



NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

2017/18

COMBINED IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND WELL-BEING PLAN

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Introduction

For many years North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has been publishing annual Improvement and Risk Reduction Plans in accordance with legislation and statutory guidance. This year, following the introduction of new legislation¹, we are publishing our first Improvement and Well-being Plan.

Rather than focus exclusively on planning the next few years for our own organisation, the new Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Authority to set its sights further into the future and to consider what it can do now to start improving the lives of people who will be living in North Wales in the 2020s, 2030s and 2040s. This is an opportunity for public services to think in the longer term and to work together more effectively to tackle the complex issues that affect people's lives but cannot be resolved by just one organisation through short term plans.

The Plan content has changed, but the statutory deadline for publishing² remains the same, as does the overall intention behind publishing which is to explain publicly what the Authority's intentions are, to invite comments and suggestions, and to provide a basis for our October progress reports.



The Sustainable Development Principle: acting *“in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”*.

¹ The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

² Fire and Rescue Authorities (Improvement Plans) (Wales) Order 2012 and paragraph 10 of Statutory Guidance “Shared Purpose Shared Future” (SPSF2).

The Local Government Measure 2009

Since 2009 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has been subject to the Local Government Measure 2009 that requires it to set and publish improvement objectives. As a designated “Welsh Improvement Authority” under this legislation, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority’s improvement plans must demonstrate that it has improved what it does in terms of at least one out of seven aspects of improvement, which are:

1. strategic effectiveness;
2. service quality;
3. service availability;
4. fairness;
5. sustainability;
6. efficiency; and
7. innovation.

Objectives do not have to change from year to year, or be achievable within a single year.

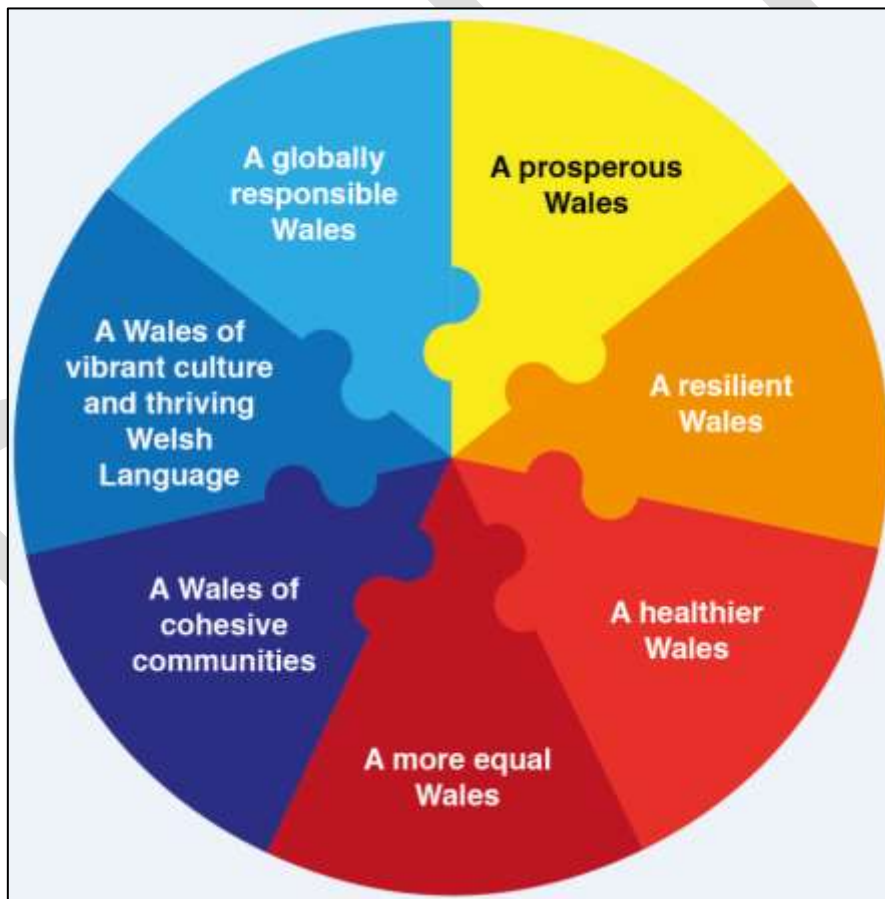
The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The aim of this new Act is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of future generations of people in Wales. North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, as one of the public bodies listed in the Act, must carry out “sustainable development”³ in order to help bring about that improvement in the Welsh population for the future.

³ *Sustainable development* is the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals. The *sustainable development principle* means acting “in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Wales's well-being goals

The Act lists seven well-being goals for Wales as a whole. These goals are intended to promote a sense of common purpose, and so encourage people and organisations to work together to help achieve the goals for the benefit of future generations of people. The goals are described in more detail in the appendix towards the back of this Plan.



What the Act requires North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to do

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to set and publish well-being objectives. These long-term objectives are changes that the Authority wants to help bring about in North Wales that will contribute to improving local well-being and to moving Wales closer to achieving its well-being goals. Having identified these long-term objectives, the Authority has a duty to take all reasonable steps to pursue them and to report publicly after the end of each financial year on the progress it has made.

The Act also requires North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to engage as an active member of Public Services Boards (PSBs). These statutory boards bring relevant organisations together to plan and work jointly on improving the social, cultural, economic and environmental prospects of future generations of people in their area. North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is a member of all four PSBs in North Wales - Wrexham; Flintshire; Conwy and Denbighshire; and Anglesey and Gwynedd.

The well-being duty

Every public body subject to the Well-being of Future Generations Act must carry out sustainable development, and in so doing, must set and publish well-being objectives that are designed to maximise its contribution to achieving each of the national well-being goals, and take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives in accordance with the Sustainable Development Principle and the five ways of working

In summary North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must:






- Set and publish well-being objectives;
- Take all reasonable steps to meet those objectives;
- Publish a statement about its well-being objectives;
- Publish an annual report of progress;
- Publish a response to any recommendations made by the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales.

How North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority must act

The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to focus on trying to make sure that the things it does now don't have a negative impact on the lives of the people who will be living here in years to come⁴.

The Authority must adopt particular ways of thinking and operating to help retain that focus on protecting the well-being of future generations of people.

The “**five ways of working**” defined in the Act involve:

-  Looking to the **long term** so that what happens now does not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
-  **Preventing** problems from occurring or from getting worse.
-  Taking an **integrated approach**, considering how its own well-being objectives might impact on each other and on the achievement of the well-being goals for Wales.
-  Remembering the rich diversity of people in North Wales and encouraging them to **get involved** in the decisions that affect them.
-  Working **collaboratively** with others to help the Authority achieve its objectives, and, conversely, to help others to achieve theirs.

⁴ According to the Act, a public body “*must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”. This is called the “**sustainable development principle**”.



WELL-BEING STATEMENT

NWFRA's long-term well-being objectives are:

- A. To support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur;
- B. To facilitate high quality, responsive and better integrated fire and rescue services so that prevention activity and emergency response can continue to be available when and where required, affordably, equitably and on the basis of risk.








To meet the well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle⁵, NWFRA proposes to take steps to:

1. Deliver a comprehensive programme of prevention activity aimed at helping to keep people and communities safe from accidental fires in living accommodation;
2. Secure the Authority's financial sustainability by adopting a 3-year financial strategy that combines the use of reserves, increasing financial contributions and making service reductions;
3. Re-balance the Authority's resources to match risk by implementing a model of resourcing that ensures the availability of at least 20 strategically located fire crews in North Wales at times of relatively lower risk, and at least 38 at times of relatively higher risk;
4. Seek opportunities to work with other organisations to offer a wider range of integrated services to the public of North Wales.

⁵ The sustainable development principle is defined in the Act as acting in a manner "which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".



NWFRA has set its well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle in that:

-  It has considered the long term challenges facing North Wales which includes projected demographic changes of an ageing and growing population, and anticipated financial constraints affecting public services.
-  It has retained prevention at its heart, recognising that preventing fires and other harmful situations from arising makes better sense than response alone.
-  It has taken an integrated approach and considered other organisations' strategies (e.g. for community health services) as well as its own.
-  It has continued to build productive working relationships with a range of other organisations, planning and collaborating at different levels and through various forums, including the PSBs.
-  It has consulted widely and sought the views of the general public and representatives of particular groups whilst determining its objectives.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will be monitoring its progress towards meeting its well-being objectives through the Service's day to day management arrangements and regular reports to the Authority.



NWFRA will involve other people with an interest in achieving the goals and ensure that those people reflect the diversity of North Wales.

The Service engages daily with a broad diversity of people who would have an interest in the achievement of Wales's well-being goals.

Through referrals from partner organisations the Service meets people whose circumstances make them more vulnerable to fires. Through particular prevention activities (e.g. home safety checks, arson reduction actions and schools visits), courses (e.g. Phoenix) and professional networks and meetings, the Service holds regular conversations with people whose views and experiences help shape the services that are delivered.

The Service also engages regularly with the business community during audits of non-domestic premises – e.g. people running small family businesses, employers of large workforces, hoteliers, restaurant owners, hospital managers and teachers.

Information about the response to the Authority's 2016 public consultation is available on request or from the Authority's website⁶.

⁶ <http://www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk/fire-and-rescue-authority/meetings-agendas-and-reports/2017/02/13/130217-ep/?lang=en>



By meeting its well-being objectives NWFA will contribute to achieving the well-being goals for Wales by making Wales:

- **prosperous** because of the reduction in the direct and indirect financial impact of fires. Local areas will be better able to thrive economically and attract inward investment and public service resources will stretch further and achieve more than would otherwise have been affordable;
- **resilient** because of the continuing availability of well-planned and sustainably affordable public services, but more importantly because people and communities will increasingly have the knowledge and confidence to develop their own resilience;
- **healthier** because fewer people will fall victim to avoidable harms; the environment will be cleaner and natural resources and landscapes will be protected for outdoor activities;
- **more equal** because attention will be targeted at supporting and influencing those people whose health, personal characteristics and/or lifestyle at different points in their lives place them at increased risk;
- a country of **cohesive communities** because safe, resilient and confident communities are more likely to maintain a sense of common purpose, sharing services and their resources more equitably;
- a country of **vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** because prosperous, resilient communities are better placed to develop a constructive and affirmative culture and engage in a diversity of cultural pursuits, and also because the Authority's established commitment to the Welsh language means that anyone who comes into contact with the Service is able to do so in their choice of either Welsh or English;
- a **globally responsible** country because of the element of environmental protection associated with the prevention of dwelling fires, and also because of the commitment to sustainability through responsible stewardship of the Authority's financial resources.

Improvement and Well-being Objective A: To support people to prevent accidental dwelling fires and stay safe if they do occur.

How this objective contributes to national well-being goals and the well-being of the population of North Wales.

Well-being goals	Aspects of well-being						Explanation
Prosperous	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Apart from the emotional impact and personal loss associated with fires in the home, there is also an economic impact, e.g. the cost of repairs, higher insurance premiums and lost work time; the cost of emergency response, medical care, re-housing and foster care; the effect on property values and attractiveness to business set-ups in the area.
	Social						
	Environmental						
	Cultural						
Resilient	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Individuals and communities who know how to prevent fires and stay safe when they do occur will be economically, socially and culturally more resilient. Public and voluntary services working together can avoid costly duplication and inefficiency and provide a better quality of service when it is needed. Public money can be reserved for those things that could not be prevented.
	Social	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Healthier	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Even minor physical injuries can be traumatic when someone has a fire in their home, but serious injuries or the death of a friend or family member can have far reaching consequences for physical and mental health. The polluting effect of fires contributes to a less healthy environment, which in turn deters people from outdoor activities.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
More equal	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	There is a recognised association between vulnerability to fire and social deprivation, disability and age. Targeted prevention work aims to redress the balance and help counteract the effects of those particular characteristics.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A country of cohesive communities	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Neighbourhoods free from accidental dwelling fires contribute to attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities that have a better chance of maintaining a sense of common purpose, sharing services and their resources more equitably.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A country with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Economic						Communities that are free from accidental dwelling fires are more prosperous, so more resilient and better able to develop a constructive and affirmative culture that engages in a diversity of cultural pursuits.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Globally responsible	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Preventing accidental dwelling fires contributes to clean air and water supplies.
	Social						
	Environmental	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Cultural						

Rationale

The place where people are most likely to be killed or injured by fire is in the home, and this is despite being familiar with the layout of the building and usually being close to at least one escape route.

Our analyses of previous fire casualties identified a range of factors that can place people at increased risk from accidental fires in the home. These factors include:

- their age (young children and older adults);
- having a disability or a limiting medical condition;
- being alone at the time of the fire;
- being affected by alcohol and/or drugs;
- living in rented accommodation;
- having no working smoke alarm installed at the premises;
- having a previous history of careless disposal of lighted material;
- living in social deprivation.

The more contributory factors that relate to a person, the higher their risk of falling victim to a dwelling fire.

The future demographic profile of North Wales indicates an ageing population. According to published projections for the area, over the next twenty years, there will be a large increase in the number of people aged 75 or over and thousands more people living alone. The Authority believes that being able to influence people's behaviours, to equip them with the knowledge and resolve to keep themselves safe and well for longer and to counteract the effects of the contributory factors makes very good sense.

Step towards meeting the well-being objective

The step that North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority proposes to take towards meeting objective A is to deliver a comprehensive programme of prevention activity aimed at helping to keep people and communities safe from accidental fires in living accommodation.

Actions towards meeting the well-being objective

During 2017/18, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will:

- Deliver 20,000 integrated Home Safety Checks, with at least 30% of those being delivered to households referred to the Service by another agency.
- Continue to work with partner organisations and build new partnerships where appropriate.
- Develop a medium term Fire Safety Strategy.
- Maintain the currency of existing information-sharing agreements, and seek to establish new agreements where appropriate.
- Seek to improve the quality and efficiency of Home Safety Checks.
- Through analysis of past occurrence patterns, identify and seek to reduce the anticipated incidence of specific categories of fires.
- Through analysis of past occurrence patterns, confirm the Service's understanding of factors that contribute to a person's vulnerability to dwelling fires.
- Continue to provide well-timed, targeted messaging and advice on how people can avoid being harmed by fires in the home.

Improvement and Well-being Objective B: To facilitate high quality, responsive and better integrated fire and rescue services so that prevention activity and emergency response continue to be available when and where required, affordably, equitably and on the basis of risk.

Helping to make Wales...	Aspects of well-being						Explanation
Prosperous	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Preventing fires and responding swiftly to emergencies when they occur helps to avoid or reduce the human cost, insured and uninsured losses, the cost of repairs and lost productivity, and the reduced attractiveness of an area to inward investment.
	Social						
	Environmental						
	Cultural						
Resilient	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Rationalising the Authority's own costs and finding a balanced way of funding the service over the next few years will help sustain fire and rescue services into the future, making the area more resilient to demographic and other changes. Planning services on the basis of risk ensures the best distribution of available resources.
	Social	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Healthier	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	This objective seeks to ensure the best spread of financial resources for providing life-saving fire and rescue services. Inevitably there are challenges with a system of short term budgeting, but financial planning seeks to anticipate and address problems before they arise, ensuring the best use of resources and the continuing provision of services.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
More equal	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Affordable, equitable services planned on the basis of risk and delivered when and where required apply to all.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A country of cohesive communities	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Avoiding the effects of fires and other emergencies contributes to more attractive, viable and safe communities.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A country with a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Economic						Communities that have access to effective prevention and emergency response services will be better able to focus on maintaining the Welsh language, creating a positive culture and protecting its heritage.
	Social	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Environmental						
	Cultural	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Globally responsible	Economic	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	High quality fire and rescue services contribute to a cleaner, better environment and protects natural resources.
	Social						
	Environmental	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Cultural						

Rationale

Given the backdrop of financial uncertainty⁷ and the potential increase in demand for services across the public sector, it is inevitable that the Authority will be faced with challenges to being able to sustain its services over the coming decades.

While living longer is to be welcomed, the projected ageing population can result in there being fewer people of working age to support those of pension age. Figures for the UK produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) show⁸ that the number of people of a pensionable age will rise from an estimated 308 for every 1,000 people of a working age in 2016 to 365 for every 1,000 people of a working age in 2037.

The ONS also observes that *“while a larger population increases the size and productive capacity of the workforce, it also increases pressure and demand for services such as education, healthcare and housing”*.

Age distribution of the UK population, 1975 to 2045 (projected)

Year	UK Population	0 to 15 years (%)	16 to 64 years (%)	65 years and over (%)
1975	56,226,000	24.9	61.0	14.1
1985	56,554,000	20.7	64.1	15.2
1995	58,025,000	20.7	63.4	15.8
2005	60,413,000	19.3	64.7	15.9
2015	65,110,000	18.8	63.3	17.8
2025	69,444,000	18.9	60.9	20.2
2035	73,044,000	18.1	58.3	23.6
2045	76,055,000	17.7	57.8	24.6

Source: Office for National Statistics.

The pressure on fire and rescue services is therefore likely to come from several different directions including being able to recruit and retain sufficient operational firefighters who meet the requisite fitness standards, and securing sufficient funds to pay for delivering fire and rescue services at a time of increasing demand for a range of public services.

⁷ See (examples) : *“Financial resilience of local authorities in Wales 2015-16”* Auditor General for Wales.

<https://www.wao.gov.uk/system/files/publications/445A2016-Financial-resilience-eng.pdf>

“Future pressures on Welsh public services”, Mark Jeffs, Wales Public Services 2025.

<http://www.walespublicservices2025.org.uk/files/2016/03/Mark-Jeffs-WPS2025-Summary-Report1.pdf>

“Welsh budgetary trade-offs to 2019–20”, D. Phillips and P. Simpson, The Institute for Fiscal Studies, Sept. 2016.

<https://www.ifs.org.uk/uploads/publications/docs/IFS%20report%20R120.pdf>

⁸<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/articles/overviewoftheukpopulation/mar2017>.

Steps towards meeting the well-being objective

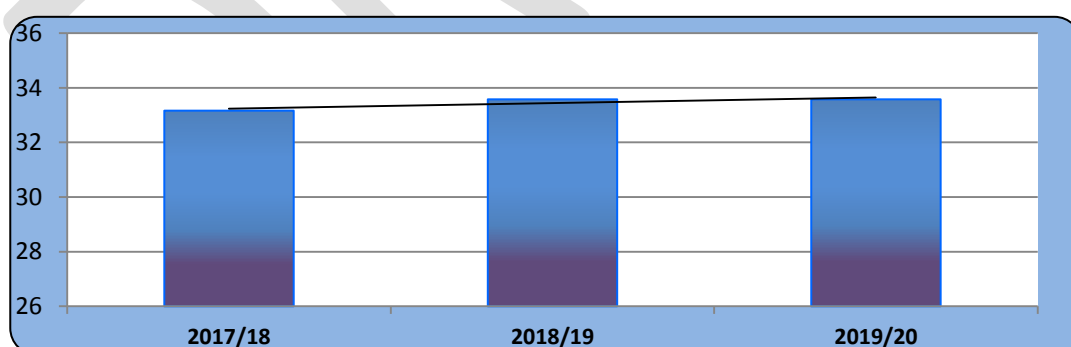
The steps that North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority proposes to take towards meeting objective B are to:

1. Secure the Authority's financial sustainability by adopting a 3-year financial strategy that combines the use of reserves, increasing financial contributions and making service reductions;
2. Re-balance the Authority's resources to match risk by implementing a model of resourcing that ensures the availability of at least 20 strategically located fire crews in North Wales at times of relatively lower risk, and at least 38 at times of relatively higher risk;
3. Seek opportunities to work with other organisations to offer a wider range of integrated services to the public of North Wales.

Actions towards meeting the well-being objective

To work towards achieving long-term objective B during 2017/18, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will:

- Deliver services within the agreed budget of £33,161,277, underpinned by £414,000 from reserves (year 1 of the 3-year financial plan).



The graph above illustrates the proposed gradual increase in the Authority's annual budget over the course of its three-year financial plan, underpinned by the use of reserves and kept low by service cost reductions. Precise costs over the coming years are impossible to calculate this far ahead because of unknown externally-driven increases, so it will be important to remain flexible over the

coming months to be able to react as and when information becomes available and to plan ahead for the 2019/20.

- Consult publicly on proposed steps to be taken towards achieving the well-being objectives during 2018/19 and agree the budget for that year based on known and anticipated costs.
- Continue to work towards achieving at least 20 strategically located fire crews in North Wales at times of relatively lower risk, and at least 38 at times of relatively higher risk.
- Continue to explore new initiatives⁹ to test whether the Service could help to reduce the pressure and demands on other public services in the area.
- Actively seek opportunities for multi-skilled staff to work beyond organisational boundaries to offer a wider range of services, particularly those that will improve health, safety and wellbeing outcomes as part of a person-centred 'safe and well' approach.
- Continue to monitor and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of pilot programmes undertaken in partnership with other organisations.

⁹ North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has already worked with the Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, responding to life-threatening medical incidents (co-responding) and to vulnerable people who have experienced a fall in their home (Community Assistance Team); and also with North Wales Police when people (particularly vulnerable people) have been reported as missing from home.

Appendix

The Well-being Goals for Wales

1.	A prosperous Wales:	An innovative and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of a wealth generated through securing decent work.
2.	A resilient Wales:	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
3.	A healthier Wales:	A society in which people's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood
4.	A more equal Wales:	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
5.	A Wales of cohesive communities:	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
6.	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language:	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
7.	A globally responsible Wales:	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global wellbeing.

Financial contributions to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

£	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Anglesey	3,219,270	3,216,231	3,198,669	3,200,523	3,190,812	3,330,579
Gwynedd	5,525,827	5,507,985	5,588,255	5,602,787	5,598,221	5,851,817
Conwy	5,206,959	5,198,570	5,283,704	5,289,891	5,277,177	5,539,433
Denbighshire	4,569,316	4,593,630	4,342,155	4,360,740	4,363,962	4,524,683
Flintshire	6,981,590	6,955,089	7,018,721	7,033,548	7,022,578	7,339,795
Wrexham	6,269,049	6,300,506	6,340,507	6,398,354	6,433,093	6,574,970
TOTAL	31,772,011	31,772,011	31,772,011	31,885,843	31,885,843	33,161,277
Population estimate	690,434	691,986	694,038	695,549	697,122	698,715.
Cost per head of population	£46	£46	£46	£46	£46	£47

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CONTACT DETAILS

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Website: www.nwales-fireservice.org.uk

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE TO FUTURE IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The Authority conducts a public consultation each year when it publicises its proposed objectives for the following year and invites comments from anyone with an interest in what the Authority does. All comments received are taken into account before finalising the following year's plans.

Anyone wishing to contribute new ideas about future improvement objectives are welcome to write to the Chief Fire Officer at the address shown above.