

**NORTH WALES
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

DRAFT RISK REDUCTION PLAN

2007-2008

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

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Foreword by the Chairman
Of North Wales Fire And Rescue Authority

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[To be added]

What is Risk Reduction Planning (RRP)?

The following extract is taken from 'Fire and Rescue Authority Risk Reduction Plan - Wales a Safer Country' issued by the Welsh Assembly Government in March 2006 and describes the RRP process as follows:

Introduction

The Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales established the priorities for risk reduction.

An Authority's RRP must make an assessment of risk, analyse the risk and deploy resources appropriately. FRAs must not only focus on the community, but must also consider their corporate risk and business environment.

The FRA's RRP must identify the Authority's aspirations and actions in reducing risk. The RRP is a live document that must be reviewed and monitored on a regular basis to ensure FRAs maintain focus on existing and emerging risk and that proposals made and actioned are having the planned outcome. RRP is based on a fundamental review of risk. Proposals must be managed carefully to ensure changes are planned, considered and justified against robust evidence that supports the proposed change.

Aim of Fire and Rescue Authority Risk Reduction Planning

The aim of RRP is to reduce risk through a managed framework that integrates the FRAs within the wider social justice agenda in Wales.

Objectives of Risk Reduction Planning

In order for FRAs to achieve the targets of the Welsh Assembly Government they must establish a strategy aimed at:

- Reducing the number of fires and other emergency incidents;
- Reducing the loss of life in fires and other emergency incidents;
- Reducing the number and severity of injuries in fires and other emergency incidents;
- Reducing the commercial, economic and social impact of fires and other emergency incidents;
- Safeguarding the environment and heritage, both built and natural;
- Providing services that are Value for Money (VFM); and
- Integrating the activities of their FRS within the wider social justice agenda."

How Could Risks Affect the Authority?

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is committed to making North Wales a safer place to live, work and visit. Anything that could prevent it from being able to fulfil that commitment could be considered to be a 'risk'.

In more specific terms, effective RRP is intended to mitigate any risks to the Authority being able to deliver its stated aims and objectives, which are:

1. To prevent accidental and malicious fires through:

- Community Fire Safety activities, including in schools
- Enforcement of Fire Safety legislation in applicable buildings
- Promoting Fire Safety in commercial establishments
- Seeking to influence the behaviour of targeted groups of people
- Participating in partnership activities to reduce arson

2. To protect people from being killed or injured by fire and other hazards by:

- Sustaining the Service's ability to respond effectively
- Vigorously promoting the provision of adequate early warning and means of escape from all buildings in the event of fire
- Providing advice to individuals and organisations on how best to react in the event of fire

3. To protect the Community, businesses and the Environment from being harmed by fire and other hazards by:

- Minimising disruption to normal day to day activities following fire or other emergency
- Assisting in achieving early recovery in the aftermath of emergencies and disasters
- Ensuring that the Service's own procedures cause the least damage through the application of responsible and environmentally sensitive practices

4. To find ways to improve in order to meet the expectations of the Community by:

- Maintaining a meaningful dialogue with the Community, partners and other stakeholders
- Reacting positively to any complaints received
- Demonstrating a continuing dedication to fairness and equality in all areas of activity
- Providing a fully bilingual service where Welsh and English are treated as equal
- Advocating and maintaining professional standards at all times
- Complying with applicable legislation
- Using the best value framework to involve the Community in seeking continuous improvement in all functions

5. To operate as effectively and efficiently as possible, making the best use of available resources by:

- Seeking continuous improvement within a recognised Performance Management Framework
- Seeking synergy through collaborative and partnership opportunities
- Maintaining a dynamic and flexible approach to improvement,
- Adapting policies and procedures to meet new challenges
- Managing resources well, ensuring that current and future services are delivered efficiently, effectively and economically

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For clarity, the RRP is arranged under separate headings of Community Risks and Corporate Risks. The bullet points are specific areas within those risks representing opportunities for improvement for the Authority.

RISK REDUCTION PLAN	
Section 1	Section 2
COMMUNITY RISKS	CORPORATE RISKS
<p style="text-align: center;">Deaths and Injuries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire related deaths and injuries • Road traffic collisions causing deaths and injuries • Properties and their remoteness from resources • Lives at risk in the community 	<p style="text-align: center;">Capacity to Deliver Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Modernisation Agenda • Sustaining partnership working • Performance management • Employee health and development • Funding arrangements
<p style="text-align: center;">Fire and Emergency Incidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance • Automatic Fire Alarms • Children and young people with a fascination for fire • Deliberate fire setting • Properties and their remoteness from resources • Service standards 	<p style="text-align: center;">Resilience in Service Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human resources • Business continuity • Call handling and dispatch • Communications • Information Technology • Assurance of operational intervention • Resilience of suppliers • Reputation
<p style="text-align: center;">Community Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparedness • Identification of community risks • Multi-agency planning • Protecting local communities using UK resources 	<p style="text-align: center;">Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing the Fire and Rescue Authority • Financial controls • Legal services • Procurement of goods and services • Corporate social responsibility • Legal compliance
<p style="text-align: center;">Environmental Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change • Spate conditions • Intervention techniques • Economic & social impact 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFS education and prevention • Communications • Welsh Language • Equality and diversity 	

SECTION 1 - COMMUNITY RISKS

Subject	Deaths and Injuries
Identified Risk	
<p>Since 2001, thirty-three people have lost their lives from fire in domestic properties in North Wales. Although the annual figure has reduced significantly from a high of eleven in 2001-02 to four in 2005-06, fire in the home still poses a significant risk.</p>	
<p>Domestic premises are not covered by fire safety legislation. Raising awareness of the dangers of fire and providing support to people to stay safe from fire are essential to reducing and eliminating the risk of death and injury from fire. North Wales Fire And Rescue Service attended 501 accidental dwelling fires in 2005-06 in which 51 people were injured. Out of those 501 accidental dwelling fires 1019 people (87%) managed to leave the dwelling unharmed and without the assistance of the attending fire crews.</p>	
<p>There are approximately 298,000 domestic properties in North Wales. If the Authority is to ensure the safety of all residents, it will require significant investment and energy to engage with every household.</p>	
<p>The Authority is well aware that deaths and injuries from road traffic collisions (RTCs) represent a significant risk to the communities of North Wales. In recent years North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has progressed from merely providing the operational intervention, when reacting to calls for assistance, to more proactive measures such as education. Whilst committed to playing an active part in seeking to reduce the number of people being killed or injured on the roads of North Wales, the Authority will need to agree with partner organisations how much of its resources can be utilised in achieving this aim. This is to avoid either becoming over-committed and consequently failing to discharge its core statutory duties, or failing to sustain proactive measures and not meet the expectations of partner organisations.</p>	
<p>The Authority has already recognised that out of the 298,000 domestic properties in North Wales at least 4,700 have been identified as being located further than 20 minutes from the nearest fire station. While this does not necessarily increase the inherent risk of death and injury from fire at these properties, it does mean that the effectiveness of the operational intervention service is significantly reduced as fires and other emergencies have more time to develop without an intervention.</p>	
<p>Fire prevention is important in all areas of North Wales but, for premises in these remote rural locations, it becomes even more of an imperative because of the time needed for a fire engine to arrive in the event of a fire breaking out.</p>	
<p>When looking at the community risk of death and injury the Authority has is mindful that the fire and rescue service only currently attends incidents that involve either fire and/or rescue. The Authority recognises that North Wales Fire</p>	

and Rescue Service may have the capacity and could develop the skills to deal with other life threatening incidents in collaboration with our partners in the community; an example of this may be someone collapsing in the street with a cardiac condition. Fire and rescue resources, in this example, may be in the best possible location to render speedy effective assistance.

Existing Control Measures

The Authority actively seeks to engage with communities of North Wales through the fire and rescue service delivering a range of initiatives and activities, so that it can raise awareness and improve the safety and knowledge of members of the public.

This delivery is known as Community Fire Safety (CFS) and has been designed around the Authority's commitment of engagement, and, importantly, with those people who have been identified as being the most vulnerable members of our communities. By carefully targeting resources, the fire and rescue service maximises its ability to protect those at greatest risk of being killed or injured by a fire in the home. The effectiveness of this programme can be seen from the reduction in the number of fire deaths, fire related injuries, the number of dwelling fires and fires overall. There has been a progressive downward trend in each of these areas over the past five years.

The resources available to the fire and rescue service include a centrally located CFS team of ten staff which includes three educationalists and two trainers coordinating the delivery of CFS in all its forms. There are also dedicated full time CFS Practitioners, one in each of the seven county areas, established by the fire and rescue service to work coterminously with the Unitary Authorities in North Wales. CFS is also a work stream of the operational personnel based at the eight whole-time stations and there is at least one part-time CFS practitioner at each of the thirty-six retained fire stations across North Wales. All provide practical advice and support to residents living in the vicinity.

In respect of road deaths and injuries the fire and rescue service is actively involved in the work of the North Wales Road Safety Group. An educational programme known as 'Impact Road Shows' have been staged by Wrexham fire station personnel working with Wrexham County Borough Council. Although extremely well received there are currently no measures relating to its effectiveness or the impact this programme has on road deaths and injuries.

The fire and rescue service is becoming more involved in Pass Plus Cymru – a scheme to improve the driving skills of young drivers who have just passed their driving test. The three Welsh fire and rescue services combine their resources to deliver road safety messages together at national events such as the Urdd and National Eisteddfodau and the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show. Again although extremely well received there are currently no measures relating to effectiveness or the impact these programme have on road deaths and injuries.

A review of Pre-Determined Attendances (PDAs) has been undertaken to improve the effectiveness of the fire and rescue service's response in terms of sending fire engines to properties in remote rural locations. However, engagement with people to deliver CFS in remote rural locations is limited.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

The CFS function has the opportunity to look broader than its title would suggest and consideration should be given to renaming the function Community Safety (CS) and dropping the specific 'Fire' tag. This would more accurately reflect the very wide range of initiatives being undertaken to make the communities of North Wales safe from death and injury.

The Authority is aware that it cannot achieve its aim of reducing the number of fire related deaths and injuries by working in isolation. Working in partnership with other agencies, charities and organisations makes far better use of financial and human resources. Therefore, establishing and developing even closer working relationships and protocols with Unitary Authorities, NHS Trusts, Local Health Boards and other organisations within North Wales will increasingly ensure the safety of the most vulnerable members of our communities.

The Authority's partner organisations expect that the fire and rescue service will be available to respond to requests for support and advice on prevention within a reasonable time scale. Having successfully raised the level of public expectation by providing safety advice and fire safety equipment, such as smoke alarms, free of charge, failure to do so in the future could represent a risk to both public safety and the public's confidence in the Authority. The Authority will seek to ensure the long term financial requirements to supply fire safety equipment through close working with its partners in the community and the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Authority has considered the operational effectiveness of the fire and rescue service to reduce deaths and injuries at RTCs using its current disposition and deployment of resources. At present the extrication rescue role at RTCs falls to Emergency Tenders (ETs) based at four fire stations covering the whole of North Wales. These ETs have been in service for many years carrying specialist equipment which, owing to its weight and size, was too unwieldy to carry on frontline fire engines. However, over the past decade technological and manufacturing advances have been made in hydraulic rescue equipment, and the equipment identified by the fire and rescue service as that most frequently used by ETs to extricate casualties, is now smaller, lighter and more easily handled. Equipment with the same (or improved) overall capabilities can now, therefore, be carried on frontline fire engines.

This will mean that frontline fire engines, across the whole of North Wales at all forty four fire stations will be provided with the appropriate level of hydraulic rescue equipment capable of extricating casualties from more robust vehicles. This, importantly, would considerably improve the fire and rescue service's intervention time to all such incidents. Medical authorities talk of the golden hour when dealing with vehicle casualties. That is to say that casualties have a

much greater chance of survival from a serious vehicle collision if they are in hospital receiving specialist care within an hour of the incident. Taking this opportunity would have a positive impact on the golden hour and also help the Authority achieve an objective of the Welsh Assembly Government's National Framework for Fire and Rescue Services in Wales to work with other organisations to reduce deaths and injuries in road traffic collisions by 30% to 50%.

The North Wales Road Safety Group is already considering how 'Impact Road Shows' can be extended to other areas of North Wales. Although there are pockets of good practice, the Service lacks a co-ordinated strategy for reducing the impact of RTCs. This could be improved through more focussed management to develop and co-ordinate the various strands of this area of service provision. This would include developing appropriate measures to determine the effectiveness of education programmes and initiatives related to deaths and injuries at RTCs. This focussed approach will utilise the fire and rescue service's Skills, Learning and Development Centre to ensure that the training received by fire crews allows them to make full use of the equipment already provided and any new equipment entering service on frontline fire engines.

Engaging households in rural communities requires a specific implementation plan, and supporting vulnerable individuals in those areas could require long term contact to be maintained, depending on the level of risk. Even with the fire and rescue service working in partnership, the delivery of Home Fire Safety Risk Assessments to all domestic properties, whether in urban or rural areas, will need to be adequately resourced.

The Authority will therefore develop a long term strategy and seek to secure the necessary financial resources to deliver Home Fire Risk Assessments to all domestic properties in North Wales; including the means to maintain contact with those at most risk of fire after the initial assessment has been made.

Co-responding is the simultaneous dispatch with the Ambulance to life threatening medical emergencies in locations where a suitable fire service resource is more readily available. This will provide additional life-saving services to local communities. Following the Authority's trial of this initiative a review will make recommendations on the feasibility of adopting co-responding and expanding it to fire stations across North Wales. Co-responding is one of the examples of best practice in partnership working quoted in the Welsh Assembly Government's National Framework.

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 requires Fire And Rescue Authorities to provide the public with information, publicity and encouragement to reduce fires and fire related death and injuries.

The Service Standard set by the Welsh Assembly Government requires Fire And Rescue Authorities to implement an additional form of risk reduction strategy in

areas that lie beyond the boundaries of the stated response time.

In its National Framework for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government stated its objective to see Fire and Rescue Authorities achieving a significant reduction in preventable deaths and serious injuries from fires in Wales of between 30% and 50%.

Again, in its National Framework for Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government stated its objective to see Fire and Rescue Authorities achieving "ambitious targets in the first five years to work with other agencies with the aim of reducing deaths and injuries in road traffic accidents by 30% to 50%".

Anticipated Benefits

- A reduction in fire related deaths and injuries
- A reduction in RTC related deaths and injuries
- Improved safety in communities
- Enhanced operational intervention at RTCs
- Improved partnership working
- Improved engagement with rural communities
- Improved monitoring and performance management
- Development of personnel, new skills and procedures
- Raised awareness of the risks from fire and other incidents

Financial Implications

Typically, a Home Fire Safety Risk Assessment will result in the provision and fitting of safety equipment costing approximately £15, excluding labour costs. Since 2001, the Service has conducted over 24,000 of these assessments, which at current costs would equate to around £360,000 in equipment alone.

In 2005-06, the Welsh Assembly Government provided funding for smoke alarms (£89,000) and other equipment (£59,036). In 2006-07, the Service proposes to spend £109,000 on providing smoke alarms, again the majority of funding coming from the Welsh Assembly Government.

A Home Fire Safety Risk Assessment with staffing costs, equipment provision and travelling would be approximately £50 per assessment. A medium term implementation plan of delivery to 4,700 remote properties on a risk based approach would cost £235,000 over three years.

Set up costs for an Impact Road Show is £6,000 plus the cost of purchasing a 'crash' display vehicle. There are staffing costs for each delivery.

The cost of providing an area inside fire stations for driving instructors and newly qualified young drivers to use for Pass Plus Cymru courses would be minimal.

New hydraulic rescue equipment per appliance would be approximately

£8,000 per set with a total cost for 44 stations of £352,000. This can be implemented over a number of years on a phased basis in line with emergency tender withdrawal and the annual equipment replacement programme. Training costs will be integral to the training budget.

Co-responding costs are as yet to be evaluated but there will be no training costs as this is provided by the Ambulance Service. The provision of equipment can be sourced through grants and sponsorship. The majority of costs will be on payment to staff which is still to be assessed.

Subject	Fire & Emergency Incidents
<u>Identified Risk</u>	
<p>North Wales Fire and Rescue Service attended 9632 operational incidents in 2005-06 compared to 11386 in 2001-02. It is pleasing to note that the overall numbers of emergency incidents, in nearly all the individually recorded categories, are on a downward trend year on year. The number of primary fires (i.e. those that involve property with a value, those where people have been killed or injured, or those that involved five or more fire engines) has fallen by 26% since 2001-02. Special Service calls (i.e. those calls that are non-fire related and deal with rescues such as RTCs) are also down from 1431 in 2001-02 to 1363 in 2005-06.</p>	
<p>However, over the past four years North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has attended over 43,000 emergency incidents.</p>	
<p>Through the sophisticated analysis of operational data it can be identified that there is a distinct pattern when the fire and rescue service receives calls to emergencies (as shown in the appendix). This shows that the fire and rescue service is at its busiest between 3pm and 10pm with in excess of 500 calls in each of those hours when calculated over a year.</p>	
<p>The operational data indicates that the top causes of dwelling fires putting members of our communities at risk are:-</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Leaving cooking unattended2) Arson/deliberate fire setting3) Smoking materials4) Direct/Radiated heat from a fire	
<p>In dwelling fires in 2005-06 46% had a smoke alarm that activated, 20% had a smoke alarm that was fitted, but did not activate (damaged, rendered unusable or battery missing) and equally as worrying 34% had no smoke alarm at all.</p>	
<p>Over the past four years North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has attended over 2182 RTCs involving 17 fatalities and 521 casualties, of which 143 had to be</p>	

extricated by firefighters. This is just a small percentage of all the RTCs that occur in North Wales. Operational data from the last four years indicates that RTCs attended by the fire and rescue service in North Wales over a single year are most prevalent in the months of July, August, September and December with over 50 a month. The days when the Service is most likely to be called to attend are Fridays and Saturdays, with over 100 RTCs in a year occurring on those days. The Service is most likely to be called to RTCs between 1pm and 6pm, with over 40 RTCs in each of those hours when calculated over a year. RTCs are classified as Special Service calls, and although the overall number of Special Service calls is declining, the number of RTCs is staying constant at approximately 140 a year. However, the trend in the numbers of casualties is increasing.

The Authority recognises that the fire and rescue service has an ever growing and perennial problem of repeat calls owing to system faults from Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs). The fire and rescue service attended 2,993 AFA false alarms in 2005-06, which represents 31% of its operational commitment.

The impact of AFAs is that responding to unwanted fire signals is a considerable drain, both financially and in terms of the time lost to the fire and rescue service. It is disruptive to other more productive work such as CFS, but, importantly, it affects the availability of fire engines for other emergency calls, thereby potentially putting local communities at risk. This is compounded by the fact that in North Wales in excess of 98% of such calls do not require any action to be taken.

False alarms from AFAs in non domestic premises generated 2,201 calls out of a total of 2,993 AFA false alarms. The fire and rescue service attended 350 non domestic premises more than once. These 350 premises were responsible for 1,842 (83.69%) false alarms from non domestic AFAs.

Out of the 2,993 false alarms from AFAs nearly half were reported by a remote monitoring company on behalf of the premises. Although accepted practice, this prevents the fire and rescue service call handling operators from questioning and managing out the call. The consequence is that the fire and rescue service only achieved 344 (11.5%) non-attendance at all AFA false alarms. The Authority believes this should and could be more.

Although not solely a youth problem, children and young people can exhibit an inappropriate fascination with fire and can become involved in anti-social behaviour involving fire, sometimes progressing to serious acts of deliberate fire setting. The effect of such behaviour can affect communities in a variety of ways, ranging from low-level nuisance to serious disruption of normal business.

Although good progress is being made in reducing deliberate fires, down from 3,257 incidents in 2001-02 compared to 2,300 in 2005-06, a drop of 29% over four years, last year registered a rise in the sub category of primary fires that were deliberately started. This sub set covers fires in property of value, but does not include vehicles, and represents an increase of 19% up to 311 fires compared to last year's 261.

Service Standards in Wales were formally issued by the Welsh Assembly Government on 21st March 2006. The Service Standard aims to provide 80% of Welsh homes with an attendance to fire in the home within 10 minutes. The Service Standard also recognises that as a result of local population numbers, population density and population types, some areas will attract a 5 minute attendance to a fire in the home. The deciding factor for the introduction of the 5 minute attendance to a fire in the home would be where the Fire Service Emergency Cover (FSEC) computer model predicts a casualty rate greater than 6. In North Wales, where areas exist outside 10 minutes, the Authority will be required to assess individual risk and needs and, where necessary, implement additional forms of risk reduction that complement the standard.

Existing Control Measures

The Authority monitors the operational performance of the fire and rescue service at every Executive Panel meeting using the information provided in a suite of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Local Performance Indicators (LPIs). The fire and rescue service monitors delivery of the operational service from receipt of an emergency call from a member of the public, to the dispatch of an appropriate resource to the incident, the arrival of that resource at the incident to the incident's conclusion. Operational policies and procedures are monitored and refreshed periodically by the Operations function, with assistance from the Skills, Learning and Development Centre which is responsible for ensuring the competence of all operational staff in the use of appliances, equipment and procedures.

As part of a cycle of seeking continuous improvement, accidents, occurrences and near misses are recorded and evaluated to identify trends, resulting in appropriate action being taken, such as amending working practices and procedures or replacing equipment.

By monitoring performance the fire and rescue service is able to adjust its operational resourcing and the delivery of educational prevention messages to meet the needs of local communities.

CFS has been very effective in reducing fire deaths and injuries as shown in the first community risk described in this document. It is also responsible for the encouraging reduction in fires overall. CFS work combines targeting the main causes of fire in the home with identifying those people in our local communities who are most at risk.

The call handling and dispatch function undertaken in the fire and rescue service's control room has contributed greatly to the reduction in the number of mobilisations the fire and rescue service undertakes. This in itself reduces risk to other road users in our communities. An example of this is that out of 859 malicious calls received in 2005-06, the control room operators successfully identified 72% as malicious by challenging the caller, and no mobilisation of fire engines was made. These occurrences are measured by a BVPI, but the control room manager has set a challenging local target (LPI) of 75% non-mobilisation of fire engines for the future. Although the same principles are

adopted for AFA false alarms, this is proving more difficult to implement and is not as effective as challenging malicious calls.

Initiatives and partnership working have assisted in reducing risk to the community from certain categories of incidents. Collaboration with Unitary Authorities to remove abandoned vehicles has impacted on the number of deliberate fires in vehicles resulting in a drop of 18% in 2005-06 from the previous year. It has already been identified that more work is required for deliberate primary fires.

The fire and rescue service devotes considerable resources to engaging with young people. A programme of educational sessions and multi-agency ('Crucial Crew') presentations is delivered in schools across North Wales and additional input is given to external groups such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Scouts, Guides, and the Prince's Trust Volunteers.

The fire and rescue service, in partnership with Unitary Authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government, also gets involved in intervention programmes such as FACE and the Phoenix Projects. These are designed to give new direction to the lives of young people who are in danger of progressing into a lifetime of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

More recently, the Authority has endorsed the fire and rescue service entering into a partnership venture to open a new purpose built visitors centre, called Dangerpoint, to educate children about the dangers and hazards of everyday life. One of the CFS team's educationalists is seconded to work part-time at the centre.

The fire and rescue service ensures that it never leaves a dwelling following an operational incident without offering the appropriate level of smoke alarms – free of charge.

As highlighted in the previous community risk incidents in remote rural locations with difficult access or restrictions cause the operational intervention service difficulty at times. Although the fire and rescue service set a target for confining fires in dwellings to the room of origin (BVPI 144) for 93.6% of occasions it was only able to achieve 89% confining 448 out of 501 dwelling fires. This measure is considered to be of operational effectiveness, but can be affected by many variables including the delay in being able to make an intervention owing to journey time.

Initial mapping using the FSEC computer model to provide an early indication of the impact of the Welsh Assembly Government's Service Standard shows that in North Wales the fire and rescue service can reach 80% (just under 230,000) of households, representing 79% (approximately 526,800) of the population and 28% of the geographical area of North Wales. There are currently no individual output areas in North Wales with a casualty rate greater than 6.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

Although the record of the last four years is pleasing there is no room for complacency. The Authority recognises that it is the hard work of its entire fire and rescue service staff that has contributed to the overall picture of increasing safety and the reduction of risk for local communities.

However the Authority wants to progress with refining CFS messages in the areas of unattended cooking, smoking materials and open or unprotected fires.

As previously stated the Authority will develop a long term strategy and seek to secure the necessary financial resources to deliver Home Fire Risk Assessments to all domestic properties in North Wales; including the means of maintaining contact with those at most risk of fire after the initial assessment has been made.

Given the very distinctive pattern of incidents (appendix) the Authority will investigate options for providing operational personnel in the right numbers, at the right times in the most appropriate locations to meet the needs of local communities. This is to ensure the most effective use of the fire and rescue service's human resources. This will include agreeing and putting into effect the recommendations of the review of operational manager provision for incidents, the review of the retained duty system (RDS) and the review of wholetime duty systems (WDS).

In dealing with false alarms from AFAs the Authority will be implementing a policy for the reduction and management of these AFAs which will ultimately see the non attendance of fire and rescue resources to repeated unwarranted false alarms. The utilisation of new fire safety legislation through the courts to enforce the management of AFA systems, where this is deemed appropriate, will also be included.

The provision of individual support and guidance for youngsters using FACE currently stops when they reach the age of eleven. There would be benefits in extending this up to the age of seventeen, focussing on young fire setters, children sent for reparation, children excluded from school, etc. The anticipated benefits would be a reduction in fire-related anti-social behaviour, its impact on communities, and a reduction in the number of malicious calls being made to the fire and rescue service control.

The Authority will continue to use the FSEC computer model to verify and inform decision making on the disposition of resources. The Authority will develop a robust performance measure to monitor progress against the Welsh Assembly Government's Service Standard.

The Authority will implement a strategy, on a risk based approach, to provide education and prevention to those households outside the 10 minute attendance times.

The Authority will review the effectiveness of dual role appliances in reaching remote and restricted rural areas as they are brought into service.

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

The Fire & Rescue Services Act 2004 requires Fire And Rescue Authorities to provide the public with information, publicity and encouragement to reduce fires and fire related death and injuries.

The Welsh Assembly Government Service Standard aims to provide 80% of Welsh homes with an attendance to fire in the home within 10 minutes. The Service Standard also recognises that as a result of local population numbers, population density and population types some areas will attract a 5 minute attendance to a fire in the home. The deciding factor for the introduction of the 5 minute attendance to a fire in the home would be where the FSEC computer model predicts a casualty rate greater than 6.

Local Government Act 1999 in respect of Best Value and performance indicators.

Anticipated Benefits

- Reduction in fires and emergency incidents
- Reduction of risk in local communities
- Improved awareness of risk in local communities
- Improved engagement with rural communities
- Reduced impact on resources from AFAs
- Improved human resource management
- Improved performance and performance management
- Improved operational access to remote and restricted rural areas

Financial Implications

The financial implication of undertaking Home Fire Safety Risk Assessments has been quantified in the first community risk in this document – Deaths and Injuries.

The reviews are yet to report, but have the potential to impact significantly on the Authority's finances. A hypothetical example would be recommendations from the RDS review to move RDS personnel from the current system of payment to a salary scheme. Conversely there could be recommendations that identify both financial savings and efficiencies.

The staffing requirement to develop work with young people has already been identified, and the Welsh Assembly Government has recently approved funding for the appointment of a youth worker, a Phoenix Project co-ordinator and part-time administrative support to continue until March 2009.

Developing the strategy for dwellings with an attendance time in excess of 10 minutes will have no implications, whereas implementing the strategy may

have significant implications. This is based on a Home Fire Safety Risk Assessment with staffing costs, equipment provision and travelling amounting to approximately £50 per assessment.

Subject

Community Resilience

Identified Risk

Following various natural disasters and terrorist atrocities over the past few years Government recognised a new level of planning was needed to meet new threats to both national and local resilience. This new level has been formalised by the Civil Contingencies Act which became law in November 2005. The Act brings into force new legislation on emergency planning that has implications for all emergency responders and local communities. The Act sets out clear expectations and responsibilities for responders to ensure that they are prepared to deal effectively with the full range of emergencies from localised incidents through to catastrophic events.

The Act ensures that Category 1 responders, such as Fire & Rescue Services, the Local Authorities, Police, Ambulance, Local Health Boards, etc. make plans that are sound and proportionate to risks.

This is produced in the form of a Community Risk Register (CRR) which has been compiled through multi-agency co-operation. As part of this process there is a statutory duty to carry out risk assessments and to publish the results of the risk assessments to the extent necessary to reduce the impact of an emergency on the local community.

Over 80 risk assessments have been completed in North Wales and the CRR can be viewed via North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's website at www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

This level of partnership working currently means that members of the fire and rescue service are involved in drawing up detailed response plans to the identified highest risks.

The fire and rescue service is also involved in the New Dimension programme which is part of the Government's Civil Contingencies Capabilities Programme. Its aim is to enhance the country's preparedness and resilience by improving the capability of the fire and rescue service to respond to major and catastrophic incidents. The programme also has the secondary benefit of supporting the fire and rescue service in delivering day-to-day business improvements to the local community. The New Dimension programme provides the capability and structure to deliver a co-ordinated national response to a range of catastrophic incidents, such that the fire and rescue service, in conjunction with others, is able to minimise the loss of life and injury and to reduce the physical, environmental, and financial effects of the incident.

The programme will deliver six distinct capabilities:

- Mass Decontamination
- Urban Search and Rescue
- Water (large scale delivery and/or removal)
- Command and Control
- Operational Logistics and Support; and
- Long Term Capability Management.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is already equipped with the mass decontamination and water capabilities through the programme.

Existing Control Measures

The Authority has been at the forefront of ensuring its resources are available as part of the national and local programme of resilience.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is a major contributor to the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) above and beyond its statutory duty. The fire and rescue service provides the chairmanship of the coordination group. This group ensures that the strategic decisions taken by the LRF are translated into firm plans and actions that will mitigate the effects of the identified highest risks on our local communities. As part of this work the coordination group was responsible for the compilation and publication of the CRR.

The fire and rescue service also provides the accommodation and management of a partnership team which is unique to North Wales and consists of a representative from the fire and rescue service, the police and the ambulance with members from other category 1 responders co-opted to the team to discharge certain areas of the local resilience work programme.

The fire and rescue service has benefited from this working arrangement which has enabled it to plan and exercise for large scale incidents over a wide range of scenarios. Part of the effectiveness of these control measures is that managers at all levels in the fire and rescue service have an appreciation of the roles of other partners and have worked closely with colleagues from other organisations which has improved the lines of communication through personal knowledge and acquaintance.

This process has improved business continuity which is fully covered in the corporate risk section.

Operational personnel in North Wales are competent in using the new equipment and appliances provided under the New Dimension capabilities programme. The fire and rescue service utilises this resource provision frequently and factors this capability into local planning. An example would be the process of identifying how and where the provided high volume pump (HVP) could be used to minimise the effects of localised flooding in North Wales.

An area that is not effective is the provision of information to operational firefighters once they are attending an incident. A great deal of work is undertaken to develop and refine plans to deal with incidents. Unless hard copies of plans are carried on each frontline fire engine, which given the quantity and range of plans would be impractical, there is currently no method of relaying mapping, building plans and other essential information relating to an incident.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

The Authority will build on the relationships that have already been established with other category 1 responders and [collaborate on operational exercising of major plans](#) to ensure both the validity of plans and the preparedness of operational firefighters.

The Authority will [review the operational use of the equipment and appliances provided by the capabilities programme](#) to ensure that the maximum utilisation is being achieved.

The Authority will [develop a proactive communications plan to warn and inform local communities](#) in the event of a major incident and to handle enquiries relating to the situation.

The Authority will [consider options on the best method of providing operational firefighters with relevant information at an incident.](#)

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

Civil Contingencies Act 2004
Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
Incident Command System – The management of operational incidents

Anticipated Benefits

- Improved cooperation between category 1 responders
- Improved collaborative management of risks in local communities
- Improved resilience in local communities
- Improved operational intelligence
- Improved utilisation of resources
- Improved engagement with local communities
- Safer working practices

Financial Implications

There are limited financial implications to major exercising with partner organisations. This would only be in respect of RDS personnel pay beyond

which the fire and rescue service would normally commit. However, this would be limited to a few occasions per annum and could be contained within existing budgets.

There are no significant financial implications in gaining full utilisation of the three vehicles provided by the capabilities programme.

Developing a proactive communications plan to warn and inform local communities will have no implications, whereas implementing the plan may have significant implications depending on the options chosen and whether they can be sourced from existing provisions within the fire and rescue service or require additional technology or third party involvement.

Implementing a system of providing information in dynamic circumstances at an incident would prove a major expense. Fire and rescue services who have already adopted mobile data units in fire engines have invested between £200k and £300k in this form of technology. The specification for Firelink should provide a digital data platform linking the control room to each fire engine. Should the service be able to secure funding from Firelink, as had originally been anticipated, this could represent a significant reduction in outlay to the Authority.

Subject	Environmental Impact
<p data-bbox="220 1122 427 1155"><u>Identified Risk</u></p> <p data-bbox="220 1196 1329 1296">There is growing evidence that damaging climate change is occurring and it will have long lasting effects on the economy, environment and society of North Wales.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1337 1361 1800">The effect of climate change in the short term manifests itself on the operational provision of the fire and rescue service for local communities by creating situations which see a rapid rise in emergency calls due to climatic conditions such as flooding, whether coastal, river or flash flooding. Extreme examples of these types of flooding events were seen at Carlisle and Boscastle, but there are also many examples of localised flooding in North Wales. In contrast prolonged dry spells can result in increased calls to grass, heath and gorse fires which will damage eco-systems and could destroy sites of special scientific interest (SSSI) which are places in North Wales considered so important to the nation's natural heritage that they have been designated to protect and enhance their special interest. These types of sites cover over 10 per cent of the land area of Wales and range from small fens, bogs and riverside meadows to sand dunes, woodlands and vast tracts of uplands.</p> <p data-bbox="220 1841 1329 1966">In these occasional circumstances the fire and rescue service's resources are committed to the point of having to prioritise emergency calls and attend incidents as and when resources become available. This strategy for dealing with incidents is known as spate conditions. These conditions have to be</p>	

balanced with other emergency calls that will still be received as part of the normal workload of frontline operational intervention services.

The Authority is aware that the fire and rescue service, along with other public and private organisations, generates considerable amounts of waste from its premises, whether refuse, paper, lighting and heating. This is in addition to the carbon dioxide emissions produced from its fleet of operational and support vehicles. The Authority also recognises that firefighting and operational techniques implemented by the fire and rescue service at many incidents will also have an impact on the environment. This may be in the form of contaminated water run off at large fires, the use of firefighting foams for the suppression of flammable liquid based fires, or the range of fluids and contaminants that can be encountered from vehicles at RTCs.

Local communities can be affected even after a fire has been extinguished, when buildings, vehicles and areas of land which are burnt out are left as eyesores and a visual reminder of the destruction of fire. This social impact can lead to an economic impact as businesses, householders and visitors form an opinion about an area based on its environment and their perception of the area's desirability.

Existing Control Measures

Dealing with large volumes of calls as a result of spate conditions is well rehearsed and enacted. This includes the large scale mobilisation and relocation of fire and rescue service resources. Equipment, techniques and procedures have been developed to deal with the new hazards that firefighters face. As an example this now includes water safety training for all operational personnel to recognise the dangers posed by fast flowing water in flood conditions and to develop the skills and techniques to operate safely. Operational managers are also aware of the impact the fire and rescue service has on the environment at an incident and work closely with the Environment Agency through early contact and consultation. This awareness of environmental issues has led the Authority to partner the Environment Agency and formalise, through a memorandum of understanding, the provision of an environmental protection unit crewed by firefighters and equipped to mitigate the impact of incidents on the environment.

The Authority recognised the potential to lead on environmental issues when establishing the new fire and rescue service headquarters at St. Asaph. The building uses energy efficient lighting and heating and there are a number of fire and rescue service premises practising re-cycling and waste segregation and management, although this is currently limited and does not form part of a co-ordinated strategic objective.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

The Authority recognises the benefit of working closely with the Environment Agency and the potential for extending this work to identifying areas susceptible to flooding, not only for the protection of local communities, but the protection of fire and rescue service resources and assets to ensure resilience in the continued ability to provide operational intervention services to local communities.

The Authority believes that closer working with the Countryside Commission for Wales for the identification of areas of SSSI would enhance the fire and rescue service's ability to deal with what are currently regarded as low level - low impact incidents. Having detailed mapping and descriptions of areas of SSSI would improve operational intelligence and the ability to provide assistance.

The Authority will review the operational techniques and procedures currently used by the fire and rescue service to minimise the effects of pollution at operational incidents and to ensure environmentally acceptable clean up processes are adopted before leaving any scene of operations.

The Authority is committed to working on an all Wales basis to address climate change and will undertake this by adopting the Green Dragon Environmental Standard which will require reviews of the use of supplied and natural resources, alternative fuels and energies; and of waste management and recycling.

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

There is a considerable array of legislation dealing with environmental issues. The Authority is seeking to achieve Level 3 of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard.

Anticipated Benefits

- Improved operational intelligence
- Improved operational techniques and procedures
- Improved awareness of the natural environment
- Improved organisational resilience
- Improved profile within communities
- Reduced impact from operational firefighting
- Reduced energy use and its costs
- Reduced fuel costs
- Reduced waste disposal and its costs

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications to reviewing areas of flooding with the Environment Agency. However, there may be significant cost implications in

identifying fire and rescue service assets and resources that could be at risk.

There are no financial implications in adding SSSI information to the fire and rescue service's geographical information systems.

Reviewing operational procedures and processes can be undertaken as a part of the operations work stream. However, there may be cost implications from any recommendations to substantially amend procedures and processes.

Attaining the Green Dragon Environmental Standard will require commitment to environmental management and initial assistance from specialist consultants costing somewhere between £1,500 and £4,000, depending on the level of award being sought. However, the Welsh Assembly Government provides a matched funding grant to assist in gaining the Standard. The financial potential is that following identifying, improving and reporting on the environmental impact of the Service and its processes the anticipated benefits of reduced energy, fuel and waste disposal costs could prove significant.

Subject	Community Engagement
<u>Identified Risk</u>	
<p>The Authority's ability to deliver an effective fire and rescue service relies heavily on engaging with people in every section of our local communities, and in doing so, meeting their expectations. Matters of equality, including language, gender, ethnicity, disability, religion, age or sexual orientation all contribute in some way to the fire and rescue service's effectiveness in this regard. Failure to act in accordance with the Authority's stated objectives relating to fairness and equality including in the provision of a bilingual service, would constitute a significant risk.</p>	
<p>To this end the fire and rescue service has already embarked on a linguistic skills strategy which includes an audit of the existing language skills and a review of the requirements for bilingual skills in all posts throughout the Service. It is intended that this work will continue to develop to ensure that the best use is made of available skills in engaging with local communities.</p>	
<p>This is important to the Authority as it recognises that there are still sections of our local communities that are just not hearing, noticing or heeding the safety messages and CFS work undertaken by the fire and rescue service.</p>	
<p>The Authority is aware that reaching certain areas of the local community will require the skills of specialists from other organisations. Partnership working has proved effective in reaching vulnerable groups and the fire and rescue service will continue to engage in partnership working to achieve safer communities.</p>	
<p>The Authority believes it is important to recruit a diversity of staff so that the fire and rescue service reflects the community it serves. Failure to achieve a</p>	

diverse workforce would impair the fire and rescue service's ability to engage with all sections of a rapidly changing community.

This is reflected in the Authority's commitment to a Race Equality Scheme which sets out the fire and rescue service's pro-active approach to providing training and awareness sessions to all employees on equal opportunities, diversity and fairness, all of which will include specific input on race issues appropriate to the minority ethnic population in North Wales.

Another Authority commitment is the Equality Act 2006 which places a statutory duty on the fire & rescue service to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment in the workplace and promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Existing Control Measures

The Authority serves a rich diversity of communities, against a backdrop of significant natural and cultural heritage and has adopted the principle that in the conduct of public business in Wales, it will treat the English and Welsh languages on a basis of equality.

The current gender make up of the CFS team is balanced and the majority of team members are bilingual which includes each of the seven County CFS practitioners. However there is no current representation from the minority ethnic population.

CFS messages and all printed safety messages generated by the fire and rescue service are printed bilingually. Call handling in the fire and rescue service control room can be carried out in the medium of English and Welsh

The National Firefighters Recruitment process adopted in 2005 has been developed and tested nationally to prevent discrimination on the grounds of gender or ethnic origin. Towards the end of 2005 the Service recruited on an all Wales regional basis using the National Firefighters' selection tests. This process has been tested nationally to ensure it is a fair process for all.

However, despite the standard of selection tests, it did not significantly alter the number of ethnic minority or female candidates who were successful.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

CFS initiatives will be monitored and assessed to ensure they meet the needs of all sections of the community.

The Authority will undertake a review of the effectiveness of current partnership working which will include an analysis of any gaps in the current provision of CFS advice and fire safety education to ensure coverage to all sections of local communities.

In relation to recruitment the Authority will establish a programme of Positive Action to be implemented prior to the next planned WDS recruitment campaign, starting with a programme to run in the year prior to recruiting.

There is also scope to raise awareness amongst women that opportunities exist to work for the fire and rescue service on the RDS, especially in areas that struggle to recruit for daytime cover.

The Authority will launch specific activities to encourage more people from ethnic minorities to apply. This will include providing sessions to raise awareness.

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

The Welsh Language Act 1993
The Equality Act 2006
The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
The Race Relations Act (Amendment) Act 2001
The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

Anticipated Benefits

- Improved engagement with local communities
- Improved delivery of safety messages
- More focussed partnership working
- A more diverse workforce reflecting the communities it serves
- Improved understanding of equalities and fairness

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications in reviewing CFS messages and initiatives. Any changes deemed necessary will be accommodated in the existing departmental budgets.

There are no financial implications in reviewing partnership working. Any changes deemed necessary will be accommodated in the existing departmental budgets.

Finance for positive action and awareness sessions will be taken from the overall cost of recruitment and the existing budget head.

SECTION 2 – CORPORATE RISKS

Subject	Capacity to Deliver Services
<p data-bbox="225 450 427 483"><u>Identified Risk</u></p> <p data-bbox="225 521 1364 622">The Authority has achieved much since its establishment in 1996. However over that period of time the role a fire and rescue service plays in society has changed almost beyond recognition.</p> <p data-bbox="225 667 1364 801">The range of statutory duties and powers which now includes rescues and the provision of CFS advice, to name but two, under the Fire and Rescue Services Act, have significantly changed the expectations of local communities and Government of what an Authority should be providing.</p> <p data-bbox="225 846 1364 1093">This, plus the requirements of various pieces of legislation such as the Crime and Disorder Act, as a statutory partner, and the Civil Contingencies Act, as a category 1 responder, has rightly placed fire and rescue services at the centre of public service delivery. This is also seen in the central role the fire and rescue services have in the New Dimensions capability programme for the provision of mass decontamination, the first of six currently identified capabilities to be rolled out across the UK.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1137 1364 1384">New workloads in addition to maintaining the core operational intervention service that our communities expect from a fire and rescue service now face the finite resources of the Authority. These new workloads include being the enforcing authority for the Fire Safety Regulatory Reform Order, and the quantity and scale of work required to achieve all the improvements associated with the Modernisation Agenda. The corporate risk to the Authority is clearly one of capacity.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1429 1364 1597">Collaborative working assists by allocating work to a number of partners, but the fire and rescue service in its willingness and desire to contribute to the aims and objectives of other organisations, as well as achieving its own goals, is spreading itself increasingly thinly and as a consequence this may have a detrimental affect on the success of the partnership.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1641 1364 1843">By sharing information between agencies and organisations, such as with health and social services agencies or crime and disorder partnerships, the fire and rescue service is able to thoroughly assess vulnerability to risk. Establishing this level of knowledge in isolation would require a great deal of resources and would be unlikely to produce such useful information without the partners' in-depth knowledge and skills.</p> <p data-bbox="225 1888 1364 1989">Following a recent review of the Wales Programme for Improvement for local authorities, the Welsh Assembly Government is working towards introducing a similar performance management framework for Fire and Rescue Authorities</p>	

(WPI-FRA). It is anticipated that the finalised WPI-FRA will come into effect from April 2007.

The planning and reporting stages of WPI-FRA are likely to tie in with those of Risk Reduction Planning (RRP), with a view to reducing the overall planning burden on Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Taking WPI-FRA and RRP together, this should result in Authorities undertaking a fundamental review of their whole operating environment; both community and corporate. A failure to adopt this framework and secure continuous improvement would constitute a significant risk to the Authority.

Having a healthy, well-trained and highly motivated workforce is vital to achieving the Authority's corporate aims. Without this, the Authority would be unable to function. The Authority recognises that each day lost through sickness absence represents reduced efficiency, compromised quality and lost opportunities. Over the past few years, sickness absence has been running at a level well above the national targets set by Government.

The effective recruitment, development, assessment and progression of fire and rescue service staff is required to ensure fairness and equality of opportunity and to effectively deliver services. Failure to secure an effective well planned workforce would constitute a significant risk to the achievement of the Authority's corporate aims and reduce the capacity of the fire and rescue service to function effectively.

The health and safety of all staff, wherever their place of work, is important, both in terms of maintaining an efficient workforce and in protecting the public. Knowledge of health and safety issues is vital to maintain an ongoing programme of development to update skills.

The Authority is committed to the provision of equipment and services to the most vulnerable members of our communities at no charge. The continued capacity to deliver these services is attributable to generous funding from the Welsh Assembly Government. Although there is no indication that this funding stream will cease the Authority recognises the risk to its corporate objectives of a reduction or the curtailment of funding streams.

Existing Control Measures

Because of the fire and rescue service's task-driven ethos of delivering high quality levels of service on demand, new work streams and work loads become absorbed into the existing organisational structure of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. There are no controls for these external impositions on both the Authority and the fire and rescue service and it only becomes an issue when tasks and priorities are not completed as required.

The fire and rescue service engages with partner agencies at county level and

across North Wales, but its efforts are often frustrated by limitations on the type of information that it is able to share. Some information is already accessible and when analysed and collated leads to targeted CFS work.

With regard to performance management fire and rescue service managers have been involved in helping the Assembly to draw up the relevant statutory guidance. The Wales Audit Office has also been invited to undertake a study of performance management arrangements throughout the Authority, and to recommend improvements as appropriate.

IT software has already been purchased that improves access to a wide range of performance information. Work to build and populate the system is already well advanced.

The fire and rescue service has recently adopted a new attendance management policy to support employees in managing down the number of days lost to sickness absence. The fire and rescue service has already begun to adopt new practices and procedures as part of a fully Integrated Personal Development System (IPDS) for the continual development of its entire staff.

Recruitment procedures, a new approach to training and development and objective assessments of potential have all been introduced. The fire and rescue service has already adopted a successful and comprehensive health and safety policy. Well-established procedures are in place to ensure staff safety and allow full access to specialist advice and support.

Participating in the Public Service Management Wales initiative with People Exchange, Action Learning Sets, Master Classes and many other development programmes has enabled the Service to develop and strengthen working relationships with other organisations.

The provision of fire safety equipment to vulnerable members of local communities is fully assessed and recorded to allow for audit.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

To ensure that the fire and rescue service is effective in partnership working the Authority will implement a partnership review board. The review board will consist of Authority and fire and rescue service members as well as lay members. The role of the review board will be to examine whether the organisations contributing to the proposed partnership are ethical and share the same aims and objectives for community safety as the Authority. The board will also examine the feasibility of the partnership in the context of current commitments, workloads and continued sustainability.

An overarching framework, incorporating both performance management and risk management strategies needs to be agreed, clarified and communicated to fire and rescue service staff.

Arrangements to roll out the performance information system will be progressed in line with the development of new national performance indicators.

The Authority will secure, through the Skills, Learning and Development Centre, additional training on conducting return to work interviews to support managers in managing their staff. The Skills, Learning and Development Centre will also review how staff development can incorporate elements of personal development relating to coping mechanisms, time management, assertiveness and positive thinking.

The Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) is actively encouraging joint working between local authorities across the public sector in Wales to achieve efficiency gains and provide improved services. The Authority will seek to collaborate with the other two Welsh fire and rescue services in an "All Wales Occupational Health Unit" with a view to working towards further collaboration with the Police and Ambulance Services across the whole of Wales.

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
The Civil Contingencies Act 2004
The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

Anticipated Benefits

- Increased capacity
- Improved management of partnerships
- More focussed partnership objectives
- Reduced burden for planning
- Improved performance management
- Reduced staff absence
- Improved staff development
- Improved health services

Financial Implications

Setting up of a partnership review board will have minimal financial implications. There are no immediate financial implications in adopting an overarching framework for planning.

The development and training of staff is an annual cost and will be sourced from the appropriate budget head. A reduction in the level of sickness absence would represent efficiency gains, even if immediate cost savings cannot be made. The cost of occupational health services is expected to increase by around 2% to 3% each year.

Identified Risk

Resilience as a corporate risk is the identification of what can disrupt the day to day running of the fire and rescue service in the delivery of its services to local communities.

The background on resilience can be read in the community risk section – Local and National Resilience. The major difference when looking at resilience as a corporate risk is that the focus for the Authority is internal rather than external.

An important part of the internal focus is the concept of business continuity management (BCM). The Business Continuity Institute defines BCM as: “a holistic management process that identifies potential impacts that threaten an organisation and provides a framework for building resilience and the capability for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its key stakeholders, and reputation.”

Good BCM focuses on three independent areas. Each of which is vital to restoring core functions following a disruption:

1. People - Without a skilled workforce the fire and rescue service can not hope to meet its objectives.
2. Processes – The services key processes and work streams, maintained and implemented by its people, enable objectives to be met
3. Infrastructure - Without buildings and other facilities in which people can work, objectives cannot be met.

The CRR developed for North Wales has already identified the pandemic flu risk as being very high. The threat of a particular strain of virus affecting the workforce is real. According to Government estimates, if pandemic flu were to strike, up to 25% of the workforce could be unavailable at any given time, either from the effects of the illness on them or on their families.

This level of absence would have a significant effect on the provision of normal services, especially if wave after wave of the virus continued to strike for weeks after the initial outbreak.

Call handling and dispatch is carried out by the fire and rescue service’s control room. This is a critical service process and provides the emergency link between local communities and the Authority. The control room relies heavily on technology to enable it to receive calls for assistance and mobilise resources appropriately. Any risk to the technology is therefore a significant risk to the safe and effective delivery of emergency and non-emergency services. A risk already identified as very high by the CRR for North Wales is coastal flooding. The current location of the control room in Rhyl has been identified as right on the edge of a coastal flood plain. This could have disastrous consequences as all the cabling for the technology is routed below ground level. Another risk is

the support by the suppliers of the existing control system which may not be available beyond 2007. The upkeep of the existing systems is therefore uncertain.

Firelink is the national project whereby radio communications systems in individual fire and rescue services will be replaced by a national wide-area radio system in Wales, Scotland and England. This is intended to build resilience by ironing out any incompatibility between different systems. However, the rollout of this new radio system itself presents risks to the effectiveness and efficiency of the control function.

Failure to deliver the operational intervention service, or delivering to a poor standard, would represent a serious threat to people's lives, a loss of public confidence in the Authority, and the possibility of litigation.

The Authority has recognised that the use of information technology is an important element of the effective running of the fire and rescue service. Any failure to secure the continuing effectiveness of this function would constitute a significant risk to service delivery.

An area in which the Authority may be at risk is the resilience of suppliers of services and goods to the fire and rescue service, particularly in areas that would affect the operational intervention service.

Failure in any area of service delivery would have a profound effect on the reputation of the Authority and the fire and rescue service and could lead to a long term loss of public confidence. This would diminish the effectiveness of CFS campaigns and have a detrimental impact on community engagement.

Existing Control Measures

The Authority has reinforced its commitment to a risk management culture by endorsing a Corporate Risk Management policy which has been developed in consultation with auditors from the local Wales Audit Office.

The fire and rescue service has initiated a business impact assessment as part of its business continuity arrangements. Managers from the fire and rescue service are already identifying critical risks, and plans will be produced and continuously monitored and updated.

Because of the potential catastrophic impact from a failure of the fire and rescue service's control room well-rehearsed, well-established procedures exist for site evacuation to a secondary control facility at Caernarfon.

Having anticipated the withdrawal of support for the control system, the Service has already budgeted for the procurement of a replacement system during 2006-07 and secured spare parts for the existing system as a precaution. A maintenance contract has also been agreed with another company to

support the system.

Currently there is no process of operational assurance of the intervention service. However, the fire and rescue service has secured excellent frontline operational intervention services through its management structures, updated procedures and policies, staff development and support programmes, and the provision of appropriate high quality vehicles and equipment.

An external review of the IT function in 2004 prompted the introduction of improvement activities. This process was repeated in March 2006 to confirm improvements and highlight some additional areas of work.

Currently there is no process for ascertaining the resilience of the fire and rescue service's suppliers.

Both the Authority and the fire and rescue service have a good public reputation which is maintained through the proactive work of the fire and rescue service's corporate communications department.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

The Authority will review the fire and rescue service's business continuity plans as part of its overarching Corporate Risk Management policy.

The Civil Contingencies Act requires that category 1 responders put in place arrangements to exercise business continuity plans to ensure they are effective. During 2007-08 the Authority will undertake to exercise its business continuity plans to confirm robustness and make amendments as required.

Owing to the vulnerability of the existing control room the Authority will consider what alternative locations are available for this provision with due regard to opportunities for partnership working and collaboration.

To provide operational assurance the Authority will set up an operational review team with the role of attending specific incidents, exercises and training events, to identify strengths and areas for development in the field of operational intervention. This initiative will enable continuous development and improvement across the operations function.

The Authority will develop a new disaster recovery policy for IT, as part of an overarching business continuity plan for the IT function. This would improve the function's overall resilience to attack or failure. This will include a range of options for the relocation of the IT server farm currently at the Rhyl site.

The Authority will adopt the Welsh Assembly Government's e-government strategy for Wales. This will ensure that the fire and rescue service's development is in line with that in other public bodies in Wales.

The Authority recognises that extending video conferencing to all seven county safety offices would also contribute to the Assembly Government's strategy for sustainable development and securing environmentally friendly policies.

The Authority will compile a register of critical suppliers and confirm their level of resilience. Based on the findings new suppliers may need to be identified.

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

Civil Contingencies Act 2004
Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004
Incident Command System – The management of operational incidents

Anticipated Benefits

- Improved resilience
- Robust business continuity
- Effective planning and exercising
- Improved staff awareness
- Resilient supply chain
- Improved information technology
- Auditable operational assurance

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications in business continuity planning as an organisational process. However, there may be implications around putting in place resilience plans depending on the requirements.

The Authority has already budgeted for the procurement of a replacement mobilising system during 2006-07.

There are no financial implications in undertaking operational assurance.

The overall IT budget requirement for 2007-08 will be calculated as part of the budget planning process for that year.

Subject

Governance

Identified Risk

Effective corporate governance and securing high quality fire and rescue services within a democratic framework relies on both an effective Authority structure and effective Members. The Wales Charter for Member Development aims to support Members by providing a broad framework that incorporates local planning, self-assessment, action and review, comparison and the sharing of good and innovative practice. Its adoption would strengthen the support given to Members in Wales, and would communicate the Authority's commitment to striving for excellence.

A legal service to the Authority is provided through a Service Level Agreement with one of the Unitary Authorities. The introduction of new fire safety legislation will fundamentally change the role of fire and rescue services. As the Authority will be an enforcing authority under the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO), the fire and rescue service will become more involved in enforcement work over a wider range of non domestic premises than ever before (e.g. at licensed premises, houses in multiple occupation, and small retail outlets). There is an anticipated increase in workload as there are approximately 26,000 non-domestic properties in North Wales, of which the fire and rescue service would consider half to pose a higher life risk. It is also anticipated that the number of prosecutions will rise under the RRO, as once an enforcement notice is issued there are tighter timescales than under the previous certification regime.

Fire and Rescue Authorities are legally and duty bound to operate as efficiently, effectively and economically as is reasonable, and to secure proper financial controls. Failure to ensure either of these can have far reaching effects on service delivery, and will constitute a risk to the Authority's ability to deliver its corporate aims.

The development of the Authority's property estate reflects the evolving needs of the Fire and Rescue Service in terms of the accommodation and welfare facilities needed for the staff and operational equipment. A failure to provide suitable accommodation cost effectively would constitute a risk to the Authority's management of its resources.

Efficiencies are planned from improved arrangements for the procurement of energy (gas, electricity, and oil) through an energy – buying partnership with other public sector organisations in North Wales. This will improve the buying power of the Authority in the various energy markets.

Any delay in assessing the National Procurement Strategy and its implications for Wales and the fire and rescue service will have a detrimental effect on the ability to achieve value for money on major procurement projects.

Corporate social responsibility is an aspiration of the Authority. The Authority is concerned with the well being of individuals and local communities. It makes

sense that an ethical organisation is likely to be more successful longer term because of its reputation with the community and improved motivation among employees. Corporate ethics can include employee secondments to community work, responsible/fair trading, human rights, ethical partnerships and environmental protection such as recycling and the control of emissions. Key influences on the Authority to maintain ethical and environmental stances are the Welsh Assembly Government, local communities and employees. A risk to the Authority could be the recruitment of quality staff as a CIPD study has recently shown 82% of a range of employees said they would not work for an organisation that did not share the same values/ethics that they did.

The Authority continues to meet its obligation of legal compliance across a wide range of legislation.

Existing Control Measures

There is currently no support mechanism to assist Members in their development.

The change to fire safety legislation marks a fundamentally different approach requiring the introduction of new processes and new control measures. However, there are some measures in place already that will carry over to the new regime:

- Good working relationships have been established with other enforcing authorities
- Good working relationships have been established with legal services,
- Staff training, which includes legal awareness, is underway

The Fire and Rescue Service in collaboration and partnership with North Wales Police and the Welsh Ambulance Trust have undertaken a review of their respective estates throughout North Wales, to identify how each service may benefit from partnering use arrangements and joint development initiatives within each of the respective estates.

To help meet the above aims and have the capacity to deal with an accelerating programme of work, the Estates Department of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has amalgamated with the Facilities Management of North Wales Police. This will give the fire & rescue service access to a larger staffed department with a wider range of skills available with its remit, a combined level of staffing that will assist in realising the desired programme of work for the estate.

The Service is a member of the Welsh Procurement Initiative which is jointly supported by the Welsh Assembly Government and the Welsh Local Government Association.

The Welsh Local Government Association is actively encouraging joint working between local authorities and across the public sector in Wales to achieve efficiency gains and provide improved services to citizens and communities. This is supported by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and promoted through their strategic document *Making the connections: Delivering Better Public Services for Wales*.

Examples of joint working and procurement are:

- Joint procurement of Fire Engines with a common appliance specification between the three fire and rescue services in Wales.
- Joint procurement of 'Corporate Wear' for the three fire and rescue services in Wales.

The Service is also working with all the emergency services on collaboration and joint working through the Joint Emergency Services Group (JESG). Current projects include control room and estate management.

The first National Procurement Strategy for the Fire and Rescue Authorities in England has recently been published. A single body - Firebuy - will take over high value purchasing on behalf of the fire and rescue services. This National Procurement Strategy sets out a clear framework identifying the way in which procurement at national, regional and local levels will be managed and co-ordinated to ensure that best value is achieved and that consistently high quality outcomes result. The Integrated Clothing Project is an example of how Service-wide procurement can work to reduce the costs to individual fire and rescue services. The implementation of the National Procurement Strategy for Wales has yet to be fully assessed by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Current Financial Control Measures include:-

Wales Audit Office (WAO)

The Wales Audit Office is the Fire Authority's external Auditor. In the Annual Audit Letter for 2005, and previous reports, the Authority has received very good reports

Accounts

The Wales Audit Office has reported that the authority has in place sound arrangements to produce its Statement of Accounts

Core Process Review

The Wales Audit Office concluded that the Authority's core financial processes contain appropriate controls. They are:

- a) Main accountancy systems
- b) Budgetary control procedures and
- c) Final accounts close down procedures

Financial Statements and Reporting

The Wales Audit Office is of the opinion that the Authority has contained its excellent record of producing the financial statements well within the statutory deadlines. The only issue arising is the continued use of provisions by the Authority. However, with regard to the pension provision, they see

this as a prudent move by the Authority.

Financial Aspects of Corporate Governance

The overall conclusion is that the Authority has appropriate governance arrangements in place. With regard to the overall financial control environment, the Wales Audit Office is satisfied that the Authority has appropriate Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and associated procedures in place to provide sound governance arrangements.

Internal Audit

The Authority is provided with Internal Audit services by Conwy County Borough Council, under a Service Level Agreement. The Wales Audit Office is satisfied that the Authority has adequate and effective Internal Audit arrangements in place.

Legality of Financial Transactions

The Wales Audit Office has reviewed the Financial Regulations and other internal financial controls and is satisfied that the Authority has adequate arrangements in place to ensure the legality of its financial transactions. It is also satisfied that the Authority has continued to have adequate arrangements in place to ensure that appropriate standards of financial conduct are maintained.

Identified Opportunities for Improvement

It is anticipated that the Authority will be in a position to receive the basic level Charter award in 2007-08. As part of its submission the Authority will need to demonstrate the willingness of Members to effectively fulfil the requirements of their office and develop a culture where learning and development which is regarded as 'normal practice'.

The Charter recognises that every Member brings his or her own unique skills and attributes to the Authority. This being the case the Authority will support the development of each member according to their personal needs whilst recognising their diverse skills and knowledge. The Charter will encourage the Authority to examine the way that business is conducted to ensure equality of access and involvement of all its Members.

The Authority is aware of its obligations as an enforcing authority for the RRO. The Authority will monitor the amount of prosecutions undertaken by the fire and rescue service and the impact on resources. The Authority will seek examples of best practice in discharging its duties and explore opportunities for collaboration in the use of legal services.

Value Wales covers all local authorities and fire and rescue authorities in Wales and aims to expand to assist in contract and tendering work. It is considered that Value Wales could be an excellent medium for procurement co-ordination across the Welsh Fire and Rescue Services.

The Authority will consider the current budget setting process to ensure that RRP and WPI link in to the process for implementation in the 2007/08 budget.

Applicable Legal / Service Standards

Local Government Act 1999
Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004
Code of Audit and Inspection Practice

Anticipated Benefits

- Improved governance
- Member skills recognition
- Enhanced legal services
- Improved corporate image
- Improved procurement practices
- Reduced procurement costs
- Improved collaboration
- Streamlined budget process

Financial Implications

There are no associated costs in adopting the Members Charter.

There are no new costs to the Authority's financial controls. There will be new costs should the Authority require legal services for fire safety enforcement outside the provisions of the current SLA.

Action Plan 2007-08

	Proposed Actions	Responsibility	By when
1.	Redefine and rename the Community Fire Safety function Community Safety by dropping the specific 'Fire' tag. This will reflect the true nature of the department's role.		
2.	Establish and develop closer working relationships and protocols with Unitary Authorities, NHS Trusts, Local Health Boards and other organisations.		
3.	Develop a long term strategy and seek to secure the necessary financial resources to deliver Home Fire Risk Assessments to all domestic properties in North Wales.		
4.	Provide the appropriate level of hydraulic rescue equipment capable of extricating casualties to all frontline fire engines.		
5.	Develop a co-ordinated strategy for reducing the impact of road traffic collisions through more focussed management.		
6.	Consider the recommendations of the review on the feasibility of adopting co-responding.		
7.	Agree and put into effect the recommendations of the Authority's programme of human resource reviews		
8.	Implement a policy for the reduction and management of false alarms from automatic fire alarms.		
9.	Monitor performance against the Service Standard for attendance at fires in the home.		
10.	Implement a strategy to provide education and prevention to households outside the 10 minute Service Standard.		
11.	Collaborate with Category 1 responders on operational exercising of major plans.		
12.	Develop a proactive communications plan to warn and inform local communities.		

	Proposed Actions	Responsibility	By when
13.	Consider options for providing relevant information at incidents.		
14.	Adopt the Green Dragon Environmental Standard.		
15.	Secure the best option for the provision of occupational health services.		
16.	Take positive action to secure a more diverse workforce.		
17.	Establish a partnership review board to oversee the effectiveness, appropriateness and ethical suitability of partnerships.		
18.	Review the effectiveness of current partnership working and monitor and assess CFS initiatives to ensure they meet the needs of, and reach all sections of the community.		
19.	Support the development of Members.		
20.	Explore opportunities for collaboration in the use of legal services for enforcement duties.		
21.	Consider ways to maximise the benefits of Value Wales.		
22.	Review the fire and rescue service's business continuity plans as part of its overarching Corporate Risk Management policy.		
23.	Consider alternative locations for the control room.		
24.	Set up an operational review team to secure operational assurance.		
25.	Develop a new disaster recovery policy for IT.		
26.	Adopt the Welsh Assembly Government's e-government strategy for Wales.		
27.	Compile a register of critical suppliers and confirm their level of resilience.		

The Wider Public Service Agendas

Wales – A Better Country

The strategic direction of this agenda is rooted in a vision that the country becomes fairer, more prosperous, healthier, better educated and where social justice is embedded within policy making. Key to this strategic vision is smarter working and working together to make a bigger and longer-lasting impact of the Welsh Assembly Government and key service providers.

Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) will need to recognise this vision in the development of their Risk Reduction Plan (RRP). The vision of this strategy is for a sustainable future where action for social, economic and environmental improvement work together to create positive change.

One single department or agency cannot deliver this vision. FRAs through their RRP should be able to identify ways in which they can influence this agenda and contribute to the wider inclusion of social justice in Wales. FRAs RRP must also identify the way in which the Authority intends to collaborate and work in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders.

Making the Connections: Delivering Better Services for Wales and Delivering the Connections – From Vision to Action

The Welsh Assembly Government's vision is that public services are essential to a prosperous, sustainable, healthier and a better-educated Wales. Joint working is vital to deliver public services of top quality; they must be responsive to the needs of individuals and communities, delivered efficiently and driven by a commitment to equality and social justice. In order to deliver this commitment to the public services the Welsh Assembly Government has published a 5-year action plan.

A collaborative model fits within Wales as its geographical pattern is distinct and the attitudes and values of the population is one of a sense of ownership in the public services. FRAs need to include citizens and communities in the development of their RRP to ensure their views and experiences are used by the FRA. This will allow FRAs to forge long and lasting relationships on which each RRP and annual action plan will continue to evolve to suit local needs and risks.

FRAs must design the allocation of their resources in a flexible manner that supports the reduction of risk. Effective, inclusive and open communication and consultation will ensure control measures and proposals made under the FRA's RRP are fully appreciated by all stakeholders.

FRAs need to design services with other agencies and partners in an innovative and planned way to ensure they are delivered in a sustained and efficient manner.

People, Places, Futures – The Wales Spatial Plan

This plan provides the basis for working together on shared local agendas; providing distinct local approaches to local problems.

Spatial planning is about reflecting local activities and investments across a geographical area in a clear and honest manner in order to shape the future of services being provided. FRAs need to pay cognisance to this strategic plan and other emerging groupings to ensure a joined-up and collaborative approach is adopted FOR local issues; ensuring a sustainable future is achieved. This will ensure the FRA's RRP will have due regard to the impact of their proposals on other sectors or administrative boundaries.

When designing services and proposals under RRP, FRAs need to recognise the distinctiveness of the communities that exist throughout Wales. Through effective communication, consultation and participation FRAs can build upon the already established sense of place and pride within the communities they serve. The challenge for FRAs will be to retain this sense of place and pride whilst embracing and promoting cultural changes that exist in our society today.

In summary, the FRAs need to engage with a wide spectrum of stakeholders to ensure the agendas impacting on the public services are recognised. The Welsh Assembly Government's policies are designed to ensure that the people of Wales receive the highest standards of public services. Each FRA has an important role to play in contributing towards this searching agenda.

Wales Programme for Improvement (WPI)

WPI is built on a process of self-review and improvement established against a risk assessment, where Authorities seek arrangements for continuous improvement. A programme of self-assessment will allow each FRA to identify the main opportunities, threats and constraints they face in meeting their aims.

By the very nature of the distinctively Welsh focus of RRP, FRAs will be undertaking a fundamental review of their whole operating environment; community and corporate.

There is an emerging understanding amongst key stakeholders that where possible, planning processes and plans should be streamlined and unified as far as possible. This is considered to be the case with RRP and WPI – Fire.

It has always been a principle of WPI – Fire that regulation should support improvement; it should not simply highlight where action is required, but it should be part of the solution.

The full detail on the integration of these two processes will emerge under the guidance that emanates from WPI – Fire.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

DRAFT

[TO BE ADDED]

LIST OF CONSULTEES

DRAFT

[TO BE ADDED]

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS CONTAINED IN THIS DRAFT RRP

We welcome your views and comments on the recommendations presented in our Risk Reduction plan. We want to encourage everyone who has an interest in our services to let us know whether or not they agree with our proposals, and why. We would also like to hear about any alternative proposals for change which we may consider including.

Please return your comments by the deadline of 2nd October 2006.

By post to:

Risk Reduction Plan Consultation
North Wales Fire Authority
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Ffordd Salesbury
St. Asaph Business Park
St. Asaph
Denbighshire
LL17 0JJ

By e-mail to:

RRP0708@nwales-fireservice.org.uk

Data Protection Act 1998

The information you supply with your response will be processed by North Wales Fire Authority for the purpose of administering this consultation.

For organisations, authorities and corporate bodies, we will assume that you have no objection to having details of your response included in a public report, unless you stipulate to the contrary.

For individuals, all responses will be treated as confidential. We will keep your personal details secure and will not disclose them to other organisations or third parties without your consent, unless we are legally required to do so. The substance of your comments may be incorporated within a report, but will not be attributed to you without your prior consent.