



AGENDA ITEM: 11

**NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY
EXECUTIVE PANEL**

21st September 2006

FireFirst – RHYL COMMUNITY FIRE STATION PROJECT

**Report by Colin Hanks,
Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Service Support**

Purpose of Report

1. To provide a preliminary update to members on the Rhyl FireFirst project.

Introduction

2. Members will be aware that in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2005 it was agreed to adopt the concept of community fire stations and Rhyl was chosen for the first such station in North Wales.
3. Whereas some fire stations in North Wales have already been adapted to accommodate other agencies, this project will be the first purpose built community fire station.
4. This facility will enable the Service to be more accessible to the public, raise the profile of the Service's community work and help in developing partnerships with other agencies.



Introduction *(continued)*

5. By offering facilities such as meeting rooms and office space it will assist the Service in reaching members of the community that are presently not being reached from within specific target groups such as the very young and the elderly.

Background

6. Built in the 1950's Rhyl Fire Station is in need of renovation and modernisation. Following the move of the Service HQ from Rhyl to a purpose built site in St Asaph in 2005, parts of the building were left empty.
7. Rhyl is an ideal site for the Service's first community fire station and the available space will help fulfil the requirement placed upon fire and rescue services to promote community safety and partnership working.
8. To ensure the viability of community facilities at the station, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) undertook a nationwide study of community fire stations to find out which were the most effective.
9. The Rhyl FireFirst campaign was also launched in February 2006 to raise awareness of the community fire station project, assess local need, and discover what kinds of facilities and activities people wanted to see.
10. An innovative engagement approach was used with local people to gather useful information about their needs. This culminated in over a record 1,000 people attending the open day held at Rhyl Fire Station on April 1st 2006.



Information

- 11.** Based on the local and national research, NWFRS has drawn up building plans, which include major improvements to the operational area of the station - the parts used by firefighters and other staff. This will ensure that Rhyl continues to receive a first-class fire and rescue service.
- 12.** The planned community space within the station runs over three floors and includes five meeting rooms including a lecture theatre and reception area, storage areas for groups who meet regularly at the station and an area where the public can view fire appliances and staff at work. All areas will be provided with the latest IT facilities.
- 13.** The exterior of the station will also be completely renovated. An important feature will be the external glass lift, providing disabled access to the second floor. There will also be disabled access toilets on both the ground and the second floor. To the rear of the station will be an extensive parking area.
- 14.** Planning permission for the re-modelling and extension of Rhyl Fire Station was granted by Denbighshire County Council's Planning Committee on the 26th July 2006.

Conclusion

- 15.** It is anticipated that building works will commence in the spring of 2007 following invitation for tenders which will take place in the autumn of 2006. The construction work is expected to last for 10 months.



Conclusion *(continued)*

- 16.** A showcase event for Assembly Members will be held at the new assembly building in Cardiff Bay on the 26th September 2006. The Assembly Member for the Vale of Clwyd, Ann Jones will be hosting the event along with the Rhyl FireFirst team, Chair of the Fire Authority and officers from the Service.
- 17.** An exhibition display will help explain and illustrate more about the project and the reception will offer Assembly Members and officials the opportunity to discuss the benefits this development will bring to Rhyl and the surrounding area.
- 18.** It is anticipated that the total project cost, including IT provision, will be approximately £2 million. The Welsh Assembly Government has indicated that it is prepared to make a substantial contribution towards the Rhyl FireFirst project and the Service is currently awaiting confirmation of this grant. A further report, containing detailed costs and funding options, will be presented to the Executive Panel on the 9th October 2006.

Recommendation

- 19.** That members note the contents of the report.