

Report to	North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Date	17 October 2022
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Contact Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer
Subject	New Training Centre



PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 This report presents an update on the work undertaken to date on the production of a detailed business case for the option/s of a new training and development centre.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2 The Authority is committed to the provision of essential operational training to its staff to support service delivery and firefighter safety. The Chief Fire Officer's assessment undertaken during 2021 identified training as a priority area and Authority approval was given to undertake a full review on the future delivery of operational training and development in the Service.
- 3 This has included a review of operational training facilities in the Service, including those located at Dolgellau and Rhyl Fire Stations. This identified the need to invest in training and development facilities to ensure operational preparedness and safety, both in terms of existing and future provision. In particular, the need to provide practical and immersive training experiences across a range of scenarios will require investment in new training facilities.
- 4 This investment will also include the identification and purchase of land to build a training and development centre within North Wales. It should be accessible within an hour's travel for the majority of our staff located at fire stations across the Service.
- 5 In order to develop a detailed business case for the options/s of a new training and development centre for NWFRS, an initial budget allocated to the project requires approval.

RECOMMENDATION

- 6 That Members:
- (i) note the content of the report;
 - (ii) authorise release of expenditure up to a maximum of £250,000 from reserves to develop the next stage of a detailed business case for the option/s of a new training and development centre for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

BACKGROUND

- 7 At the meeting of the Fire Authority September 2021 the three main priorities for the Service were presented by the Chief Fire Officer in her assessment and approved by Members. They included improving availability, improving training and strengthening the corporate structure.
- 8 This report includes some of the work that has commenced to improve operational training and development in the Service, which includes a project to build a new training and development centre.

INFORMATION

- 9 The Service has undertaken a detailed review of its operational training facilities at Rhyl and Dolgellau fire stations and as a result it has become apparent that, they do not provide the facilities required to train firefighters operating in a modern-day fire and rescue service.
- 10 Although the fire house training facility at Dolgellau fire station continues to be used for operational training it is 47 years old. Significant investment is now required to extend its medium-term life span for risk critical breathing apparatus and firefighting tactics training across a range of scenarios faced by our firefighters.
- 11 During the past decade the Authority will have noted the number of fires and other emergency incidents have reduced significantly. Although this is a success story for the fire prevention work that has taken place in our communities during this time, it has resulted in the risk of firefighters having less exposure to the hazards and complex situations they are likely to face when attending such incidents.

- 12 Fire contaminants is also a risk present in the smoke and toxic flammable gases released during fires and may contribute to cancer and other health conditions in firefighters. So, the management of fire contaminants needs to be included in training and development centre design, operational procedures and fire and rescue service culture.
- 13 To mitigate these risks, operational training and development for our staff in a realistic and immersive training environment which includes adequate health and safety measures, needs to be at the forefront of a new training and development centre design. Therefore, a project has commenced to develop options with our staff. This will provide essential facilities required for training and development for at least the next 25 years.
- 14 The new training and development centre will aim to imitate through the use of realistic training props, such as fire houses, farming area, ship fires, road network, all of the current and foreseeable hazards NWFRS firefighters are likely to face in their communities when responding to emergency incidents.
- 15 Subject to Members approval, the next steps of the project will involve the production of a detailed business case which will allow the Authority to consider if building a new training and development centre at a new site in North Wales is a valid option. During the next stage of the project the following will be undertaken:
 - appoint consultants required for the project (building consultant, architect, quantity surveyor and services engineer);
 - identify suitable land and agree an exclusivity agreement with the land owner;
 - undertake surveys, such as ground investigation, contamination, topographical, ecological;
 - develop a design brief in conjunction with users, architects and energy and sustainability experts;
 - discuss the project with the local planning authority;
 - liaise with statutory bodies and services suppliers to ensure the proposal meets modern regulations;
 - produce a cost estimate for the project covering both capital investment and longer-term revenue consequences.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	This project is aligned to all of the Well-being and Corporate Objectives 2022/23 and will promote firefighter safety, support operational preparedness and ensure sustainability over the longer term
Budget	£250,000 funded from reserves.
Legal	The Authority has a duty under the Health and Safety legislation to ensure the sufficiency of training of its staff, management of risks such as contaminants. The project also addressed the wider legal obligation to reduce carbon emissions.
Staffing	Project team and stakeholders are included in the Project Initiation Document (PID) for approval at Service Leadership Team. The project supports staff health and safety and wellbeing.
Equalities/Human Rights/ Welsh Language	Implications for the protected characteristics are covered within the PID Integrated Impact Assessment.
Risks	All risks are included in the PID risk register.