


Report to	Executive Panel	
Date	15 November 2025	
Lead Officer	Anthony Jones - Assistant Chief Fire Officer	
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Subject	Strategic Risk Management	

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To provide Members with an update in relation to the Risk Appetite Statement and an overview of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's (the Authority) Strategic Risk Register.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 Since the review of internal controls by internal auditors, Mersey Internal Audit Agency (MIAA), several changes to how risk is recorded and managed have been implemented to strengthen the risk management process.
- 3 The approved Risk Appetite matrix was reviewed at the recent Strategic Risk Committee on 23 October 2025, and the risk appetite remains unchanged.
- 4 The report provides Members with an update of the content of the Authority's Strategic Risk Register.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5 It is recommended that Members;
 - i) **note the Strategic Risk Register; and**
 - ii) **review and approve the risk appetite in paras 14-21 below**

BACKGROUND

- 6 The Authority's Strategic Risk Register identifies known risks that could potentially prevent the Authority from achieving its planned outcomes and/or delivering its core functions. Register entries are assigned risk scores that are regularly re-evaluated by officers to reflect the current state and the predicted effect of planned mitigations.

- 7 Under this policy, the Executive Panel receives a summary report on strategic risks at least twice a year. Between meetings, the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority can view the full detail of the register with officers.

INFORMATION

- 8 Heads of Department are responsible for identifying and managing the risks they own; however, a Strategic Risk Committee has been added to the Governance Assurance Structure and has met twice since the last report. This committee is responsible, amongst other things, for reviewing those risks that are identified as being 'High' or 'Very High' risk.
- 9 The Strategic Risk Committee is supported in its work by all other Committees in the Governance Assurance Structure, which now all have risk as a standing agenda item for discussion of new and existing risks in the context of their respective workstreams.
- 10 Level 1 and 2 Risk Training E-Learning modules have now been completed and signed off by the chair of the SRC. This work by the Training and Development department completes the provision of training at levels 1-4 identified as needing implementation by the MIAA report. These modules will be assigned to the relevant personnels digital learning accounts imminently and are to be completed on a 3 yearly cycle

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Risk Appetite Statement

Last reviewed: 23rd October 2025 at Strategic Risk Committee

- 11 The Authority recognises that its long-term sustainability depends upon optimising risk in relation to the delivery of its strategic objectives, and that the relationship with communities, staff, contractors, the general public and other stakeholders is key to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service)'s success.
- 12 The Authority does not have a single risk appetite, but rather appetites across the range of its activities. We recognise that in pursuit of our wellbeing and improvement objectives we may choose to accept different degrees of risk in different areas.
- 13 Our risk appetite has been defined following consideration of organisational risks, issues and consequences. We will always aim to operate organisational activities at the levels defined below. Where activities are projected to exceed the defined levels, this must be highlighted through appropriate governance mechanisms.

- 14 **Financial risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance for financial risks with reference to core running costs, seeking safe delivery options with little residual risk that only yield some upside opportunities. The Authority will receive ongoing assurance through the annual governance statement that policies and procedures are in place in line with Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and SOLACE guidance.
- 15 **Response/Operations risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance for risks to our ability to respond to emergencies, seeking to safeguard our ability to reduce risk to the public whilst maximising the safety of our fire fighters.
- 16 **Legal/Regulatory compliance risks:** We have adopted a **minimal** stance for compliance, seeking a preference for adhering to responsibilities, and safe delivery options with little residual risk. The Authority will have annual assurance that compliance regimes are in place, through the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).
- 17 **Reputational risks:** We have adopted an **open** stance for reputational risks, with a preference for safer delivery options, tolerating a cautious degree of residual risk and choosing the option most likely to result in successful delivery, thereby enhancing our reputation for delivering high-quality, cost-effective services to the public.
- 18 **People risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance in relation to People risks. We believe strongly in the importance of positive staff engagement and maintaining a values-led culture in support of all our staff. Recruitment and retention of retained firefighters is a particular challenge in some of our more rural communities.
- 19 **Information risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance to the management and storage of personal information risk, to reflect the sensitivity and importance of information held on our systems to support our prevention and protection activities as well as staff information processed for the purposes of employment.
- 20 **Technology/Cyber risks:** We have adopted a **minimal** stance for threats to our assets arising from external malicious attacks. To address this risk, we operate strong internal control processes and utilise robust technology solutions.

- 21 **Assets/Estates risks:** We have adopted a **cautious** stance for assets and estates respectively, seeking value for money but with a preference for proven delivery options that have a low residual risk. This means that we use solutions for purchase, rental, disposal, construction, and refurbishment that ensure we protect the taxpayer from as much risk as possible, producing good value for money whilst fully meeting organisational requirements.

21 Strategic Risk Register

Theme	Mitigating Actions
<p>Response/Operations (Risk Appetite – Cautious)</p> <p>Due to uncertainties in the availability of funding for capital investment, there is a risk that training facilities could be no longer fit-for-purpose if investment in the maintenance and improvement of facilities is not provided in the future.</p>	<p>Investment in training facilities at Dolgellau and Rhyl along with Compartment Fire Behaviour Training facility at Airbus Broughton will allow Breathing Apparatus training to continue in the short to medium term. There is limited capacity to extend/expand these sites to include any other scenario based training due to their locations and planning restrictions. These training facilities are currently supplemented by staff attending external venues however, this comes at a cost that is challenging to predict beyond the current financial year.</p>
<p>Technology/Cyber (Risk Appetite – Minimal)</p> <p>Due to the ever-evolving cyber threat landscape, there is a risk that the organisation will be subjected to a cyber attack</p>	<p>Various technologies to help protect us from external threats, internal security settings etc. However, most of these technologies are well known and cyber criminals are adapting their attacks to circumnavigate our controls. Additional software (eg Bullwall) helps lower the consequence, and protocols are being drawn up to help with post attack mitigations</p>

<p>Financial risks (Risk appetite – Cautious)</p> <p>There is a risk that the deadlines may not be met due to the complexity of pension rules and the need to address legal challenges. This could be caused by the intricate nature of the regulations and the time required to resolve legal issues.</p>	<p>Member of scheme Advisory Board. Data quality is improving. Cashflows are outside of the pension fund.</p>
<p>Response/Operations (Risk Appetite – Cautious)</p> <p>Due to recruitment and retention of sufficient staff there is a risk that we may not be able to maintain pump availability particularly in rural areas.</p>	<p>Dedicated recruitment and availability teams in each area. Dedicated groups and Committee in Assurance Structure focusing on this risk. Officers, staff and representative groups working in social partnership to implement the recently agreed collective agreement to improve rural fire cover and increase resilience. Dedicated daily availability resource maximises appliance availability across North Wales.</p>

Risk is defined as a combination of the likelihood and consequences of hazardous events.

Likelihood: the chance of something happening. May be described by the probability, frequency or uncertainty of events.

Consequence: The outcome of an event. Specifically, the severity or extent of harm caused by an event.

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 legislation that define its functions and how it operates.
Staffing	No specific implications identified.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	No specific implications identified.
Risks	Mitigations seek to minimise the likelihood of risk occurring,