

YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

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Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service



**Emergency Cover Review
Frequently Asked Questions
Have your say**

21 July 2023 – 22 September 2023

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

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1. Why conduct an Emergency Cover Review?

The main reasons for conducting a review into our emergency cover include:

- The fact that our on-call firefighters are not as available as they have been traditionally and recruitment is also proving challenging;
- The risks faced by our communities are changing with climate change and new technology; and
- The financial challenges we are facing are now greater than ever.

2. What does the Emergency Cover Review involve?

The review involves working with professional consultants [ORH](#) to model how the Service could look, using data from several sources as well as our own professional judgement.

This involves considering a whole range of factors such as quantifying and analysing risks, matching our resources to risk and identifying optimal locations, responding efficiently and optimising our day to day management and contingency planning, as well as assessing our capacity for prevention and protection activities.

A Fire and Rescue Authority Working Group has been established to determine the way forward during the Emergency Cover Review. This Working Group consists of six Fire Authority Members, one from each Unitary Authority in North Wales. The Group has been meeting regularly to consider the initial modelling findings in addition to our pre-consultation feedback which will help to inform full consultation.

The Group has discussed the potential options for future emergency cover in detail and determined which of the options should be examined in more detail before deciding which future emergency cover options to recommend for full consultation.

3. What does pre-consultation involve?

Pre-consultation activities are an essential part of preparing for public consultation and provide an early opportunity for selected stakeholders and other interested parties to engage with us and provide important feedback on the consultation objectives, challenges faced, and areas of concern and to offer ideas on proposals which might address the challenges faced.

Overall pre-consultation provides an opportunity to engage selected stakeholders and other interested parties in an initial dialogue to help shape, review and agree appropriate proposals which can be taken forward to public consultation.

We have been working with the Consultation Institute, adopting a structured process for exploration of our current operations and to support the development and appraisal of options to take forward to public consultation. Using a four stage approach, this covers: (i) exploring the current situation and challenges faced; (ii) exploring what solutions

might be considered; (iii) the development of clear ideas and solutions and (iv) the appraisal of potential solutions into a rank list of proposals.

Our aim is to reassure ourselves as well as others that we are following the right consultation process. The Consultation Institute provides qualified peer review and a Certificate of Consultation Readiness to ensure that we are adopting best practice guidelines in line with their [Consultation Charter](#) and that our consultation is delivered to the required standard.

In order to meet the requirements of the certificate we are required to provide evidence at each stage of our activities that we are abiding by the standards expected by the Consultation Institute. Our activities include listening to the views of others via focus groups and workshops, analysing who may be impacted by our plans and to what extent, analysing the risks involved with all of our proposed future plans, and ensuring we adopt the right methods of communicating and engaging with all our stakeholders so that they can get involved and provide feedback.

4. What will full consultation involve?

Public consultation will gather feedback from those who live, work and travel in the region about the future of how we provide our emergency cover services in North Wales.

To help us develop our options, we have been working with our staff and representative bodies, members of the public, council representatives, local vulnerable groups and members of our Fire and Rescue Authority to understand what matters should our services be required in an emergency.

All the feedback has been used to develop our proposals for the future of emergency cover services across North Wales and the consultation process encourages people to let us know what they think.

Full consultation will involve presenting detailed information on the future options for providing emergency cover in North Wales to all our identified stakeholders or those who may be impacted by our future plans, as well as all the different ways people can get involved and share their views.

A comprehensive communications strategy has been developed to ensure that information is presented utilising a variety of communications channels in order to reach diverse audiences and maximise engagement.

5. How do you know you are conducting the consultation properly?

At every step of the way, we have been working closely with the Consultation Institute to ensure we are conducting our consultation in the proper manner.

Having such expert oversight helps to reassure ourselves as well as others that our

preparations for consultation are in line with the required standards, expected by the Consultation Institute.

The Consultation Institute provides qualified peer review and a Certificate of Consultation Readiness to ensure that we are adopting best practice guidelines in line with their [Consultation Charter](#) and that our consultation is delivered to the required standard.

In order to meet the requirements of the certificate we are required to provide evidence at each stage of our activities that we are abiding by the standards expected by the Consultation Institute.

Our activities include conducting listening to the views of others via focus groups and workshops, analysing who may be impacted by our plans and to what extent, analysing the risks involved with all of our proposed future plans, and ensuring we adopt the right methods of communicating and engaging with all our stakeholders so that they can get involved and provide feedback.

Following the Certificate of Consultation Readiness and subject to meeting the required standards, the Institute will provide certification that the consultation planning and activities have been Independently Quality Assured to a standard that meets the requirements of the [Consultation Charter](#) and assurance framework.

6. What themes emerged from the pre-consultation?

Potential options for providing future emergency cover cross North Wales were developed on the basis of the following criteria:

- Emergency cover - how our fire appliances response to emergency calls.
- Protection and prevention services - how we keep your homes and businesses safe.
- Affordability - keeping our services as affordable as possible, providing best value for money.
- Workforce - impact of changes on our teams.
- Fair and equitable service - having our staff at the right place, at the right time and with the right skills.
- Social value - recognising the impact of any changes we make on our communities.

Key themes arising from engagement with stakeholders during the pre-consultation included:

- Finance - Understanding the budgetary pressures. Is the review of emergency cover financially driven?
- Future risks - Climate change and new technology may place more demand on resources.

- Prevention and protection – how our engagement with the public and businesses are affected.
- Communication – Key to aid understanding of the challenges faced and impacts of any proposals.

7. What potential options will be consulted upon?

During pre-consultation, four options were under consideration for consultation.

One of the options involved no change, staying as we are and accepting the availability risk.

However, on the basis that this option does not meet the criteria of the Emergency Cover Review for a fair, sustainable and equitable emergency response across the communities of North Wales, this option is not being taken forward for public consultation.

Three options were chosen for public consultation and these have different implications for helping to ensure we can be there for you at the right place, right time and with the right skills.

All the options are detailed in all our consultation material which is available on our website: www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

In short, the three options being consulted upon are as follows:

Option 1

This would mean that the 12 rural firefighter posts and 28 wholetime firefighter posts from Rhyl and Deeside station would be reallocated to the three new day staffed stations at Corwen, Dolgellau and Porthmadog. Cover for Rhyl and Deeside would change to a day crewed model similar to the model which currently operates at Colwyn Bay, Llandudno, Bangor, Caernarfon and Holyhead. This will continue to be in addition to the existing on-call firefighters who crew the second fire engine at all these stations.

Option 2

An alternative model which provides an improved emergency cover by introducing three new day staffed stations at Corwen, Dolgellau and Porthmadog but also realises savings of £1.1 million towards the increase in 2024/25 budget, currently estimated at £6 million, thus limiting the year on year increase to £4.9m. This option changes the crewing model at Rhyl and Deeside to a day staffed model, which leaves the night time cover to be provided solely by the on-call firefighters and removes the third appliance from Wrexham. In total this sees a reduction in 22 wholetime firefighter posts.

Option 3

Changes are in line with option 2, however, only two day staffed stations are introduced at Dolgellau and Porthmadog and the closure of five on-call fire stations is included. This is a reduction of 36 wholetime and 38 on-call firefighter posts and realises savings of £2.4m thus limiting the year on year cost increase to £3.6m.

8. How long will the consultation run?

The public consultation takes place between Friday 21 July and midnight on Friday 22 September 2023.

This will be communicated widely both internally to staff and externally to our stakeholders.

9. How will you feed back the decision?

All the feedback received from the public and stakeholders during the consultation will be regularly monitored and analysed to inform the decision-making process.

We will evaluate and report on the consultation process, preparing a comprehensive report summarising the findings, lessons learned, and recommendations for future improvements. This information will be presented to Fire and Rescue Authority Members and shared with the public.

Going forward, we will provide regular updates on the progress of the emergency cover review, acknowledging and addressing any concerns raised during the consultation and engagement process.

10. What exactly are the financial challenges you are facing and how do you propose to save money?

The Authority is required to set a balanced revenue budget which must be approved by the full Authority before the commencement of the financial year.

The budget setting process for 2023/24 highlighted the significant budget challenges and financial constraints being experienced across the public sector and recognised the need to identify measures to further reduce the budget requirement.

The Authority approved the net revenue budget for 2023/24 of £43.314 million at its meeting of 16 January 2023 following a series of member planning meetings. This represents the amount to be levied against constituent local authorities and although it represented a year on year increase of 9.9% it included the requirement to deliver £1.4 million of in year savings and address the impact of the Welsh Government's decision to remove financial support of £0.4 million towards the emergency services national network.

A further amendment was made following the reallocation of £1.08 million of Welsh Government funding which was moved from hypothecated grant received directly into the revenue support grant issued to local authorities. This change is cost neutral to the local authorities although the net budget to be levied increased to £44.394 million.

The pay negotiations for firefighters concluded in February 2023 for both the 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial years with an increase of 7% and 5% respectively. This is payable from July each year and is above the planning assumptions used when setting the 2022/23 and 2023/24 budgets. All pay awards are subject to national negotiations, the timescales of which are outside of the control of the Authority.

Consequently, the underlying financial challenge faced by the Authority for 2023/24 is a recurring shortfall of £2.4 million. In the short-term, it is proposed that the cost pressure will be managed through temporary changes to service delivery in respect of response times and prevention work, deferring expenditure and the use of reserves.

The actions taken avoid the need to raise a supplemental levy during 2023/24 and will allow Fire and Rescue Authority Members the opportunity to consider the options arising from the Emergency Cover Review to provide future financial awareness and stability.

11. Where does your money come from and how do you propose to save money?

We are committed to delivering value for money across all the services we provide with funding levied from the six local authorities we serve: Anglesey, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, and Wrexham.

Our Fire and Rescue Authority is made up of representatives of the six local authorities and has the power to raise a Council Tax levy for funding.

Each year, each constituent local authority pays a contribution into a combined fire service fund which is equal to its proportion of our Fire and Rescue Authority's expenses.

Our current budget for 2023/24 is £44.4 million - which equates to £63.07 a year per head of population in North Wales, or £150.66 a year per household.

How these costs would change for each of the options is summarised below:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Estimated cost per head of population/year	£71.59	£70.03	£68.18
Estimated cost per household/year	£171.02	£167.29	£162.88
Difference with 2023/24 cost per household/year	Increase of £20.36 per household	Increase of £16.63 per household	Increase of £12.22 per household

12. How do you propose to improve emergency cover?

All three options look to introduce a full time day response in areas of the Service currently reliant on on-call availability. Options 1 and 2 increase the number of households we can provide an emergency response to within 20 minutes, whilst Option 3 sees a reduction in households receiving an emergency response within 20 minutes. All options provide the opportunity for increased prevention and protection work in our more rural areas. This is summarised in the following table:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Station and/or Duty System Changes	Rhyl and Deeside move to Day Crewing and Rural Wholetime Duty staff are relocated	Rhyl and Deeside move to Day Staffing, Wrexham's 3rd appliance is removed and Rural Wholetime Duty staff are relocated	Rhyl and Deeside move to Day Staffing, Wrexham's 3rd appliance is removed and Rural Wholetime Duty staff are relocated
Wholetime Stations Introduced	Day Staffing at Corwen, Porthmadog and Dolgellau	Day Staffing at Corwen, Porthmadog and Dolgellau	Day Staffing at Porthmadog and Dolgellau
Station Closures	None	None	Abersoch, Beaumaris, Llanberis, Cerrigydrudion and Conwy
Wholetime Staff Numbers	No Change	22 Fewer Wholetime Firefighters 12% Reduction	36 Fewer Wholetime Firefighters 19% Reduction
On-Call Staff Numbers	No Change	No Change	38 Fewer On-Call Firefighters 8% Reduction
Percentage of North Wales households receiving a 1st response within 20 minutes	Increased to 92.7%	Increased to 92.2%	Decreased to 91.5%
Difference with current response model	2,148 more households receive a response within 20 minutes	321 more households receive a response within 20 minutes	2,087 less households receive a response within 20 minutes
Change in Prevention and Protection Activity per annum	1,740 extra residential safe and well checks. Increased industry and business engagement in rural areas	1,740 extra residential safe and well checks. Increased industry and business engagement in rural areas	1,160 extra residential safe and well checks. Increased industry and business engagement in rural areas
Social Value	Increased community engagement in rural areas e.g. school visits, safety campaigns, partnership events. Increased potential for future wholetime employment opportunities in South Denbighshire and Gwynedd	Increased community engagement in rural areas e.g. school visits, safety campaigns, partnership events. Increased potential for future wholetime employment opportunities in South Denbighshire and Gwynedd	Reduced community engagement and reduced employment opportunities in the 5 areas where on-call stations would be closed. Increased potential for future wholetime employment opportunities in South Gwynedd
Estimated cost per household per annum	£171.02	£167.29	£162.88
Difference with 23/24 cost per household per annum	£20.36 increase	£16.63 increase	£12.22 increase

negative change

positive change

13. How will the proposals impact protection and prevention work?

Preventing incidents from happening in the first place is far better for everyone involved.

Not only does our prevention work help to keep communities safe but it also means we can better manage how we operate – and importantly, for some communities such as those in more rural areas, it is a vital part of protecting our residents.

In 2008 in addition to being a responding service, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service positioned itself as a preventative service. Since then we have worked hard to bring down the number of fires and resulting deaths and injuries.

Importantly, 2022/23 was a milestone year for us – for the first time since we have kept records, there were zero deaths due to accidental fires in dwellings in North Wales.

This is great news, but we must not become complacent. We need to work harder still to maintain this level of safety.

Whilst we can work to improve how our average cover and performance could look, there will still be areas, especially in rural locations, where we would continue to work harder to improve our protection and prevention services and continue to focus on the recruitment of on-call staff and their availability.

The three options will all result in extra residential safe and well checks conducted in our communities every year.

14. How will the proposals impact our staff?

We recognise that our staff are our biggest asset and we value the people who work for us. The differing options put forward will impact on our staff in different ways. We met with staff and representative bodies during the Emergency Cover Review to ensure that the interests of our staff are fairly represented and considered during this process. Our staff are aware of the consultation and we are actively encouraging them to get involved in order to provide their feedback. We will continue to work closely with both staff and representative bodies both during the consultation process and at the implementation stage.

The potential impact of any redistribution of staff arising out of the proposals will be reduced by undertaking a preferencing exercise with the operational workforce. This would involve all affected operational staff identifying their preferred work location and the Service would then seek to locate staff where they wish to be located where possible, considering additional factors such as skills, home location, personal circumstances and associated commutes. Those who cannot be immediately matched to a preferred location would be placed on a transfer list for placement once a vacancy at their preferred location arises.

This preferencing exercise would also apply to duty systems whereby wholetime staff will be asked for their preference in terms of their preferred duty systems.

Whilst no guarantees can be made in terms of the ability to accommodate staff preferences, staff are reassured that these will be given due consideration when decision making.

Where closure of on-call stations is proposed there is the potential for redundancies of on-call staff. Where redundancies are being considered, we will follow a fair redundancy process and consider all options to reduce or avoid redundancies where possible.

We will continue to consciously provide opportunities to staff to be involved and input into the consultation process and beyond. We value both their insight and support with facilitating any resulting changes to how we approach emergency cover in the future.

In order to assist with any organisational change, an equality impact assessment will be undertaken to help ensure that the Service has given due consideration to the needs and impacts of staff in relation to protected characteristics.

We recognise that with potential change comes uncertainty and this can impact people in different ways. Our staff have a broad range of support mechanisms accessible to them in order to support them during this process. We will continue to highlight the range of support available through our internal communication channels to ensure staff can readily access any support they may require during this process.

15. Will the 'role' of a firefighter change as a result of the review?

Changes to the firefighter role are not being considered as part of this review. Any changes to the role of a firefighter would need to be referred to the National Joint Council (NJC) to be progressed through to a negotiated settlement for an agreement to be reached.

16. Will staff receive disturbance allowance if they are relocated?

Disturbance allowance is payable to staff to cover additional travel expenses when an employee's place of work has been changed by circumstances beyond their control and these changes are not referred to in their terms and conditions of service.

It is recognised that our workforce consists of staff who are employed on a fixed location contract and other staff who are employed on a flexible location contract. Therefore, entitlement to disturbance allowance would depend on an employee's existing contract of employment. The Service will honour the terms detailed in individual contracts of employment.

17. What happens to staff pay if required to change duty systems?

It is recognised that our workforce consists of staff who are employed on a fixed location contract and other staff who are employed on a flexible location contract. Therefore, any change to work location, duty systems and continued entitlement to any associated allowances will depend on an employee's existing contract of employment.

The Service will honour the terms detailed in individual contracts of employment. Remuneration will be calculated in accordance with the station posting and associated duty type.

18. Will there be a new duty system introduced?

Any newly introduced duty systems associated with the Emergency Cover Review will be devised based on the principles outlined in Section 4 of the Grey Book and be subject to the appropriate level of negotiations.

An equality impact assessment will be undertaken to help ensure that the Service has given due consideration to the needs and impacts of staff in relation to protected characteristics.

19. What is the need for firefighter training?

We want to continue to improve our training provision and be able to provide the very best training facilities for our firefighters – which will in turn ensure we can provide the best possible response and protection services to our communities across North Wales and be able to respond professionally and safely to a wide variety of different types of incidents.

The best training provision also means being able to ensure the safety of our firefighters whilst attending incidents. Our staff quite rightly expect that we train and equip them to undertake a job that comes with inherent risks, as safely as possible.

As our society continues to evolve, so too do the risks faced by emergency services, and along with these new risks come more sophisticated technology. Responding effectively to different emergencies means training is critical and the need for realistic and immersive training in all of the emergencies firefighters are likely to attend is even more crucial.

Following a detailed review of our operational training facilities at Rhyl and Dolgellau fire stations, it has become apparent that they do not provide the standard of facilities required to train firefighters operating in today's modern-day fire and rescue service.

Although the fire house training facility at Dolgellau fire station continues to be used for operational training, it requires significant investment to extend its medium-term life span for risk critical breathing apparatus and firefighting tactics training and cannot be

considered as a long-term option. It is also located in an area which is a considerable distance for the majority of our staff to travel and attend breathing apparatus courses.

In a nutshell, the scope and realism of our current training facilities do not match our vision for the future and our aspirations for high quality, realistic and immersive training.

Therefore, we conducted workshops with staff to develop aspirations, ideas and requirements for a new training centre. We then consulted with building construction professionals, sustainability experts and an architect to develop a high-level design for a training and development centre which meets our sustainability goals.

In May 2023 we presented initial ideas and plans for a new training centre to our Fire and Rescue Authority members. A working group consisting of six Authority Members, one from each of the constituent areas, and key members of staff from the Service has now been established to develop and scrutinise ideas for the new training centre.

Members of the working group have visited our facility at Dolgellau, as well as the newly built training centres at Cheshire and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Services to view their state-of-the-art facilities.

The working group is now working to put together and inform a detailed business case which will be presented to the Fire Authority members for scrutiny and approval in October 2023.

Currently, we have identified a potential site for a new Training Centre in Denbighshire on the A55 corridor, and are undertaking the necessary surveys and land suitability assessments.

If the business case is approved, a timetable will be developed, although it is envisaged that building work could commence during early part of 2025 following a planning application, detailed design brief development and procurement of a main contractor.

The safety our staff is our utmost priority, and we are passionate about providing resources and facilities of the highest standard to enable effective and exceptional training.

20. If you need to save money why commit to building a new training centre?

Alongside emerging new risks associated with climate change, advances in technology such as electric vehicles, the technology that firefighters use has become more sophisticated. Training is therefore critical, and because the number of fires has decreased significantly in recent years thanks to our prevention work, it makes the need for realistic and immersive training in all of the emergencies we are likely to attend even more crucial.

We also need to be mindful of our need to train firefighters to keep themselves and the public safe and provide the highest quality of response.

We are therefore developing a stand-alone business case to build a state-of-the-art Training Centre. It would be more centrally located, so less time would be spent travelling and more time could be spent training. It could also prepare our firefighters for dealing with new and existing risks and we could share it with our emergency service partners and others we may attend emergencies alongside, for joint emergency service training and collaboration activities to ensure our people have the right skills.

21. What about vulnerable groups – will they have a say on the proposals?

The safety and wellbeing of all our communities is important to us and so too are their views on future services.

We have therefore been working closely with representatives from vulnerable groups throughout the pre-consultation process and we have developed a comprehensive communications strategy to ensure that information is presented utilising a variety of communications channels in order to reach diverse audiences and ensure inclusive engagement.

22. Why add additional day staffed fire stations?

The three options under consideration all involve changing the way we staff some of our fire stations during day time hours, from a retained duty system crewed by on-call firefighters to a day staffed duty system crewed by wholetime firefighters, which would be a new duty system for North Wales.

Day staffing means that fire stations would be crewed by full time firefighters during 12 hours of the day (e.g. 8am until 8pm), supplemented by on-call firefighters, and reverting to being full on-call fire stations overnight.

Day staffing would need to be agreed locally with staff if this was decided as a way forward. Other fire and rescue services in the UK already operate this type of staffing.

The locations proposed for day staffing, and some of the reasoning for this, are as follows:

Porthmadog: Greater improvement in response compared to other local stations. Availability support from neighbouring on-call stations. Station facilities will support a change with minimum investment (Options 1, 2 and 3).

Dolgellau: Strategic location in South Gwynedd with better transport networks for a greater response impact. Availability support from neighbouring on-call stations. Station facilities will support a change with minimum investment (Options 1, 2 and 3)

Corwen: Strategic location covering South Denbighshire with networks into other on-call areas across several local unitary authorities. Availability support from neighbouring on-call stations. Station facilities will support a change with minimum investment (Options 1 and 2).

23. How can you justify Option 3 which will result in station closures?

Option 3 is not taken lightly as it involves considering the permanent closure of five on-call fire stations.

It also means less firefighters and therefore a reduction in local job opportunities, impacting the social value in those communities.

In all, it is envisaged that 74 fewer firefighters (wholetime and on-call) would be required if this option was adopted – which equates to 11.5% of our total number of firefighters in the Service.

It would therefore reduce our operational response and result in greater risk to our communities.

This option does however help to reduce budget pressures at a time when financial challenges are greater than ever.

All the options will result in asking North Wales households to pay more for our services in future in order to meet these challenges – but Option 3 would mean households would be asked to pay less than the other options (£4.41 a year less per household than Option 2, and £8.14 a year less per household than Option 1).

Whilst Option 3 would clearly impact staff and our communities in certain locations, we would work hard to keep this to an absolute minimum and would be committed to working closely to support any staff who may be affected by these changes.

The factors considered for identifying on-call fire stations for closure with Option 3 involve:

- Incident numbers
- Modelled impact on average response times if the station was removed
- Modelled impact on average response times if the station was 100% available
- Capacity of neighbouring stations to absorb call volume
- Appliance utilisation rates
- Current establishment – financial savings
- Longer term financial savings – rates, utilities, equipment and training costs.

All the options under consideration would involve improving our prevention and protection activities in rural areas.

24. How will the review impact road safety or the ability to respond to incidents that are increasing due to climate change such as wildfires or flooding?

There are a whole range of factors that come into play when considering how we can provide the fairest possible service across all communities in North Wales and the challenge for us as a Service is finding the right balance in meeting all our objectives.

All three options improve the Service's average response time to road traffic collisions and look to introduce a full time day response in areas where the Service is currently reliant on on-call availability.

Options 1 and 2 increase the number of households we can provide an emergency response to within 20 minutes, whilst Option 3 sees a reduction in households receiving an emergency response within 20 minutes.

25. How will the review decision be implemented?

We have not made any decisions yet and we will remain open-minded about the solution until after all the feedback, evidence and information has been gathered and considered.

After the consultation closes on Friday 22 September, all the feedback gathered will be analysed to produce a report setting out what people have said about our proposed options.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will consider the feedback, along with a wide range of other information and evidence, such as incident data, workforce data and financial data. The Authority will use all the feedback, evidence and information to decide how to proceed.

The final decision-making meeting of the Fire and Rescue Authority will be recorded and made available on our website www.northwalesfire.gov.wales to allow those interested to hear the discussion about how the decision is made.

We will publish details of this Fire and Rescue Authority meeting on our website: www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

After the final decision has been made, any changes to our emergency cover would take place in a phased approach, as part of our 2024/28 Community Risk Management Plan.

26. What are the predicted costs of the Emergency Cover Review?

Consultation is recognised as a key mechanism for improving service delivery across the public and private sector and is a key theme of government policy. It is a statutory duty for Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) in Wales to consult with the public on specific areas of service delivery, in accordance with the Local Government Wales Measure 2011 and the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales.

Each Authority must consult with local communities, service users, businesses, partners and other stakeholders when setting service standards and performance targets, to develop a more citizen focused approach to ensure the effective delivery of services.

The Authority considers public accountability and transparency to be of vital importance in all aspects of its relationships with local communities, partners and organisations and each year is required to publish an assessment of its performance against the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, where public engagement and consultation is also a key component of these requirements.

To ensure that we adhere to our legal responsibilities and adopt recognised best practice whilst undertaking our Emergency Cover Review, we have engaged independent industry experts in the development of robust options to present for public consultation.

The indicative planning costs for the Emergency Cover Review are:

Budget	What have we spent this on?	Why?
£61,000	ORH Ltd are industry experts and provide data analytics to a range of organisations working in the emergency sector.	ORH Ltd has provided independent technical support in relation to data analysis and modelling to critique current emergency cover arrangements and to identify the optimum locations of any additional day staffed stations.
£39,000	The Consultation Institute (tCI), a not for profit, well-established institute promoting high-quality public and stakeholder consultation in the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Institute works across the sector including at Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.	The Institute provides qualified peer review and a Certificate of Consultation Readiness to ensure that the Authority is adopting best practice in line with a Consultation Charter, and that any full public consultation is delivered to the required standard.

£10,000	Sarah Barnett Research with wide experience in market and social research and the analysis of qualitative data.	Collation and independent, expert analysis of the wide range of consultation feedback to produce a report to the Fire Authority to aid decision making.
£2,000	Translation Services	Statutory duty under the Welsh Language Standards Regulations (No.5) 2016)
£7,000	Independent Chairperson to facilitate the Community Engagement Events (15 in total)	Independent Chairperson to facilitate the community events as is recommended best practice.
£8,000	Printing costs	Legal requirement to provide a range of accessible information.
£10,000	Community Events x 15	Room Hire, Public Address systems and technical support and refreshments.
£2,500	Promotional Materials and adverts	Promote consultation to gain broadest range of public engagement

27. What is the policy in relation to petitions?

In that a petition represents the expression of the views of the people who sign it, it is the view of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) and the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) that such documents constitute an important mechanism which empowers local people to have a voice on local fire and rescue matters.

However, petitions will not be considered in isolation, but as one piece of evidence and information which contributes to an overall picture of public opinion. The intention is to ensure that:

- voices are heard appropriately;
- the danger of listening only to active lobby groups is avoided.

Petitions can be raised either as a discrete statement by the signatories, or as a response to a public consultation or proposal which is being made by the Authority / Service. In the latter instance, petitioners should be aware that petitions should not be considered to be in order to be accepted for consideration, petitions should meet the criteria as described below.

A petition comprising any number of signatures will be considered by the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) or the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (the Service) in its decision-making process. If a petition with the significant support of a minimum of 1000 signatures has been received:

- by the Authority, the Chair of the Authority will include the petition as a specific item for the agenda of the next meeting of the Authority;
- by the Service, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) will include the petition as a specific item for the agenda of the next formal meeting of the Service Leadership Team.

Petitions may be received in one of three forms:

- as traditional hard copy;
- electronically, for example by email, as an e-petition, or in web-based or social media format;
- in a combination of hard copy and electronic forms. However, both parts of the petition must have been received by the Authority / Service before they can be considered as a whole.

The name and address of the organiser of the petition, who must be resident within the area to which the petition relates, should be provided on the first page of the petition. Submissions should include a Statement of Petition which should comprise:

- the organisation to which the petition is being addressed, namely the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority or the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service;
- the proposition which is being promoted by the petition;
- the timeframe during which the signatures have been collected.

The following information about each signatory should be included:

- name;
- postcode;
- original, handwritten signatures (in the case of a written petition);
- email address (in the case of an electronic petition). If this data is not collected as a result of the data controller not sharing the data, as would be the case with social media (such as Facebook) or '38 Degrees', the petition will only be recognised as an indicator of public sentiment.

Care should be taken not to include any information or signatures which should not be made public.

Petitions in either hard copy or electronic form can be compiled in either Welsh or English, or indeed in a combination of both languages.

Written petitions should be addressed as follows;

- outside a formal consultation period, to either the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority or the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service;
- during a formal consultation period, to either the Chair of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority or to the Chief Fire Officer of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

In all instances, the address is as follows:

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters,
Ffordd Salesbury,
St Asaph Business Park,
St Asaph,
Denbighshire, LL17 0JJ.

Should the petition organiser wish to have the document formally received, they should make an appointment by telephoning 01745 535250 or by emailing CorporateCommsDept@northwalesfire.gov.wales.

Electronic submissions should be brought to the attention of the Head of Corporate Communications by forwarding a link to CorporateCommsDept@northwalesfire.gov.wales.

An acknowledgement of receipt of the petition will be sent to the organiser of the petition within five working days of receipt of the document, along with a clear explanation as to what will subsequently happen.

Petitions that are received during a formal consultation period will not be viewed in isolation but as one piece of evidence and information which contributes to an overall picture of public opinion. The intention is to ensure that:

- the voices are heard appropriately;
- the danger of listening only to active lobby groups is avoided.

Thus, petitions will be considered as an item of correspondence in the same way that any other response would be regarded, so long as they meet the following conditions:

- they relate to a subject, proposal or matter about which the Authority / Service is actively seeking public opinion;
- they are submitted before the publicised closing date of the consultation process.

28. Why is the review not looking at reductions/savings in its non-operational personnel?

Stats Wales figures show that North Wales FRS has achieved significant savings in non-operational personnel.

Over the three years 2018-19 to 2021-22, NWFRS achieved 13.4% savings. The Service's budget management principles ensure that continued and future efficiencies are proactively sought.