NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY REPORT

DATE:	19th December 2005
REPORT BY:	**Colin Hanks – Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Support)**
PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To present North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's new website to Authority members.

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) has launched a new website at www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk The fully bilingual site offers two dedicated routes to follow from the home page, either the Fire and Rescue Authority or the Fire and Rescue Service.

1.2   The aim is to create a new, modern functional site which can be updated in house by Service personnel. The chosen design has been created to be bright, colourful and interesting with a sensible balance between text and photos to alleviate IT capacity issues, as many users in the more rural areas of North Wales are not on broadband connections.

1.3   A live demonstration of the new website will be shown to members during the Fire and Rescue Authority meeting.

2.   **BACKGROUND**

2.1   In February 2005 the Service commissioned an independent review of the existing North Wales Fire and Rescue Service website. The audit highlighted that the site suffered from a lack of structure and had an overall 'homemade' look and feel. The audit also commented that there was a plethora of information, (some of which was out of date) and that overall the website failed to clearly identify the intended audience and was difficult to update.

2.2   The new website has been created with a content management system which can be accessed online and which allows easy updating by a core group of staff with the appropriate username and password, from any PC with internet access. Certain areas with large amounts of content which need regular updating (eg Authority meetings, press releases, events etc) have a dedicated section in which content can be quickly entered and is then automatically formatted on the page.

2.3   The content of pages can be changed (text and pictures) and hypertext links can be created to other sites, to other pages within the site and to email addresses.

2. **BACKGROUND** *(continued)*

2.4 Documents (in any format such as Word, Excel or Adobe pdf) can be uploaded to the site, and then 'attached' to pages so they can be downloaded by users accessing the site.

2.5 The site has been created in two versions – Welsh and English – with easy access between both at any point throughout the site. To ensure equality of both languages, the initial homepage offers the user the option of entering either the Welsh or English site.

2.6 There is a dedicated section within the site for the Fire and Rescue Authority, set to a slightly different template to give the pages their own 'look' although they are essentially part of the same site.

2.7 The homepage also allows the user to go straight to these pages (Welsh or English) without first going through the Service site.

3. **COSTS**

3.1 The development of the new website has occurred with no cost to the Fire and Rescue Authority as monies were made available in the form of a grant from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to improve public access to websites.

4. **RECOMMENDATION**

4.1 That members note the above report in conjunction with the live demonstration of the new Service website.