On-call and community stations need safe, practical and proportionate facilities that support local response, training, welfare, storage and community engagement.

Headquarters at St Asaph performs a central organisational role, including command and control functions. Rhyl Community Fire Station has particular strategic importance because it supports command and communications resilience as the designated backup control. This means its condition, digital infrastructure and resilience need to be considered as a standing priority, not only through its physical condition score.

The fleet workshop is also important because fleet and estate planning are increasingly connected. As the Service progresses fleet decarbonisation, workshop facilities and electrical capacity will need to support future vehicle technology and changing maintenance requirements.

4. The current condition of our estate

Between 2025 and 2026, the estate was subject to the most comprehensive recent stock condition assessment in the Service's history. Sites were assessed across three core areas: electrical condition, building fabric and mechanical services. This provided a clearer picture of where urgent work is needed and where planned investment can be sequenced over time.

The findings show a mixed estate. Around 38.7% of the estate is in good condition and can be managed through planned preventive maintenance. Around 28.5% requires coordinated work within the next three to five years. Around 32.6% has a condition rating indicating urgent repairs or replacement works.

The indicative backlog maintenance liability is estimated at between £3 million and £4 million at 2026 prices. This backlog relates to works that are already overdue or needed within approximately two years to bring properties up to an acceptable operational standard. It is separate from the wider programme of transformation, decarbonisation and long-term improvement.

Key estate facts

49 sites surveyed; 44 operational fire stations; 32.6% require urgent works; indicative backlog £3m–£4m.

The backlog is concentrated across several areas: building fabric such as roofs, windows, external envelope, drainage and forecourts; mechanical and electrical infrastructure such as boilers, heating, ventilation, rewiring and switchgear; operational infrastructure such as bay doors, storage, signage and security; welfare facilities such as showers, changing rooms, kitchens, rest areas and lockers; and statutory compliance catch-up such as electrical certification, asbestos, fire alarms and Legionella controls.

The new digital asset management system will allow this backlog to be formally quantified and monitored more accurately. That is important because better information will support better decisions, clearer reporting and more effective use of public money.



5. Priority buildings and early focus

The condition assessment identifies a number of priority sites. These sites are not the only buildings that need investment, but they help shape the early programme because their condition, operational role or planned service change creates a stronger need for intervention.

Dolgellau Fire Station is identified as the highest-priority site. It has aged electrical and building fabric infrastructure and is converting to nucleus crewing status, which means it requires major refurbishment. Porthmadog is also converting to nucleus crewing status and requires significant internal changes to support modern welfare, operational, administrative, training and inclusive facilities.

Bangor Fire Station is another priority pilot modernisation project. The strategy identifies the need for welfare, contamination management and equality, diversity and inclusion improvements. Bangor, Dolgellau and Porthmadog will therefore be important learning projects. The standards, layouts and lessons from these schemes will help shape future refurbishment across the estate.

Other priority sites include Y Waun, Abersoch, Amlwch, Caernarfon, Caergybi, Llandudno and Treffynnon. These sites present different combinations of ageing fabric, mechanical and electrical issues, welfare limitations, coastal exposure, operational requirements or lifecycle needs. Abergele and Benllech are also highlighted because of elevated fabric condition concerns which will need close monitoring and prioritised intervention if risks increase.

The strategy does not treat priority scoring as a one-off exercise. As more accurate asset information becomes available, and as building condition and operational requirements change, priorities will be kept under review through the formal governance structure.

Early project learning

Bangor, Dolgellau and Porthmadog will help shape future design standards across the estate.

The delivery of the early estate programme will also be supported by changes to facilities management arrangements. The collaborative Facilities Management Service Level Agreement with North Wales Police has been in place for over 20 years and has played an important role in maintaining and developing the Service's estate.

As the Service seeks to address a number of emerging estate challenges, including backlog repairs and maintenance, contamination management, equality, diversity and inclusion requirements, and the delivery of carbon reduction commitments, a review of future arrangements has been undertaken.

Following this review, the Service and North Wales Police have jointly agreed that the Service Level Agreement will conclude in March 2027. The transition provides an opportunity to build on the strong foundations established through the partnership while developing an operating model that is aligned to the future ambitions and priorities of this Estates Strategy.

6. What needs to change

The strategy identifies ten connected estate priorities. Together, these priorities explain what needs to change across our buildings and how future investment will support a safer, more inclusive, operationally effective and sustainable estate.

1

Backlog maintenance and building condition: We will address urgent and overdue building works in a planned way, focusing first on the sites and issues that present the greatest operational, safety or financial risk. This will help move the estate away from reactive repairs and towards long-term planned maintenance.

2

Statutory compliance: Every building must be safe, legally compliant and properly managed. We will strengthen how we monitor, evidence and report compliance across the estate.

3

Operational functionality and standardisation: Our stations must support modern emergency response, with layouts, storage, appliance bays and welfare areas that help crews work safely and efficiently. Refurbished stations will be designed around clear and consistent standards, while still reflecting local needs.

4

Contamination management: We will improve how our buildings help reduce firefighter exposure to contaminants. This includes better clean and dirty zoning, safer movement through stations and facilities that support national contamination guidance.

5

Workforce wellbeing: Our estate should support the health, comfort and wellbeing of everyone who works in it. This means improving facilities such as showers, changing areas, rest spaces, kitchens, quiet areas and fitness provision where appropriate.

6

Equality, diversity and inclusion: Our buildings must be welcoming, accessible and dignified for all members of our workforce and visitors. We will improve inclusive facilities, including accessible, gender-neutral and appropriate changing and welfare provision.

7

Training infrastructure: Modern training needs modern facilities. We will pursue the proposed Hwb Awen Training and Development Centre as the preferred long-term solution for training infrastructure. Where this cannot be delivered as planned, we will explore alternative delivery models and targeted investment to ensure firefighters and staff continue to have access to safe, effective and realistic training environments.

8

Community engagement and collaboration: Fire stations are important community assets. We will look for opportunities for our estate to better support prevention, protection, partnership working and local community engagement.

9

Digitalisation and asset intelligence: Better estate decisions need better information. We will introduce improved digital asset management so that condition, compliance, maintenance and investment decisions are based on reliable data.

10

Decarbonisation and sustainability: We will reduce the environmental impact of our buildings and support the Service's net zero commitments. This includes improving building fabric, reducing fossil fuel use, increasing renewable energy and improving energy monitoring.

7. Our vision, mission and principles

Our Vision

To provide a modern, sustainable and inclusive estate that empowers our people, enables excellent operational delivery and supports safer, stronger communities across North Wales.

Our Mission

To strategically manage and develop our estate to ensure it is safe, efficient, environmentally responsible and aligned with the evolving needs of our service, our people and our communities.

Our Principles

Principle	What it means for the estate
Safe and Compliant	Every facility meets all statutory requirements. Contamination management is embedded in design. Compliance is proactively managed.
Operationally Effective	Station design actively supports emergency response, efficient workflow and safe mobilisation. The estate enables excellence.
Fit for Modern Service Delivery	Facilities support modern firefighting, contamination management, training, community engagement and evolving operational demands.
Financially Sustainable	Investment is planned, prioritised and evidence-led. Whole-life cost is central to all decisions. The backlog liability is progressively eliminated.
Environmentally Responsible	The estate delivers against Welsh Government net zero obligations. Fossil-fuel heating is phased out. Renewable energy is maximised.
Inclusive and Supportive of Workforce Wellbeing	Every person who works in or visits an NWFRS building finds facilities that are welcoming, dignified, accessible and reflective of their needs.
Digitally Enabled	Every significant estate decision is underpinned by reliable asset, condition and performance data, and every facility is built to support the connectivity the modern Service requires.

8. Station locations and estate rationalisation

The full strategy sits alongside the Emergency Cover Review. That review assessed the geographical configuration of the station estate against current and projected community risk patterns. The conclusion is that the current distribution of fire stations across North Wales has been validated as appropriate to support effective emergency response.

This means the Estates Strategy is not seeking to redraw the station map. Instead, its role is to ensure that the right stations, in the right places, are fit for purpose. The focus is therefore on improvement, modernisation, resilience and suitability rather than a programme of station closure or consolidation.

A separate assessment considered potential estate rationalisation opportunities. This included whether some facilities could be amalgamated, disposed of or reconfigured. The strategy concludes that, while marginal benefits may theoretically exist in some cases, the operational, geographical, community, cultural and financial factors do not currently support an active consolidation programme.

This does not mean the estate will never change. Future opportunities will be considered on a case-by-case basis through the Land and Property Committee if circumstances change. However, the current strategic direction is to invest in making each existing station the best it can be for the community it serves.



9. Training and Hwb Awen

Training is a major strategic priority because the Service needs facilities that support realistic, safe and modern operational learning. Current training facilities are spread across several sites and some assets are ageing. The strategy recognises that training infrastructure must improve so that firefighters and staff have the facilities needed to maintain operational competence, support health and wellbeing, and prepare for current and future risks.

The preferred option remains the proposed Hwb Awen Training and Development Centre at St Asaph. The project continues to be a strategically important investment for the Service, supporting operational capability, firefighter health and wellbeing, and longer-term organisational resilience. If delivered, Hwb Awen would provide modern, purpose-built training facilities and support the Service's wider ambitions for safer, more realistic and more sustainable training.

The strategy also considers the Outline Business Case for Hwb Awen alongside alternative options if full funding is not secured within the early years. In that scenario, significant investment would still be required in the existing training estate, including urgent works to training towers, welfare improvements and training technology, so that facilities remain safe and capable while longer-term options are reviewed.

This approach provides a balanced position. Hwb Awen remains the preferred transformational route for training infrastructure, but the Service is managing the financial and programme risks carefully while continuing to strengthen the case for investment. If the preferred route cannot proceed as planned, the wider Estates Strategy will still need to ensure that the existing training estate remains safe, capable and aligned with operational requirements. This may require the Service to consider alternative delivery models, including phased development, partnership arrangements, shared facilities, increased use of regional or national training assets. Such options would be assessed against operational requirements, value for money, resilience and long-term strategic fit.

The logo for Hwb Awen, featuring the words 'hwb awen' in a white, lowercase, serif font. The text is set against a background that transitions from a dark blue on the right to a greenish-blue on the left.

10. Sustainability, carbon and climate resilience

Decarbonisation is a legal, environmental and operational priority. NWFRS has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions across the whole service by 2030. The strategy confirms that no new hydrocarbon-fuelled heating system will be installed or significantly refurbished anywhere in the estate beyond the end of financial year 2024/25.

The estate currently consumes approximately 2,639,751 kWh of natural gas, 96,520 kWh of LPG and 1,374,357 kWh of electricity each year. This equates to baseline Scope 1 emissions of 502.7 tCO₂e and Scope 2 emissions of 240.4 tCO₂e. These figures show the scale of the challenge and the need for a structured pathway.

The strategy supports a fabric-first approach. This means improving the building itself, such as insulation, air tightness and building fabric, before or alongside changes to heating systems. This reduces energy demand and helps new low-carbon technologies work more effectively.

The strategy also addresses renewable energy, solar PV, air source heat pumps, smart metering and electrical capacity planning. These are practical steps needed to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for future fleet and building requirements.

Climate resilience is equally important. North Wales faces risks linked to flooding, coastal exposure, severe weather and wildfire. Future building investment must therefore consider not only carbon reduction but also the ability of operational facilities to withstand changing climate conditions and continue supporting emergency response.

Carbon focus

The strategy supports a fabric-first decarbonisation pathway, renewable technologies and better energy information.

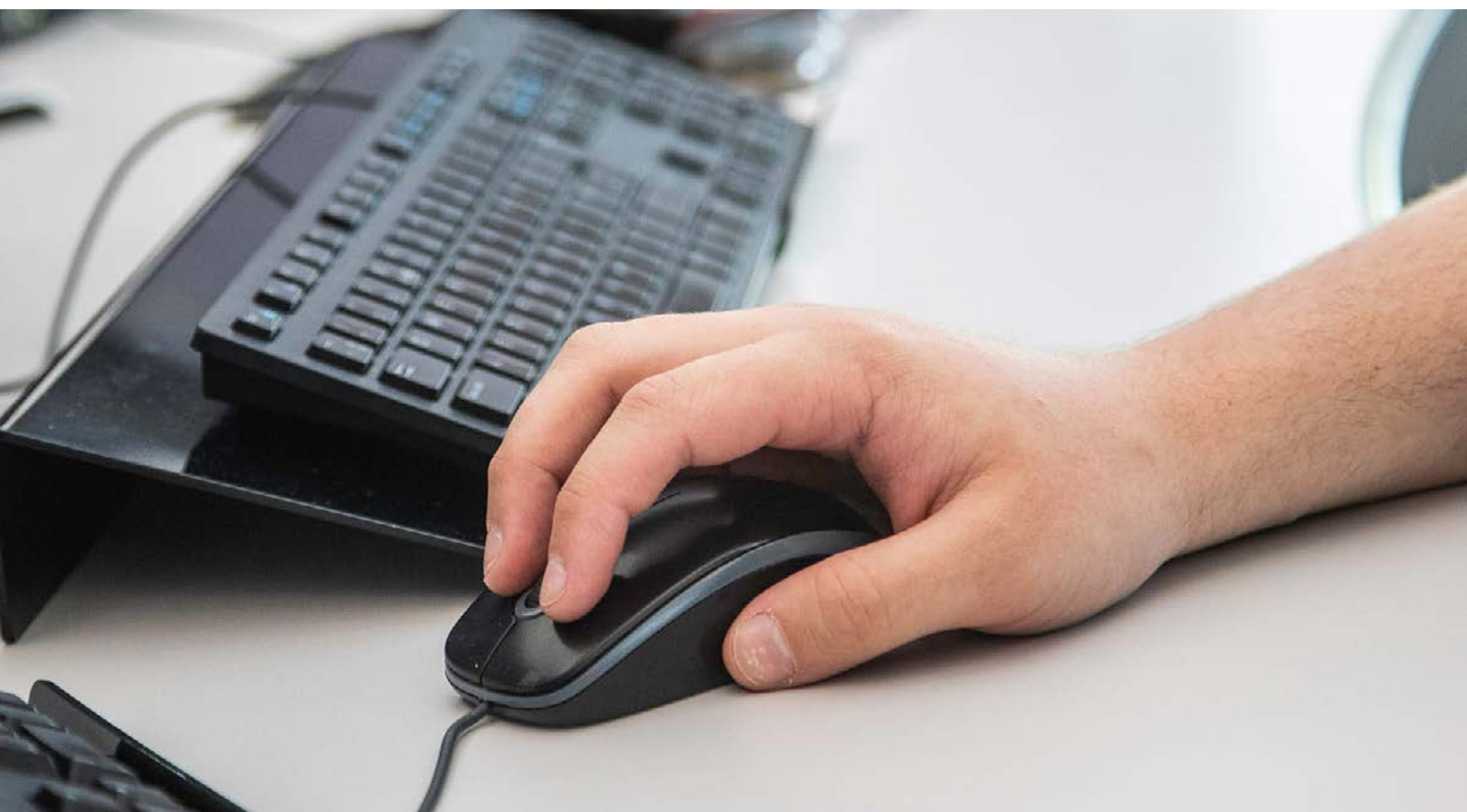
11. Digital infrastructure and asset intelligence

A modern estate needs reliable information. The full strategy identifies the procurement and implementation of a Computer-Aided Facilities Management (CAFM) platform as one of the most important enabling investments in the programme. This system will create a single source of truth for asset condition, compliance, maintenance, backlog, planned works and capital programme information.

At present, some estate information relies on separate records, historical knowledge and condition snapshots. The new system will allow the Service to move towards more consistent, data-led estate management. This is essential for managing statutory compliance, prioritising repairs, planning lifecycle investment and reporting progress to members and the public.

Digital infrastructure also matters within buildings themselves. Modern stations need reliable connectivity, systems that support training and operations, and the capacity to incorporate smart building technologies over time. As the estate is refurbished, digital standards should be built into design rather than added later.

Better asset intelligence will also support transparency. It will help show why one project is prioritised ahead of another, how backlog is reducing, whether compliance is being maintained, and whether investment is delivering the intended outcomes. This is particularly important in a public service environment where decisions must be accountable and evidence based.



12. Investment prioritisation and delivery plan

The strategy introduces a formal Estate Assessment Framework and Investment Prioritisation Matrix. These tools are designed to make investment decisions consistent, transparent and evidence based.

Projects are assessed against the factors shown below. The highest weighting is given to **operational risk** and **building condition**, reflecting the importance of safe and effective emergency response. Compliance is also given significant weight because statutory duties must be met.

Criterion	Weighting
Operational Risk	25%
Building Condition	20%
Compliance Risk	15%
Contamination	10%
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	10%
Carbon Reduction	10%
Financial Benefit	10%

This approach provides a clear and evidence-based way to decide how estate funding should be used over the life of the Strategy. It does not remove judgement, but gives a structured basis for decision-making, ensuring that urgent safety, compliance and operational resilience issues are given appropriate weight, while also recognising longer-term value, firefighter health, inclusion, sustainability, workforce benefits and value for money.

Delivery is structured in three phases.

Phase 1 focuses on immediate priorities and foundations. This includes Bangor, Dolgellau and Porthmadog, urgent repair and compliance works, interim contamination measures, CAFM implementation, smart metering, the planned transition from the Facilities Management Service Level Agreement with North Wales Police (NWP), Hwb Awen business case progression and early decarbonisation work.

Phase 2 focuses on programme acceleration between 2028 and 2032. It includes further station refurbishments, continued lifecycle investment, decarbonisation works, inclusive design improvements, contamination management improvements and progress on Hwb Awen. The strategy refers to a target of approximately two station refurbishments per year, subject to funding, capacity and governance decisions.

Phase 3 focuses on estate transformation and completion between 2032 and 2036. This includes remaining station improvements, estate-wide inclusion and accessibility, fleet workshop readiness, continued decarbonisation and preparation for the next strategy period.

Delivery approach

The programme is phased, evidence-led and subject to annual reporting and formal governance review.

Delivery risks and affordability

Delivery of this Strategy will depend on the availability of funding, internal capacity, market conditions, statutory approvals and the successful delivery of supporting programmes such as facilities management transition, digital asset management and decarbonisation. Individual projects will remain subject to business case approval, funding availability and annual budget-setting decisions. These risks will be monitored through the governance arrangements set out in this document and reflected in annual reporting.



13. Governance, accountability and measuring success

Delivery will be overseen through clear governance arrangements. The Land and Property Committee and Land and Property Working Group will provide scrutiny of estate decisions, delivery progress, scoring, priorities and performance. The Service Leadership Team and the Authority will receive regular reporting.

The Land and Property Working Group brings together representation from Operations, Finance, People and Estates, with trade union representation. Its role includes reviewing disposals, acquisitions, lease matters, major projects, the delivery roadmap, the Estate Assessment Framework and the KPI performance dashboard.

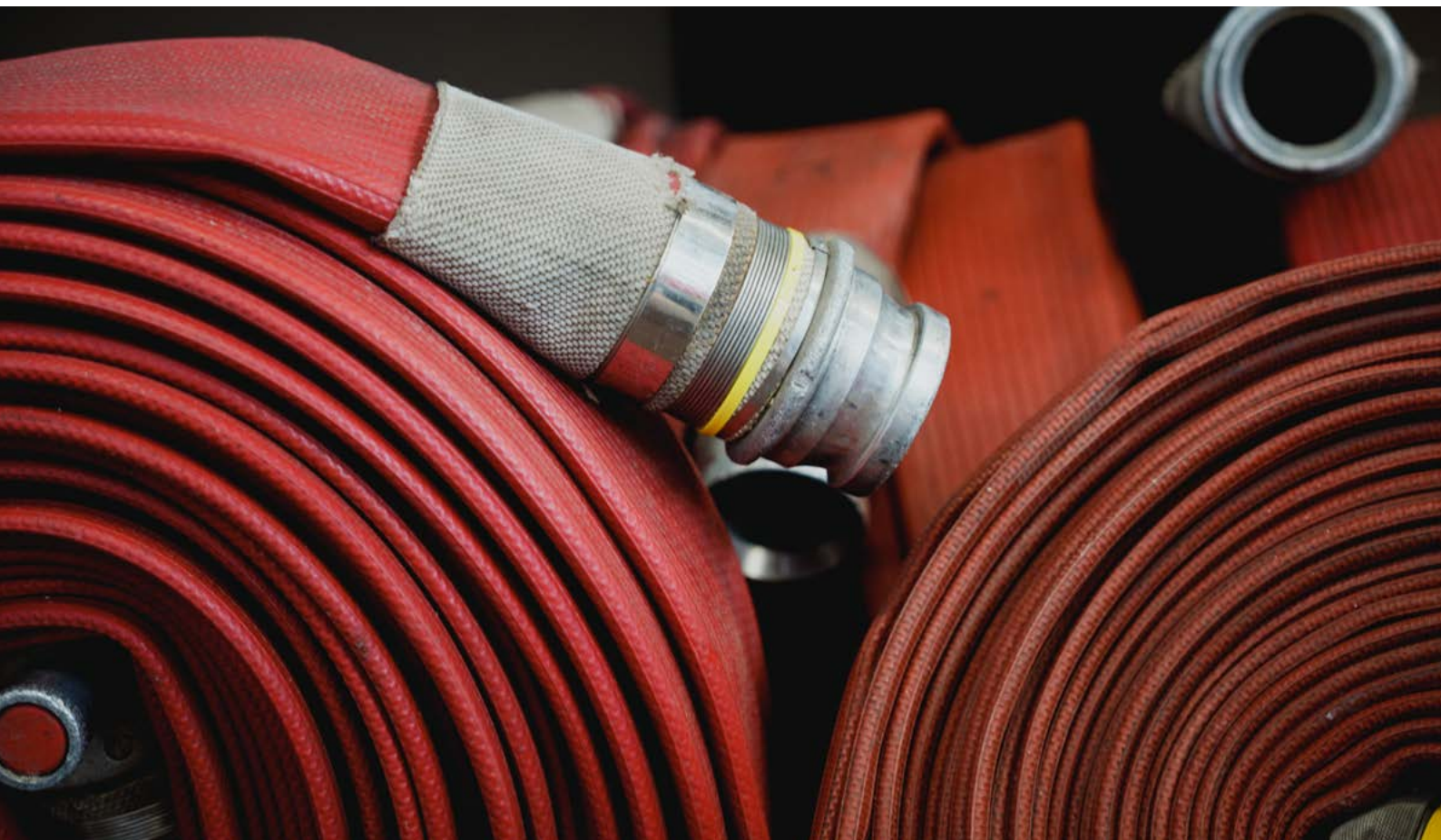
Progress will be reported through an annual Estate Performance Report. The strategy will also be formally reviewed at the 2031 midpoint. This ensures the plan remains live, responsive and accountable, rather than becoming a static document.

Success will be measured through progress against the strategic priorities seen below:

Priority	Key Performance Indicator(s)
P1 - Ageing Estate and Lifecycle Risk	Estate condition grade profile (% Condition Rating 1/2/3); reactive maintenance as % of total maintenance spend.
P2 - Backlog Maintenance and Building Condition	% backlog liability resolved annually; % compliance items cleared within timescale; backlog cost per square metre against portfolio average.
P3 - Operational Functionality, Standardisation and Workforce Wellbeing	% appliance bays meeting dimensional standard; operational workflow score; stations completed per annum against Design Reference Standard; % full time stations meeting minimum welfare standard.
P4 - Contamination Management and Firefighter Health	% full time stations with NFCC-compliant zoning; % personnel with access to compliant decontamination facilities; annual contamination audit score.
P5 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	% stations with gender-neutral welfare; % stations meeting full Inclusive Design Standard; EDI audit score; accessibility compliance %.
P6 - Training Infrastructure	Hwb Awen Full Business Case and delivery milestone status; training tower condition profile; training facility capability score; % sites meeting operational training standard.

P7 - Decarbonisation and Sustainability	% reduction in estate and fleet carbon emissions from the 2025/26 baseline (743.1 tCO2e Scope 1 and 2); % estate with heat pump; % suitable roof with solar PV; % white fleet zero/ultra-low emission; progress to 2030 net zero target.
P8 - Digital Infrastructure and Asset Intelligence	% properties with smart metering; % full time stations with BMS; CAFM coverage and data completeness; Digital Infrastructure Standard compliance; control room resilience review status.
P9 - Facilities Management Transition and Governance Capability	In-house FM team operational by April 2027; LPWG scrutiny meetings held; Estate Performance Reports on time; capital programme outturn vs budget.
P10 - Financial Constraint and Investment Discipline	Capital programme variance to approved budget; % of capital allocated in line with Investment Prioritisation Matrix ranking; funding secured from non-Fire-Authority sources (Welsh Government grants, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, partnership investment).

Our commitment is clear. By 2036, every station and support facility should have been improved, assessed or planned in line with this strategy. The aim is an estate that is safer, more inclusive, more sustainable, more resilient and better able to support the communities of North Wales for the next generation.



14. Conclusion

This Estates Strategy for 2026–2036 is both a statement of ambition and a practical programme of action. It is grounded in evidence from the stock condition assessment, decarbonisation and digital infrastructure surveys, operational suitability work, the Emergency Cover Review, the Hwb Awen business case process and the facilities management transition. It also reflects the views of those who work in, manage and rely on NWFRS facilities every day.

The challenges are significant. The Service faces an estimated backlog maintenance liability, contamination management requirements, facilities that need to better reflect a modern and inclusive workforce, and a legal obligation to decarbonise the estate and fleet by 2030. These issues directly affect the health, dignity, safety and operational effectiveness of NWFRS personnel.

However, strong foundations are already in place. The Outline Business Case for Hwb Awen has progressed through governance; Bangor, Dolgellau and Porthmadog are in active planning; comprehensive condition, decarbonisation and digital surveys have been completed; and the Emergency Cover Review has validated the current station estate. These achievements provide a clear platform for long-term estate improvement.

The strength of this strategy is its clear golden thread. Strategic demand drivers lead to defined priorities, priorities lead to options, options are assessed through the Estate Assessment Framework and Investment Prioritisation Matrix, and projects are then placed within the delivery plan and monitored through performance indicators.

The decisions made through this strategy will shape the NWFRS estate for a generation. They will determine the quality, sustainability and inclusivity of the facilities provided to firefighters, staff and communities across North Wales.

The strategy will be reviewed formally at the five-year midpoint in 2031 and renewed for 2036–2046. Progress will be reported annually to the Fire Authority Resources Committee and scrutinised quarterly by the Land and Property Committee and the Land and Property Working Group.



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