

AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB GOGLEDD CYMRU



NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

An extraordinary meeting of the **NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY** will be held **MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2023**, virtually **via Zoom**, commencing at **13:00**.

Yours faithfully,
Gareth Owens
Clerk

AGENDA

1. Apologies

2. Declarations of Interest

3. Notice of Urgent Matters

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972.

4. To make the decision on which option to implement from the Emergency Cover Review.

PART II

It is recommended pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act, 1972 that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) of business because it is likely that there would be disclosed to them exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) 12 to 18 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. None

Report to	Fire Authority
Date	18 December 2023
Lead Officer	Stewart Forshaw, Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Corporate Policy & Planning)
Contact Officer	Anthony Jones, Head of Planning, Performance and Transformation
Subject	Emergency Cover Review



PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To provide Members with an update following the ninth North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority) Member led Emergency Cover Review (ECR) working group
2. To enable a decision to be taken regarding a revised operational response model for North Wales.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3. The key objective of the ECR was to consider the current arrangements and to recommend options to provide a fair, sustainable and equitable emergency response across the whole of North Wales, balancing demand and current and future community risks.
4. In order to develop options for the Fire Authority to refine and consult the public on, ORH were engaged and provided independent evidence-based modelling of a number of different operational response scenarios.
5. ORH are a sector leading organisation who help emergency services across the UK and around the world to optimise their resources and respond in the most efficient and effective way. They have a reputation as experts in developing effective emergency response models.
6. Taking account of ORH's advice, three options of how emergency cover services in North Wales could be provided were put forward for public consultation.
7. After receiving feedback in relation to the ECR consultation, the Fire Authority requested that Officers did not undertake any further work on two of the three options that were consulted upon, these being Options 2 and 3, but that they continued to refine Option 1.

8. At the working group on the 27th November 2023, the Service presented the refined option, referred to as Option 1a.
9. At the same working group, the FBU presented an option that they referred to as Option 4, updated from a previous version of this option presented to Members on the 7th November and indicated that this was their preferred option for consideration.
10. Following this working group, the FBU prepared a set of summary documents and shared them with Members.
11. The Service presented a review report based on the discussions held on the 27 November.
12. The Service also presented the Equality Impact Analysis and Equality Impact Assessment of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority ECR. These reports describe the impact and mitigation against each of the concerns raised about the three options that were presented during the consultation, assisting Fire Authority Members to satisfy their Public Sector Equality Duty as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
13. The completion of these documents concluded the requirements of the formal quality assurance process that has been overseen by the Consultation Institute. The Authority have been recognised as achieving 'Good Practice' for all elements of the consultation.
14. This confirmed that the consultation process has met the 'Gunning Principles', the recognised legal foundation from which the legitimacy of public consultations is assessed.
15. The four 'Gunning Principles' are that: -
 - Proposals are at a formative stage
 - There is sufficient information to give intelligent consideration
 - There is adequate time for consideration and response
 - Conscientious consideration must be given to the consultation responses before a decision is made.
16. In the event of the 'Gunning Principles' having not been followed, the Authority's decision may be subjected to a judicial review.

17. The Member led Working Group, extended to the Full Fire Authority, met again on 4 December 2023. Initially, the outcomes of the Member led Budget Scrutiny Working Group was presented and debated amongst the group.
18. Confirmation was provided that Option 1, the refined version referred to as Option 1a and the FBU option referred to as Option 4 could all be achieved within the same or very similar cost envelope, albeit with different levels of operational cover and operational resilience aligned to each option.
19. The Chief Fire Officer and Officers reminded Members of the reason that the ECR was originally instigated, in order to address the challenges with 'on call' availability in rural locations, so as to provide a more fair and equitable level of operational response across the region; ensuring that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has available resources in the right places at the right time, with the right skills.
20. Following assessment of the FBU option 4 against the ECR Evaluation Criteria, using analysis from ORH, Officers relayed that it did not meet the aims of the ECR. Their review concluded that it did not provide resilient emergency cover and did not provide a fair and equitable service to communities across the whole of North Wales.
21. Moreover, Officers relayed that the analysis showed that it offered a worse level of emergency cover than both Option 1 and 2 presented in the public consultation and less flexibility than the current response model already in place. The existing model was rejected by Members in their working group on the 4th April 2023 and this decision was ratified in the Fire Authority meeting on 17th July 2023.
22. Options 1, 1a and 4 were debated and Officers advised Members that if they decided to proceed with the FBU Option 4 further it posed a risk of judicial review to the Authority. The option had not been consulted upon and it was deemed to be significantly different to the options presented during the consultation. Officers also advised that a decision to implement Option 4 would be contrary to the Gunning Principles, as there has been a failure to provide the public with sufficient information about this option to allow for meaningful comment.

23. Officers were asked to seek legal advice as to the position in relation to progressing with the FBU Option 4.

Legal advice highlighted that if Option 4 were to be implemented, the Fire Authority would be taking a decision that was not supported by public opinion and was contrary to professional advice. There would be a significant risk of a claim for judicial review on the following grounds:

- Option 4 in its current design was not raised during the public consultation and the public were unable to consider and comment on it;
- It is deemed by officers to be significantly different to the options consulted upon and therefore fairness would require the Authority to carry out further consultation before adopting Option 4;
- As Officers have indicated that Option 4 does not meet the aims of the ECR and would provide a worse level of emergency cover than other options that have been presented to the public, a decision by the Authority to adopt Option 4 would be a decision that the court might regard as unreasonable, and therefore unlawful;
- A decision to adopt Option 4 may also be contrary to the Authority's duties under part 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 as it may not secure the provision of the personnel, services and equipment necessary to efficiently meet all normal requirements in respect of fire-fighting, road traffic accidents and emergencies; and
- Option 4 has not been subject to an equality impact assessment and therefore the Authority may not be able to demonstrate that it has complied with its equality duties if it decides to adopt Option 4.

24. Legal advice also highlighted that:

- Option 4 would reduce levels of emergency cover compared to the current operating model, and
- There would be a significant risk that a court would find that undertaking consultation on an option that is not considered to be viable based on the evaluation criteria would be unreasonable, and
- adopting Option 4 would therefore undermine the objective of the emergency cover review, and
- Adopting an option that undermines the objective of the emergency cover review would create significant legal risk for the Authority.

25. The Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales' Broadening the role Thematic Review made a number of recommendations around releasing capacity, not only to support health related activities, but also to increase training, exercising and risk reduction work undertaken by firefighters.

26. Any of the options other than Option 1 or 1a would not address these recommendations. The Deputy Minister for Social Partnership has been very clear that the Welsh Government expects all Thematic Review recommendations to be addressed in full.

RECOMMENDATION

27. That Members,

- i) Note the legal advice that the FBU Option 4 cannot be recommended because to adopt it would result in an operating model that is worse than the current one and worse than Option 1 and 1a. Doing so may expose the Authority to legal challenge;
- ii) Members officially reject Option 2;
- iii) Members officially reject Option 3; and
- iv) Members agree to implement an improved variant of Option 1, this being Option 1a.

BACKGROUND

28. At its meeting on 17 July 2023, the Authority agreed to commence public consultation between 21 July and 22 September 2023, extended to 30th September on three options, having previously discounted options for growth and the option to continue with the existing response model.

29. At the close of the consultation on 30 September 2023, 1500 responses were received via the online questionnaire and 226 paper questionnaires had been received from the public. A total of 17 community engagement events had taken place across the region as well as 17 meetings with equality, diversity and inclusion groups. In addition, engagement with North Wales Councillors, Chief Executives, Members of the Senedd and Members of Parliament also took place.

30. A comprehensive programme of staff engagement visits to fire stations and departments in locations across the whole North Wales were also delivered.

31. The consultation responses, interpreted independently, showed a clear rejection of Option 2 (63% disagreeing) and Option 3 (93% disagreeing). The responses did show a clear public opinion that Option 1 was the preferred option (68% agreeing).

32. Following discussion and based upon the clear rejection from the public, at the Fire Authority meeting on the 16 October 2023, Officers were asked to continue to refine Option 1 and to cease working on Options 2 and 3.
33. At the Member led working group held on the 7 November 2023 a refined and improved variation of Option 1 was presented, referred to as Option 1a.
34. Option 1a, was presented as follows:
- Rhyl and Deeside change to Day Crewing (no change from Option 1)
 - WDS Rural team are relocated (no change from Option 1)
 - Porthmadog and Dolgellau Fire stations have a 12-hour Day Shift Duty System of two watches, 14 staff, covering 7 days per week (no change from Option 1)
 - Wrexham's second wholetime fire engine would continue to provide support to the south Denbighshire area as and when required, in the same way as they currently do. (different Option 1, but the same as existing utilisation). The FBU have also proposed this within their options to FRA.
 - To create an additional day staffing station at Llangefni. (different to Option 1 but utilising all existing staff to provide an enhanced model in the next priority strategic location, underpinned by an ORH evidence base)
35. The Clerk to the Authority has advised that continuing with the current operating model is not appropriate, as the daily challenges to achieve a suitable level of operational cover is known to the Authority and the failure to act to address this problem would be negligent.
36. Officers met with representatives from The Fire Brigades Union on 16 November 2023 to attempt to seek a compromise and recognise areas of common ground.
37. The FBU were furnished with access to all data presented throughout the emergency cover review. This culminated in a Collective Bargaining Agreement being drafted by Officers and shared with the FBU, with the understanding that this compromised position would be put to the FBU membership.
38. The FBU committee rather than the full membership determined that the contents were not acceptable and rejected the compromise, with a request that a revised version of their Option 4 was to be taken forwards as their preferred option for consideration.

39. The Member led working group met again on the 27 November 2023 with Officers presenting information that described the enhancements offered by Option 1a in comparison to Option 1.

40. These enhancements through an additional day staffed fire appliance being located in Llangefni, Ynys Môn included:

- a greater number of households that could be reached within the maximum 20-minute response time. 5265 households compared to 2148
- Increased day time resilience on Ynys Môn when considering current and future risks;
- a greater number of homes that would receive Safe and Well prevention interventions, specifically on Ynys Môn;
- better interaction with local businesses to gather risk information on Ynys Môn and;
- greater opportunities for social value to be added through future employment opportunities in a wider number of locations in North Wales.

41. At the Working Group meeting on the 27 November 2023 the FBU presented two options that they referred to as options 4 and 5, both of which were predicated on there being no changes to the staffing models in Rhyl or Deeside.

42. The Authority asked that the FBU decided upon their preferred option and that Officers consider this against the evaluation criteria that has been utilised throughout the ECR.

43. The FBU requested that Option 4 was presented as their preferred option and this was as follows;

- No Change to Rhyl and Deeside
- WDS Rural team are relocated
- Wrexham's second wholetime fire engine will provide support to south Denbighshire during the hours of the current duty system operating a Wrexham Fire Station, as and when required. If not required it will stay in Wrexham.
- 14 WDS staff split across Dolgellau and Porthmadog on four days on and four days off pattern, one station staffed at any one time.

44. In the working group meeting on the 4 December, Officers provided their professional assessment of the FBU Option 4 in comparison to Option 1 and 1a, underpinned by analysis from ORH.

45. It was articulated that any option that does not make changes to staffing models in Rhyl or Deeside will either be less efficient or require additional funding than Options 1 or 1a.
46. A description was then provided as to the limitations of the model being presented by the FBU, as well as an explanation of the origins of the model from a neighbouring Service with a very different set of circumstances and risk profile to the North Wales context.
47. Officers have highlighted that the implementation of Option 4 would actually put the Service in a worse position than its current service delivery model, as it would not create any additional daytime capacity and would be more restrictive by placing all of the WDS rural firefighters in one location fifty percent of the time and vice versa, without the benefit of two additional stations as would be achieved in Option 1a.

IMPLICATIONS

Well-being Objectives	The consultation must meet the Authority's obligations under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
Budget	The consultation budget implications have been publicised in the consultation frequently asked questions and have been presented to the Budget, Monitoring and Procurement Committee.
Legal	<p>Legislation requires that the Authority must consult the public on changes to our emergency cover provision. The ECR consultation and the best practices the Services has followed have received Quality Assurance following scrutiny by Consultation Institute.</p> <p>Decisions by public authorities which appear to be at odds with their stated intentions and/or their legal duties can be designated as "irrational" or "unreasonable" by the courts and may be struck down if challenged in a Judicial Review.</p>
Staffing	The Service has conducted extensive direct consultation with staff and their representative bodies during pre-consultation and full public consultation. However, in deciding on options to be consulted on staff will be impacted by the proposed changes within the options.
Equalities/Human Rights/Welsh Language	Carrying out pre-consultation and full consultation has enabled the Authority to gather feedback from stakeholders and capture views on all three options to inform the Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) and Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). The EIA and EqIA are a vital part of the decision-making process that gives Members equality assurance against the three options that were presented for public consultation between 17 th July and 30 th September 2023. The Consultation Institute approved both documents and gave Equality Assurance on 28 th November 2023. Equality Assurance has not been obtained in respect of Option 4.
Risks	The ECR and its consultation reduces the risks of not being able to set a balanced budget and respond to emergencies effectively and efficiently in the communities of North Wales

Emergency Cover Review

Consultation

**Your Fire and Rescue Service –
right time, right place, right skills**

Addendum to the report on the responses to the consultation

30th October 2023

Prepared for:-

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service; North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

Prepared by:-

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1.0 Introduction

This document forms an addendum to the report on the Emergency Cover Review Consultation findings dated 4th October 2023.

This addendum contains the following supporting information:-

Section 2 – A copy of the consultation questionnaire

Section 3 – Detail of the 5 petitions received during the consultation period

Section 4 – Copies of substantive written submissions (discussed in section 6 of the full report document) and other comments/feedback received by email, telephone, post or social media during the consultation period.

2.0 Copy of the Questionnaire

YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
RIGHT PLACE
RIGHT TIME
RIGHT SKILLS



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service



Emergency Cover Review
Consultation Questions
Have your say

21 July 2023 – 22 September 2023

ATAL AMDDIFFYN YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING

www.tangogleddcymru.llyw.cymru
www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

Your fire and rescue service – right place, right time, right skills

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority is running a public consultation to 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.

Emergency cover is the way we manage our resources to keep people safe – no matter where you live or who you are, we aim to be there for you when you need us.

This means being able to provide an equitable service across our diverse communities – diverse in terms of location and geography, in terms of the types of incidents we respond to, and also in terms of the people we serve, whatever your ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation and regardless of any disability.

We aim to achieve this by managing our resources, our budget and our people as effectively as possible.

Balancing this against the current challenges to providing our services is also key – especially when our part time or on-call firefighters are not as available as they have been traditionally, when the risks faced by our communities are changing with climate change and when the financial challenges are greater than ever.

And it's not just about responding to incidents – preventing them from happening in the first place is far better for everyone involved. Our prevention and protection work is therefore equally as important to helping to keep you safe.

Understanding your views and the views of all those who live, work and travel in our region is key to this – so thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

The information you provide will be treated confidentially, in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR).

Please do not include any personal information in the free text fields, as it may be necessary for us to share the results of the consultation with an external agency to facilitate collation of those results.

Any personal information you do provide will be treated in the strictest confidence and in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR), and will only be used by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority or disclosed to others for a legally permissible purpose.

Our Approach

In our consultation document (www.northwalesfire.gov.wales) we highlight some of the risks we face. We would like to understand which areas of risk are most worrying to you.

Question 1: What risks concern you most?

Please rank the following risks, with 1 being most worrying to you and 4 least worrying.

Please select one option only in each row.

	Most worrying		Least worrying	
	1	2	3	4
House Fires	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wildfires	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Road Traffic Collisions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flooding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 2: Do you feel there are any other risks we should be considering or planning for?

Question 3: Which decision-making criteria is most important to you?

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority use criteria to inform its decision making about service provision across North Wales. We would like to understand how you would prioritise these criteria.

Please rank the following, with 1 being most important to you and 6 least important.

Please select one option only in each row.

	Most important			Least important		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Emergency cover - how our fire appliances respond to emergency calls.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protection and prevention services - how we keep your homes and businesses safe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordability - keeping our services as affordable as possible, providing best value for money.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workforce - impact of changes on our teams.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fair and equitable service - having our staff at the right place, at the right time and with the right skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social value - recognising the impact of any changes we make on our communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Question 4: Please explain briefly your reasoning for choosing the ratings in question 3?

Question 5: Are there any other criteria that you think should be included in question 3?

Options for Emergency Response for the Future

Our options propose varying the level of our response in certain areas and reducing levels during periods of lower demand. We are now interested in your view on our options.

Please consider each of the following 3 options and score them in the questions that follow.

	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 22/23 cost per household per annum	£20.36 increase	£16.63 increase	£12.22 increase

negative change

positive change

Question 6

Option 1 involves:

- Maintaining a 24-hour response model at our existing wholetime stations, with Rhyl and Deeside fire stations changing to a day crewing duty system.
- The addition of **three** day staffed fire stations located at Corwen, Porthmadog, and Dolgellau, utilising the reallocation of wholetime firefighters following changes at Rhyl, Deeside and the Rural Wholetime Duty System.

To what extent do you think this option meets the needs of our communities?

Please select one option only.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| I agree strongly | <input type="radio"/> |
| I agree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't agree or disagree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I disagree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I disagree strongly | <input type="radio"/> |

Question 7: Please explain why you made this choice.

Question 8

Option 2 involves:

- A response model where Rhyl and Deeside fire stations change to a day staffing duty system.
- Wrexham's third fire appliance is removed, maintaining one fire appliance staffed by wholetime firefighters and one appliance staffed by on-call firefighters.
- The redistribution of staff from Wrexham, Rhyl, and Deeside fire stations and the Rural Wholetime Duty System enables the addition of **three** day staffed stations, located at Corwen, Porthmadog, and Dolgellau and a reduction in wholetime firefighter numbers by 22.
- The realisation of £1.1 million of savings towards the 2024/25 budget.

To what extent do you think this option meets the needs of our communities?

Please select one option only.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| I agree strongly | <input type="radio"/> |
| I agree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't agree or disagree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I disagree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I disagree strongly | <input type="radio"/> |

Question 9: Please explain why you made this choice.

Question 10

Option 3 involves:

- A response model where Rhyl and Deeside fire stations change to a day staffing duty system.
- Wrexham's third fire appliance is removed, maintaining one fire appliance staffed by wholetime firefighters and one appliance staffed by on-call firefighters.
- The redistribution of staff from Wrexham, Rhyl, and Deeside fire stations and the Rural Wholetime Duty System enables the addition of **two** day staffed stations, located at Porthmadog and Dolgellau and a reduction in wholetime firefighter numbers by 36.
- The closure of five on-call fire stations at Abersoch, Beaumaris, Cerrigydrudion, Conwy, and Llanberis, resulting in the reduction of on-call firefighter numbers by 38.
- The realisation of £2.4 million of savings towards the 2024/25 budget.

To what extent do you think this option meets the needs of our communities?

Please select one option only.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| I agree strongly | <input type="radio"/> |
| I agree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I don't agree or disagree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I disagree | <input type="radio"/> |
| I disagree strongly | <input type="radio"/> |

Question 11: Please explain why you made this choice.

Equality Impact

We have undertaken an equality impact assessment to ensure our decision-making process is fair and does not present barriers to taking part or disadvantage anyone, especially protected groups. You can view the Equality Impact Assessment on our website: www.northwalesfire.gov.wales

Question 12: Are there any other equality issues that we could be thinking about?

Additional Information

This section focuses on other areas of emergency cover that you would like us to consider.

Question 13: Are there any other areas of emergency cover that you would like us to consider?

Question 14: If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or group please tell us who you represent and where you are based/which area you cover.

Question 15: Are you an employee of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service?

Yes
No

Location

Question 16

Please choose one of the following to indicate the local authority area in North Wales where you live, work, or are visiting.

Please select one option only.

- Anglesey**
- Conwy**
- Denbighshire**
- Flintshire**
- Gwynedd**
- Wrexham**

Equality Monitoring – Age and Gender

As a public body, we have a duty to consider the impact of our decisions on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation), as well as the Human Rights Act and Welsh Language Act.

This information is optional and will only be used for the purpose of this Emergency Cover Review.

The following section relates to your age and gender.

Question 17: Age

Which age group are you?

Please select one option only.

- 17 and under**
- 18 – 24**
- 25 – 34**
- 35 – 44**
- 45 – 54**
- 55 – 64**
- 65 and over**

Question 18: Gender

How do you identify?

Please select one option only.

- Male**
- Female**
- Other, please self-describe:**

The following section relates to your race and ethnicity.

Question 19: Race/Ethnicity

Which of the following best describes you?

Please select one option only.

- White - Welsh/English/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- White - Irish
- White - Gypsy/Roma/Traveller
- White - Any other White background (please describe in Q20)
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group - White and Black Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group - White and Black African
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group - White and Asian
- Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group - Any other Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Group background (please describe in Q20)
- Asian/Asian British - Indian
- Asian/Asian British - Pakistani
- Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi
- Asian/Asian British - Chinese
- Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian/Asian British background (please describe in Q20)
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - African
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
- Black/African/Caribbean/Black British - Any other Black/African/Caribbean/Black British background (please describe in Q20)
- Other Ethnic Group - Arab
- Other Ethnic Group - Any other Ethnic Group background (please describe in Q20)

Question 20

Please describe your ethnicity below if you have chosen 'Any other' from the list above.

The following section relates to disabilities, sexual orientations, and religious beliefs.

Question 21: Disability

Are you disabled or have a long-term health condition?

Please select one option only.

No

Yes, please describe

Question 22: Sexual Orientation

Please select one option only.

Heterosexual

Gay/Lesbian

Bisexual

Other, please describe

Question 23: Religion and/or belief

Do you affiliate with any particular religion, faith or belief system?

Please select one option only.

No religion

Christian (All denominations)

Muslim

Buddhist

Hindu

Jewish

Sikh

Bahai

Any other religion, please describe



Thank you – that is the end of our questions

Thank you for taking the time to complete our consultation questionnaire – your views are really important to us.

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

Further information is available on our website www.northwalesfire.gov.wales where you can also find details of our community engagement events to gather feedback and hear more about what people think.

This information is also available in an easy read format which you can request by emailing us at EmergencyCoverReview@northwalesfire.gov.wales or calling or texting us on **07787 578 386**.

You can post your completed questionnaires to: **Freepost ADOLYGIAD TAN/FIRE REVIEW**

What happens next

After this consultation closes at **midnight on Friday 22 September**, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority will consider the feedback, along with a wide range of other information and evidence, before deciding 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

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.

YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
RIGHT PLACE
RIGHT TIME
RIGHT SKILLS

3.0 Petitions

Five petitions were received during the Emergency Cover Review Consultation period, with the detail of these provided in the table below.

Petition Title	Petition wording	Submitted by	Submitted to	Number of signatories
Petition P-06-1363 Save our Fire and Rescue Service	The petition states: North Wales Fire and Rescue Service along with the Fire and Rescue Authority plan to downgrade Rhyl and Deeside Stations from 24hr Stations to day-staffed Stations, leaving the Stations empty at night. (Option 2). Currently there are 3 Wholetime Stations in North Wales, Wrexham, Deeside and Rhyl. They are staffed 24/7. Under the current proposals Rhyl and Deeside would be downgraded to day staffed Stations, relying on on-call personnel responding from home at night. The predicted delay could be as much as 8-10 minutes. In a fire, every second counts and this will undoubtedly cause injuries and even deaths.	Gavin Roberts (NWFRS employee)	The Senedd	1,937
Save Our Station	Whilst the focus was on Beaumaris, it also highlighted not to close all five stations proposed for closure under Option 3	Dai Ifor Evans-Jones (Fire Fighter at Beaumaris Fire Station)	NWFRS (presented at community engagement event)	1,448
Conwy Fire Station Petition	Expressing concern and not agreeing with the closure of Conwy Fire Station. It was noted that residents signing the petition in the catchment area of Conwy Fire Station were unable to attend the local engagement event/complete the electronic survey, but they went on to accept an offer from North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's EDI Officer to meet with them in person and to help them complete the questionnaire.	Councillor P A Owens (Conwy Town Council)	NWFRS (presented at community engagement event)	41
Petition to say no to option 3	Object to Option 3 and say no to the significant loss of 74 front line firefighters	Catrin Wager (Party of Wales)	Members of the North Wales Fire and	427

	and the closure of 5 on-call fire stations that this option would entail	Candidate, Bangor Aberconwy)	Rescue Authority	
Save Wrexham's Fire Engine	Opposing to cut Wrexham's second whole-time fire engine and maintain emergency cover in the area	Councillor Carrie Harper via Councillor Marc Jones (Plaid Cymru, Grosvenor, Wrexham County Borough Council)	Councillor Marc Jones NWFRA	734

4.0 Correspondence Received

This section of the addendum provides copies of substantive written submissions (discussed in section 6 of the full report) in full. These are listed in the language(s) in which they were received.

4.1 Overall

4.1.1 National Association of Retired Fire Fighters – North Wales Branch

Mr Dylan Rees, Chairman,

North Wales Fire Authority. 17th

September, 2023

Formal response to the 2023 Emergency Cover Review.

Dear Dylan

First of all, please accept my apologies for the much-delayed response to our meeting concerning the Fire Cover Review.

There was much more that we would have liked to discuss with you both concerning not just the review document itself but also other factors, although not directly linked to the review, that could have some bearing on financial considerations built in to the options produced for public consultation.

Our group has now provided me with their individual comments and observations and I have to say that one member in particular, namely [name removed], has done much work in putting together a document which I sincerely hope you will bring to the attention of the Chief and her team. They would do well to give serious consideration to its content for it gives, in my humble opinion, a far more practical solution to the ever increasing problem of operational availability.

I hope, that in respect of [name removed] work, you will also provide me with an assurance that not only will the whole Fire Authority be given the opportunity to give it their full consideration, but that also it is presented to the Chief as a serious long term answer to the ongoing problems that NWF&RS are facing.

I have given much thought to how I might best give a formal NARF response to

the proposals promulgated by NWF&RS bearing in mind that it would prove impossible to give a collective response as our group has a membership of seventy plus persons.

At this point I would like to add a few comments and observations of my own. Again, they do not directly relate to the consultation document but may provide some points which you, the Authority, may not be aware of or have had the opportunity to consider

- 1) Why was the FBU excluded from the working group meetings?
- 2) I believe you have by now had sight of the official FBU response (option 4 and option 5 growth).
- 3) Has the full Fire Authority had sight of the excellent argument put forward for the retention of the second pump at Wrexham?
- 4) During my one to one meeting with the Chief earlier this year, she said she would like to see a status quo re fire cover. Among reasons for rejection of this was the comment that it posed a risk to firefighters and the public, also the costs involved. No full explanation was provided for this reasoning.
- 5) The FBU are strongly critical of what they perceive as a “top heavy” management structure. I have studied the job responsibilities of the management team and would hope that they have, in some areas, no more than an overview reference.

I note elsewhere that NWF&RS carry an establishment of 146 non-operational staff and 274 operational. Assuming that the second figure includes ALL operational middle and executive ranks, I find the ratio surprising to say the least.

6) It seems that MANY new references have sprung up over the years. While readily accepting that times change, there seems to be no move to reduce the number of non operational staff

7) I sincerely hope NWF&RS do not persist with the proposal to recruit direct entry non operational Station Managers. CFO Docx says, “We are delighted to be taking part in the scheme which ties in with our core values enabling people to fulfill their full potential no matter what background”.

I am also reliably informed that should such an appointment be confirmed then there will be at least a two year period before the successful candidate will be ready to take up position. This will result in a very

considerable financial cost to the service.

The CFO also makes reference to a wide pool of talent.

I suggest that including for every job vacancy advertised, a requirement for the ability to have a basic grasp of the Welsh language will have the reverse effect in that this will exclude talented individuals with no understanding of Welsh at all from applying.

In my time as part of the Brigade Management Team I was a strong supporter of the Welsh Language and still am. At no time ever did not being able to speak Welsh hamper me or prevent me from carrying out my duties in a correct and professional manner.

The CFO says that the service will benefit immediately from skills and experiences brought to the table. NO IT WON'T.

Most importantly, how does this lie with the numerous junior officers in the service ready to step up to the challenges of Station Management? I have no doubt whatsoever that this will have an adverse effect not only on the morale of those individuals but on the service as a whole.

- 8) What happened to non operational hydrant inspectors? Assuming the proposal for job losses goes ahead, how will an already stretched service be able to carry out a full program of hydrant inspections?
- 9) Why is breathing apparatus maintenance and hose testing outsourced? What are the associated costs bearing in mind that these were in-house activities?
- 10) Why was the rope and line rescue aspect of the service done away with? At a recent gathering of Fire Service personnel I posed this question to a very senior officer. The glib reply was along the lines of, "austerity measures". Bearing in mind the title of North Wales FIRE AND RESCUE Service, how on earth did the previous Chief get this past the Fire Authority? I appreciate that this, Chairman, was before your time in office but bring it to your attention and put it to you that it was a grave error of judgement on the part of all concerned.
- 11) The proposal to build a new, all encompassing training facility is a folly.

The list, quite frankly, is endless but there is much in those things which I have mentioned that have financial implications.

I now give our formal response to the meeting as follows:-

As a group we feel the consultation process is flawed, essentially for the following reasons.

- 1) Much information has been withheld from the public hence they are not able to give an informed response.
- 2) The failure to include the FBU at the commencement of the review was a fundamental error
- 3) Given the excellent response for the retention of the second pump at Wrexham, the proposal for its removal should be rejected immediately.

You may recall that at the commencement of our meeting I read out a request from our secretary that the consultation be postponed for one year in order for the people of North Wales to be given a clear picture of what operational staff cutbacks would mean to them in real terms.

We endorse that request and hope you will give it your full consideration.

If the review does go ahead then North Wales NARF give their full backing to the Growth option five proposed by the FBU.

This concludes the formal response of the North Wales branch of NARF which should be read in conjunction with the additional responses set out below.

Sincerely
[name removed]

Response of [name removed].

The **Emergency Cover Review** is a result of an Improvement Proposal made in Audit Wales' 2021 review of "**Corporate Resilience in N.W.F.R.S.**"

The proposal stated, "**To support Resilience the Authority should review station locations to identify opportunities to optimise emergency response arrangements.**"

No financial implications were included in the proposal.

In September 2021, the C.F.O. presented the F.A. with an assessment highlighting key risks facing the Authority:-

Maintaining sufficient availability of on-call fire crews.

Ensuring sufficient resources to maintain and develop firefighter skills.

Having enough corporate capacity to meet current and future demand.

Again, no financial implications were included in the proposal.

The Executive Panel set up the **Emergency Cover Review Working Group** on 14th March 2023 for the sole purpose of addressing the key risks.

Still, no financial implications were included in the proposal.

The E.C.R. Working Group met on 4th April 2023 and were presented with four potential options; (Option 3 does not have the support of the C.F.O and Option 4 was discarded.)

Option 1 goes some way to address the existing resilience problem without any financial implications and is achievable quickly.

Options 2, 3 are solely concerned with reducing resilience for budgetary purposes and fails to investigate any of the numerous alternative budget savings that are clearly shown by the O.H.R. data sets.

We are surprised that the 2024/5 budget planning has simply been attached to the Emergency Cover Review, which artificially limits the Budget options.

It is our opinion, that considering just these 3 options, Option 1 could be implemented now as just the first step of many in a process that aligns response, resilience and sustainable budgets, ready for the late 2020's

The budget's savings possible are constrained by the poor location of some existing fire stations and capital expenditure should be at first be directed towards the re-siting of fire stations, rather than an expensive new Training Centre.

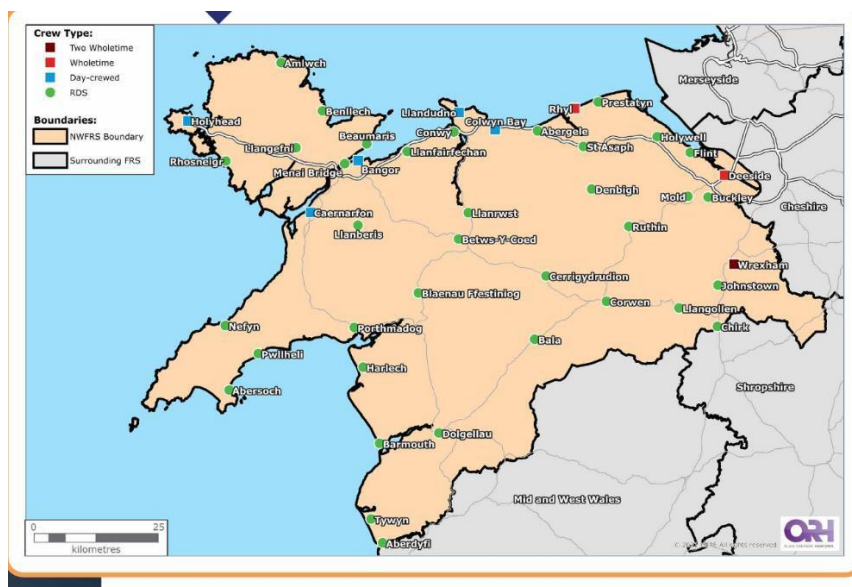
Cheshire's new Training Centre at Winsford cost £10.7million and provides training for a much greater and diverse set of industrial risks than North Wales.

Nationally, Fire Services are building new fire stations at strategic locations at lower costs by using innovative building methods. E.g. Harold Hill, Saughall Massie, Lymm and Powey Lane fire stations. The last three are wholetime with pumps and specials and just as at Wrexham, they provide a significant presence to a large area.

With the stated aim of a 20-minute attendance time, there is over provision of RDS stations in some areas and they are absorbing budgets that can be better spent elsewhere.

Below we provide some examples, but using their detailed data sets the Fire Authority can assess each option against the larger picture. Due to the limited data published, we cannot identify those stations with serious manning deficiencies, nor the additional burden this places on adjoining stations.

Existing Station Locations.



Stations with Wholetime personnel.

Wrexham is the only one of these stations with a 360-degree fireground. The new station is ideally sited to provide support to neighbouring stations.

Johnstown is sited just 3.6 miles away **and could be closed.**

Deeside is very close to the Cheshire border and just 4.7 miles from their wholetime Powey Lane Fire Station

Buckley is sited 4.4 miles away **and could be closed.**

Mold is sited 6.2 miles away **Possible**

changes

1. Relocate Deeside to the strategic A55/A494 interchange and close Buckley and Mold.
2. Re-introduce wholtime cover

Rhyl is adjacent to the sea and only covers a 180-degree semi-circle.

Prestatyn is sited 3.1 miles away.

St Asaph is sited 5.8 miles away and **is a strategic site Possible**

changes

1. Close Prestatyn Fire Station, or
2. Re-locate Rhyl Fire Station to St Asaph, close Abergele Fire Station. Improves cover in the Vale of Clwyd.

Colwyn Bay is adjacent to the sea and only covers a-180 degree semi-circle.

St Asaph is 12.8 miles away Abergele is

6.6miles away.

Llandudno is 5.9 miles away.

Possible changes

See Llandudno below.

Llandudno is unique as it is on a peninsular and since it was originally on a county boundary, it is very close to **Colwyn Bay (5.9 miles)**

Possible changes

1. Relocate both Colwyn Bay and Llandudno to a new strategic site at Llandudno Junction A55/A470 interchange.

Llandudno is 3.2miles away. Colwyn Bay is

4.5 miles away.

Conwy is 3.6 miles away via A55 **and could be closed.**

2. Combine both stations' Day-crews to provide a wholetime replica of Wrexham.

RDS Stations.

Menia Bridge is subject to bridge closures and should be protected.

Bangor is 3.7 miles away Llangefni is 9 miles away.

Betws y Coed is strategically sited and if RDS day cover is unreliable then Day Staffing should be introduced.

The option 1 for day staffing at Corwen, Dolgellau and Porthmadog should be introduced at the earliest possible moment.

Response of [name removed].

My response is to agree with [name removed]; We should support the FBU and the Wrexham submissions which, in my view, were very comprehensive and gave some facts and figures the public wouldn't be aware of, for example, Wrexham station is more active than Cardiff Central!!

I think we should add to [name removed] request that decisions should be delayed. The consultation is flawed - in that the public doesn't have access to all the options. the two councillors we met asked us to comment on two options that the public are unaware of as they have only been presented with options 1 to

3. Until the public have access to all options it cannot be construed to be a complete consultation.

Response of [name removed].

I think our response should refer to the following points;

The current situation is a result of the toxic culture within the service created by the previous CFO, this has been a major contributing factor to the poor retention of RDS staff.

Insufficient effort has been made over the last twenty years to fix a failing RDS system, only sticking plaster solutions have been implemented.

The chair stated that doing nothing wasn't an option, but didn't mention what was being done to fix the current model of fire cover.

More than half of all RDS stations are regularly not available, and despite what the chair may think, frontline staff morale is definitely at an all-time low.

This is a badly thought-out consultation put together by senior managers who do not understand operational fire cover.

The information provided to the public does not explain the situation or the proposals in a clear manner, it is too full of management jargon and flannel. This causes confusion and people switch off before reading it through properly. It is not possible to get past page one of the questionnaire without selecting one of the options.

Proposal four put together by NWF&RS FBU is a better set of options but is not being presented.

If the reason for the consultation is that the current retained duty system is failing, it makes no sense whatsoever to cut whole-time posts.

There is no mention in the consultation regarding any reduction to non-operational support staff, surely less support would be required if any of the proposed options are implemented. Was this even considered, particularly as NWF&RS continues to recruit for new non-operational posts?

The risks in Deeside, Rhyl and Wrexham have not decreased, in fact, even though the number of fires is lower, larger fires have become more common, and the number of other calls, such as RTC'S, floods, and wildfires have increased.

I doubt the Fire Authority members fully understand the process of downgrading a whole time station to day crewing and, additionally, the time taken and costs to carry the change through.

The second pump at Wrexham is the busiest pump in North Wales and it would be ridiculous to even consider its removal from a town that has recently gained city status.

The RDS crew in Wrexham is a complete failure and cannot be relied on to provide sufficient cover as a second pump.

The selection of five retained stations earmarked for closure was based on their poor availability performance and therefore does not reflect the best option. All this talk of a multi-million pound all singing all dancing Training Centre is also not being fully explained. Yes, it may be true that it is a capital spending project and not part of the revenue budget, but with only limited assistance from WAG to buy the land and build the centre, the ongoing loan payments will have to come from the revenue pot, something that seems not to have been factored into the budget figures presented as part of the consultation.

4.1.2 Sam Rowlands MS

Sam Rowlands

Member of the Welsh Parliament for North Wales

Aelod Senedd dros Gogledd Cymru

North Wales Office | Swyddfa Gogledd Cymru
North Wales Business Park, Abergele LL22 8LJ

Cardiff Office | Swyddfa Caerdydd
Senedd Cymru, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff CF99 1SN

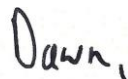
Tel | Ffon: 0300 200 7267

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Dawn
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St. Asaph
LL17 0JJ

Via email: dawn.docx@nwales-fireservice.org.uk

28th September 2023

Dear ,

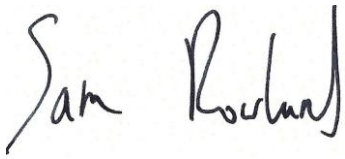
I'm writing in response to NWFRS's Emergency Cover Review consultation. I very much welcome the decision to consult with the public and to take their views into consideration.

I have been contacted by some of my constituents, who are very concerned at the possibility of a fire appliance being removed from Wrexham fire station. Wrexham is one of North Wales' largest population centres and it is vital that the Fire Service remains well resourced in this area.

I am also concerned at the proposed reduction in staffing levels included in both Options 2 and 3 of the review. Both Rhyl and Deeside fire stations serve heavily populated areas and I am sure that the public would expect these stations to be manned 24 hours a day. Indeed, fires are not constrained to starting only during day time hours.

Whilst I understand that recruitment remains an issue which the Fire Service needs to consider when planning emergency cover, I hope there will be an aspiration to recruit more staff and avoid a planned reduction in numbers.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Rowlands". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S'.

Sam Rowlands MS
Member of the Welsh Parliament for North Wales

————— — **Senedd Cymru**
— **Welsh Parliament**

4.1.3 Hannah Blythyn MS

Hannah Blythyn AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol Deputy Minister for Social Partnership

CFO Dawn Docx

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Ffordd Salesbury

St Asaph
Denbighshire LL17
0JJ

dawn.docx@northwalesfire.gov.wales
executiveassistants@northwalesfire.gov.wales
dylanrees@anglesey.gov.wales

4 September 2023

Dear Dawn,

I recently met the Chair for North Wales Fire Brigades Union, Stuart Stanley and the Brigade Secretary, Matt Ryan, at their request, to gain an understanding of their views on North Wales's consultation on changes to front-line firefighting cover.

The FBU representatives indicated that they opposed all three consultation options put forward by the FRA and commented that they had felt disappointed by the lack of opportunity to contribute to the discussions that had taken place during the engagement process. They referred to three counterproposals, which involved the creation of hub stations to maintain current cover standards, as well as providing Growth and . I understand these counterproposals have now been presented to the FRA. The timing of the consultation was also raised. It was felt that the timeframe does not allow sufficient engagement from the workforce, or the communities affected by the proposals. This is something that has also been raised with me by elected representatives from North Wales.

I made it clear to the FBU that the review and consultation are being conducted by North Wales FRA; and, as they relate to operational matters, are solely a matter for the FRA. It is not for Welsh Government to take a public position on any of the consultation options, or on any alternative which the FBU or others might propose. However, I agreed to relay the concerns to you.

In the spirit of working in partnership, I also informed the FBU of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act which, as you are aware, places a duty on public bodies, including FRAs, to seek compromise or consensus with their recognised trade unions, to improve the delivery of public services.

I trust that the FRA will continue in meaningful dialogue with union representatives and consultees, and hope that a fair and reasonable outcome can be reached which is accepted by all concerned, including the workforce.

I am copying this letter to Cllr Dylan Rees. Yours sincerely,



Hannah Blythyn AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Weinidog Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol Deputy Minister for Social Partnership

Annwyl Dawn,

Cwrddais â Chadeirydd Undeb Brigadau Tân Gogledd Cymru, Stuart Stanley ac Ysgrifennydd y Frigâd, Matt Ryan, mewn ymateb i gais ganddynt am gyfarfod, er mwyn deall eu safbwynt ar ymgynghoriad Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru ar newidiadau i'r trefniadau diffodd tân rheng flaen.

Dywedodd cynrychiolwyr Undeb y Brigadau Tân eu bod yn gwrthwynebu pob un o'r opsiynau a gynigir gan yr Awdurdod Tân ac Achub yn yr ymgynghoriad, a'u bod yn teimlo'n siomedig oherwydd y diffyg cyfle i gyfrannu at y trafodaethau a gafwyd yn ystod y broses ymgysylltu. Fe wnaethant gyfeirio at dri chynnig amgen, sy'n cynnwys creu gorsafoedd ar ffurf canolfannau a fyddai'n gallu cynnal safonau presennol y ddarpariaeth, yn ogystal ag opsiwn Twf a Buddsoddi. Rwy'n deall bod y cynigion amgen hyn bellach wedi cael eu cyflwyno i'r Awdurdod. Mae amseriad yr ymgynghoriad hefyd yn fater a godwyd ganddynt. Roeddent o'r farn nad oedd yr amserlen yn caniatáu am ddigon o ymgysylltu o safbwynt y gweithlu na'r cymunedau y mae'r cynigion yn effeithio arnynt. Mae cynrychiolwyr etholedig yn y Gogledd hefyd wedi codi'r mater hwn gyda mi.

Rwyf wedi ei gwneud yn glir i'r Undeb mai cyfrifoldeb Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru yw cynnal yr adolygiad a'r ymgynghoriad; a bod y rhain yn ymwneud â materion gweithredol ac felly materion i'r Awdurdod yn unig ydynt. Nid lle Llywodraeth Cymru yw datgan barn gyhoeddus ar unrhyw opsiwn yn yr ymgynghoriad, nac ar unrhyw opsiwn amgen a gynigir gan yr undeb neu eraill. Fodd bynnag, fe gytunais i anfon pryderon yr Undeb ymlaen atoch.

Yn yr ysbryd o weithio mewn partneriaeth, fe wnes i hefyd dynnu sylw'r Undeb at Ddeddf Partneriaeth Gymdeithasol a Chaffael Cyhoeddus (Cymru), sydd, fel y gwyddoch, yn rhoi dyletswydd ar gyrff cyhoeddus, gan gynnwys Awdurdodau Tân ac Achub, i geisio cyfaddawd neu gonsensws â'u hundebau llafur cydnabyddedig, gyda'r nod o wella gwasanaethau cyhoeddus.

Rwy'n hyderu y bydd yr Awdurdod Tân ac Achub yn parhau i fod mewn deialog ystyrlon â chynrychiolwyr undebau a'r rheini y mae'r ymgynghoriad yn berthnasol iddynt, gan obeithio y gallai hynny arwain at ganlyniad teg a rhesymol sy'n dderbyniol i bawb, gan gynnwys y gweithlu.

Rwy'n anfon copi o'r llythyr hwn at y Cyng. Dylan Rees.

Yn gywir,

4.1.4 Llyr Gruffydd MS

(Translation of email below)

Dear friend

I would firstly like to thank the fire service for their work in keeping our communities safe over the past year.

In responding to the consultation, I would like to object to the three options that have been proposed for the Emergency Provision Review across North Wales.

I welcome the intention to expand the full-time emergency service in parts of the West, but this should not be done at the expense of losing jobs and key experience in the East.

I have had a number of residents contact me concerned about the future of Deeside and Rhyl stations due to the intention in Options 1, 2, and 3 to cut full time staffing with the intention of redeploying staff towards the West . Many are worried that the staff here can find jobs in neighboring authorities, especially as some of them live across the border.

Wrexham currently deals with 50% of emergency calls and therefore it is surprising to see an intention in Option 2 and 3 to cut the number of firefighters from 52 to 28 and lose the second full-time fire engine. Losing such numbers of staff with their experience and expertise scares me to be honest, as the second crew is often needed to crew the special units such as the high platform ladder and the chemicals unit.

The third option would mean closing 5 stations and losing 1 in 5 firefighters, something the Chief Fire Officer himself has described as "unacceptable". I agree with that opinion.

An alternative has been presented by the Fire Brigade Union which proposes to maintain the current services and increase them in the West. The case for the increase has been made in the consultation so that, to a certain extent, is accepted by the Fire Authority. What is encouraging in this alternative is the intention to secure and maintain the service in the more urban areas, areas with a large number of vulnerable residents, disadvantaged communities and tall buildings that require a special and reliable service. I do not believe that the options that the authority has presented would ensure that a special and reliable service would be constantly available in these vulnerable areas.

There is a cost to each of the options but I have no doubt that the residents of North Wales appreciate the service they receive.

I therefore hope that the fire authority will consider Option 4 and 5, which are the FBU's alternatives, at their next meeting.

Very correct

Llyr Gruffydd MP

From: Gruffydd, Llyr (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd) <Llyr.Gruffydd@senedd.wales>

Sent: 29 September 2023 14:42

To: Emergency Cover Review <emergencycoverreview@northwalesfire.gov.wales>

Subject: Ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad

You don't often get email from llyr.gruffydd@senedd.wales. [Learn why this is important](#)

Annwyl gyfaill

Hoffwn yn gyntaf ddiolch i'r gwasanaeth tân am eu gwaith yn cadw'n cymunedau'n ddiogel dros y flwyddyn ddiwethaf.

Wrth ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad, hoffwn wrthwynebu'r tri opsiwn sydd wedi eu cynnig ar gyfer yr Adolygiad Darpariaeth Brys ar draws y Gogledd.

Rwy'n croesawu'r bwriad i ehangu'r gwasanaeth brys llawn amser mewn rhannau o'r Gorllewin, ond ni ddylid gwneud hyn ar draul colli swyddi a phrofiad allweddol yn y Dwyrain.

Rwyf wedi cael nifer o drigolion yn cysylltu â mi yn bryderus am ddyfodol gorsafoedd Glannau Dyfrdwy a'r Rhyl oherwydd y bwriad yn Opsiynau 1, 2, a 3 i dorri staffio llawn amser gyda'r bwriad o ad-leoli staff tua'r Gorllewin. Mae nifer yn poeni y gall y staff yma ddod o hyd i swyddi mewn awdurdodau cyfagos, yn enwedig gan fod rhai ohonynt yn byw dros y ffin.

Mae Wrecsam ar hyn o bryd yn delio â 50% o alwadau brys ac felly mae'n syndod gweld bwriad yn Opsiwn 2 a 3 i dorri'r nifer o ddiffoddwyr tân o 52 i 28 a cholli'r ail injan dân llawn amser. Mae colli'r fath niferoedd o staff gyda'u profiad a'u harbenigedd yn fy nychryn a bod yn onest, gan fod angen yr ail griw yn aml er mwyn criwio'r unedau arbennigol megis yr ystol plattform uchel a'r uned gemegau.

Byddai'r trydydd opsiwn yn golygu cau 5 gorsaf a cholli 1 o bob 5 diffoddwr tân, rhywbeth y mae'r Prif Swyddog Tân ei hun wedi disgrifio'n "annerbyniol". Rwy'n cytuno efo'r farn honno.

Mae dewis amgen wedi ei gyflwyno gan Undeb y Frigâd Dân sy'n cynnig cynnal y gwasanaethau presennol a'u cynnydd yn y Gorllewin. Mae'r achos am y cynnydd wedi ei wneud yn yr ymgynghoriad felly mae hynny, i raddau'n cael ei dderbyn gan yr Awdurdod Tân. Beth sy'n galonogol yn y dewis amgen yma ydi'r bwriad i sicrhau a chynnal y gwasanaeth yn yr ardaloedd mwy trefol, ardaloedd sydd â nifer helaeth o drigolion bregus, cymunedau difreintiedig ac adeiladau uchel sydd angen gwasanaeth arbennigol a dibynadwy. Nid wyf yn credu y byddai yr opsiynau y mae'r awdurdod wedi eu cyflwyno yn sicrhau y byddai gwasanaeth arbennigol a dibynadwy ar gael yn gyson yn yr ardaloedd bregus yma.

Mae yna gost i bob un o'r opsiynau ond nid oes gennyf amheuaeth fod trigolion y Gogledd yn gwerthfawrogi'r gwasanaeth y maent yn ei dderbyn.

Gobeithiaf felly y bydd yr awdurdod tân yn ystyried Opsiwn 4 a 5, sef dewisiadau amgen yr FBU, yn eu cyfarfod nesaf.

Yn gywir iawn

Llyr Gruffydd AS



Llyr Gruffydd AS / MS

Gogledd Cymru / North Wales

Gweinidog Cysgodol Materion Gwledig
Shadow Minister for Rural Affairs

llyr.gruffydd@senedd.cymru

llyr.gruffydd@senedd.wales

01824 703593

Dilynwch ni / Follow us



 Fy rhagenwau dewisiol yw fe/ef / My preferred pronouns are he/him/his

4.1.5 Tunnels Administrative Authority Representative



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Cysylltedd Trafnidiaeth a Digidol
Transport and Digital Connectivity

Sent by email to
<EmergencyCoverReview@northwalesfire.gov.wales>

Our Ref/Ein cyf : qA1199830

29 September 2023

Dear Sirs,

I refer to the recent consultation publication by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service “Emergency Cover Review Have Your say”.

By way of introduction, I am the Administrative Authority Representative for the Welsh Government under the Road Tunnel Safety Regulations (RTSR 2007 amended 2009 and 2021) with responsibility for the road tunnels on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) on behalf of the Welsh Ministers.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide my observations and concerns regarding potential changes to the capacity of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. As the owner of the trunk road network in Wales, we play a key role in ensuring the smooth operation of the region's transportation systems. Critical elements of our network include the A55 tunnels which serve local communities, tourism, commerce, and the emergency services as a primary route. Over 13 million vehicles have passed through these tunnels in the past year alone. The tunnels in question are:

- A55 Conwy Tunnel – 1.1km length, dual bore two lane – submersed tunnel.
- A55 Pen y Clip Westbound Tunnel – 930m in length – two lane single direction rock bored tunnel.
- A55 Penmaenbach Westbound Tunnel – 658m in length – two lane single direction rock bored tunnel.
- A55 Penmaenbach Eastbound Headland Tunnel – 172m in length – two lane single direction rock bored tunnel.

The tunnels on the A55 over 500m in length must comply with the RTSR that define minimum safety measures, as well as requirements for tunnel management, incident response, and regular safety inspections. To minimise safety risks, RTSR emphasises the importance of preventive measures, such as robust fire detection, adequate ventilation for the control of heat and smoke, emergency exit provisions etc. These systems are embedded into the operating procedures and plans for tunnel management. Only seven other tunnels in the UK are subject to this legislation.

Our operating procedures, emergency contingency plan, fire risk assessments (in accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005) and evacuation modelling have been undertaken based on the assumption that the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service would

respond to a tunnel incident within 12 minutes. This time was arrived at following discussion with NWF&RS staff and evaluation of actual incident response data. While it is fully appreciated that this time is not a guarantee, if it is considered likely that if this crucial estimated response time is no longer achievable or compromised, it could adversely impact the risk of serious injury or fatalities in the event of an incident within the tunnels. Furthermore, re-evaluation of our risk assessments and modelling would be necessary and may present untenable risks. Introducing new procedures and mitigation measures for life safety systems would be inherently disruptive to the network, will incur significant costs (both capital and revenue) and may be problematic to justify.

Consequently, any prospect of a reduction in capacity within the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service raises serious concerns for incident response to tunnel events. The ability to respond quickly to incidents is crucial as delays may lead to the escalation of an incident resulting in more extensive infrastructure damage and a negative impact on public safety.

Of particular relevance to the A55 tunnels the following fire stations are identified as being of critical importance for initial response:

- Conwy - Retained Duty System (RDS) station. Recorded Sites of Risk include “the A55 and its tunnels” (<https://www.northwalesfire.gov.wales/about-us/stations/conwy/>).
- Llanfairfechan – RDS station.
- Llandudno – Day crewed wholetime station. Recorded Sites of Risk include the “[A55] expressway, including major [Conwy] tunnel” (<https://www.northwalesfire.gov.wales/about-us/stations/llandudno/>).
- Bangor – Day crewed wholetime station. Recorded Sites of Risk include the “A55 Expressway” (<https://www.northwalesfire.gov.wales/about-us/stations/bangor/>).
- Colwyn Bay – Day crewed wholetime station. Recorded Sites of Risk include “the A55 and the Conwy Tunnel” (<https://www.northwalesfire.gov.wales/about-us/stations/colwyn-bay/>).

Additionally, the NWF&RS Corporate Plan 2021-24 explains the vision for the future, and how you propose to achieve this through seven long term objectives. Supporting the delivery of the seven objectives are more detailed, shorter term, steps that have been linked to the seven well-being goals outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

I consider that maintaining and reinforcing objective 5 of the plan is paramount.

- Objective 5: To maintain a suitably resilient, skilled, professional and flexible workforce.

Option 3, the closure of Conwy fire station, would appear likely to result in a reduced service. I would state a strong objection to this option. The remaining options 1 and 2 do not appear to have the same impact but nevertheless I would like to seek assurances that the service can provide the required attendance within the existing timeframe and with adequate resources to tunnel incidents.

I would welcome the opportunity to engage further or participate in any group consultation

sessions. Yours faithfully



Jason Hibbert

Tunnels Administrative Authority Representative
Cynrychiolydd Awdurdod Gweinyddol Twneli

4.2 Representative Bodies

4.2.1 Fire Brigades Union – Letter 15th August



FBU Welsh Region
2nd Floor
Hastings House
Fitzalan Court
Cardiff
CF24 0BL
Tel: 029 2049 6474
Email: 08@fbu.org.uk

15th August 2023.

Dear Fire Authority Member,

I write to you today, requesting that North Wales Fire Authority extend the current public consultation period for the Emergency Fire Cover Review in North Wales.

I also request that the 2 x options produced and agreed by the membership of North Wales Fire Brigades Union (attached document), for improving fire cover in North Wales, are included in the public consultation, going forward.

I am extremely concerned with the current situation and feel that it needs reviewing urgently.

There is growing anger and dissatisfaction amongst the workforce, stemming from their views, experience and expert opinion, not being considered when producing the original public consultation options document.

Employees feel let down, are disengaging, and there is a genuine risk of the service becoming fractured.

This period of change, if we don't get it right, could have a long-term detrimental impact on staff morale and the relationship between stations and service management.

In North Wales, we have a proud history of a positive and pro-active working relationship between the Fire Brigades Union (who represent the majority of the workforce) and yourselves, the employer. This was highlighted and recognised earlier this year in a

meeting with the Deputy Minister for Social Partnership, Hannah Blythin, and is something we should all be extremely proud of.

Extending the consultation period and including the additional options put forward, would certainly show strong leadership. It would send a clear message to the employees of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service that they are being listened to, that their opinions, concerns, and ideas matter and are valued.

Thank you for your time.

Kind Regards,

Duncan

Duncan Stewart-Ball
Regional Secretary FBU
Cymru/Wales

4.2.2 Fire Brigades Union – Options for Emergency cover Improvement

Fire Brigade Union – The Voice of Professional Firefighters

Options for Emergency Cover Improvement

A vision for improvement and growth, not options of decline

FBU North Wales
8-14-2023

Foreword

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is facing an important decision on how to improve its emergency response to communities. They have three options to consider, but all of them would lead to a decline in night-time response standards in communities, negatively affecting densely populated areas, industrial centres, major hospitals, and regions facing economic and social challenges.

Last year, North Wales achieved an extraordinary milestone - ZERO fire-related deaths. This success can be attributed to preventative work and the current resource model, honed over many years, and tested thoroughly. The current approach has proven effective in minimizing the risk of fire-related fatalities.

None of the current Consultation Options deliver wholesale fire cover improvement across all communities in North Wales. Nor do they come without significant cost and disruption. During the Emergency Cover Review's initial concept and development stage, the public and employee representative bodies were not included to help shape and contribute. This led to the three Options out for consultation, none of which align with the original aim of improving emergency cover across all of North Wales. It seems the primary focus has shifted to achieving modest financial savings, overshadowing the true goal of enhancing safety across the region

Every professional firefighter in North Wales supports the need for improved fire cover in rural areas. The decline in On-Call firefighter availability has been a persistent issue, partly due to societal changes forcing people to work outside their communities. To address this, we propose two options which are able to establish and maintain 3 Day Staffed stations and keep the proven formula at Rhyl and Deeside unchanged.

One of the proposals is a *Growth and Investment* Option. This involves utilising existing staff resources combined with the creation of 23 additional posts. These positions would allow the independent creation of 3 new Rural stations, boosting social partnerships, social cohesion and investment, improving community wellbeing and importantly, it aligns with the **Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015**.

It is noteworthy that both Options also increases the number of households that will receive a response within 20 mins, over the current best model of Consultation Option 1 (See Appendix 2)

Addressing varying standards of response and emergency in North Wales requires action. Inequality in service between rural and urban areas raises questions of fairness. Living in a free and open democracy, all communities, staff and other stakeholders should be given the opportunity to consult on options of growth, as well as options of decline.

Achieving zero fire deaths last year was a significant milestone, but maintaining these standards is vital. In a sector where timely and adequate response is crucial, a safe and robust working model should be preserved.

FBU North Wales
The Voice of Professional Firefighters

OPT	Model	How it is achieved	Benefits	Drawbacks
<p>Option 4</p>	<p>Rhyl, Deeside and Wrexham remain unchanged, 3 additional hub stations are created. No cost increases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NWFRS has an over establishment of 8 - WDSR have an establishment of 11 - Utilise 2 departmental WM/CM's <p>3 hub stations are created. working on a 9-day fortnight basis. Monday-Friday Monday – Thursday 8hr working day</p> <p>Personnel from WT stations are offered the opportunity to transfer to a new rural station.</p>	<p>No On- Call Station closures. No redundancies or job losses. Wrexham maintain a 2nd Appliance</p> <p>Current Cover Standards are maintained at Rhyl, Deeside and Wrexham AND significantly improved at Corwen, Porthmadog and Dolgellau.</p> <p>No added costs associated with permanently relocating 28 staff from Rhyl and Deeside.</p> <p>Provides a permanent “Home Station” for WDSR/ transfer personnel, creating regular work patterns and contributing to environmental impact goals.</p> <p>278 more households within a 20-minute response than the Consultation Option 1 and 2105 more households than Consultation Option 2</p> <p>Percentage increase is 92.80 (Consultation Option 1 is 92.70)</p> <p>Social Value and Prevention and Protection activity is the same as Option 1</p> <p>Wholetime Staff numbers = No Change</p> <p>On-Call Staff numbers = No Change</p> <p>Dept. WM's/ CM's are on-hand to offer local support to On-Call crews</p>	<p>No Wholetime cover available on weekends and 1 Friday per fortnight.</p> <p>£20.36 per household increase from previous year (in line with Consultation Option 1)</p> <p>A costlier choice over Option 2 (£16.63) and Option 3 (£12.22)</p>

OPT	Model	How it is achieved	Benefits	Drawbacks
<p>Option 5 (Growth)</p>	<p>Rhyl, Deeside and Wrexham remain unchanged, 3 additional hub stations are created. A cost increase is involved.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NWFRS has an over establishment of 8 - WDSR have an establishment of 11 - Create 23 new Posts <p>Utilise the 42 staff to crew 3 rural hub stations.</p> <p>Personnel from WT stations are offered the opportunity to transfer to a new rural station.</p>	<p>No On- Call Station closures. No redundancies or job losses. Wrexham maintain a 2nd Appliance</p> <p>Current Cover Standards are maintained at Rhyl, Deeside and Wrexham AND significantly improved at Corwen, Porthmadog and Dolgellau.</p> <p>No added costs associated with permanently relocating 28 staff from Rhyl and Deeside.</p> <p>Provides a permanent “Home Station” for WDSR/ transfer personnel.</p> <p>278 more households within a 20-minute response than the Consultation Option 1 and 2105 more households than Consultation Option 2</p> <p>Percentage increase is 92.80 (Consultation Option 1 is 92.70)</p> <p>Social Value and Prevention and Protection activity is the same as Option 1</p> <p>Wholetime Staff numbers = No Change</p> <p>On-Call Staff numbers = No Change</p> <p>Creation of 23 new posts provides opportunities for local communities to secure full-time employment.</p>	<p>£24.54 per household increase from previous year</p> <p>A costlier choice over Option 1 (£20.36) Option 2 (£16.63) and Option 3 (£12.22)</p>

OPT	Model	How it is achieved	Benefits	Drawbacks
			<p>Greater investment in local communities, creating social cohesion and improved wellbeing.</p> <p>Reduced environmental impact.</p> <p>It fits the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, which is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales (see appendix 3)</p>	



1 x Rural Day Crewed Station costs £750,000



A Day Shift requires up to 14 Firefighters
(7 when working a 9 Day Fortnight)



This equates to £53,571.43 per Firefighter
Or £1,232,142.89 in total for 23 new posts



With 294,703 households in N Wales, this equates to an increase of **£4.18** per annum or **1.15p** per day

Cost of Each Option

Consultation Option 1	= £20.36
Consultation Option 2	= £16.63
Consultation Option 3	= £12.22
Employee/ FBU Option 4a	= £20.36
Employee/ FBU Option 4b	= £20.36
Employee/ FBU Option 4c	= £20.36
Employee/ FBU Option 4d	= £20.36
FBU Growth Option	= £24.54

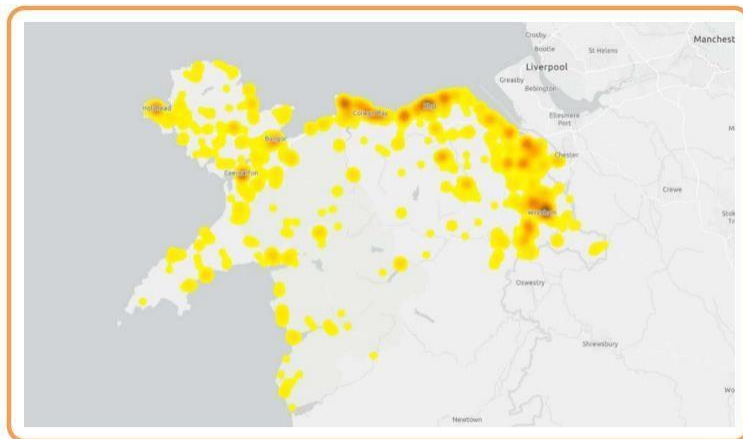
Potential Efficiency Savings

Training Facility = £48 million (£1.1million per annum on interest only)

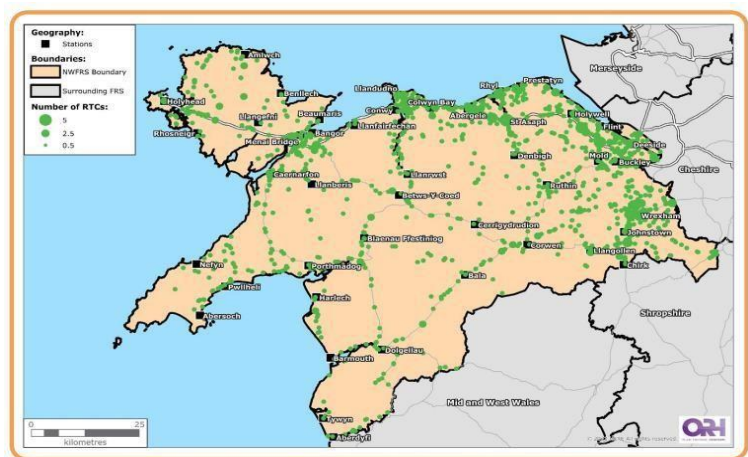
Assistant Chief Fire Officer = £130,000 (on costs) plus car and benefits

NFCC Direct Entry Scheme = £163,000 during 3-year development

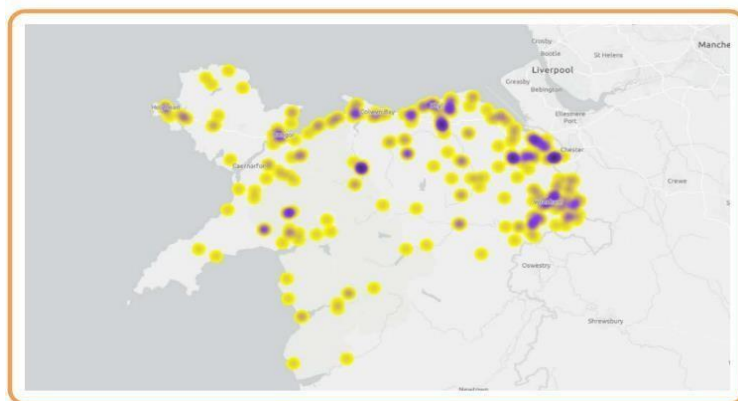
Appendix 1



Accidental Dwelling Fires attended 01/04/2017 - 31/03/2022



Road traffic collision locations 01/04/2017 - 31/03/2022



Flooding incidents attended 01/04/2017 - 31/03/2022

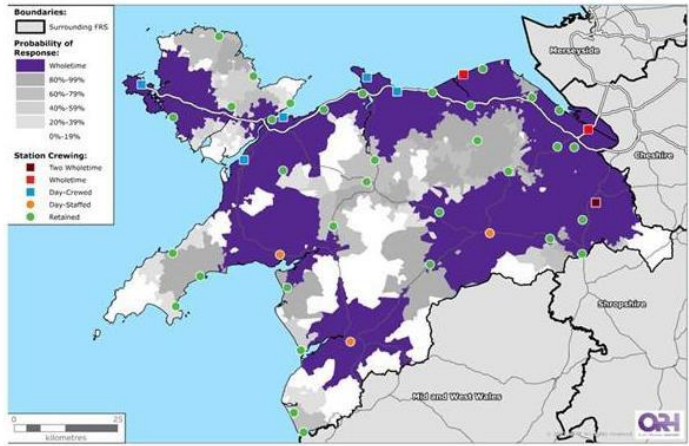
In each of the 3 examples of primary incident types attended, the greatest concentration of occurrences are turnout areas relating to or supported by Rhyl, Deeside and Wrexham

Appendix 2

	Total Households	Base Position (Current)		Modelled Option (Growth)		Difference	
		Households in 20 mins	% Households Covered	Households in 20 mins	% Households Covered	Households in 20 mins	% Households Covered
NWFRS-wide	341,341	314,323	92.10%	316,749	92.80%	+2426	+0.7%

You'll see from the above table that this brings 278 more households within a 20 minute response than the Consultation Option 1 and 2105 more households than Consultation Option 2.

The daytime response map will look the same as Consultation Option 1 in terms of footprint but Deeside and Rhyl would be highlighted in red as Wholetime:



Appendix 3

Fostering Well-being through Job Creation at Rural Fire Stations in Alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 represents a visionary framework aimed at enhancing the overall social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales. This legislation urges public bodies to adopt a proactive, long-term perspective, collaborate effectively, and engage communities in pursuit of shared well-being goals. The proposed establishment of three new rural fire stations in Corwen, Porthmadog, and Dolgellau, coupled with the creation of 23 full-time positions, aligns seamlessly with the principles of this Act, serving as a tangible embodiment of its aspirations.

At its core, the Act emphasises the creation of a prosperous, resilient, healthier, and more equal society, fostering cohesive communities, vibrant culture, and global responsibility. By expanding fire cover in underserved rural areas, the proposed fire stations echo these core values and goals in several significant ways:

Resilient Communities: The Act's emphasis on resilient communities is mirrored by the proposal's intention to bolster emergency response capabilities. The establishment of 23 wholetime local employment posts ensures a consistent and reliable presence to address emergencies, thereby strengthening the community's ability to cope with challenges and disruptions. With more personnel available on a full-time basis, emergency response times can be improved. This enhanced capability is critical in addressing various emergencies, including fires, accidents, and natural disasters. Swift and efficient response can mitigate potential damages and save lives. It also has the added benefit of bolstering On-Call firefighters at periods during nighttime hours.

Long-Term Impact: The Act's focus on long-term thinking aligns with the proposal's commitment to addressing the decline in on-call firefighters. The introduction of permanent positions provides a sustainable solution, safeguarding the community's well-being for years to come. The new firefighter positions provide valuable employment opportunities for individuals residing in Corwen, Porthmadog, Dolgellau, and neighbouring areas. Job creation is vital for community stability, reducing unemployment rates, and offering career paths for individuals who may have otherwise sought employment outside the region.

Collaborative Approach: The Act's call for collaboration is exemplified by the coordination required to establish the fire stations. This collaboration involves public bodies, local authorities, and communities, reflecting the Act's emphasis on cross-sector partnerships to enhance overall well-being.

Community Engagement: The Act's emphasis on involving people in achieving well-being goals resonates with the fire stations' potential to engage the community. Through fire safety

education, emergency preparedness initiatives, and active participation, the fire stations can empower citizens to contribute to their own well-being and safety. The presence of new firefighter posts can facilitate increased engagement between the fire service and local communities.

The creation of new firefighter posts and the expansion of fire services can instil a sense of pride and security within local communities. Knowing that there are dedicated professionals ready to respond to emergencies fosters a safer and more resilient environment.

Economic Prosperity: The creation of 23 full-time positions aligns with the Act's vision of a prosperous economy that generates wealth and employment opportunities. These positions not only enhance emergency response capabilities but also contribute to the local economy. These firefighters will become consumers, leading to increased spending on goods and services within the communities where they live and work. This localized economic activity can contribute to a stronger economic foundation for the region, reinforcing the Act's commitment to sustainable economic development.

Cultural Enrichment: The Act's promotion of culture and language aligns with the fire stations' potential to foster community cohesion. By becoming hubs of safety and cultural exchange, the stations can embody the Act's goal of nurturing a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Employing local people, with the societal richness they bring, will engender a sense of ownership and responsibility.

Environmental Stewardship and Local Resilience: By employing local individuals to staff these fire stations, the proposal directly addresses environmental concerns. The reduction of long-distance commutes decreases carbon emissions, contributing to a more sustainable environment. Localized employment enhances resilience by ensuring swift and effective emergency response within communities. This approach aligns harmoniously with the Act's broader emphasis on environmental stewardship, fostering an eco-friendlier community while also promoting self-reliant and empowered neighbourhoods.

Firefighters bring diverse skills and backgrounds to their roles. The recruitment of new firefighters can bring a fresh perspective and diverse skill sets to the fire service, enhancing its overall capabilities and adaptability.

Acknowledging the necessary financial investment, the proposal's implementation to establish three new rural fire stations and create 23 full-time positions requires an increased allocation within the Fire Service budget. This adjustment leads to a modest rise in council tax, amounting to £4.18 per household annually, or approximately 1.5 pence per day for every household in north Wales. This financial commitment underscores dedication to well-being and safety, further solidifying the alignment between the proposal and the Act's principles.

In conclusion, the commitment to expanding fire cover and investing in dedicated personnel not only enhances emergency response capabilities but also signifies a conscious effort to realize the well-being aspirations outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Through the synergy of improved safety, community

engagement, economic empowerment, and environmental responsibility, this proposal stands as a testament to Wales's commitment to holistic well-being for present and future generations.

4.2.3 Fire Brigades Union – Letter 7th September



FBU Welsh Region
2nd Floor
Hastings House
Fitzalan Court
Cardiff
CF24 0BL
Tel: 029 2049 6474

Dear Fire Authority Member,

I am writing to you today, following a letter that I sent to yourself and all North Wales Fire Authority members on the 15th August 2023, with reference to the Emergency Fire Cover Review. The letter highlighted my concerns with the current Public Consultation process and the negative effect it is having on employees of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, your staff. With this point in mind, it is extremely disappointing that I have only received a few responses to my correspondence.

Yesterday afternoon I attended the public meeting at Rhyl rugby club. The turnout was poor to say the least, probably about 20 people, consisting of approximately 4 x members of the public. The others present were employees, councillors, MP's and union representatives. The numbers in attendance mirrored most of the other public meetings so far. It was very disappointing, as this is such an important topic which could impact so many people across North Wales.

It was highlighted how poorly attended these meetings are, and questions were asked about how these meetings had been communicated to the public of North Wales.

I understand that the Fire Service comms team have been busy, but have they got it wrong on this occasion?

It appears that they have failed to reach most residents in North Wales.

- Why hasn't the Fire Authority / Fire Service sent out letters to every household explaining what is going on, and inviting members of the public to these meetings to discuss? As once this process is over, each household will receive a council tax bill with increases applied, and the fire cover will be changed, which is obviously, far too late.

After the meeting yesterday, and with my concerns, I knocked on every household in my neighbouring street and asked the following questions;

- Are you aware that there is a Public Consultation taking place into changes within North Wales Fire and Rescue Service?
- Are you aware that there is a Public Meeting next Tuesday 12th September in Conwy, to discuss?

A few people knew that there was a Public Consultation into the Fire Service, as they had seen it on the news, earlier in the year. The majority didn't have a clue about the process. Nobody was aware of the Public Meeting next week in Conwy.

I was shocked and decided to phone a few friends and family, who I hadn't discussed the process with, the answers were pretty much the same. It is possible, that most residents in North Wales do not know about these meetings taking place, which is worrying, especially as you would want maximum engagement to reinforce your decisions on such important matters.

The three options put forward by the Fire Authority for change in North Wales were discussed but were not supported by anybody in yesterday's meeting. That was clear, as nobody wanted to put a green coin in any of the option tubes that were on display. Everybody wanted a growth option to be included and were really shocked to discover that yourselves as a committee, decided that the Public of North Wales should not be given the option to vote for growth, but instead a possible reduction depending on your postcode. This is not fair, and certainly amazes me, especially as every option put forward at this present time comes at a cost to the taxpayer.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer, also explained the problems with recruiting and retaining Retained Duty System Firefighter's, which basically led North Wales to undertake the Fire Cover Review. RDS availability has been a big problem in North Wales for many years and we have worked with the employer to try to rectify these issues.

I am aware that the RDS budget each year is approximately £3 million, or certainly has been recently, and that most years there has been huge underspend, which has been confirmed in meetings with the SLT in the past.

- Why can't the underspend from the RDS annual budget cover the costs associated with the introduction of 2 or 3 rural day staffed stations?

Based on the facts above that I am presenting to you, I request on behalf of the members of the Fire Brigades Union in North Wales, that the current Public Consultation is reviewed, extended, properly communicated to all members of public across all areas of North Wales. The option for growth (Option 5), which the Fire Brigades Union has submitted should now be included in the public consultation going forward.

Yours Sincerely,

Duncan

Duncan
Stewart-Ball
Regional
Secretary FBU
Cymru/Wales

4.3 Anglesey

4.3.1 Isle of Anglesey County Council



Ms Dawn Docx

Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive Fire and Rescue Service

Sent via e-mail:- emergencycoverreview@northwalesfire.gov.wales

DYLAN J. WILLIAMS BA (Hons), MSc, MA, M.R.T.P.I.

Prif Weithredwr Chief Executive

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Swyddfa'r Sir LLANGEFNI

Ynys Môn - Anglesey LL77 7TW

Gofynnwch am - Please ask for:

☐ (01248) 752102

E-Bost-E-mail: DylanWilliams@ynysmon.llyw.cymru

Ein Cyf - Our Ref. EmergencyCoverRev Eich Cyf - Your Ref.

28 September, 2023 Dear Ms Docx

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority – Emergency Cover Review

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Emergency Cover Review consultation. Senior Officers and Elected Members have reviewed the consultation document and considered the proposed options. These were formally considered and endorsed by the Executive on Tuesday, 26 September 2023.

As a local authority in North Wales and as a category 1 responder, the Council plays a crucial role in civil resilience and must ensure adequate preparedness for emergencies. We work alongside the emergency services and other category 1 responders and fully appreciate and understand the importance of the service and the challenges faced. We value our continued commitments and endeavours to collaborate effectively, whilst recognizing that the current financial challenges are both uncertain and demanding. We also recognise the difficulties in planning for, delivering, and maintaining core statutory services in a period of financial constraints.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council is one of the 6 constituent authorities of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. Membership of the Fire and Rescue Authority includes county councillors from the six local authorities and this Council has 3 members on the Authority.

The majority of funding for the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is received by way of levy from the Unitary Authorities within the area. The Council pays into this combined fund and the contribution is based on population. Any change in the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service budget would consequently impact on the levy contributions and would result in added pressure to the Council's budget. This would either result in the Council having to reduce other service budgets in order to maintain the budget at the level of funding available or to increase the funding by passing on the additional cost to the Island's residents through increased Council Tax.

Please see below detailed comments:

General comments

1. The purpose and objective of the consultation is clearly set out in the document. The information within and the general presentation of the document is clear and easy to understand.
2. Although, the document does not give detail on the reason / need for change, we have been advised that the review seeks to improve guaranteed day time emergency cover across the whole of North Wales.
3. There are differing needs and challenges across the region, primarily driven by geography, and having a dispersed rural community. We are eager to ensure that rural communities are not at a disadvantage in terms of service provision as a result of any changes.
4. The location of the RAF base at Valley with its own fire station makes Anglesey unique. We would welcome assurances that discussions have / will take place with the RAF to ensure all avenues have been explored with regard to collaborative working.
5. We recognise that North Wales as a region has continued to evolve and so have the risks faced by the public who live, work and visit. We also welcome the evolution of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to become a preventative service along with special service calls emerging as a result of climate change and advances in technology.
6. We agree with the criteria used in developing the options and the key themes arising from the initial engagement. They are appropriate and suitable.

Options

7. The document suggests that on a regional basis, the impact of the 3 different options varies.
8. Specifically for Anglesey, there will be no impact or effect from maintaining the current arrangements or changing to options 1 and 2.
9. Although options 1 and 2 would see no impact on the Island they would cost more. To maintain the existing level of service, if financially achievable, would be a desirable outcome.
10. The maps showing the location of the emergency calls clearly show that the majority of calls around the coast are in the North and on Anglesey. However, the 3 options proposed increase the full-time staff in South Meirionnydd and Denbigh. As a result, the Service will have more full-time staff in the areas with fewer calls.

11. The consultation document does not show the number of calls per full-time staff before and after implementing any changes. This comparison would help to show the impact of the changes under each of the options. Ideally the change should create a situation where the call to staff figure be consistent across the region.

Option 3

12. Option 3 includes the closure of one of the Island's Retained Stations in Beaumaris.

13. Our view is that the closure or non-availability of a resource would result in taking longer for the next nearest resource to attend an emergency. The next nearest response would not necessarily be coming from neighbouring stations as they may not be available due to crewing deficiencies or being required elsewhere. In the case of Beaumaris, the next station to respond is Menai Bridge which has only been available 26% of the time.

14. Option 3 is the only option detailing a reduction (2,087) in the number of households that would receive a response within 20 minutes. Both options 1 and 2 note an increase (2,148 and 321 respectively). Information received specifies that the closure of the Beaumaris Station would reduce the number of households in Anglesey receiving a response in 20 minutes by 670 households (a reduction from 78.4% to 76%). The location of these households has not been shared; we assume that these would be in the South East of the Island.

15. As previously noted, the next nearest response would not necessarily be coming from neighbouring stations, therefore suggesting the response may come from off Anglesey. With the nearest day crewed station to Beaumaris being over the Menai in Bangor, Gwynedd, it is in our view a reduced service which enhances threat to life.

16. The congestion and lack of resilience for the Menai crossings is of significant concern and dependency on the Bangor Fire Station therefore raises serious concerns. Detailed evidence of these concerns were presented and endorsed by the Council's Executive on the 18th of July 2023 (Improving the Reliability and Resilience across the Menai Straits.pdf (anglesey.gov.uk)).

a. The Britannia Bridge is the only point on the UK trunk road network hosting the Trans-European Road Network route E22, where the carriageway narrows from 4 lanes to two - one in each direction.

b. Restrictions on the type of vehicles that can access the Menai Suspension bridge (only up to 7.5 tonnes), and speed restrictions of 30mph along with the lack of enhanced safety facilities, such as hard shoulders contribute to poor resilience with regards to emergency vehicles.

c. The Britannia Bridge is vulnerable to closures due to wind, incidents and accidents.

d. During particularly high winds (gusts above 70mph) the bridge is fully closed – with no possible diversion route for vehicles over 7.5 tonnes.

17. The lack of resilience of the existing Menai crossings has consequential effects on the emergency services and the safety of our communities. We therefore oppose the closure of the Beaumaris Fire Station as included in option 3.

Central costs and operating structure

18. The consultation does not discuss, consider or propose any change to the central costs of running the service. The 3 options presented raise the costs between 8.1% and 13.5%. It will then be a question for the Fire Service how to fund the increase in costs, i.e. will all the costs be funded by the levy or will the service offer savings including reducing the central costs?

19. The focus must be on protecting front line services and the omission of any detail or consideration surrounding the central costs does not provide any assurance that this is the case.

In summary, I confirm the Council's position that the focus of the review must be on protecting front line services during the current economic climate and that consideration needs to be given to implementing efficiency savings in other areas within the operating structure and working practices of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, i.e. central costs, training costs etc. Further detail, consideration and discussions are required regarding the wider operating structure and opportunities for efficiencies.

The Council requests that the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service conduct a review of their administrative and central costs as a basis for setting the levy contribution incorporating the input of the Section 151 Officers in North Wales.

In addition, the Council requests that a local review be undertaken with a specific focus on value for money for the Island's residents.

The Isle of Anglesey County Council is against the closure of Beaumaris Station as stated in Option 3.

As stated previously, we value our continued commitments and endeavours to collaboration, whilst also recognising that the current financial challenges are both uncertain and demanding. We would welcome further discussion regarding our response.

Yours sincerely

DYLAN J. WILLIAMS

Chief Executive

28 Medi, 2023

Annwyl Ms Docx

Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru – Adolygiad Darpariaeth Brys

Diolch am y cyfle i ymateb i ymgynghoriad Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru ar ddarpariaeth brys. Mae Uwch Swyddogion ac Aelodau Etholedig wedi adolygu'r ddogfen ymgynghori, ac wedi ystyried yr opsiynau arfaethedig. Cawsant eu hystyried a'u cefnogi'n ffurfiol gan y Pwyllgor Gwaith ar dydd Mawrth, 26 Medi 2023.

Fel awdurdod lleol yng Ngogledd Cymru ac fel ymatebwr categori 1, mae gan y Cyngor rôl hanfodol o ran cydnorthedd sifil ac mae'n rhaid iddo sicrhau ei fod yn barod rhag argyfyngau. Rydym yn gweithio ochr yn ochr â'r gwasanaethau brys ac ymatebwyr categori 1 eraill ac rydym yn gwerthfawrogi ac yn deall pwysigrwydd y gwasanaeth a'r heriau a wynebir ganddo. Rydym yn gwerthfawrogi ein hymrwymiad a'n

hymdrechion parhaus i gydweithio'n effeithiol, ond yn cydnabod ar yr un pryd bod yr heriau ariannol presennol yn llethol ac yn peri

ansicrwydd. Rydym hefyd yn cydnabod yr anawsterau sydd yn gysylltiedig â chynllunio, cyflenwi a chynnal gwasanaethau craidd yn ystod cyfnod o gyfyngiadau ariannol.

Mae Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru yn cynnwys chwe awdurdod cyfansoddol, yn cynnwys Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn. Mae'r Awdurdod Tân ac Achub yn cynnwys cyngorwyr sir o'r chwe awdurdod lleol ac mae gan y Cyngor 3 aelod ar yr Awdurdod.

Mae Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru'n cael ei ariannu'n bennaf drwy ardoll gan Awdurdodau Unedol yr ardal. Bydd unrhyw newid i gyllideb Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru'n effeithio ar yr ardoll gan roi pwysau ychwanegol ar gyllideb y Cyngor. Byddai hyn yn golygu y byddai'n rhaid i'r Cyngor naill ai leihau cyllidebau gwasanaethau eraill er mwyn cynnal y gyllideb gyda'r cyllid sydd ar gael iddo neu gynyddu'r gyllideb drwy drosglwyddo'r gost ychwanegol i drigolion yr Ynys drwy gynyddu'r Dreth Gyngor.

Gweler y sylwadau manwl sydd wedi'u nodi isod:

Sylwadau Cyffredinol

1. Mae pwrpas ac amcan yr ymgynghoriad wedi ei nodi'n glir yn y ddogfen. Mae'r wybodaeth wedi'i chyflwyno'n glir ac mae'r ddogfen yn hawdd i'w deall.
2. Er nad yw'r ddogfen yn nodi pam bod angen y newid, rydym wedi cael gwybod bod yr adolygiad yn ceisio gwella'r ddarpariaeth frys sydd ar gael yn ddi-ffael yn ystod y dydd ar draws Gogledd Cymru gyfan.
3. Mae gwahanol anghenion a heriau yn bodoli ledled y rhanbarth, sy'n gysylltiedig â daearyddiaeth yr ardal a'i chymunedau gwledig a gwasgaredig yn bennaf. Rydym am sicrhau na fydd ein cymunedau gwledig dan anfantais o ganlyniad i unrhyw newidiadau i'r ddarpariaeth brys.
4. Mae lleoliad canolfan yr Awyrlu yn Y Fali gyda'i gorsaf dân ei hun yn gwneud Ynys Môn yn unigryw. Byddem yn croesawu sicrwydd bod trafodaethau wedi / a fydd yn cael eu cynnal gyda'r RAF i sicrhau bod pob opsiwn wedi'i ystyried o ran cydweithio.
5. Rydym yn cydnabod bod Gogledd Cymru fel rhanbarth wedi parhau i esblygu ac felly hefyd y risgiau i'r bobl sy'n byw, gweithio ac ymweld â'r ardal. Rydym hefyd yn croesawu'r modd y mae Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru wedi esblygu i fod yn wasanaeth ataliol ynghyd ag ymateb i alwadau am wasanaeth arbennig o ganlyniad i newid hinsawdd a datblygiadau technolegol.
6. Rydym yn cytuno gyda'r meini prawf a ddefnyddiwyd wrth ddatblygu'r opsiynau a'r themâu allweddol a godwyd yn ystod y gwaith ymgysylltu cychwynnol. Maent yn addas a phriodol.

Yr Opsiynau

7. Mae'r ddogfen yn awgrymu bod effaith y 3 opsiwn yn amrywio ar sail ranbarthol.
8. Yn achos Ynys Môn yn benodol, ni fydd cadw'r trefniadau presennol neu newid i opsiwn 1 neu 2 yn achosi unrhyw effaith.
9. Er na fyddai opsiynau 1 a 2 yn cael unrhyw effaith ar yr Ynys, byddant yn costio mwy. Cynnal y gwasanaeth presennol, os ydi hynny'n bosib yn ariannol, fyddai'r opsiwn delfrydol.
10. Mae'r map yn nodi lleoliad y galwadau brys a dderbyniwyd yn glir gyda'r mwyafrif ar hyd y glannau yn y Gogledd ac ar Ynys Môn. Fodd bynnag, mae'r 3 opsiwn arfaethedig yn cynyddu staff llawn amser yn Ne Meirionnydd a Sir Ddinbych. O ganlyniad, bydd gan y Gwasanaeth fwy o staff llawn amser mewn ardaloedd sy'n derbyn llai o alwadau.
11. Nid yw'r ddogfen ymgynghori yn dangos nifer y galwadau yn ôl aelodau staff llawn amser cyn neu ar ôl gweithredu unrhyw newidiadau. Byddai'r gymhariaeth hon yn helpu i ddangos effaith y newid o dan bob un o'r opsiynau. Yn ddelfrydol, dylai'r newid sicrhau cysondeb o ran y ffigyrau galwadau a staff ar draws y rhanbarth.

Opsiwn 3

12. Mae Opsiwn 3 yn golygu cau un orsaf dân ar alw ar yr Ynys, sef Gorsaf Dân Biwmares.

13. Rydym o'r farn y byddai cau'r orsaf, neu ddiffyg argaeledd yr adnodd hwn, yn cynyddu'r amser ymateb gan y byddai'n cymryd mwy o amser i'r orsaf dân agosaf nesaf ymateb. Ni fyddai'r ymateb o reidrwydd yn dod o'r orsaf dân agosaf nesaf chwaith gan nad ydynt bob amser ar gael oherwydd problemau staffio neu oherwydd eu bod wedi cael eu galw at argyfwng arall. Yn achos Biwmares, yr orsaf nesaf i ymateb yw Porthaethwy, sydd dim ond wedi bod ar gael 26% o'r amser.

14. Dim ond Opsiwn 3 sy'n sôn am leihad (2,087) yn nifer yr aelwydydd a fyddai'n derbyn ymateb cyn pen 20 munud. Mae Opsiwn 1 a 2 yn cynyddu'r ymateb (2,148 a 321 yn y drefn honno). Mae'r wybodaeth a gafwyd yn nodi y byddai cau Gorsaf Biwmares yn golygu y byddai 670 yn llai o aelwydydd ar Ynys Môn yn derbyn ymateb mewn 20 munud (gostyngiad o 78.4% i 76%). Nid ydych wedi rhannu lleoliad yr aelwydydd hyn ond tybiwn eu bod yn ne-ddwyrain yr Ynys.

15. Fel y nodwyd yn flaenorol, ni fyddai'r ymateb brys o reidrwydd yn dod o'r orsaf dân agosaf nesaf, sy'n awgrymu y gallai'r ymateb ddod o orsaf oddi ar yr ynys. Gan fod yr orsaf dân criw dydd agosaf i Fiwmares wedi'i lleoli dros y Fenai ym Mangor, Gwynedd, rydym o'r farn y byddai'r gostyngiad hwn mewn gwasanaeth yn peryglu bywydau.

16. Mae'r tagfeydd a'r diffyg gwydnwch dros y Fenai a'r ddibyniaeth ar Orsaf Dân Bangor yn peri pryder sylweddol. Cyflwynwyd tystiolaeth fanwl ynglŷn â'r pryderon hyn mewn adroddiad a gymeradwywyd gan Bwyllgor Gwaith y Cyngor ar y 18fed o Orffennaf 2023 (Gwella Dibynadwyedd a Chydnherthedd ar draws y Fenai.pdf (ynysmon.gov.uk)

a. Pont Britannia yw'r unig bwynt ar rwydwaith cefnffyrdd y DU sy'n rhan o lwybr Rhwydwaith Ffyrdd Traws Ewropeaidd yr E22, lle mae'r gerbyttffordd yn culhau o 4 lôn i ddwy – un ym mhob cyfeiriad.

b. Ceir cyfyngiadau o ran y math o gerbydau sy'n gallu cael mynediad i Bont Menai (sef hyd at 7.5 tonnell yn unig), ac mae cyfyngiadau cyflymder 30mya ynghyd â diffyg cyfleusterau mwy diogel, fel lleiniau caled, yn cyfrannu at gydnerthedd gwael o ran cerbydau brys.

c. Mae'n rhaid cau Pont Britannia'n aml oherwydd gwynt, digwyddiadau a damweiniau.

d. Yn ystod gwyntoedd cryfion (sy'n hyrddio dros 70mya) caiff y bont ei chau'n gyfan gwbl – heb unrhyw lwybr gwyro posibl ar gyfer cerbydau sydd dros 7.5 tonnell.

17. Mae'r diffyg gwydnwch dros y Fenai yn cael effaith ar wasanaethau brys a diogelwch cymunedau. Rydym felly'n gwrthwynebu'r cynnig i gau Gorsaf Dân Biwmares fel y nodir yn Opsiwn 3.

Costau canolog a strwythur gweithredol

18. Nid yw'r ymgynghoriad yn trafod, ystyried na chynnig unrhyw newidiadau i gostau canolog y gwasanaeth. Mae'r 3 opsiwn a gyflwynwyd yn golygu cynnydd o 8.1% i 13.5% o ran costau. Sut fydd y Gwasanaeth Tân yn ariannu'r cynnydd hwn, h.y. a fydd yr holl gostau'n cael eu hariannu drwy'r ardoll neu a fydd y gwasanaeth yn cynnig arbedion i leihau ei gostau canolog?

19. Rhaid canolbwyntio ar amddiffyn gwasanaethau rheng flaen ac nid yw hepgor unrhyw fanylion neu ystyriaethau ynghylch costau canolog yn cynnig unrhyw sicrwydd mai dyma sy'n digwydd.

I gloi, cadarnhaf safbwynt y Cyngor y dylid canolbwyntio ar amddiffyn gwasanaethau rheng flaen yn sgil yr argyfwng economaidd ac y dylid ystyried arbedion effeithlonrwydd mewn meysydd eraill o fewn strwythur gweithredu ac arferion gwaith Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru, h.y. costau canolog, costau hyfforddi ac ati. Mae angen rhagor o fanylion ac ystyriaethau a thrafodaethau pellach ynglŷn â'r strwythur gweithredu ehangach a chyfluoedd i ddod o hyd i arbedion effeithlonrwydd.

Mae'r Cyngor yn gofyn i Wasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru gynnal adolygiad o'i gostau gweinyddol a chanolog fel sail ar gyfer gosod y cyfraniad ardoll a bod Swyddogion Adran 151 yng Ngogledd Cymru yn cael cyfrannu at yr adolygiad hwnnw.

Yn ogystal, mae'r Cyngor yn gofyn am gynnal adolygiad lleol gyda ffocws penodol ar werth am arian i drigolion yr Ynys.

Mae Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn yn erbyn cau Gorsaf Biwmares fel y nodir yn Opsiwn 3.

Fel y nodwyd yn flaenorol, rydym yn gwerthfawrogi'n hymrwymiad a'n hymdrechion parhaus i gydweithio, ond yn cydnabod bod yr heriau ariannol presennol yn llethol ac yn peri ansicrwydd. Byddem yn croesawu trafodaeth bellach.

4.4 Conwy

4.4.1 Councillor Gwennol Ellis (County Councillor, Conwy Borough Council)

From: Cyng Gwennol Ellis <cyng.gwennol.ellis@conwy.gov.uk>

Sent: 23 September 2023 17:35

To: Cyng Gwennol Ellis <cyng.gwennol.ellis@conwy.gov.uk>

Subject: Adolygiad Darpariaeth Brys - Emergency Cover Review

(Please scroll down for English)

Annwyl Aelod Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru

Rwyf yn Gyngorydd Sir dros Ward Uwch Aled, sydd wedi'i lleoli yn rhanbarth deheuol Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Conwy. I'r rhai sy'n anghyfarwydd â'r ward arbennig hon, mae'n ardal wledig ac yn cwmpasu cymunedau Llangwm, Cerrigydrudion, Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr, a Phentrefeolas. Prif gyflogaeth yr ardal yw amaethyddiaeth a sectorau amrywiol sy'n gysylltiedig ag amaethu. Yn ddiweddar, mae buddsoddiad wedi'i wneud mewn chwe fferm ddofednod sy'n cynhyrchu wyau a chyw iâr, gyda'r unedau mwyaf yn cynnwys hyd at 64,000 o adar. Mae nifer sylweddol o ffermydd a thai mewn lleoliadau anghysbell, sy'n cynnwys rhostir a thirweddau grug yn bennaf. Yn ychwanegol, mae dwy ysgol gynradd, dau gartref gofal henoed – un yn gartref i 34 o unigolion – chwe thafarn, a dwy gronfa ddŵr: Alwen a Brenig. Yn ogystal, mae coedwig Clocaenog ar gyrion cymunedau Cerrigydrudion a Llanfihangel.

Mae trigolion Uwch Aled yn bryderus ac anfodlon iawn ynghylch y bwriad i gau Gorsaf Dân Cerrigydrudion o dan Opsiwn 3 o'r Adolgiad. Mae'n hanfodol fod y rhanbarth yma'n cadw ei Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub am y rhesymau a grybwyllwyd eisoes. Mae nifer o ystadegau yn ymwneud â galwadau ac ymatebion gorsafoedd tân y Gogledd wedi'u cyhoeddi yn ystod y broses ymgynghori. Fodd bynnag, mae'n rhaid herio'r data sy'n honni bod Criw Tân Cerrigydrudion wedi'u galw 14 o weithiau yn unig mewn blwyddyn. Mae'r ffigur yma'n ymwneud yn benodol â digwyddiadau lleol, nid y cyfanswm o alwadau a ymatebwyd iddynt a oedd yn nes at 50. Mae'r rhesymeg y tu ôl i ddewis Gorsaf Dân Cerrigydrudion ar gyfer Opsiwn 3 yn anodd ei ddeall. Pa ffactorau a ddylanwadodd ar y penderfyniad yma, yn hytrach na dewis gorsaf arall fel Johnstown, lle mae Wreccsam mor agos, neu Llanrwst, sydd tua thair milltir o Fetws y Coed, sydd a thim llawn o swyddogion?

Pobl leol, sydd â gwybodaeth helaeth o'r ardal yw'r Criw yng Ngherrigydrudion. Mae'r risg o danau mewn tai preifat a chartrefi gofal, sefydliadau lletygarwch, diwydiannau'n gysylltiedig â ffermio, damweiniau'n ymwneud â pheiriannau neu ollyngiadau cemegol,

yn ogystal â damweiniau ffordd posibl, tanau rhostir yn ystod tywydd sych, a thanau coedwig yn uchel.

Mae gan Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru ddyletswydd i sicrhau lles y rhai ohonom sy'n byw mewn cymunedau gwledig, yn union fel mewn ardaloedd trefol. Byddai amddifadu Uwch Aled o'i gorsaf dân yn golygu bod yr ardal gyfan yn agored iawn i niwed a mwy o debygolrwydd o golli bywyd. Tra'n cydnabod yr angen am arbedion ariannol, mae achub bywydau pobl a phlant yn llawer pwysicach.

Dear Member of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

I hold the position of County Councillor for the Uwch Aled Ward, situated in the southern region of Conwy County Borough Council. For those unfamiliar with this particular ward, it boasts a rural setting and encompasses the communities of Llangwm, Cerrigydrudion, Llanfihangel Glyn Myfyr, and Pentrefeolas. The primary source of employment within the area is centered around agriculture and its various related sectors. In recent times, investment has been made in six poultry farms specialising in both egg and chicken production, with the largest units accommodating up to 64,000 birds. A notable number of farms are remotely located, consisting largely of moorland and heather landscapes. Moreover, the ward includes two primary schools, two care homes for elderly residents – one housing 34 individuals – six public houses, and two sizable reservoirs: Alwen and Brenig. Additionally, Clocaenog forest is situated on the periphery of both Cerrigydrudion and Llanfihangel communities.

The residents of Uwch Aled express deep concern and dissatisfaction regarding the proposed closure of the Cerrigydrudion Fire Station under Option 3 of the Emergency Cover Review to implement cost-saving measures. It is imperative that this region retains its crucial Fire and Rescue Service for the reasons mentioned previously. Several statistics relating to callouts and responses at various fire stations have been presented during the consultation process. However, it is necessary to contest a particular statistic which claims that the Cerrigydrudion Fire Crew were dispatched a mere 14 times in one year. This figure pertains specifically to local incidents, not the overall number of occasions on which the retained fire officers were summoned, which was closer to 50. The rationale behind selecting Cerrigydrudion Fire Station for Option 3 remains incomprehensible. What factors influenced this decision, as opposed to choosing another station such as Johnstown, where Wrexham is in close proximity, or Llanrwst, approximately three miles from Betws y Coed, which has a full team of officers?

The Cerrigydrudion Fire Crew consist entirely of local individuals who possess extensive knowledge of the region. Our area faces elevated risks from fires within

private residences and care homes, hospitality establishments, agricultural involving farming and incidents involving machinery or chemical spillages, as well as potential road accidents, moorland fires during dry weather conditions, and forest fires.

The North Wales Fire Authority bears an obligation to ensure the well-being of those residing in rural communities, just as in urban regions. Depriving Uwch Aled of its fire station would result in considerable vulnerability for the entire area and an increased likelihood of loss of life. While acknowledging the necessity for financial savings, it is vital that careful thought be given to preserving human lives before monetary considerations.

Yn gywir / Sincerely

Gwennol

Cynghorydd Gwennol Ellis
Councillor Gwennol Ellis

Cynghorydd Sirol - Uwch Aled – County Councillor
Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Conwy – Conwy County Borough Council

Cefnogwr y Gymraeg / Welsh Language Champion

Ffon symudol / Mobile: 07759718396
Cartref / Home: 01490 420674

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg fel ei gilydd. Ni fydd gohebiaeth yn yr un iaith na'r llall yn arwain at unrhyw oedi.

Mae'r neges e-bost hon ac unrhyw ymgysylltiadau yn gyfrinachol, ac wedi eu bwriadu ar gyfer yr un sy'n cael ei h/enwi yn unig. Gallent gynnwys gwybodaeth freintiedig. Ar gyfer yr amodau llawn ynglŷn â chynnwys a defnyddio'r neges e-bost hon ac unrhyw atodiadau, gweler https://www.conwy.gov.uk/ebost_ymwadiad

We welcome correspondence in both Welsh and English. We will respond to correspondence in either language without delay.

This email and any attachments are confidential and intended for the named recipient only. The content may contain privileged information. For full conditions in relation to content and use of this e-mail message and any attachments, please refer to https://www.conwy.gov.uk/email_disclaimer

4.5 Denbighshire

4.5.1 Denbighshire County Council

This is the response of Denbighshire County Council to the proposals set out in the document entitled Right Place, Right Time, Right Skills (the Paper). This response is in narrative form as the questionnaire format is not conducive to capturing the views of a large organisation.

The Council wishes to place on record the value that it places on the service provided by North Wales Fire and Rescue and its admiration for the dedication and courage of its firefighters.

The Council is of the view that the Paper has identified the correct risks and that the protection of life should be the most important consideration. The Council is therefore of the view that emergency cover should be a paramount consideration in determining the option to be taken forward.

In terms of the options presented in the Paper the feedback from elected members has been that they note that a 'no change' option has been discounted before consultation on this paper has begun.

The Council strongly supports the proposal to have a day staffed station at Corwen providing an improved response in the South of the County.

The Council is however, gravely concerned about the proposed loss of the 24-hour duty system at the Rhyl fire station and the consequential risks that may arise.

As the changes proposed to Rhyl Fire Station's duty system appear to form part of each of the three options contained within the Paper, the Council is unable to support any of them and would look forward to seeing an option that maintained the 24 hour arrangements that currently exist at Rhyl.

4.5.2 Rhyl Town Council



CYNGOR TREF Y
RHYL
TOWN COUNCIL

Our Ref / Ein Cyf: F06/070923

Your Ref / Eich Cyf:

Date / Dyddiad: 7th
September 2023

Town Mayor / Maer y Dref: Councillor / Cynghorydd Ms

Jacque McAlpine Town Clerk / Clerc y Dref: Mr

Gareth J. Nickels

North Wales Fire & Rescue

EmergencyCoverReview@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Emergency Cover Review Consultation

Rhyl Town Council has significant concerns around the proposals that are contained within the NWFA Emergency Cover Review document that has come to the Town Council for consultation.

These proposals appear to wish to address the need to provide adequate cover in certain rural areas of North Wales at the expense of long-established standards in Rhyl (and Deeside) which have been proven in reducing fatalities through fire.

The options contained within these proposals would lead to a decline in night time response standards, negatively impacting densely populated wards in Rhyl and outlying areas, many of these include HMO's, a significant number of care homes and, additionally, Glan Clwyd Hospital which all come with their own, unique, set of issues and risks.

Rhyl Town Council notes that the NWFA has not produced an equality impact assessment on any of the three options put forward for consultation and is choosing to only do this after the consultation has closed and a decision has been made.

This is disappointing as we believe that such an assessment would assist in fully understanding the impacts on our communities and local wards and therefore making this consultation fully meaningful.

Furthermore, it would appear, from the report submitted to the Fire Authority on 17th July, that these proposals have been put forward, and agreed, by a working group that consisted of 6 Members, one from each principal authority, and that no members of the public, community organisations or employee representative bodies were invited

to participate.

Had this been the case, then Rhyl Town Council believes that this would have assisted in putting together a set of options that may have met the requirements for all concerned and addressed the issues in a way that may have negated a need for a reduction in service from Rhyl.

Additionally, Rhyl Town Council is concerned that whilst the main focus or headline may be fire related, we recognise the impacts these proposals may have on the many, additional, areas of work that Firefighters undertake, for example road traffic accidents, given our proximity to the A55 and other significant roads leading into and out of Rhyl, along with coastal flooding as experienced a number of times in the town and flooding from rivers as experienced in our neighbouring areas and has been accepted as increasing events for a number of reasons. Members of the Town Council also expressed concern at the reduction of availability to attend situations involving persons threatening self-harm, particularly when involving high buildings or structures.

On the face of it, these proposals will reduce the cover available to Rhyl as an On Call response, which can only lead to significant delays in response times and reduce the number of serving firefighters required at Rhyl as they will be deployed elsewhere.

Currently and historically, Rhyl residents have been safe in the knowledge that there is guaranteed fire cover 365 days a year, from full time firefighters. However, these proposed options would take away that guaranteed response, which is very concerning as this increased risk will be put onto members of the public within the Rhyl area.

Rhyl Town Council is concerned that that these proposals could be seen as a way of seeking financial savings rather than achieving the aim of enhancing safety across Rhyl and our neighbouring regions.

The council recognises the success of NWFRA achieving zero fire deaths last year and recognises that maintaining these standards is vital, however the options that are proposed in this consultation would suggest that these milestones will be under threat moving forward and calls on North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority to reconsider these proposals.

Yours sincerely



Town Clerk

4.5.3 Llangollen Town Council

Llangollen Town Council response to North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority’s consultation on improving the future of emergency cover in North Wales.

Question 1

What risks concern you most?

	1	2	3	4
House Fires	<input checked="" type="radio"/>			
Wildfires				<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Road Traffic Collisions		<input checked="" type="radio"/>		
Flooding			<input checked="" type="radio"/>	

Question 2

Do you feel there are any other risks we should be considering or planning for?

River rescue

Question 3

Which decision-making criteria is most important to you?

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Emergency Cover – how our fire appliances respond to emergency calls	<input checked="" type="radio"/>					
Protection and prevention – how we keep your homes and businesses safe		<input checked="" type="radio"/>				
Affordability - keeping our services as affordable as possible, providing best value for money			<input checked="" type="radio"/>			
Workforce – impact of changes on our teams						<input checked="" type="radio"/>
Fair and equitable service - having our staff at the right place, at the right time and with the right skills					<input checked="" type="radio"/>	
Social value - recognising the impact of any changes we make on our communities				<input checked="" type="radio"/>		

Question 4

Please briefly explain your reasoning for choosing the ratings in question 3?
To ensure adequacy of cover whilst providing value for money.

Question 5

Are there any other criteria that you think should be included in question 3?
No.

Options for Emergency Response for the Future

In response to the various options propose varying the level of our response in certain the Town Council believes that the primary concern of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority should be the provision of services based on local risk assessment of demands irrespective of cost.

4.5.4 Gareth Davies MS/AS (Vale of Clwyd)



GARETH DAVIES MS/AS

Member of the Welsh Parliament for Vale of Clwyd Aelod Senedd Cymru dros
Dyffryn Clwyd

Ms. Dawn Docx

Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Ffordd Salesbury

St. Asaph Business Park St. Asaph

LL17 0JJ

Our REF: VA280

Re: Emergency Cover Review

Dear Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Ms. Docx,

31st July 2023

I hope this finds letter you well. I am writing in respect of the North Wales Fire Authority's Emergency Cover Review report dated 17th July 2023, and current consultation period from 21st July 2023. I would like to highlight the wide ranging implications that current proposals are likely to have on my constituents in Rhyl and across the Vale of Clwyd, and on continuing to ensure that North Wales is a safe place to live, work and visit.

I have received grave concerns from valued sources regarding the impact of proposed changes on the existing service to the Vale of Clwyd community and its apparent risk to the wider initiative of providing a fair, sustainable and equitable emergency response across North Wales.

With regards to this, I have particular concerns around the options currently presented in the review, that do not seem suitable or acceptable, nor does any option seem to be the safest pathway for the health, safety and well-being of my constituents in the short and long-term.

Given that stations in my constituency include Prestatyn, St. Asaph and Denbigh that are not presently manned on a continuous 24-hour basis, I am deeply concerned by the recommendations put forward to relocate Rhyl firefighter posts to three alternative day staffed stations, in line with situational assessments. As such, relocations do not seem to be workable for staff and I am therefore apprehensive over the impact this will have on the work-life balance and retention of staff across the Service.

With Rhyl being one of the most deprived towns across the North Wales Coast, and given the broad recognition and existing demand for emergency fire and rescue responses in Rhyl and its surrounding communities, I am sure you will concur that this significant area highly values a 24- hour Emergency Cover model.

I have received reports from constituents that many properties and accommodation in the Rhyl area regretfully do not have sufficient fire and smoke detection equipment, and have been informed by others in the constituency that they have highly valued the late evening and night-time emergency response provided by the local Fire Service.

Proposed changes such as the reliance on retained staff in Rhyl, does not seem a viable structure as a whole to reduce Emergency Cover inequalities across Denbighshire and the Vale of Clwyd.

Furthermore, I have received concerns from sources that members of the public have not found the Authority's consultation system easy to navigate, which deepens my concerns regarding the numbers of the public that will be able to have their say on the proposed changes to existing resources within the allocated time frame.

With the above in mind, and given the potential negative impact of proposed changes on the safety, well-being, work and lifestyle arrangements of employees and residents in the Vale of Clwyd, I would like to request that the Authority conducts a reassessment of options presently put forward as recommendations.

I am grateful in advance for your recognition of points raised on behalf of my constituents and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Davies MS/AS
Vale of Clwyd/Dyffryn Clwyd



GARETH DAVIES MS/AS

Member of the Welsh Parliament for Vale of Clwyd Aelod Senedd Cymru
Dyffryn Clwyd

Mr..Dylan Rees
Chair, North Wales Fire and
Rescue Authority



31st July 2023
Our REF: VA280
Re: Emergency Cover Review

Dear Chair, Mr. Rees,

I hope this finds letter you well. I am writing in respect of the North Wales Fire Authority's Emergency Cover Review report dated 17th July 2023, and current consultation period from 21st July 2023. I would like to highlight the wide ranging implications that current proposals are likely to have on my constituents in Rhyl and across the Vale of Clwyd, and on continuing to ensure that North Wales is a safe place to live, work and visit.

I have received grave concerns from valued sources regarding the impact of proposed changes on the existing service to the Vale of Clwyd community and its apparent risk to the wider initiative of providing a fair, sustainable and equitable emergency response across North Wales.

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I am grateful in advance for your recognition of points raised on behalf of my constituents and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Davies MS/AS
Vale of Clwyd/Dyffryn Clwyd



GARETH DAVIES MS/AS

Member of the Welsh Parliament for Vale of Clwyd Aelod Senedd Cymru dros
Dyffryn Clwyd

Ms. Dawn Docx
Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Ffordd
Salesbury
St. Asaph Business Park St. Asaph
LL17 0JJ

31st July 2023
Our REF: VA280
Re: Emergency Cover Review

Dear Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, Ms. Docx,

I hope this finds letter you well. I am writing in respect of the North Wales Fire Authority's Emergency Cover Review report dated 17th July 2023, and current consultation period from 21st July 2023. I would like to highlight the wide ranging implications that current proposals are likely to have on my constituents in Rhyl and across the Vale of Clwyd, and on continuing to ensure that North Wales is a safe place to live, work and visit.

I have received grave concerns from valued sources regarding the impact of proposed changes on the existing service to the Vale of Clwyd community and its apparent risk to the wider initiative of providing a fair, sustainable and equitable emergency response across North Wales.

With regards to this, I have particular concerns around the options currently presented in the review, that do not seem suitable or acceptable, nor does any option seem to be the safest pathway for the health, safety and well-being of my constituents in the short and long-term.

Given that stations in my constituency include Prestatyn, St. Asaph and Denbigh that are not presently manned on a continuous 24-hour basis, I am deeply concerned by the recommendations put forward to relocate Rhyl firefighter posts to three alternative day staffed stations, in line with situational assessments. As such, relocations do not seem to be workable for staff and I am therefore apprehensive over the impact this will have on the work-life balance and retention of staff across the Service.

With Rhyl being one of the most deprived towns across the North Wales Coast, and given the broad recognition and existing demand for emergency fire and rescue responses in Rhyl and its surrounding communities, I am sure you will concur that this significant area highly values a 24- hour Emergency Cover model.

I have received reports from constituents that many properties and accommodation in the Rhyl area regretfully do not have sufficient fire and smoke detection equipment, and have been informed by others in the constituency that they have highly valued the late evening and night-time emergency response provided by the local Fire Service.

Proposed changes such as the reliance on retained staff in Rhyl, does not seem a viable structure as a whole to reduce Emergency Cover inequalities across Denbighshire and the Vale of Clwyd.

Furthermore, I have received concerns from sources that members of the public have not found the Authority's consultation system easy to navigate, which deepens my concerns regarding the numbers of the public that will be able to have their say on the proposed changes to existing resources within the allocated time frame.

With the above in mind, and given the potential negative impact of proposed changes on the safety, well-being, work and lifestyle arrangements of employees and residents in the Vale of Clwyd, I would like to request that the Authority conducts a reassessment of options presently put forward as recommendations.

I am grateful in advance for your recognition of points raised on behalf of my constituents and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Gareth Davies MS/AS
Vale of Clwyd/Dyffryn Clwyd

Dr James Davies MP

Member of Parliament for the Vale of Clwyd / Aelod Seneddol dros Ddyffryn Clwyd



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

29 September 2023

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in response to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) Emergency Cover Review consultation 2023. I am grateful to both Dawn Docx, Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive, and representatives of the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) for their time in discussing the review with me.

In my role as MP for the Vale of Clwyd, I have considered the proposals from the point of view of the region as a whole, but particularly with a focus on the impact they may have on the Denbighshire area.

It is very positive that there were no deaths arising from accidental fires within dwellings in the region in 2022/23. I understand that the role of the service is slowly changing to take on new responsibilities, and a greater numbers of previously infrequent challenges. I support the desire to ensure that cover is more equitable and reflects the diverse needs of the region and, therefore, see the value of Options 1 and 2 from the perspective of introducing greater cover in south Denbighshire.

Nevertheless, I am naturally disappointed that all of the three options put forward within the consultation result in an impaired provision via the Rhyl station. While the achievement of 20 minute response times may remain unchanged within the Rhyl catchment area, that almost certainly obscures a deterioration in the 10 minute response time. The Rhyl station currently covers an area where the population continues to increase, along with many busy roads. It also deals with an increasing number of flooding incidents.

The Chief Fire Officer provided me with the following additional information relating to Rhyl on specific questioning:

“How many incidents in Rhyl require the attendance of

more than one fire appliance? 5-year averages:

- *Incidents requiring 1 appliance – 70%*

- Incidents Requiring 2 appliances – 29%
- Incidents requiring 3+ appliances – 1%

Rhyl's duty system / response model:

Whilst Rhyl's incident ground is the third busiest in North Wales, it is significantly quieter than Wrexham's and it has very similar call volumes to those incident grounds served by the day crewing duty system in other areas of North Wales.

In 2021/22, Rhyl's incident volume was only 16 incidents higher than Colwyn Bay's and Colwyn Bay is served by half the number of Firefighters working a day crewing duty system. This is just over one extra call a month in comparison to Colwyn Bay and yet 14 more fulltime Firefighters serving Rhyl."

It is clear that funding is a key driver for the options being discussed in the review and this is inevitable. Council tax increases present a difficulty for householders, especially during the current economic climate. Nevertheless, I understand that for NWFRS, inflationary pressures combined with a desire to improve cover pose great challenges. Delivering a sustainable service is imperative and NWFRS will appreciate that, if my local taxpayer is being asked for increased contributions, this will be difficult to justify if the service being offered in the immediate area is to be inferior.

I am concerned that you state *"In the future, the Welsh Government's aspiration is that we explore being able to assist our ambulance colleagues further by responding to cardiac arrests. To do all this we would need to be in the right place"*. It is not the Fire Service's responsibility to compensate for the Welsh Government's mismanagement of the Ambulance Service and NHS provision. It would be wrong for this consideration to influence decisions arising from the Emergency Cover Review.

The changes proposed in the review would result in a significant impact on some existing staff. Those crew members who do not live within five minutes of Rhyl station (whether travelling at 20mph or otherwise) would be required to find alternative accommodation for the nights that they are on duty. As I understand it, this would usually be in excess of 90 nights a year. Whilst I appreciate that there is an option to relocate staff who may live closer to Rhyl station but currently work out of area, no preferencing exercise has been undertaken as yet and therefore there are unknown impacts.

I believe that staff would be eligible for a payment which is intended to cover the cost of finding nearby accommodation for on-call duty. However, I am told this is not always adequate to meet hotel costs and many might need to sleep in a van on site. This would clearly have an impact on their quality of life and could result in fire fighters leaving the service.

It has been suggested by FBU representatives that the Fire and Rescue Service is currently top heavy as a result of financial resources allocated to fund middle management posts. It has

been explained that currently two posts are vacant and that the service has arguably not been negatively affected by these vacancies. Whilst I cannot comment on this observation, I would ask that any inefficiencies within the current management and non-operational staffing structure are assessed before making significant changes to operational services.

The FBU have also identified 19 excess posts within the service which they consider can be re-allocated. It is clear that this claim needs full exploration.

Whilst I appreciate the review proposals would provide an upgrade in the current provision in Corwen to a day-staffed station, the FBU raised concerns that this option may have unintended consequences when taking into consideration the local politics and perceived "ownership" of the station. They felt that it may result in reduced loyalty and lack of interest from the local retained firefighters who currently manage this station and would still be relied upon for night cover.

FBU members also raised concerns that a greater reliance on retained staff may be unwise. They are troubled by a general decline in on-call firefighter availability due to societal changes. The potential impact of this must be considered in any plans brought forward. Additionally, as these staff have primary jobs, their availability is often reliant on their employer's flexibility and goodwill. Over-reliance on such arrangements could diminish the support of employers.

When solely considering the Denbighshire area, the only significant difference between Options 1 and 2 appears to be the 'Day Crewing' and 'Day Staffing' of Rhyl station respectively. It is my understanding that the former involves daytime firefighters contracted for night cover from home whereas the latter relies upon retained staff at night. Based on the data kindly provided to me for the last five years, 39% of incidents in the Rhyl area occurred between 8pm and 8am. This constitutes a significant level of night-time demand and I feel that relying only on retained staff to cover the night shift for this area would be a risk.

It would appear to me that the specifics of any eventual agreed hours of duty of day crewing and day staffing would be critical to the overall impact of the arrangements.

In my opinion Option 3 is not a viable proposition. This option reduces the number of firefighters and involves a reduction in the areas reached, with 2,087 fewer households receiving a response within 20 minutes. Yet, this option would still cost the taxpayer an additional £12.22 a year.

I would highlight the fact that there is a need to consider the cover from neighbouring Fire and Rescue Services and vice versa. I believe that, when necessary, NWFRS can potentially expect a 20 minute response from Powey Lane, Chester and Ellesmere Port.

I would be grateful if you could take my observations into account and

could carefully consider the FBU's counter proposals. I am told that, at the Initial Concept and Development Stage, public and employee representative bodies were not included to help shape and contribute to discussions. I believe it is imperative that an open dialogue takes place with the FBU and staff to ensure an amicable solution is found which delivers a safe and cost- effective service.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow rectangular background. The signature is a stylized cursive 'J' followed by a horizontal line.

Dr James Davies MP

4.5.6 Darren Millar MS

From: Millar, Darren (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd)

<Darren.Millar@senedd.wales>

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 2:34 PM

To: Dylan Rees <DylanRees@ynysmon.llyw.cymru>

Cc: dawn.docx@northwalesfire.gov.wales; EmergencyCoverReview@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Subject: North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Emergency Fire Cover Consultation

RHYBUDD: Daw'r e-bost hwn o ffynhonnell allanol. Peidiwch ag agor dolenni, ateb nac anfon ymlaen oni bai eich bod yn adnabod/ymddiried yn yr anfonwr.

CAUTION: This email is from an external source . Do not open links, reply or forward unless you know/trust the sender.

Dear Dylan,

I am contacting you in response to the current consultation on Emergency Fire Cover in North Wales.

While I applaud the Fire and Rescue Authority's ambition to increase the ability to respond to incidents at more households within 20 minutes, I regret that I must strongly object to all of three of the options in the consultation document on the basis that they would all lead to a reduction in cover at Rhyl Fire Station.

As you will be aware, crews in Rhyl provide cover for many of my constituents in the Towyn and Kinmel Bay area. This area has the largest number of households in Wales at risk of flooding and the population rises from around 10,000 to 70,000 in the summer months due to the large number of holiday caravans in the area.

The catastrophic Towyn floods on 1990 are still etched into local memory and, should there ever be a repeat of such a major incident then it is critical that fire and rescue response crews are on hand immediately to assist, particularly if a flood took place at night during the visitor season.

Holiday caravan fires can also be devastating and the density of these on some local holiday parks, along with the huge increase in the population during the visitor season does not appear to have been considered by the Authority in developing its proposals.

Having discussed your proposals with local firefighters it would appear that, in their professional opinion, there is an alternative to the options in the consultation paper which is yet to be explored by the Fire and Rescue Authority which would enable the retention of 24/7 cover in Rhyl and increase the number of households able to receive a 20 minute response beyond those in your options while still creating three new hub stations to serve rural North Wales. I understand that the cost of the alternative is likely to add around £20 per annum to the annual precept which is literally less than the cost of a packet of peanuts each week for a year.

Given the above, I would urge the Fire and Rescue Authority to consider the alternative option as a matter of urgency.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours,

Darren

4.6 Flintshire

4.6.1 Flintshire County Council

Neal Cockerton
Chief Executive
Prif Weithredwr



Sent via email:
EmergencyCoverReview@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Our Ref/Ein Cyf 230928NC
Date/Dyddiad 28th September 2023
Email/Ebost
chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk

Dear Chief Fire Officer

Emergency Cover Review Consultation

Thank you for attending FCC on 6 September with ACFO MacArthur to explain the consultation currently being undertaken by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (the Authority). We are grateful for your time and the explanations you were able to provide.

Clearly, councillors are very appreciative of the services provided by the firefighters and other staff at the Authority. Preventing and extinguishing fires not only saves lives but also protects properties, livelihoods and the possessions (and the sentiments and memories bound up with them). It was clear from the presentation that the geographical spread of fire stations is (notionally) well placed to serve the most populated residential areas of the region.

Your presentation made clear the challenges that face the Authority in ensuring that those stations are fully staffed when needed. It was readily apparent that changing patterns of work and property ownership must be making it very difficult to recruit the volunteer firefighters who operate from the majority of those fire stations. Indeed the coverage map that showed the availability of engines from those volunteer stations was both surprising and concerning.

Clearly the Authority also has to provide other services such as assistance at road traffic collisions. Although we did not see the maps you explained that many road traffic collisions take place in the more rural areas of the region. It is easy to imagine, given the nature of the rural road network, that many accidents will take place well away from the fire stations that are currently served by whole time and day crew firefighters.

You also outlined the challenges posed by:

- wild fires, which, by their nature, will take place in more rural locations; and
- electric vehicles which will be widely spread across the region and which are hugely demanding of resources

These challenges occur in areas that are heavily dependent on volunteer firefighters and so the difficulty in recruiting them is understandably going to impact on the Authority's ability to respond in the way that the residents and tax payers of North Wales would expect and hope.

Flintshire is, of course, North Wales' most populous county. As such it has the greatest need for fire cover and contributes the most to the Authority's finances. It also has high rise properties which are amongst the tallest in the region. The county has always been fortunate to benefit from a whole time station which has delivered good response times alongside the RDS stations at Buckley, Flint, Holywell and Mold. The Council is most anxious to preserve the current response times so that its residents are not put at risk.

We explored the current response levels and whether changing the shift pattern at Deeside Fire Station would impact upon this. You explained that the change in crewing model at Deeside would mean that the day crew/staff firefighters would be on call in the evening. So whilst you acknowledged that such firefighters would need to travel to the station that would add no more than 5 minutes to their response time. Further you explained that volunteering levels at Flint and Deeside are amongst the highest within the region, so it would be reasonable to expect that cover at night time could be maintained. However, councillors would seek assurance about the additional recruitment (if any) that would be put in place to ensure that volunteering levels remain sufficient to ensure levels of cover at least equal to those at present.

Some options for proposed service change would see a reduction in the number of posts. Councillors were concerned to ensure that existing firefighters who wish to continue working (noting the ageing demographic within the service) would have the greatest opportunity to do so and that any reduction in headcount was achieved by mutual agreement if possible. You gave assurances that this should be possible (subject to negotiation with the recognised unions). The Council's representatives on the Authority had also been approached by the Fire Brigade's Union in respect of a fourth option, which you assured that you would be discussing in more detail with the FBU.

We discussed the perceived need for relocated and improved training facilities for the Authority, and whether they are driving the need for change. You explained that firefighters need to train to meet the challenges of their role, including entering "hot premises". The current facilities are in Dolgellau. The facilities are not only old and too close to residential premises but they are also remote for many employees. More importantly though, you also explained that the need for the review was driven by gaps in cover and the corresponding response rates in more rural areas rather than financial concerns.

Lastly, we discussed the funding stream for the Authority which is "indirectly" funded via the constituent councils, that is to say it raises a levy on the constituent councils rather than issuing a precept in a similar manner to the Police. This means the funding is not transparent and has meant the Authority has come under pressure from the constituent councils to reduce costs, so that they in turn are not forced to increase council tax. However, at Flintshire we have in the past identified the amount of money for the Authority that is included within any increase in council tax. We believe that our residents value the work of the Authority and are willing to support it financially in order to continue receiving high levels of service.

Having considered all of the above factors, and notwithstanding the cost, there was overwhelming support amongst the councillors present for Option 1.

Yours sincerely,

Neal Cockerton Chief Executive

4.6.2 Shotton Town Council

Mrs Collette Lowry Clerk & Financial Officer Alexandra Street Shotton

Deeside Flintshire, CHS IDL

Chief Fire Officer,

19/09/2023,

Dear Dawn Docx,

Members at Shotton Town Council are extremely concerned to hear of the consultation options for the fire service which will affect the Deeside Fire Station.

Councillors appreciate the financial challenges you face and appreciate that staff from the service would be utilised in other rural areas, but on behalf of the community we request you reconsider this proposal. The council believe that any of the current proposed options will have a detrimental impact on Deeside and its surrounding areas and we are imploring you to reconsider the plans to change Deeside to a day staffing crew only.

The council has read the supporting documents and acknowledge the statistics but both they and the community have a genuine concern and worry about the repercussions of this potential decision. Is there any viability at all of retaining a night crew at Deeside please?

We look forward to hearing from you,

Collette Lowry

Town Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

4.6.3 Mark Tami MP

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

Our Ref: DEMT37056 26 July 2023

Dear Chief Executive,

I am writing on behalf of my residents in Alyn and Deeside with regards to the consultation on proposed changes to the Fire and Rescue service in North Wales.

I appreciate that you are carrying out a consultation with residents but feel that having read through the 3 options being put forward you are simply asking residents in my area to choose the least worst option.

As the **MP** for Alyn and Deeside which at the next election will include Flint and Bagillt I will have many more residents and businesses relying upon a full time fire service.

You will know that along the Flintshire coastline we have some of the most deprived wards in Wales. We have very heavily populated areas from Saltney to Deeside to Flint with a large turnover of properties and an increasing number of HMOs (Houses of multiple Occupation). We have an increasing demand for pensioner properties as our large communities grow older and live longer, this includes the High Rise flats in Flint. We have some of the lowest paid households across North Wales and we have the largest and busiest industrial area in North wales and the North West.

I seriously cannot believe that you would even consider that Deeside fire station should not be manned at night and that we would need to rely upon retained staff who do this as a second job. I think the strain on the retained staff would take its toll upon them and before long you will have a recruitment issue which would force you to look at your options again.

I also learn that while trying to save up to £3.65M by these cuts to service and further ink house savings, you are moving ahead with a £48M training facility in St Asaph which will undoubtedly cost you more in ongoing costs and is questionable in cost compared to similar facilities in neighbouring regions..

I feel that there needs to be another option put forward that improves and not reduces the service to all the businesses and families in Alyn and Deeside. Your proposals do nothing to reassure my residents of their safety and Put simply I cannot support any cuts in service to the Fire and Rescue Service in Alyn and Deeside.

Yours sincerely
MarkTamiMP

4.6.4 Jack Sargeant MM/AS

The Office of Jack Sargeant

Aelod o'r Senedd dros Alun a Glannau Dyfrdwy Member of the Senedd for Alyn and Deeside

jack.sargeant@senedd.cymru senedd.cymru/JackSargeant

jack.sargeant@senedd.wales senedd.wales/JackSargeant

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

St Asaph Business Park,

Denbighshire,

LL17 0JJ

Senedd Cymru
Bae Caerdydd, Caerdydd, CF99 1SN

Welsh Parliament
Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF99 1SN

Dyddiad | Date: 14 August 2023

Dear Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive

Pwnc | Subject: North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Emergency Cover Review

I write in response to the public consultation for the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Emergency Cover Review.

I have reviewed the 3 options that are being consulted on and have serious concerns about the impact they will have on the Deeside site and the effects on the wider community, with the potential to cost lives.

I have met with the North Wales Fire Brigade Union and heard the two additional options they are proposing. I would strongly urge the Fire and Rescue Service to work with North Wales Fire Brigade Union and consider more suitable solutions, including further investment in North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

I would also ask that you extend the current consultation past the September deadline in order to ensure as many responses as possible are able to be submitted.

Jack Sargeant MS/AS

Member of the Senedd for Alyn & Deeside Aelod o'r Senedd dros Alun a Glannau Dyfrdwy

4.6.5 Mark Isherwood MS

Dear Dawn,

During our online meeting on 18th May, we discussed North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's options for how you continue to provide emergency cover in North Wales in the future.

I subsequently received correspondence from employees of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service highlighting their concerns and requesting a meeting.

Concerns highlighted in their correspondence included:

"The proposed changes to the fire response do not improve fire cover. How can less operational firefighters and a downgrade of cover possibly improve response? These changes will affect ALL residents and visitors of North Wales".

"There are now 3 options open to the public.

Option 1 Twelve rural firefighter posts and 28 wholetime firefighter posts from Rhyl and Deeside stations would be reallocated to 3 new day staffed only stations based in the rural areas of North Wales. Rhyl and Deeside would then change to a day crewing system, similar to that of use in Colwyn Bay, Llandudno, Caernarfon, Bangor and Holyhead.

Option 2 An alternative model which continues to provide 3 new day staffed stations, but also realises a saving of £1.1million by reducing fire cover in Rhyl and Deeside by removing their wholetime night cover and reducing the station to day staffing only. This would then rely on the retained firefighters to cover the night periods. This also removes the second wholetime appliance in the city of Wrexham, leaving it with only 1 wholetime appliance and 1 retained appliance. This will see a loss of 22 firefighter posts.

Option 3 Same as option two, but only 2 new stations introduced, and the permanent closure of 5 retained stations in North Wales. This will see the loss of 38 retained firefighters, and 26 wholetime firefighters.

"The entire point of this review was to improve fire cover in North Wales, but all of these proposals set to make drastic cuts and reduce fire cover.

"I now fear my job as a firefighter is on the line, and as the main earner in my household, my family could not afford to live without my earnings".

In a subsequent meeting, I was further advised:

- All 3 options in the public consultation reduce cover and increase cost (Council Tax).
- FBU have proposed 2 further options, option 4 (cost-neutral) and option 5 (higher cost), which are being reviewed by the Fire Authority.
- Senior leaders are pushing for a new training facility to be built in St Asaph, which aims to be the biggest in Wales and the North West, for a cost of £48Million, when we are cutting jobs. They have not got the resources to staff this as a revenue earner from other FRSS.
- Next-door Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service, with which we often work, cut top Managers not firefighters.

I would therefore be grateful if you could give this your attention and provide a response which can be shared with my constituents.
Thank you.

Regards

Mark

<p>Mark Isherwood MS Member of the Welsh Parliament for North Wales Welsh Conservative Party</p>	<p>Mark Isherwood AS Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Gogledd Cymru Plaid Geidwadol Cymru</p>	
<p>0300 200 7217</p>		

4.7 Gwynedd

4.7.1 Gwynedd Council

Ymateb Cyngor Gwynedd i Ymgynghoriad Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru – “Adolygiad Darpariaeth Brys – Dweud eich Dweud”

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu'r cyfle i gyflwyno barn ac adborth i'r adolygiad ar ddyfodol y gwasanaethau tân ac achub yng Ngogledd Cymru.

Cefnogir yn llwyr eich nod o fod “yn y lle iawn, ar yr amser iawn gyda'r sgiliau cywir” yn ogystal â'r ffaith bod eich gwaith modelu yn seiliedig ar “allu i ymateb” o fewn 20 munud yn ystod y dydd i unrhyw leoliad ar draws y Gogledd (yn enwedig felly pan yn ystyried digwyddiadau tan gwyllt a

damweiniau ar ffyrdd gwledig). Yn y cyd-destun yma, mae'n amlwg o'r ddogfen ymgynghori bod y tri opsiwn yr ydych yn ymgynghori arnynt yn ceisio cyfarch y nod.

Fodd bynnag, mae'r Cyngor yn gwrthwynebu'r cynnig a wneir yn opsiwn 3, sydd yn argymhell cau gorsafodd ar-alwad yn Abersoch a Llanberis yn ogystal a Biwmares, Cerrigydrudion a Conwy. Yn hynny o beth, cefnogir datganiad y Prif Swyddog Tân, sydd eisoes wedi nodi y byddai gweithredu'r opsiwn hwn yn mynd yn groes i'w chyngor proffesiynol.

Byddai cau dwy orsaf ar-alwad o fewn y Sir yn golled enfawr ac ym marn y Cyngor yn tanseilio'r nod o allu ymateb yn brydlon i alwadau brys mewn rhai mannau yng Ngwynedd. Mae hyn yn arbennig o

wir pan yn ystyried bod y pwysau mwyaf ar y Gwasanaeth ar ddiwedd y prynhawn ac yn gynnar

gyda'r nos pryd y byddai'n fwy tebygol bod staff ar-alwad angenrheidiol ar gael i ymateb i'r galwadau a dderbynnir.

Ar y llaw arall, ystyrir y bwriad, o fewn pob un o'r tri opsiwn, i sefydlu gorsafodd tân staff dydd ym Mhorthmadog a Dolgellau, yn gam allweddol sy'n cryfhau'r gallu i wireddu'r nod i ymateb yn gyflym i alwadau yn yr ardaloedd dan sylw. Mae opsiwn 1 a 2 yn cynnig gwireddu hyn heb gau gorsafodd ar-alwad lleol ac, o safbwynt gwella gwasanaeth, mae'r Cyngor yn amlwg gefnogol i'r naill fwrriad a'r

llall. Fodd bynnag, mae cost uwch (a cholled swyddi yn opsiwn 2) yn perthyn i'r datblygiad hwn ac mae'r Cyngor yn bryderus am effaith hynny ar lefel y cynnydd mewn treth a fyddai'n angenrheidiol i weithredu'r newid.

Yng nghyd-destun cost, mae'r Cyngor yn nodi bod y nifer swyddogion ar strwythur uwch-reolaethol yr Awdurdod Tân ac Achub rhanbarthol yn ymddangos yn uchel o'i gymharu ag Awdurdodau Tân ac Achub eraill ar draws Cymru a Lloegr. O safbwynt y treth-dalwr yng Ngwynedd, creda'r Cyngor y byddai'n synhwyrol i'r Awdurdod Tân bwysu a mesur y gost rheolaethol honno ochr yn ochr a'i allu i ddarparu'r gwasanaeth rheng-flaen y byddai am ei wireddu.

Gwyddoch bod rhagdybio pwysau trwm iawn ar gyllidebau awdurdodau lleol yn y flwyddyn ariannol nesaf a thu hwnt. Mae'r cynnydd disgwylidig yng nghyfraniad y chwe Awdurdod, a fyddai'n cyfateb ag oddeutu 14% ar gyfer gwireddu opsiwn 1 ag oddeutu 10% ar gyfer opsiwn 2, yn mynd i olygu y byddai rhai o'n gwasanaethau lleol ni fel Cyngor dan fygythiad uwch nag y byddai heb y gofyn ychwanegol hwn.

I grynhoi felly, mae'r Cyngor yn gefnogol i'r nod o wella gwasanaethau ymateb brys ac yn awyddus i weld gorsafoedd tân staff dydd ym Mhorthmadog a Dolgellau yn cael eu sefydlu ond nid ar draul cau gorsafoedd tân ar-alwad Abersoch a Llanberis, tra'n cynnig ymhellach bod modd ystyried lleihau'r cynnydd a ragwelir yn yr ardoll ar gyfer treth 2024-25 trwy adolygu gofynion uwch reolaethol a threfniadau gweinyddol o fewn yr Awdurdod Tân.

Mae'r Cyngor hefyd yn ymwybodol o gynigion sydd wedi'u cyflwyno gan Undeb y Frigâd Dan, yn ychwanegol i'r opsiynau a gynhwysir yn yr ymgynghoriad. Manteisir ar y cyfle i ddatgan ein cefnogaeth i'ch bwriad i barhau i drafod y posibiladau efo cynrychiolwyr yr undeb hwnnw yn dilyn yr ymgynghoriad cyhoeddus.

English Translation

Gwynedd Council's response to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Consultation - "Emergency Cover Review - Have Your Say"

The Council welcomes the opportunity to submit views and feedback to the review on the future of fire and rescue services in North Wales.

Your aim of being "in the right place, at the right time with the right skills" is fully supported as well as the fact that your modelling work is based on "being able to respond" within 20 minutes during the day to any location across the North (especially so when considering wildfire incidents and accidents on rural roads). In this context, it is clear from the consultation document that the three options you are consulting on are trying to meet the goal.

However, the Council opposes the proposal made in option 3, which recommends the closure of on-call stations in Abersoch and Llanberis as well as Beaumaris, Cerrigydrudion and Conwy. In that respect, the Chief Fire Officer's statement is supported, who has already indicated that implementing this option would go against their professional advice.

Closing two on-call stations within the County would be a huge loss and in the Council's opinion would undermine the aim of being able to respond promptly to emergency calls in some places in Gwynedd. This is particularly true when you consider that the greatest pressure on the Service is in the late afternoon and early evening when it would be more likely that the necessary on-call staff are available to respond to the calls received .

On the other hand, the intention, within each of the three options, to establish day staff fire stations in Porthmadog and Dolgellau, is considered a key step which strengthens the ability to realize the aim to respond quickly to calls in the areas concerned. Option 1 and 2 offer to realize this without closing local on-call stations and, from a service improvement point of view, the Council is clearly supportive of either intention. However, there is a higher cost (and job loss in option 2) associated with this development and the Council is concerned about the impact of that on the level of tax increase that would be necessary to implement the change.

In the context of cost, the Council notes that the number of officers on the senior management structure of the regional Fire and Rescue Authority appears high compared to other Fire and Rescue Authorities across England and Wales. From the point of view of the taxpayer in Gwynedd, the Council believes that it would be sensible for the Fire Authority to weigh up that management cost alongside its ability to provide the front-line service it would like to achieve. .

You know that there is a very heavy pressure on local authority budgets in the next financial year and beyond. The expected increase in the contribution of the six Authorities, which would correspond to approximately 14% for realizing option 1 and approximately 10% for option 2, is going to mean that some of our local services as a Council would be under a higher threat than it would be without this additional requirement.

In summary then, the Council is supportive of the aim of improving emergency response services and is keen to see day staffed fire stations in Porthmadog and Dolgellau being established but not at the expense of closing the on-call fire stations in Abersoch and Llanberis, while further proposing that it is possible to consider reducing the anticipated increase in the levy for the 2024-25 tax by reviewing higher management requirements and administrative arrangements within the Fire Authority.

The Council is also aware of proposals that have been submitted by the Under Brigade Union, in addition to the options included in the consultation. We take the opportunity to state our

support for your intention to continue discussing the possibilities with the representatives of that union following the public consultation.

4.7.2 Catrin Wager (Party of Wales)

Members of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

c/o Fire and Rescue Headquarters

St Asaph Business Park LL17 0JJ

04 October 2023

Dear Member,

I'm writing to you as the founder of a petition which responded to the consultation on the future of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The focus of the petition was to object to Option 3 and say no to the significant loss of 74 front line fire fighters and the closure of 5 on-call fire stations that this option would entail.

427 individuals signed the petition, making it clear that the public do not want to see such drastic reductions in services.

Over the past year, the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service hit a significant milestone, with zero fire related deaths in the region over the year. This is an incredible achievement, and the ambition for any future delivery model should be to maintain this, as far as it may be possible. Option 3 would be a failure of such an ambition, and with lives at risk, should be taken off the table immediately.

However, I would also like to take this opportunity to personally request that serious consideration is given to the options put forward by the Fire Brigades Union. While the three models put forward by the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service have benefits, specifically improving cover in the western part of the region, they also involve cuts. I am concerned that those cuts will impact areas of high deprivation, as well as reduce cover in the areas with the highest number of incidents. This could lead to some of our most vulnerable communities facing increased risk, which is simply unacceptable.

The options put forward by the FBU ensure that services can be maintained in areas where they are needed most, and also provide a pathway to creating new permanent posts and opening new stations. This would send a strong message that the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service are willing to invest in their people, and in our communities.

I am fully aware of the financial pressures our public services are facing, and that additional levies could be problematic for local authorities that are already facing difficulties following years of under-investment and cuts by central governments.

These pressures make it imperative that Fire Authority Members are rigorous in their decision making. Questions have been asked about the number of senior salaries within the authority and the significant investment in new training facilities, which I'm led to believe could cost four times as much as new state of the art facilities recently built by the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service. Both matters **must** be properly scrutinised by authority members to ensure responsible management of public funds.

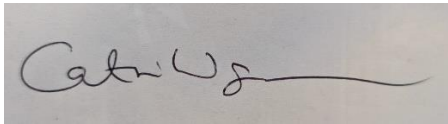
So I write on behalf of the 427 people who signed our petition to object to Option 3 to say this option is simply not acceptable.

But I also make a personal plea, to ask you to give serious consideration to alternative models that have been proposed.

Our future is uncertain, but we can plan for it, by making the right decisions now. I believe that investing in our front line workers, and in our communities, is the right thing to do, to ensure a safer future for us all.

Lives matter, please, do your best to safeguard them. With thanks,

Sincerely,



Catrin Wager

Plaid Cymru Candidate (Westminster) Bangor Aberconwy

04 Hydref 2023

Annwyl Aelod,

Ysgrifennaf atoch fel unigolyn a gychwynodd ddeiseb mewn ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad ar ddyfodol Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru.

Pwrpas y ddeiseb oedd gwrthwynebu i Opsiwn 3 a dweud 'na' i golli 74 o weithwyr tân rheng-flaen, a chau 5 gorsaf dân ar-alwad, sef yr hyn fyddai'n ganlyniad i'r opsiwn hwn.

Arwyddwyd y ddeiseb gan 427 o bobl, sy'n dangos yn glir nad yw'r cyhoedd yn fodlon derbyn y fath doriad yn y gwasanaeth.

Yn ystod y flwyddyn diwethaf, cyrhaeddwyd carreg filltir sylweddol gan Wasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru, sef nad oedd unrhyw golled bywyd mewn canlyniad i dân yn y rhanbarth. Mae hyn yn orchest anhygoel, a dylai fod yn uchelgais unrhyw fodel ar gyfer y dyfodol i gynnal hyn. Byddai Opsiwn 3 yn sicr o fod yn fethiant i'w gynnal, a gan fod bywydau yn y fantol, dylid ei ddi-ystyru'n syth.

Fodd bynnag, hoffwn gymryd y cyfle hwn i ofyn yn bersonol i chwi roi ystyriaeth deilwng i'r opsiynau a gyflwynwyd gan Undeb y Brigadau Tân. Tra fod gan y tri opsiwn a gynigwyd gan Wasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru eu rhinweddau, yn arbennig y gwelliant mewn gwasanaeth i ardaloedd gorllewinol y rhanbarth,

maent hefyd yn golygu toriadau. Mae gen i bryderon y byddai'r toriadau hyn yn andwyol i ardaloedd o amddifadiad dwys, ac yn arwain at ostyngiad mewn gwasanaeth yn yr ardaloedd ble mae'r nifer uchaf o achosion. Gallai hyn arwain at rai o'n cymunedau mwyaf bregus yn wynebu risg uwch, sydd yn hollol annerbyniol.

Mae'r opsiynau a gynigir gan yr UBT yn sicrhau y gellir cadw gwasanaethau yn yr ardaloedd hynny sydd eu hangen fwyaf, ac hefyd yn arwain at greu swyddi parhaol newydd ac agor gorsafoedd newydd. Byddai hyn yn anfon neges gryf fod Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru yn fodlon buddsoddi yn eu pobl, ac yn ein cymunedau.

Rwyf yn ymwybodol iawn o'r heriau ariannol sy'n wynebu ein sector gyhoeddus, ac y gall ardollau ychwanegol fod yn anodd i awdurdodau lleol sydd eisoes yn wynebu argyfyngau yn dilyn blynyddoedd o dan fuddsoddi a thoriadau gan y llywodraethau canolog.

Mae'r gwasgeddau hyn yn ei gwneud yn hanfodol fod Aelodau'r Awdurdod Tân yn drwyadl yn eu penderfyniadau. Mae cwestiynau wedi codi ynglŷn â'r nifer o gyflogau uwch sydd o fewn yr awdurdod, a chostau'r ganolfan hyfforddiant newydd, all fod pedwar gwaith cost cyfleusterau arloesol adeiladwyd gan Wasanaeth Tân ac Achyb Swydd Gaer yn ddiweddar. Mae'n **hanfodol** bod y ddau bwnc yn cael eu craffu'n fanwl gan aelodau'r awdurdod er mwyn sicrhau rheolaeth gyfrifol o arian cyhoeddus.

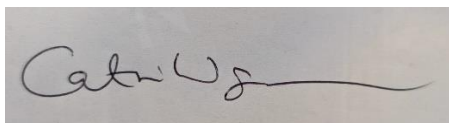
Felly, rwy'n ysgrifennu ar ran y 427 o bobl wnaeth arwyddo'r ddeiseb i wrthwynebu Opsiwn 3, i ddatgan yn glir nad yw'r opsiwn hwn yn dderbyniol o gwbl.

Ond rwyf hefyd yn gwneud cais personol i ofyn i chwi gysidro'n ofalus yr opsiynnau amgen sydd wedi eu cyflwyno.

Mae'n dyfodol yn ansicr, ond gallwn baratoi ar ei gyfer drwy wneud y penderfyniadau cywir yn awr. Credaf mai bussoddi yn ein gweithwyr rheng flaen, ac yn ein cymunedau, ydy'r penderfyniad iawn er mwyn sicrhau dyfodol mwy diogel i ni oll.

Mae bywydau'n bwysig. Os gwelwch yn dda, gwnewch eich gorau i'w diogelu.

Yn ddifuant



Catrin Wager

Ymgeisydd Plaid Cymru Bangor Aberconwy (San Steffan)

4.8 Wrexham

4.8.1 Wrexham Council



North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Emergency Cover Review Consultation

Formal response from Wrexham County Borough Council

The council has considered the proposals and questions posed in respect of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFRA) consultation exercise, Right Place, Right Time, Right Skills: Emergency Cover Review.

Before addressing the specific questions posed by the consultation, Wrexham Council wishes to express fundamental concerns about the way that NWFRA is funded. Whilst recognising that this issue is outside the scope of the present consultation and is not directly within the control of NWFRA, the council considers it unfair that NWFRA is empowered to determine the level of local authority contributions at a time when local authorities are experiencing increasing pressures on the Local Government Settlement.

An increase in county council contributions to the Fire and Rescue Service, at a time of increasing budget pressures for local government can only result in a net reduction in the funds available to provide essential local authority services.

The present levy system means that this cost is not clear to the public view, and Wrexham Council considers that the NWFRA levy should be a 'police style' council tax precept model, as applied to Fire and Rescue Services in England, as this would be a fairer and more transparent means of funding, allowing members of the public a better understanding of the cost of Fire and Rescue services.

The council therefore suggests that it would be appropriate for the NWFRA to lobby Central Government and the Welsh Government for a review of the current model of funding, with a focus on openness and transparency.

Responses to consultation questions

Questions 1 & 2: What risks concern you the most and do you feel that there are any other risks we should be considering or planning for?

The consultation makes reference to four specific areas of risk: House fires, wildfires, road traffic collisions, and flooding.

Local authority services make a significant contribution to preventing and reducing risks in all of these areas by:

- Maintaining and enforcing housing standards to reduce hazards in homes;

- Providing environmental protection and enforcement services to prevent and remove littering, fly tipping and other potential hazards from parkland and countryside;
- Maintaining roads and street lighting;
- Maintaining an infrastructure of gullies, manholes and drains throughout the County Borough and developing flood defence and alleviation schemes.

At a time of increasing budget pressures for local government, an increase in the levy imposed upon local authorities by NWFRA will result in less funding being available for the provision of essential local authority services.

NWFRA should therefore take account of the risk that may be presented to preventive services by increasing the levy upon local authorities at a time of ongoing financial stress.

Questions 3 & 4: Which decision making criteria are most important to you and why?

Wrexham Council considers that any decision-making exercise should be undertaken in the round and that due regard should be given to all criteria. However, we feel that the following three criteria are of particular significance:

- **Emergency cover:** An effective and reliable emergency response service is essential to protect people's lives and livelihoods. It is therefore imperative that present levels of cover are preserved, and are not compromised by reductions in staffing and/or resources
- **Protection and Prevention services:** Protection and prevention is crucial in reducing the number of incidents requiring an emergency response and it is important that this work continues. NWFRA should also be mindful of the role local authority services play in helping to reduce the risk of emergency incidents, and the potential impacts on these services from increased NWFRA levy costs.
- **Affordability:** At a time of increased budget pressures on local authorities and cost of living pressures on individuals, NWFRA needs to ensure that service cost levies remain affordable.
- **Fair and equitable service** - We note that the published Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which accompanies the consultation is focussed on the risks of being able to engage sufficiently with the groups of people who share the equality protected characteristics. We would expect that the EqIA will be updated following the consultation to record the outcome of the engagement work, and to assess the actual potential impacts of the options on those who share equality protected characteristics, in order to inform the Fire Authority's decision.

In addition:

All options should also include a sustainability impact assessment in terms of Wales' commitment to Net Zero.

Options for Emergency Response for the future

The council is concerned that all three of the options presented by the consultation involve a significant increase in the levy charged to local authorities alongside a reduction in service levels, whether this be a move from Wholetime to Day Staffing for some stations as proposed by Option 1, or the more extensive staffing and service reductions proposed by Options 2 and Option 3.

We do not believe that either of the options demonstrates value for money or meet the needs of our communities.

While we welcome the commitment to improve the emergency cover arrangements in some parts of the region (the south and west), we do not believe that this should be at the expense of vital emergency cover services currently provided in the east.

We call on the Fire Authority to maintain the current levels of emergency cover within the County Borough of Wrexham.

Wrexham holds a position of strategic importance in the region – it is an expanding city, with the largest prison in the UK, and the largest Industrial Estate in Europe.

There are 13 incidents in Wrexham each day, and some 4,500 each year. However, figures show that Wrexham takes around 50% of all North Wales calls, having the expertise and experience to cover a large part of the region, with specialist units and multiple pumps providing cover for many retained stations. This, along with the demand on the FRS being predominantly along the A55 corridor, means that Wrexham holds a central position to the region's emergency cover, it should not be compromised in any way.

We are therefore vehemently opposed to any proposal to remove a fire appliance from Wrexham (Options 2 and 3), both for the safety of the city itself and for other areas and fire stations across the County Borough for which the engine provides cover. A fast and reliable fire and rescue service is vital to protect the lives, homes and livelihoods of local people, and the council therefore has serious concerns about the increased risk to local people if the service capacity were to be reduced in this way.

We are disappointed that the NWFRA has taken the decision to consult on Option 3, which would result in the removal of Wrexham's third appliance, along with a 19% reduction in Wholetime Firefighters and an 8% reduction in On-Call Staff Numbers across the region. The inclusion of this option ignored the professional advice of senior officers in the Fire & Rescue Service, and should be discounted immediately.

We are also concerned that the review has been driven by the need to save money because of the lack of funding, and that as such, the narrow scope of the review, which ignores corporate, management, support services, and the plans for capital investment which impact annual revenue costs, is flawed as it does not consider the potential for efficiencies in these areas. There are also concerns about the deliverability of the options in terms of changes to the workforce both in terms of their Terms and Conditions and location.

We recognise the financial pressures being experienced by the FRS, alongside other public services, and would urge the NWFRA and the NWFRS to lobby Central Government and the Welsh Government to provide the necessary funding to ensure the resilience and sustainability of the FRS and to support a model of growth and improved emergency cover for all households. We urge the NWFRA to explore other options and would expect NWFRA to keep all local authorities informed as to the progress with this.

Additional Information: Are there any other areas of emergency cover that you would like us to consider?

The council is cautious of any further extension of the role or duties of the Fire and Rescue Service given the potential impact on core service levels and quality, and on the overall cost of the service.

4.8.2 Gwersyllt Community Council



CYNGOR CYMUNED **GWERSYLLT** COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Dave Sheridan

Clerk to the Council / Clerc i'r Cyngor

O: 01978 754776

M: 07377225691

E-mail/E-bost: gwersylltcommunitycouncil@outlook.com www.gwersylltcommunitycouncil.co.uk

**Gwersyllt Community Resource Centre
Second Avenue
Gwersyllt Wrexham LL114ED**

Stuart Millington
Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Fire and Rescue Service

Dear Stuart Millington,

I am writing to you as the Clerk to Gwersyllt Community Council and I have been asked by the Members of Gwersyllt Community Council to object in the strongest of terms the proposed reduction in the number of full-time firefighters in Wrexham and axe its second whole-time fire engine.

The proposed cuts would leave the city with one whole time pump and crew, and one retained pump and crew - which is not always available.

The Members of Gwersyllt Community Council have declared its strong opposition to the proposals, with all elected Members stating that reducing the number of frontline firefighters in Wrexham is completely unacceptable.

the Members of Gwersyllt Community Council calls on the Fire Authority to maintain the current levels of emergency cover in Wrexham.

My understanding is that the fire fighters based in Wrexham are the busiest in North Wales and reducing the service and frontline staff in the package of proposals is something that the Members of Gwersyllt Community Council finds completely unacceptable.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dave Sheridan', written over the text 'Yours sincerely'.

Dave Sheridan

Clerk to Gwersyllt Community Council / Clerc i Gyngor Cymuned Gwersyllt

4.8.3 Caia Park Community Council

From: Clerk <clerk@caiapark.gov.uk>

Sent: 07 September 2023 22:59

To: Emergency Cover Review <emergencycoverreview@northwalesfire.gov.wales>

Cc: malcolm.king@wrexham.gov.uk

Subject: Fire Service plans to reduce coverage in Wrexham

You don't often get email from clerk@caiapark.gov.uk. [Learn why this is important](#)

Regarding the proposals to reduce the Fire Service coverage in Wrexham, I am forwarding details of a motion raised by one of our Councillors and the resulting decision.

Cllr. Brian Cameron put forward a Motion to be heard at the Caia Park Extraordinary Council meeting held on 17th August 2023.

The Motion was as follows:

'MOTION TO CAIA PARK COMMUNITY COUNCIL NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

North Wales Fire Authority are proposing 3 options as a way of reducing costs, 2 involving cutting the 2nd fire appliance in Wrexham and reducing the numbers of firefighters from 52 to 28.

Caia Park Community Council believe this would put the safety of its citizens in jeopardy, not just in Caia Park but the whole of Wrexham.

This is totally unacceptable given Wrexham has a population of around 136,000 with possibly the largest Industrial Estate in Europe, Wrexham Maelor Hospital, a University, College Cambria in the town and also the manufacturing training college on Bersham Road, as well as one of the largest prisons in the UK.

Caia Park Community Council takes the safety of its residents in Caia Park and Wrexham very seriously, and say that proposals to cut services in Wrexham is unacceptable and calls on the Fire Authority to look at other options of cost saving, possibly from the top of the Authority to save costs.'

It was unanimously resolved at the meeting that the Council agrees:

1. that the current proposals by the North Wales Fire Authority are unacceptable due to the potential effects on the safety of Wrexham County Borough citizens and the Council totally opposes the proposals.
2. that the Council's opposition to the proposals is communicated to the Fire Authority.
3. that it calls on the Fire Authority to look at other options of cost saving.
4. that details of the motion and resulting decision is communicated to all Wrexham Community Councils.

The Council would be grateful if its views are taken into account in the decision making process regarding the proposed options for cost saving.

Regards,

Andrea Evans

**Andrea Evans BSc. (Hons), CiLCA
Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer
Caia Park Community Council**

Tel: 01978 354825

E-mail: clerk@caiapark.gov.uk

Community Council Offices
Prince Charles Road
Wrexham
LL13 8TH

4.8.4 Llangollen Rural Community Council

From: Clerk <clerk.llangollenrural@gmail.com>
Sent: 25 September 2023 15:22
To: Emergency Cover Review <emergencycoverreview@northwalesfire.gov.wales>
Subject: Fire Service plans to reduce coverage in Wrexham

You don't often get email from clerk.llangollenrural@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Regarding the proposals to reduce the Fire Service coverage in Wrexham, I am forwarding details of a motion that was discussed by Llangollen Rural Community Councillors at the Council Meeting held on 5th September 2023 and the resulting decision.

The Motion was as follows:

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

North Wales Fire Authority are proposing 3 options as a way of reducing costs, 2 involving cutting the 2nd fire appliance in Wrexham and reducing the numbers of firefighters from 52 to 28.

Llangollen Rural Community Council believe this would put the safety of its citizens in jeopardy, not just in Llangollen Rural but the whole of Wrexham. This is totally unacceptable given Wrexham has a population of around 136,000 with possibly the largest Industrial Estate in Europe, Wrexham Maelor Hospital, a University, Coleg Cambria in the town and also the manufacturing training college on Bersham Road, as well as one of the largest prisons in the UK. Llangollen Rural Community Council takes the safety of its residents in Llangollen Rural and Wrexham very seriously, and states that proposals to cut services in Wrexham are unacceptable and calls on the Fire Authority to look at other options of cost saving, possibly from the top of the Authority to save costs.'

It was unanimously resolved at the meeting that the Council agrees:

1. that the current proposals by the North Wales Fire Authority are unacceptable due to the potential effects on the safety of Wrexham County Borough citizens and the Council totally opposes the proposals.
2. that the Council's opposition to the proposals is communicated to the Fire Authority.
3. that it calls on the Fire Authority to look at other options of cost saving.

The Council would be grateful if its views are taken into account in the decision making process regarding the proposed options for cost saving.

Regards,

Andrea Evans

Andrea Evans
BSc (Hons), CiLCA
Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer
Llangollen Rural Community Council

Tel: 07950 813858

 Reply

 Forward

4.8.5 Acton Community Council

MRS CAROLE ROBERTS
Clerc/Clerk

c/o Acton Community Resource Centre
Overton Way, Wrexham
LL12 7LB

Your ref:
Ref:202923/CR

Ffôn/Telephone : 07913 071470
Epost/Email: clerk@actoncommunitycouncil.gov.uk

Via email: EmergencyCoverReview@northwalesfire.gov.wales

Councillor Dylan Rees

Chair of North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority North Wales Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters
Ffordd Salesbury, St. Asaph Business Park,

St. Asaph, Denbighshire, LL17 0JJ

Dear Councillor Rees

EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW

HAVE YOUR SAY YOUR FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE -RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT TIME, RIGHT SKILLS

I am writing to notify you of the views of Acton Community Council following its September 2023 Meeting when it considered the current Consultation information for the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority outlining 3 proposed options as a way of reducing costs, two of which involve cutting fire appliances in Wrexham and reducing the numbers of firefighters from 52 to 28.

Acton Community Council has also considered information provided by Caia Park Community Council about its response to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority about this Consultation. Acton Community Council wholeheartedly agrees with the position statements made by Caia Park Community Council and wishes to restate and confirm as its response the following comments:

1. Acton Community Council believes the options and proposals in the Consultation will put the safety of its citizens in jeopardy, not just within the Communities of Acton and Caia Park but the whole of the County Borough of Wrexham.
2. The proposals are totally unacceptable given Wrexham has a large resident population of around 136,000 together with possibly the largest Industrial Estate in Europe, the Wrexham Maelor General Hospital, a University Campus, College Cambria- the manufacturing training college on Bersham Road, as well as one of the largest Prisons in the UK.
3. Both Community Councils take the safety of its residents and Wrexham very seriously, and say that the proposals to cut services in Wrexham are totally unacceptable and now call on the Fire and Rescue

Authority to look at other options of cost saving, including the possibility of top down savings of the Authority to save costs.

Acton Community Council supports the Caia Park Community Council's unanimous resolution that was made at its special meeting in August 2023 and agrees:

1. that the current proposals by the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority are unacceptable due to the potential detrimental effects on the safety of Wrexham County Borough citizens and the Council totally opposes the proposals;
2. that the Council's opposition to the proposals should be communicated to the Fire and Rescue Authority; and .
3. that it calls on the Fire and Rescue Authority to look at other options of cost saving.

These comments are being submitted before the extended 30 September 2023 Consultation deadline and I should be obliged if you would confirm receipt and their inclusion in the Consultation responses for consideration by the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Yours Sincerely

Carole Roberts

Clerk to Acton Community Council

4.8.6 Minera Community Council

From: nwfireandrescueservice@gmail.com <nwfireandrescueservice@gmail.com>

Sent: 25 September 2023 13:21

To: CT.Control <CT.Control@northwalesfire.gov.wales>

Subject: Contact Us form submission

Contact Us Request:

Name: David Hinchliffe (Clerk)

Email: mineracc@gmail.com

Subject:Complaints

Country:United Kingdom

Address: Minera Community Council PO Box 2305, Wrexham LL11 0FS

Telephone:07506205907

Enquiry details::Please see below the text of a minute from the 20 September meeting of Minera Community Council. This is not of itself a 'complaint' but is being sent to you under that heading as the closest in spirit from those offered on this form to the mood stamp of the Council's resolution. We are, and will always remain, fully committed to and supportive of your service, but unequivocally stand with our fellow Community Council colleagues in Caia Park and beyond in opposing proposals which place the population of the County Borough in greater peril in return for cost savings. 84.1/23 An email had been received from Caia Park Community Council attaching the text of a resolution opposing proposals to make cuts to the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in the Wrexham area. Following a brief discussion of the wording of the resolution The Chair proposed and Cllr N Jones seconded that an identical resolution, adjusted to support the residents of the Minera ward, be passed by Minera Community Council and forwarded by the Clerk to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The proposal was agreed by all present, and the text of the resolution is recorded below: North Wales Fire Authority is proposing 3 options for reducing costs, 2 involving cutting the 2nd fire appliance in Wrexham and reducing the numbers of firefighters from 52 to 28. Minera Community Council believes this would put the safety of its citizens in jeopardy, not just in the Minera communities but the whole of Wrexham. This is totally unacceptable given Wrexham has a population of around 136,000 with possibly the largest Industrial Estate in Europe, Wrexham Maelor Hospital, a University and Coleg Cambria in the town as well as the manufacturing training college on Bersham Road, together with one of the largest prisons in the UK. Minera Community Council takes the safety of its residents in Minera and Wrexham very seriously and maintains that proposals to cut services in Wrexham are unacceptable, and calls on the Fire Authority to look at other options of cost saving, possibly from the top of the Authority, to achieve financial economies.' It was unanimously resolved that the Council agrees: 1. that the current proposals by the North Wales Fire Authority are unacceptable due to the potential effects on the safety of Wrexham County Borough citizens and the Council totally opposes the proposals. 2. that the Council's opposition to the proposals is communicated to the Fire Authority. 3. that it calls on the Fire Authority to look at other options of cost saving.

 Reply

 Forward

4.8.7 Rhosddu Community Council

Dear Sir,

Rhosddu Community Council wishes to object to the proposal to reduce the number of Fire Engines in Wrexham and the number of Fire Fighters in Wrexham.

The Council appreciates that the Fire Service is under financial pressure following 13 years of austerity. However

The Wrexham Station covers not only the City of Wrexham, but also the Wrexham Industrial Estate (one of the largest in Wales) as well as other Industrial Estates in the surrounding areas where serious fires could occur with chemicals and other combustible materials.

The Prison on the Industrial Estate is a recent addition to the buildings requiring special attention because of the number of inmates in confined areas.

The Welsh Government has imposed on the Wrexham Council an obligation to allow the provision of thousands of additional houses in the County Borough. Currently, there is a Planning Application with the Planning Department for more than 1,500 new homes on a single site less than a mile from the Wrexham Fire Station.

Climate Change has seen an unprecedented number of wild fires in Europe and beyond, and it is inevitable that this growth in wild fires will spread to North Wales in the coming years.

In addition, the incidence of flooding has increased around the world, and this will inevitably occur in North Wales.

As I am sure you appreciate, the training of Fire Fighters takes many years, and to lose many experienced Fire Fighters now will have an impact for years to come. Planning for now is not the answer; the Fire Service should be planning for the future; the future where there are more homes, more industries, more wild fires and more flooding.

When the inevitable happens, who we going to call? Wrexham Firefighters !!

Nigel Hodges

CLERK
Rhosddu Community Council

4.8.8 Sarah Atherton MP

Dawn Docx

Chief Fire Officer and
Chief Executive North
Wales Fire and
Rescue Authority

1, September 2023

Dear Dawn,

As the Member of Parliament for Wrexham, I am extremely concerned that North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority are consulting on the future provision of emergency cover for Wrexham.

Fire and Rescue services in Wales are devolved to the Welsh Government in Cardiff. The first and most important duty of any government is to keep its citizens safe. Therefore, I would suggest that it is the responsibility of the Welsh Government to step up and provide the funding necessary to maintain Wrexham's current level of fire service provision - particularly as the UK Government recently delivered the largest annual funding settlement to Wales since devolution, providing a record £18 billion per year to the Welsh Government - around £1.20 for every £1 spent in England.

Two out of the three consultation options, as part of your Emergency Cover Review, propose removing Wrexham's third fire appliance (i.e., fire engine), maintaining one appliance staffed by wholetime firefighters and one retained appliance staffed by on-call firefighters -who would not always be available and who do not have the necessary skills to undertake some of the tasks of wholetime firefighters. This would be unacceptable for an area the size of Wrexham. As Wales' newest city, with plans for expansion both in domestic homes (the Local Development Plan allocates space for more than 8,000 homes) and businesses (with Wrexham soon to have the largest trading estate in Europe), these proposals are unacceptable and, I would suggest that the consideration should be to expand the current fire service provision covering Wrexham - not reduce it!

Wrexham is the largest urban settlement in North Wales, covering an area of almost 200 square miles, consisting of a city centre and surrounding communities which are home to approximately 140,000 residents. Wrexham has one of the largest industrial estates in Europe which contains over 340 businesses and employs over 10,000 people. It also contains HMP Berwyn, the UK's largest prison.

Wrexham Maelor Hospital is the largest hospital in North Wales. This whole area is served primarily by Wrexham Fire Station and its three appliances, which currently attend 1,572 callouts a year- more than five incidents a day. I am seriously concerned that, if this decision goes ahead, and 24 firefighter jobs are lost, the safety of Wrexham residents would be compromised.

At the same time as these proposals, which involve large-scale cuts and redundancies, an undertaking to build a new training centre for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in St. Asaph has been approved, I am told, to the cost of £48 million. North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is undoubtedly under-resourced and underfunded, and improved training facilities are certainly needed. However, the timing, size, and scale of this project is concerning.

Furthermore, I am worried that Wrexham is, once again, bearing the brunt of the Welsh Government in Cardiff Bay's decision to underfund North Wales and treat us as an afterthought, instead of addressing the North-South funding disparity which led to the same proposals being made in 2016. Clearly, Wrexham is repeatedly being targeted, and residents will feel threatened by these potential cuts yet again. This cannot keep happening. Cities of a similar size in England, such as Preston, are served by two wholetime fire engines as well as other resources, like a Major Rescue Unit. Indeed, Newport in South Wales is served by three fire stations - each operating a wholetime service. I cannot understand why North Wales is losing out again.

Following our meeting on 9th June, alongside North Wales Conservative MP colleagues on 4th August, and throughout the consultation process, I have urged Wrexham residents to make their voices heard and respond to the consultation. Having submitted my own response, I was struck by how difficult it was to find the link to complete the questionnaire, as well as the lack of space available (250 words maximum) to object to the proposals. In addition, the structure and style of the questionnaire made it impossible to express a view in favour of retaining the current level of Fire Service provision across North Wales or to suggest that you seek the funding you require from the Welsh Government.

Following a high volume of correspondence from concerned residents, I launched a petition to oppose plans to remove Wrexham's third appliance. I will be submitting the hundreds of signatures as part of the consultation process before the closing date on 22nd September.

I sincerely hope that North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority take the views of the people of Wrexham into account, realise that these proposals are unworkable, and retain our current fire service provision. As there are bold proposals underway to grow the city of Wrexham, I am finding it difficult to comprehend how slashing coverage can be an option.

Yours sincerely,



Sarah Atherton
Member of Parliament for Wrexham



[Photo taken on High Street; 22nd August 2023 at 1738hrs].

If proposals to remove Wrexham's third fire appliance are adopted, an incident such as the one pictured would take up the entire provision of Wales' newest city- leaving the rest of Wrexham unsupported.

Thank you to our Wrexham firefighters.

4.8.9 County Councillor Hermitage Ward and Community Councillor Offa

I have attempted to complete the questionnaire which has been extended until tomorrow 30 September, I have reached question 4 and received the above error message, consequently I am unable to access further parts of the 30 part questionnaire which is unfortunate, however, I shall conclude my stating I call upon the Fire Authority to maintain its covers levels of emergency cover within the County Borough of Wrexham.

Cheers Graham

Cllr Graham Rogers
County Councillor Hermitage Ward and Community Councillor Offa
7 Bell Court, Hightown, Wrexham, LL13 8QP
Tel 01978 351107 or Mobile 07968214189
Email graham1.rogers@wrexham.gov.uk

4.9 Additional correspondence

This section of the addendum provides comments received by email, letter, telephone, face-to-face and via social media during the consultation period (in addition to the substantive written submissions included in sections 4.1 to 4.8).

Table 4.9.1 – Comments received by email, letter, telephone and face-to-face

Date	Method of response	Content of response
20/7/23	Email	<p>By removing one of the fire engines from Wrexham, will putting people at risk. Why is Johnstown not on the list because they are retained and they rarely go out it always seems to be Wrexham coming up to Emergency's in Penycae and Rhosllanerchrugog.</p> <p>So maybe Wrexham should have the second whole-time fire engine operational?</p>
21/7/23	Email	<p>Hello Could you tell me about any plans to close the fire station at Abersoch. Secondly if closure is to occur do you own the building and what are the plans for it? Our Coastguard station is across the road and I believe our rescue officers utilise your car park by local agreement. We may be interested in taking the station on. Kind Regards</p>
21/7/23	Email	<p>Good morning, I am writing on behalf of Llanberis Mountain Rescue team. We are the busiest Mountain Rescue team in the UK and we face a problem which you might be able to help me with. We currently operate out of a village hall / park wardens office in Nant Peris which is no longer fit for purpose. We are looking at option to upgrade. I saw that unfortunately the Llanberis Fire station might be set for mothballing. I was wanting to register early interest in the site if it were to become available. Clearly the site has a vast amount of read-across and would be an opportunity not to be missed. Could you please put me in contact with the estates management team/equivalent so that I can have further discussions? Many thanks</p>
22/7/23	Email	<p>Keep Llanberis Fire Station open. Keep retained firefighters at Llanberis Fire Station</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>I have seen the proposals over which you are now engaged in a public consultation. I would like to object in the strongest terms to the possible closure of the Fire Station in Abersoch as this would leave the only cover through either Caernarfon or Porthmadog both of which are about 45 minutes or more away by road from Abersoch and the coastal areas west of there. The likely seriously reduced life chances of anyone unlucky enough to be caught up in a fire in any of those areas does not bear</p>

		contemplating. Accordingly, I urge you to keep the Abersoch Fire Station open at all costs.
24/7/23	Email	I write to ask that the fire station in Abersoch be not closed. If that was closed, the nearest stations are a good 45 minutes drive away, on a good day. I really think that that is dangerous. A huge amount of damage and danger can be caused in 45 minutes. I genuinely think this would be hazardous for life. Please could you reconsider this proposal?
24/7/23	Email	I hear The North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has launched a public consultation concerning the service to be offered in future. One option includes closing the fire station in Abersoch. I just wish to raise my objection to this proposal.
24/7/23	Email	I read with great concern of proposals to close Abersoch Fire Station and wish to register the objections of my wife and myself to these utterly mad proposals. We live in Mynytho, some four miles from the station. Responding to a fire anywhere on the peninsula west of Llanbedrog would involve a response/travel time in excess of 45 minutes in average traffic conditions risking property destruction and more importantly, loss of life in the event of a fire of significance in this area. The cost/life balance of this unbelievable exercise defies logic. Please add our names to the list of objectors to closure proposals.
24/7/23	Email	It has been brought to my notice that there is the real possibility of closing. The Abersoch Fire Station. I can't think of anything more dangerous. Not only are there many dwellings in and around Abersoch but the area is heaving with caravans full of young families. Please rethink any such plans. It would be terrible if there was a major incident.
24/7/23	Email	Dear Sir or Madam I strenuously oppose reduction of any emergency service provision in our beautiful Llŷn Peninsula. We are higher rate Community Charge rate payers, owing to our property not being our primary residence, so we already feel discriminated against and any further reduction in services for what is an exorbitant 'charge for services' is unacceptable. Abersoch will be left unsupported by fire and rescue due to its rurality but also because of the stance of Gwynedd County Council towards second home owners who are in a preponderance in this area. This is raw discrimination.
24/7/23	Email	This email is to register my concern about the proposal, currently the subject of consultation, that the Fire Station at Abersoch should be closed with reliance being placed on a service from Porthmadog or Caernarfon.

		<p>I had the misfortune of my property suffering a serious fire 5 years ago, the outcome of which could have been life threatening were not the Abersoch Fire Brigade so promptly in attendance. I believe that the size of the community and its remote location warrant a local station. I would also like to think that, given the level of the Council Tax being levied, and to be levied, it is economically appropriate for such a facility to be maintained.</p>
24/7/23	Email	<p>Good Evening</p> <p>I am informed that there is a motion in the offing to propose closure of the fire station in Abersoch. As a doctor , mother , grandmother and concerned human being I would like it to be noted that I find this proposition to be extremely worrying .</p> <p>We are all aware of the worries and dangers around fires and emergencies to which the fire service respond . They simply save lives and their arrival at scenes is crucial and is best as soon as is possible after being alerted . An extra 45 mins on a good day is just not going to GIVE THAT PRECIOUS LIFE A CHANCE .</p> <p>One can easily see from the statistics that deaths have occurred and/ but that peoples lives have been saved by those brave members of the fire service .</p> <p>The Station at Abersoch is VITAL for the lives on the peninsular .</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>I object to the proposed closure of the abersoch fire station. This puts homes at risk.</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>I understand there is a review underway into the future of Fire Stations in N Wales and particularly the Abersoch station .</p> <p>This station serves a wide rural area in which there are many businesses and a large number of villages. These businesses and communities rely on locally based emergency services of which the Fire Brigade is one of the most important.</p> <p>There are also a large number of holiday homes in the area many of which are unattended for parts of the year . These properties need fire cover as much as permanent homes. The proposal to close the Abersoch station and give the area cover from Bangor or Porthmadog is totally unacceptable given the travel times from both these locations to any community on the Llyn. The recent increase in the council tax paid by those people with second homes or holiday let homes should also be used to cover the continued operation of the Abersoch station , especially as it is a part time station. The village has recently had its medical practice closed and has also seen the junior school given similar treatment , the</p>

		closure of the Fire Station will further undermine this community and its confidence in the service providers .
25/7/23	Email	<p>We wish to object to the closure of the Abersoch Fire Station.</p> <p>If the closure goes ahead this could have a really serious impact on the life and survival chances of anyone unlucky enough to be in a building on fire in the area.</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>Please register my immense concern about the reported suggestion that Abersoch Fire Station be closed.</p> <p>The resultant severe risk to Abersoch Businesses, residents and property does not bear thinking about.</p> <p>I must express my objection to this proposal, both as an Abersoch Business owner & parent & grandparent to two families in Mynytho & Llanbedrog.</p> <p>Closure of the Abersoch Fire Station could have tragic consequences.</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>I object to the closing of the above fire station. They do tremendous work and with the next nearest station being 45 minutes away at least this would have serious consequences for domestic properties in and around the Abersoch area.</p> <p>I would urge you to rethink this idea.</p>
25/7/23	Email	pls can I object to closing the fire station in abersoch
25/7/23	Email	<p>We wish to object in the strongest terms to any closure of the Fire Station in Abersoch. To close this station would mean that the nearest fire station would be located approximately 45 minutes away. That sort of travel distance can literally mean the difference between controlling a fire or not and also could mean the loss of life.</p> <p>We appreciate that the Council are looking to make savings, but these savings should not be at the risk of losing essential services of this nature. To proceed with a closure of the Abersoch fire station would be reckless in the extreme and would not be in the interests of the population of the Llyn Peninsula.</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>Further to reports that there is a “consultation” regarding the closure of the above I would like to lodge my very strenuous opposition.</p> <p>The fire service is vital to the Abersoch area. Pwllheli has its own engine and Nefyn has a new purpose built fire station/police station. Both engines could be attending call outs when a fire occurs in Abersoch, and then there would be no cover at all.</p>

		<p>In this area we have a lot of heathland, in the dry summer months these are subject to wild fires, be it arson or accident. There is a lot of mechanical equipment, boats etc., all subject to the odd accident. This is as well as the odd house fire of which there have been several recently, the local chip shop had a fire only last week.....</p> <p>It is absolutely essential that we retain the Abersoch Station.</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>It has come to my attention that there is a possibility that Abersoch Fire Station is under consideration to be closed.</p> <p>I can only envisage that this spells disaster for local inhabitants of the Llyn Peninsula. To relocate the existing station to either Porthmadog or Caernarfon would mean that a fire in Abersoch would take 30/45 mins to reach from Porthmadog. Surely this puts peoples lives at risk and has to be seen as such.</p> <p>I am totally against any such move and would like you to accept this email as evidence of my objection.</p> <p>For heavens sake please see the foolishness of this proposal</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>I'm very concerned about the proposals to reduce the amount of stations to cover the llyn Peninsula. The fire service is one part of our emergency & rescue services rolled out across the whole of the U.K. and we need them to be there for people in this area . The quick response from the emergency services is what we all expect and would hope to keep . Fires and RTA'S all need immediate attention and delays make me very worried for the possible outcomes in certain situations. Removing the Abersoch station is of particular concern as they cover our area . Reviews & money saving options should not be allowed to endanger life .</p>
25/7/23	Email	<p>I would like to register my objection to the potential closure of the Abersoch Fire Station. The nearest fire stations in the absence of Abersoch would be either Caernarfon or Porthmadog both of which are about 45 minutes away by road from the western end of the Llyn peninsula. This could have a really serious impact on the life and survival chances of anyone unlucky enough to be in a building on fire in this area of the Llyn.</p>
26/7/23	Email	<p>In response to the Consultation document regarding the possible closure of the fire station in Abersoch, we would like to register our firm opposition to such a proposal.</p> <p>In our view this is a high risk strategy which could potentially have a serious impact on life and property in such a tightly built community and particularly when there are hundreds of holiday makers staying in the area. We have had a lot of hot summers recently and it would be madness</p>

		to risk not having a fire service immediately to hand in case such an eventuality happened. Only recently the chip shop caught fire...
27/7/23	Email	I understand that there is a proposal to close the Abersoch Fire Station. As a householder in Abersoch I strongly object to this proposal and would like to ensure that my concerns are recorded.
27/7/23	Email	As the owner of a property in Abersoch, I should like to object to the closure of the fire station in Abersoch. The proposed closure would place property in the western end of Llyn at a greatly increased risk of fire danger if fire stations in Caernarfon or Porthmadog had to be used. More importantly, the health risk to people would be increased because of the distances involved.
27/7/23	Email	I am the owner of a house in Abersoch. I would like object to proposals to close Abersoch Fire Station which would leave a large area of the Llyn peninsular inadequately covered.
27/7/23	Email	I am given to understand that there is a proposal which includes the closure of Abersoch fire station. Given the large area of the peninsular which is covered by this station and the importance of this area to national income I suggest that the closure of Abersoch fire station would be short-sighted both as regards the security of the population and financially.
31/7/23	Email	In light of the proposals to change emergency fire cover, I would like some more information about the specialist appliances currently based in Wrexham. The Ariel Ladder Platform, Technical Rescue Unit and Environmental Protection Unit all need experienced crews to staff them. If full-time firefighters are halved as proposed from 52 to 28 in Wrexham, then who will be crewing these specialist appliances? Retained staff can't do that job. Wrexham is the busiest station in north Wales in terms of callouts and also helps to cover large parts all the region because it has adequate staffing at present. If Options 2 or 3 go ahead, what guarantees can you provide that these specialist appliances will have adequate crewing? Will they even stay in Wrexham as a result of Options 2 or 3?
18/7/23	Email	With reference to our telephone conversation earlier this afternoon, I am writing to you, as Chair of the North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority, with the agreement and approval of the Town Clerk. It is fair to say that this latest announcement is very worrying for all of us in the Seiriol Ward and Town Councillors have already written to the office to express their concerns having already lost other vital and crucial services in the Town over the years, banks, post offices to name a couple.

		<p>As the Public Consultation Document does not become available until Friday, 21st July 2023, let us not jump to any conclusion and wait to see what it has to say.</p> <p>Naturally, every resident should also be encouraged to complete the document as and when and to make their feelings known.</p> <p>Should an opportunity become available to have a face-to-face public meeting to discuss the matter, we, in Beaumaris would welcome to be included and given the chance to host such a meeting in order to air our views and opinions.</p> <p>Diolch a gan gyfeirio at ein sgwrs ffôn yn gynharach y prynhawn yma, yr wyf yn ysgrifennu atoch, fel Cadeirydd Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru, gyda chytundeb a chymeradwyaeth Clerc y Dref.</p> <p>Mae'n deg dweud bod y cyhoeddiad diweddaraf yn peri pryder mawr i bob un ohonom yn Ward Seiriol ac mae Cynghorwyr Tref eisoes wedi ysgrifennu at y swyddfa i fynegi eu pryderon ar ôl colli gwasanaethau hanfodol eraill yn y Dref dros y blynyddoedd, banciau, swyddfeydd post i enwi un neu ddau ohonynt.</p> <p>Gan na fydd y Ddogfen Ymgynghori Cyhoeddus ar gael tan ddydd Gwener, 21 Gorffennaf 2023, gadewch inni beidio â neidio i unrhyw gasgliad ac aros i weld beth sydd ganddi i'w ddweud. Yn naturiol, dylid annog pob preswlydd hefyd i gwblhau'r ddogfen pan a phryd ac i fynegi eu teimladau.</p> <p>Os daw cyfle i gael cyfarfod cyhoeddus wyneb yn wyneb i drafod y mater, byddai croeso mawr i ni ym Miwmares gael ein cynnwys a chael y cyfle i gynnal cyfarfod o'r fath er mwyn lleisio ein barn a'n safbwyntiau.</p>
17/8/23	Email	<p>I wanted to take an opportunity to thank everyone involved in yesterday's consultation event at Ty Pawb in Wrexham. In particular I thought the video which has been produced I was very effective at raising awareness of the challenges and the options being consulted upon. If this video could be shared digitally with the public I think this would be extremely helpful and I want to thank Stewart for agreeing to look into this. There are two points I would like to make which I would like the authority to take on board. Firstly with regards to the options affecting the "third appliance" at Wrexham. The continued to description of this as the third appliance I feel is misleading and this is the feedback I continue to receive, particularly that it does not clearly state it is actually the removal of the second wholetime crew. The way the appliances are manned are important and I think we need to be explicitly clear on how appliances are to be manned. Secondly I think the format of the engagement event was good however I think there may be lessons to be learnt by all of us around advertising the events. The feedback I am getting is that the event and format could have</p>

		<p>been better advertised and similarly that the timing of the consultation outside of term time when many are on annual leave is not ideal. The question I have been asked is whether there are opportunities for further consultation events early September? Wrexham and Flintshire both have their events during one day in August. I appreciate Gwynedd is a substantial geographical area however it is being suggested that they have a disproportionate amount of consultation events based on local authority area and also population. If a further event could be held to address this deficit I think it would be beneficiary to the process. Once again thank you once again to all involved in yesterday's consultation and I would welcome your thoughts on the potential for additional events.</p>
22/8/23	Email	<p>Option 3 of the consultation includes the closure of Beaumaris Station. However, the document does not provide any detail regarding the impact of closing the station.</p>
23/8/23	Email	<p>I write from the office of Virginia Crosbie MP regarding some concerns passed on by Virginia's constituent.</p> <p>Virginia was asked the following regarding Beaumaris Fire Station. Please could you advise on any plans to close the station?</p> <p>"Beaumaris station is the only one in the seriol area and if this closes it would put many lives at risk. the closest station would be Menai Bridge which is retained and then Benllech both with a 20min drive to any fire in Beaumaris if a fire were in Llangoed or further afield then that time could be longer and with the traffic along the garth bend in summer this could lead to lives being lost.</p> <p>This is a serious matter. Our vital services at this end of the island are once again becoming the target of closures, this end of the island is dying. people are shouting at spending 30million on a third bridge to save 20min on a commute but not willing to spend that money on 20min to save lives."</p>
22/8/23	Email	<p>The Member would be grateful if you could kindly respond in writing to the few queries she raised regarding the options that are going out for consultation.</p> <p>Additionally, she would appreciate a copy of the options report.</p> <p>Finally, Janet has heard that there may be an intention to spend £43million on a new fire training centre. If so, she would be pleased to recommend underused buildings that could be well suited to host such a centre</p>
3/9/23	Email	<p>I'm writing to oppose any closure of Beaumaris fire station as this would leave the residents of Llangoed and penmon at serious risk relying on menai bridge engine having to navigate garth bends also there's a elderly home at penmon this would seriously put these frail people at risk so I</p>

		would like it noted I totally oppose this proposed closure money saving should never come above the protection of the
6/9/23	Telephone	<p>Since I am unable to attend the meeting today I would like to say this to the Fire Authority.</p> <p>I believe all Fire Authority members should be actively pursuing this issue with the public in their own areas given the seriousness in the proposals for reduction in fire cover. Also, the matter should be put on hold for one year to allow the members to make contact with their constituents.</p>
7/9/23	Email	Rhyl Town Council has significant concerns around the proposals that are contained within the NWFA Emergency Cover Review document that has come to the Town Council for consultation.
11/9/23	Email	I have read the full consultation document and I think I must have missed the following point. I notice in option 1 of the consultation the phrase "Day Crewing" is used for Rhyl and Deeside but in options 2 and 3 the phrase is "Day Staffing". Could you please explain the difference.
14/9/23	Email	Fire and Ambulance service should now be one service. We get less fires yet we can't get an ambulance. On more than one occasion people I know and others have stated they have called for an ambulance and been told the wait is going to be 4-5 hours. Yet Fire crews are sat at fire stations waiting for a call. It's time to use the people available to cover all eventuality. Yes you will have specialist people/staff just like we do today.
21/9/23	Email	<p>Dear Sir/Madam,</p> <p>I am a resident of Rhyl and cannot accept the three options you have set out for the Emergency Cover Review, for Emergency Fire Cover.</p> <p>None of the reviews contain 24 hour cover, for one of the most used town fire stations. I also could not contemplate the loss of fire fighters to redundancy. We could lose lives with all three of those options.</p> <p>Please re-think this and allow for 24 hour/7 days a week, 365 days a year as you do now. This is clearly a service we should not be losing. I have been present in a property where there was a fire, accidentally caused by a male a floor down. 1 other in the same building was a chip fire, another two in other buildings on the same street. You saved our homes and us. I even alerted you to a fire around the corner from where I live now, where the life of a woman was nearly lost. I didn't know if anyone was there but you saved her.</p> <p>Please, please, save lives, please do not change the way you do things, as this would mean that that lives could be lost, because you didn't get there in time</p>

20/9/23	Email	<p>I am getting in touch to advise that I have been unable to respond to your consultation of proposed fire cover changes as the questionnaire will not work. Images attached for reference.</p> <p>If you are able to add my views to the consultation, I would be grateful.</p> <p>I believe that we should not be compromising our current fire cover to plaster over holes elsewhere in North Wales.</p> <p>Flintshire and Wrexham are big, suburban and industrial areas that require the 2 wholtime stations they currently have. The turnout times will dramatically increase by dropping pumps/making stations day staffed/retained and may well impact on night cover if wholtime staff live further than 5 minutes away. There is more and more building work taking place in these areas, along with a main hospital that will all suffer.</p> <p>There has been plenty of education on how quickly a fire in the home takes control and the golden hour following an RTC that does not justify the change.</p> <p>Maybe more investment into recruitment is required, especially into other ethnic culture's and community events to encourage people to want to join the fire service. This would help to provide the cover required in the areas lacking.</p> <p>Listen to the public, their thoughts and feelings matter and make the consultation process easier for everybody to complete.</p>
22/9/23	Email	I propose OPTION 1 in your Emergency Cover Review
22/9/23	Email	<p>I CHOOSE OPTION 1 AS A WAY FORWARD IN YOUR EMERGENCY COVER REVIEW.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p>
25/9/23	Email	<p>With the 20mph Law in Wales and your proposal to get rid of Fire Cover in the Wrexham Area. I wonder if you have looked into "Response Times" from Retained and Part Time Crews having a third of their Speed to travel to Station taken off them. This would mean extra delays to the Safety of the Public. i would like to hear your views on this matter please.</p>
28/9/23	Email	<p>FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: WEDNESDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2023</p> <p>FIREFIGHTER CUTS: A SMOKESCREEN FOR LABOUR'S BLANKET 20MPH</p> <p>Commenting on the news there are plans to cut the number of fire stations and firefighters in North Wales, putting lives at risk, Welsh</p>

		<p>Conservative Shadow Minister for Social Partnership, Joel James MS said:</p> <p>“If you read the public consultation document the fire service are asking all households in North Wales for £171 per year, a hike of £20.36 so that it can increase the number of households that it can reach in 20 minutes by less than 1% of the total. This is a very big price for such a small gain.</p> <p>“They are also threatening that firefighter jobs will be lost and fire stations will be closed if the public do not support this, and I believe that this is actually a smokescreen to hide the fact that they are worried they will no longer be able to meet their 20 minute response time due to the introduction of the 20mph speed limit.”</p> <p>Also commenting, Welsh Conservative Shadow Minister for North Wales, Darren Millar MS added:</p> <p>“It’s crucially important that we don’t see a reduction in cover at fire stations and firefighter numbers in North Wales.</p> <p>“There must be suitable alternative proposals put forward in order to ensure there is suitable emergency cover available for the public, that will protect the services and ensure there is no additional risk to people’s lives.”</p>
29/9/23	Email	<p>Bore Da / Good Morning</p> <p>Unfortunately your consultation form does not appear to be working properly. I've tried 3 times this week to complete it and it doesn't allow me to go beyond the first page or recognise the saved version.</p> <p>I appreciate the fact that you wish to enhance rural services. This must include reinstating the large animal rescue service, which was stopped in 2015 without consultation. There is no other organisation who can carry out this service.</p> <p>thank you</p>

Table 4.9.2 – Comments received via social media

Date	Comment
21/7/23	Done! You should have the public meetings in the areas where you are thinking of closing the stations! The public will always support their firefighters, especially the ones who try! Majority of the public don't have a clue about what goes on in the fire service so this feels like a cop out for the chief. You see if any of these ideas go wrong,

	her job will be safe as she can say "the public voted!" This is a pay more or shut up movement by NWFRS!
23/7/23	You all keep us safe! Thank you 🙏 If it was in London would this be happening? ♡ Anything north of Watford Gap n Cardiff, (it seems) no interest in public safety and cost-cutting 😞. You're all 🙏
21/7/23	I don't see an option to merge the 3 fire rescue services/ authorities, get rid of the extra chief fire officers, deputies and assistants of which there are far too many !! Cut back all the non job managers positions and leave the firefighters alone to do what they do best.
21/7/23	Hardly going to be right place, right time or anything for the people of Wrexham, Deeside or Rhyl after a day shift is it ? Hardly going to be right place, right time or anything for the people of Wrexham, Deeside or Rhyl after a day shift is it ? You cant recruit retained as you dont offer flexible contracts like Shropshire etc. Demographics have changed but leaving large swathes of the biggest conurbations and industrial areas uncovered by wholtime resources in the night is not right.
21/7/23	This is a bigger fight than last time , but you can be sure the powers at be have made there decision
21/7/23	...oh yes mate, the one pump disestablishment is the slight of hand to get public attention. Rather like the slicing of a cake and people watching what others get
21/7/23	Presumably Option 1 is the service's preferred option as it has the least impact, i.e no station closures or loss of appliances? Introducing Day Crewing at Corwen and Porthmadog is interesting? Can someone please explain what are Rural Wholtime Duty staff?
21/7/23	Closing Cerrig is leaving a 22 mile part of the A5 main route bereft of RTC cutting equipment between Corwen and Betws-y-Coed if Corwen are on a make up elsewhere, you're also leaving the Hiraethog Moors towards Denbigh and Bylchau without cover relying on Llanrwst and Abergele to back Denbigh up. With Beaumaris, if the A545 suffers another landslide as it's prone to you've got Menai Bridge cut off thus leaving Llangefnï and Benllech to cover coming in from Pentraeth and even further to get to Llangoed, Llandonna and Penmon.
21/7/23	With Llanberis the tourists flock in and hotels fill up with walkers heading to Snowdon. This creates a problem with the A4087 around Llanrug, Brynyfail and Pen-y-Pass being prone to RTC's baring in mind the road cuts across the Caernarfon bypass with Llanberis third pump into Caernarfon and covering towards Capel Curig and a busy outward bound centre that suffered a fatal blaze resulting in two deaths at the Meadows outward bound centre in 1992.
21/7/23	History shows that in 1972 when Pwllheli opened their new fire station it was built in minds that it was going to be day manned as projected infrastructure and Butlins Starcoast camp were the major risks then and as now personally wouldn't it make

	more sense to put the day crews there as they can fan out towards Abersoch, Aberdaron, Nefyn, Pystyll and Portmadoc covering a 180' turnout area.
21/7/23	my mum was a leading control op out of caernarfon for over 30 years and was on quite a few very large fires god knows what would have happened with these cuts it is scary !!!!! They need to put all their cards on the table not drip feed them !!!
21/7/23	So how is removing a station near a school a good thing?
21/7/23	Think I'd rather pay a bit more and keep the status quo tbh
21/7/23	Hello. I have just looked at you consultation. None of the options seem to change coverage for the rural area around Penley, Wrexham. Do you cover that area (or do you have an arrangement with Shropshire) and if you do cover it what are average response times please? Will any option impact on Penley? Many thanks.
24/7/23	I would like to know, who and how the 3 options for consultation were decided upon ,I bet it wasn't the firefighters or local communities that chose these options.I've got an option for you merge the 3 fire/rescue services in Wales together get rid of most of the assistant/ deputy chief fire officers, if that doesn't raise enough ,the non job managers can go next(nobody knows what they do anyway) ,return the fire service to its core business of fighting fires and responding to other emergencies and leave the firefighters alone to do what they do best !! Consultation sorted ! You can thank me later !!!
25/7/23	Can you name me any of your "staff" that were " consulted" and came up with any of these three options ,if they did they should not be in the job and should be ashamed of themselves,but I'm sure that these three options were only brought up by the ones with the silver on their shoulders looking after their own jobs ! I take it you will be publishing a post "consultation" report so I can check that my views were included for reference??
25/7/23	I fully agree, an all Wales service would really reduce the higher paid senior officer base but, unfortunately you won't see that option on the table. They'd rather cut the front end than loose their cushy, well paid office jobs.
25/7/23	I also agree that no serving operational fire fighter would support any one of the three options.
25/7/23	... it was exactly the same last time they covered their cuts by telling us they were improving the service,I actually asked the Chief Fire Officer to his face how
25/7/23	Unfortunately most cut backs involve the front end fire cover never the senior ranks.
25/7/23	It will be interesting to see where the day crew staffing for Corwen, Dolgellau and Portmadoc will come from. I can't see fire fighters from Rhyl, Deeside or Wrexham agreeing to move into those areas. This strengthens your argument about internal consultation.

25/7/23	Llanberis I believe are currently at a serious RTC, what more proof do the FA need to see that cutting gear is needed in Llanberis and as they were alerted yesterday by control to stand by at Portmadoc. This ludicrous plan I hope will fail as the public deserve a fire service with front line appliances and equipment, not overpaid corporate paper clip counters with no fire ground experience.
30/7/23	Cadwch Orsaf Dab Abersoch yw'r pentref mywaf yng Gwynedd a dylid cael Gorsaf dan yna – Keep the fire stations. Abersoch is the largest viallg ein Gwynedd - it should have a fire station there.
31/7/23	this superfluous position will keep a retained fire station and fire engine on the run protecting communities not placating corporate interests. The service is there to protect communities funded by tax payers and is currently over run by managers with no operational experience having never been in training school or assessed to be a competent firefighter rising through the ranks by merit creaming off tax payers money.
31/7/23	Yet again, a kick in the teeth for frontline staff who had a perfectly good promotion structure for years. And will this save Deeside and Rhyls night cover or Wxms 2nd pump ? Doubt it.
2/8/23	To be fair you are expecting us as joe public to give opinions based on very little information. Whilst I understand that you are at a stage of "aiming" for 20 pumps available in daytime in North Wales (your quote to Fire Authority members). And that is out of 54/5 plus pumps across 44 stations then this is quite dismissive in the least. Those wholetime stations reduced to day crewing are losing an appliance at night are they not ?
2/8/23	50 character limit is ridiculous to discuss complex issues like the importance of prevention vs the need for appropriate staffing and training for when preventative measures fail.
14/9/23	I don't know how you handle your resources and I'm not in a position to even pretend I could advice you either. You are heroes and the experts in what you do. It takes a special kind of person too run towards the flames whilst everyone else runs away. I trust and thank you for your expertise is protecting us every day and I trust you will do what is best to continue and improve on that in the future. I personally would rather pay you than north wales police in my council tax bill. And I support further funding and support too you. Other than that. I have no opinion on this. Thank you for all you do.
19/9/23	We don't want option 1,2 or 3 we want the option we weren't allowed to know about, the option we only found out about because the union guys were at the meeting in Conwy. Option 4 people we want option 4!!!

22/9/23	They are not telling the public the full details , so how can the public comment on only half of the document
22/9/23	There are other ways the service can save money without cutting wholetime jobs which are the only ones they can depend on being available 24/7
22/9/23	But you should keep the fire service as near to how it is now and charge people more per year.

4.9.1 Response from an attendee after attending the community engagement event in Cerrigydrudion

Response to consultation

During the consultation event in Cerrigydrudion I stood up to explain the concerns I have regarding the consultation currently undertaken by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. Upon completing the online questionnaire, I was dissatisfied that I couldn't fully express my views. The character limit included in the online questionnaire didn't allow any detailed response. Therefore, I enclose my full response.

Since this consultation has been launched it has dominated my thoughts. It is difficult to comprehend the willingness of the fire authority to propose an option which will make me, my family and my community less safe.

The three options presented do not align with each other and is not clear why these three options have been selected. Is it the intention to consult on options to improve emergency day cover or are you consulting on options to limit the cost increase to households? There is a lack of strategic direction on display.

I summarise the options as follows:

- Option 1 will deliver improved day cover, maintain the number of firefighters but will cost the most.
- Option 2 will deliver less improvements to day cover, reduce the number of fire fighters and cost a little less than option 1.
- Option 3 will make cover worse, reduce the number of fire fighters to respond to major incidents and still this represents an increase in costs.

The inclusion of Option 3 doesn't correlate with the option 1 and 2 as there is no improvement at all. Neither option 2 or 3 are acceptable as both reduce the number of firefighters.

The priority for every single member of the fire authority should be the equitable cover for every resident in North Wales. Option 3 will reduce this cover. It fails to meet the objectives of the review to improve day cover and also fails to deliver on cost as this option will also increase cost to every household. The inclusion of this option proves that there are members of the authority willing to increase risk to vulnerable households and represents a failure in responsibility.

No risk assessment has been published in this consultation. Assuming that one surely exists the consequence of implementing option 3 is likely to be ominous in areas cover by threatened fire stations and has been omitted for this reason. In the absence of a published risk assessment, I have illustrated the impact on four risks below but there are many more.

Risk – Cover during the night

Option 3 will make day cover worse and it will also make night cover worse. There is no mention of night cover in the consultation document, and this is a failure. Most fatal house fires take place at night. Closing fire stations will increase the risk of fatalities significantly.

Risk – Response times

Option 3 will make response times worse. We acknowledge that there are times when fire crews are unavailable during the week, but fire officers have confirmed that these correlate when people are at work. The population in rural areas is at its highest when cover is available (evening and weekends) and closing a station like Cerrigydrudion will make response times worse for the residents paying for the service. This fact cannot be disproved. The truth is that the expected response time from Corwen, Bala or Betws y Coed to the village of Cerrigydrudion would be around 30 mins, however, some outlying dwellings are as much as 15 mins from Cerrigydrudion therefore even if one of these crews could find the dwelling straight away, the earliest it could arrive is in 45 mins. A fire rated door is expected to last 30 mins but with this response time the occupants would not survive. Response times matter.

Risk – Geographical spread of stations is too large / Geography of areas impacts response.

The geographical spread of fire stations is important. Local fire fighters can respond quicker to the incident not only because they are nearer but because they know where they are going. There is a danger that crews responding to calls in the future will be unable to attend in time as they will not have adequate knowledge of the area. A fire appliance is a large vehicle, and some roads simply cannot accommodate it. Knowledge of this is important and Option 3 will increase the risk of fire appliances getting stuck on rural roads.

Risk – Ability of the service to respond to major incidents.

The ability of the service to respond to major incidents would be severely impacted by the loss of 78 fire fighters. The importance of having multiple shifts of fire fighters at major incidents is invaluable as exhausted fire fighters cannot do their jobs. Losing fire fighters would increase the risk to all.

Impact of the consultation

The overall effect of the consultation has had a detrimental effect on my mental health and caused unnecessary worry. I cannot comprehend that the future of the fire service provision is reliant on such an inadequate document. I expected that the consultation would cover at least the following:

- Risk during the day.
- Risk during the evening.
- Ability of the service to respond to major incidents.
- Ability of stations to cover each other.
- Geography of each area.
- Areas of High risks inc. infrastructure, roads, mountains, forests.

- Impact of the loss of local knowledge.
- Number of current firefighters
- Retention and recruitment rates in each station

There are gaps in the information published and no adequate assessment of the impact of these changes on the above factors. In addition, there hasn't been an adequate assessment of the impact of option 3 will have on residents' health and wellbeing. The equality impact assessment published only addresses part of the requirements that the Future Generation Act places on public bodies. This is a dereliction of duty by the fire authority.

Following the consultation event in Cerrigydrudion concerns have been raised to me that fire officers have selected data to evidence a narrative to engineer closure of some stations. I cannot disprove this accusation as very little data has been published. In addition, there are concerns that some stations not considered for closure are ineffective as they have severe retention and recruitment issues and unable to respond to incidents. This requires nearby stations to provide cover. The willingness of the authority to place the future of 5 stations at risk will do nothing to address retention or recruitment in North Wales. Why would you want to join if there is a chance that the station will close in the near future?

Overall, I'm frightened by the fact that there hasn't been any hesitation by the fire authority to propose an option which will make safety worse, the fire service weakened and less able to respond to incidents and also expect me and everyone else to pay more for it. £8.14 a year is the difference between option 1 and 3. It is clear that some fire authority members believe that the lives of people in Cerrigydrudion and the surrounding area is not worth £8.14.

The closure of fire stations and reduction in the overall number of firefighters should never be on the table and it is unforgivable that Cllrs sitting on the fire authority have included this option.

It is therefore important that a recorded vote takes place when the fire authority decide to vote on this critically important matter. Every single member of the fire authority is responsible for the safety of all residents in North Wales and they need to be held accountable for the decisions they take.

Ymateb i'r ymgynghoriad

Yn ystod y digwyddiad ymgynghori yng Ngherrigydrudion codais ar fy nhraed i egluro'r pryderon sydd gennyf ynghylch yr ymgynghoriad a gynhelir ar hyn o bryd gan Awdurdod Tân ac Achub Gogledd Cymru.

Ar ôl cwblhau'r holiadur ar-lein roeddwn yn anfodlon na allwn fynegi fy marn yn llawn. Nid oedd y terfyn cymeriad a gynhwyswyd yn yr holiadur ar-lein yn caniatáu unrhyw ymateb manwl. Felly amgaeaf fy ymateb llawn.

Ers i'r ymgynghoriad hwn gael ei lansio mae wedi bod ar flaen fy meddwl. Mae'n anodd deall parodrwydd yr awdurdod tân i gynnig opsiwn a fydd yn fy ngwneud i, fy nheulu a'm cymuned yn llai diogel.

Nid yw'r tri opsiwn a gyflwynir yn cyd-fynd â'i gilydd ac nid yw'n glir pam y dewiswyd y tri opsiwn hyn. Ai'r bwriad yw ymgynghori ar opsiynau i wella gwasanaeth ymateb brys yn ystod y dydd neu a ydych yn ymgynghori ar opsiynau i gyfyngu ar y cynnydd mewn costau i aelwydydd? Mae diffyg cyfeiriad strategol yn cael ei arddangos.

Rydw i'n crynhoi'r opsiynau fel a ganlyn:

- Bydd Opsiwn 1 yn darparu gwasanaeth yn ystod y dydd gwell, yn cynnal nifer y diffoddwyr tân ond yn costio y swm uchaf.
- Bydd Opsiwn 2 yn sicrhau llai o welliannau i wasanaeth yn ystod y dydd, yn lleihau nifer y diffoddwyr tân ac yn costio ychydig yn llai nag opsiwn 1.
- Bydd Opsiwn 3 yn gwneud y gwasanaeth yn yn waeth, yn lleihau nifer y diffoddwyr tân i ymateb i ddigwyddiadau mawr ac yn dal i gynyddu costau i bob aelwyd.

Nid yw cynnwys Opsiwn 3 yn cydfynd a opsiwn 1 a 2 gan nad oes gwelliant o gwbl. Nid yw opsiwn 2 na 3 yn dderbyniol gan fod y ddau yn lleihau nifer y diffoddwyr tân.

Y flaenoriaeth ar gyfer pob aelod o'r awdurdod tân ddylai fod gwasanaeth cyfartal i bob preswlydd yng Ngogledd Cymru. Bydd Opsiwn 3 yn lleihau'r gwasanaeth hwn. Mae opsiwn 3 yn methu â chyflawni amcanion yr adolygiad i wella'r gwasanaeth yn ystod y dydd a hefyd yn methu â dileu cynnydd mewn costau gan y bydd yr opsiwn hwn hefyd yn cynyddu'r gost i bob cartref. Mae cynnwys yr opsiwn hwn yn profi bod yna aelodau o'r awdurdod sy'n fodlon cynyddu'r risg i aelwydydd bregus ac yn adlewyrchu nad ydynt yn ddigon cyfrifol.

Nid oes asesiad risg wedi'i gyhoeddi yn yr ymgynghoriad hwn. Gan gymryd bod un yn sicr yn bodoli mae canlyniad gweithredu opsiwn 3 yn debygol o fod yn niweidiol mewn ardaloedd a gwmpesir gan orsafoedd tân dan fygythiad. Rhaid derbyn felly ei fod wedi ei hepgor am y rheswm hwn. Yn absenoldeb asesiad risg cyhoeddedig, rwyf wedi dangos yr effaith ar bedair risg isod ond mae llawer mwy.

Risg – Gwasanaeth ymateb yn ystod y nos

Bydd Opsiwn 3 yn gwneud ymateb dydd yn waeth a bydd hefyd yn gwneud ymateb yn ystod y nos yn waeth. Nid oes sôn am ddarparu gwasanaeth yn ystod y nos yn y ddogfen ymgynghori ac mae hyn yn fethiant. Mae'r rhan fwyaf o danau angheuol mewn tai yn digwydd yn ystod y nos. Bydd cau gorsafoedd tân yn cynyddu'r risg o farwolaethau yn sylweddol.

Risg – Amseroedd ymateb

Bydd Opsiwn 3 yn gwaethgu amseroedd ymateb. Rydym yn cydnabod bod adegau pan na fydd criwiau tân ar gael yn ystod yr wythnos ond mae swyddogion tân wedi cadarnhau bod y rhain yn cyfateb pan fydd pobl yn y gwaith. Mae'r boblogaeth mewn ardaloedd gwledig ar ei huchaf pan fo diffoddwyr tan ar gael (gyda'r nos ac ar benwythnosau) a bydd cau gorsaf fel Cerrigydrudion yn gwneud amseroedd ymateb yn waeth i'r trigolion sy'n talu am y gwasanaeth. Ni ellir gwrthbrofi'r ffaith hon. Y gwir yw y byddai'r amser ymateb disgwylidig o

Gorwen, Bala neu Betws y Coed i bentref Cerrigydrudion tua 30 munud, fodd bynnag, mae rhai o'r tai anghysbell cymaint â 15 munud o Gerrigydrudion felly hyd yn oed pe bai un o'r criwiau hyn yn gallu dod o hyd i'r annedd yn syth, y cynharaf y gallai gyrraedd yw ymhen 45 munud. Disgwylir i ddrws gyda sgôr tân bara 30 munud ond gyda'r amser ymateb hwn ni fyddai'r preswylwyr yn goroesi. Mae amseroedd ymateb yn bwysig.

Risg – Mae gwasgariad daeryddol gorsafoedd yn rhy fawr / Mae daeryddiaeth ardaloedd yn effeithio ar yr ymateb.

Mae lledaeniad daeryddol gorsafoedd tân yn bwysig. Gall diffoddwyr tân lleol ymateb yn gyflymach i'r digwyddiad nid yn unig oherwydd eu bod yn agosach ond oherwydd eu bod yn gwybod i ble maent yn mynd. Mae peryg na fydd criwiau fydd yn ymateb i alwadau yn y dyfodol yn gallu bod yn bresennol mewn pryd gan na fydd ganddyn nhw wybodaeth ddigonol o'r ardal. Mae peiriant tân yn gerbyd mawr ac nid yw'n addas i rhai ffyrdd. Mae gwybodaeth am hyn yn bwysig a bydd Opsiwn 3 yn cynyddu'r risg y bydd peiriannau tân yn mynd yn sownd ar ffyrdd gwledig.

Risg – Gallu'r gwasanaeth i ymateb i ddigwyddiadau mawr

Byddai gallu'r gwasanaeth i ymateb i ddigwyddiadau mawr yn cael ei effeithio'n ddifrifol gan golli 78 o ddiffoddwyr tân. Mae pwysigrwydd cael digon o ddiffoddwyr tân mewn digwyddiadau mawr yn amhrisiadwy gan na all ddiffoddwyr tân sydd wedi blino wneud eu gwaith. Byddai colli ddiffoddwyr tân yn cynyddu'r risg i bawb.

Effaith yr ymgynghoriad

Mae effaith gyffredinol yr ymgynghoriad wedi cael effaith andwyol ar fy iechyd meddwl ac wedi achosi pryder diangen. Ni allaf ymgyffred bod dyfodol darpariaeth y gwasanaeth tân yn dibynnu ar ddogfen mor annigonol. Roeddwn yn disgwyl y byddai'r ymgynghoriad yn cwmpasu'r canlynol o leiaf:

- Risg yn ystod y dydd.
- Risg gyda'r nos.
- Gallu'r gwasanaeth i ymateb i ddigwyddiadau mawr.
- Gallu gorsafoedd gefnogi ei gilydd.
- Daeryddiaeth pob ardal.
- Meysydd o Risg Uchel gan gynnwys isadeiledd, ffyrdd, mynyddoedd, coedwigaeth
- Effaith colli gwybodaeth leol.
- Nifer y ddiffoddwyr tân presennol
- Cyfraddau cadw a recriwtio ym mhob gorsaf

Mae bylchau yn y wybodaeth a gyhoeddwyd ac nid oes asesiad digonol o effaith y newidiadau hyn ar y ffactorau uchod. Yn ogystal, ni fu asesiad digonol o'r effaith y bydd opsiwn 3 yn ei chael ar iechyd a lles preswylwyr. Nid yw'r asesiad o'r effaith ar gydraddoldeb a gyhoeddwyd ond yn mynd i'r afael â rhan o'r gofynion y mae Deddf Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol yn eu gosod ar gyrff cyhoeddus. Mae hyn yn ddiffyg dyletswydd gan yr awdurdod tân.

Yn dilyn y digwyddiad ymgynghori yng Ngherrigydrudion mynegwyd pryderon wrthyf fod swyddogion tân wedi dewis data i ddangos naratif i gefnogi cau rhai gorsafoedd. Ni allaf wrthbrofi'r sylwadau hyn gan mai ychydig iawn o ddata sydd wedi'i gyhoeddi. Yn ogystal, mae

pryderon bod rhai gorsafoedd nad ystyrir eu cau yn aneffeithiol gan fod ganddynt broblemau cadw a recriwtio difrifol ac na allant ymateb i ddiwyddiadau. Mae hyn yn ei gwneud yn ofynnol i orsafoedd cyfagos ddarparu gwasanaeth cyflenwi. Ni fydd parodrwydd yr awdurdod i roi dyfodol 5 gorsaf mewn perygl yn gwneud dim i fynd i'r afael â chadw neu recriwtio yng Ngogledd Cymru. Pam fyddech chi eisiau ymuno os oes siawns y bydd yr orsaf yn cau yn y dyfodol agos?

Ar y cyfan, mae'r ffaith nad yw'r awdurdod tân wedi petruso o gwbl i gynnig opsiwn a fydd yn gwaethygu diogelwch, yn gwanhau y gwasanaeth tân ai wneud yn llai abl i ymateb i ddiwyddiadau a hefyd yn disgwyl i mi a phawb arall dalu mwy amdani wedi fy nychryn. £8.14 y flwyddyn yw'r gwahaniaeth rhwng opsiwn 1 a 3. Mae'n amlwg bod rhai o aelodau'r awdurdod tân yn credu nad yw bywydau pobl Cerrigydrudion a'r cyffiniau yn werth £8.14.

Ni ddylai cau gorsafoedd tân a gostwng yn nifer cyffredinol y diffoddwyr tân fyth fod ar y bwrdd ac mae'n anfaddeuol bod y Cynghorwyr sy'n eistedd ar yr awdurdod tân wedi cynnwys yr opsiwn hwn.

Mae'n bwysig felly bod pleidlais wedi'i chofnodi yn digwydd pan fydd yr awdurdod tân yn penderfynu pleidleisio ar y mater hollbwysig hwn. Mae pob aelod unigol o'r awdurdod tân yn gyfrifol am ddiogelwch holl drigolion Gogledd Cymru ac mae angen iddynt fod yn atebol am y penderfyniadau a gymerant.

4.9.2 Response from Firefighter 1

Re: Comments direct (unable to navigate through process document in PFF).

My previous experience informs the following comments... 1. The NWFRS has seen growth of non frontline roles yet the first option of cost cutting (this is the thrust of the consultation) is to remove further operational posts. Some of these green book roles are vital (obviously Corporate Comms team do a necessary and vital role as do fleet, payroll and some elements within HR) yet others speak to me of senior leadership failing to grasp the reality of the role of the FRS in a cost constrained funding situation. A detailed trawl of all green book support roles should be undertaken in a job evaluation process prior to any operational jobs being lost or re designated.

2. The fundamental reasoning of the proposals to change WDS duty systems is to support the RDS, and this was not well explained in the consultation presentation.

The reasons for lack of availability are complicated and predicated in a changing working environment. However, it is my view that NWFRS has not undertaken comprehensive analysis of why availability has changed since 2000 nor of the reasons RDS retention is so appalling.

I would offer a suggestion that this is because the Service has never had the capacity to recover from the recruitment freeze of 2008-12 and fundamentally failed to consider the needs of the RDS particularly the crew and watch managers. Support is not forthcoming to those in role and there is no thinking outside the box to increase interest in recruitment. I wrote a masters paper of recruiting women returners to the workplace with particular reference to rural areas and it fell on deaf ears. Just one example of where and how our PM's have dropped the ball over the last two decades.

3. The availability and hence the response issues are long term in the making and will require some long standing plans to improve... it will not happen overnight. The FBU options for growth offer some capacity to see improvements in the RDS availability and I would strongly support consideration of both of those proposals.

4. It goes without saying that the options put forward by Principle Managers are backward, regressive and ill thought out and I am informed produced at considerable cost from an outside company. Surely if the Service was in charge of its affairs it could at least conduct its own research.

Thanks for hearing me out. Good luck to all those serving staff either responding to incidents, preventing incidents or fulfilling vital support roles to enable this to happen.

4.9.3 Response from Firefighter 2

Purpose

As a totally committed loyal & proud RDS firefighter (& longstanding community member), providing over 127 hours a week (including full day time cover) to the Fire Service over the last 7+ years (having no other external employment commitments), in conjunction with the points raised at internal (20 July) & external (30 Aug 2023) meetings at Dolgellau (Station of the Year 2022), I should be extremely grateful if you would kindly consider the following ahead of making any firm decisions potentially impacting current RDS role/my contract with the Fire Service.

Observations (to help Maximise Efficiency of Existing Resources) include:

Material Change: Not sure why RDS crew members (including those currently providing daytime cover) at Dolgellau Fire Station were not consulted (pre-review) by Senior Management or by the External Consultants conducting the review. Aspects within the review/explanations provided are a potential material change to contract/income (governed by legislation), with local RDS job positions/income (at risk) being given to others (from outside the locality) in a potentially unfair manner - potential redundancy/financial impact under certain circumstances.

How many potentially being deployed to Gwynedd speak native tongue Welsh & know the area as well?

Effective use of Existing Resources not maximised (ahead of any Potential Changes) - for example:

□ Long-term Sickness/Authorised Absence: In terms of accountability to the Public/Council Tax payer, historic practices at certain Stations (potentially spanning over 7yrs) should be reviewed by an independent Senior Official, as such aspects have had a negative impact upon provision of daytime cover (& cost/finances) & this is now potentially affecting others unfairly. Such issues should be potentially reviewed & addressed ahead of any Emergency Cover Review implementation.

□ Availability Statistics, Potential Misinformation/Assumptions v Facts: Potential inaccurate assumptions made by review board, including eg. potential hypothesis that crews/appliance were/are not available to respond during the day ('off the run'), when, in fact, crews are available & have positively responded & turned out to passive alerts on majority of occasions called out. (availability of crews being a key factor in the review).

ie. some Stations potentially appear to be regularly 'off the run' on Gartan, but (somehow) tend to always be available when beepers are sounded - evidence supporting such fact (over the last few years) includes Dolgellau crew (whilst actually being on call) being stood down by Control immediately post Barmouth crew being deployed via passive alerting (despite them being officially not actually on call). Members of Dolgellau crew have lost considerable income as a direct result (not good for morale), where Senior Officers have since advised that Dolgellau crew are to be allowed to proceed to such incidents & be paid exactly the same amount of time at incident as those alerted passively whilst not on call, yet Dolgellau crew income continues to be curtailed as a result.

Number of call outs stated at public meeting also potentially inaccurate in the absence of clarification/qualification/definition. Dolgellau also borders & covers Mid Wales area.

□ Skills on Gartan/Training: Absence of strategic focused training support (eg. driver/pump & IC) by Management/Support & Training Managers has also contributed to/caused the recent potential shortfall in daytime cover. Execution of such tailored training will help resolve skills availability in the short term. Training should be strategically targeted, tailored & focused, rather than a potential 'scatter-gun' approach on occasions. eg. over the last few years, some RDS crew members have been trained to drive (ERDT) when, in fact, they are not actually available to provide cover during the day due to eg. main employment restrictions (thus, arguably not a cost effective approach). Examples of other crew members with more years of service/experience providing significant daytime cover (for several years) wanting & willing to be trained but not chosen to undertake driver/IC training, despite previous email requests

several years ago & subsequent promises made by Management, potentially raising nepotism/favouritism questions.

Potential failure of Managers to identify & organise appropriate training & potential succession plans has led to a recent shortfall of drivers & IC's during the day, & resulted in increased costs in providing relief cover & travelling expenses, etc, & more recently led to the Emergency Cover Review. There are currently four members of RDS crew available during the daytime to respond (potentially supplemented by one extra/rural crew member). This would be far more cost effective.

Potential Resolutions/Mitigation (to help increase Efficiency & Availability, especially during the day)

Focused Availability/Skills Training

RDS crew members available during the day to undertake driver/pump operator & IC training. Retention (of existing RDS) is far cheaper/easier than recruitment & training.

Potential Refinement to Option(s) presented (eg. option 1)

It has been confirmed at the Community meeting that it is within the power of the Deputy Chief to alert RDS crew members simultaneously when day crew members are alerted on Station under potential new option. Whilst fully appreciating the existing position & importance of RDS members attending Station promptly within a maximum timeframe (as per existing individual availability grid eg. within 1-2mins), under potential new option it may be deemed appropriate to allow existing RDS members who currently provide cover/availability during the daytime (7 days a week at a far cheaper cost option) to join the day crew staff on the main appliance (in the event of a call out) as the eg. 4th/5th/6th rider to avoid loss of RDS goodwill/local jobs & avoid potential financial redress costs. With day crews of 7, 2 potentially on leave at any given time, plus allowing for other potential absences/sickness, a shortfall exists &, in the event of a key incident, local knowledge & long standing experience of Welsh speaking RDS members could also be crucial & help significantly. If local RDS members are not allowed to continue to undertake their existing duties in line with contract & respond/ride on the main appliance, then RDS contract is deemed to be materially altered & could lead to potential redundancy/financial recompense.

Such potential refinement/suggestion is no different to historic practices & currently at times when RDS are asked to cover day crewing Stations such as Caernarfon, etc (riding alongside day crewing/whole time staff).

Please kindly confirm Senior Management agreement to continue to alert RDS members on all emergency calls at exactly the same time as alerting day crewing staff on Station, & allow RDS members to ride alongside day crew on main appliance. Existing availability grid forms (with route, distance & time checked/endorsed by Line Manager/Locality Manager) confirm those able to respond & attend Station within say 1-2 mins of call alert.

Such refinement also helps to mitigate potential availability issues in the event of a potential future change to day crewing staff, or system not working as well as originally planned upon future review, or costing too much to the local tax payer.

Summary

- Focused/tailored training & pro-active collective management (with independent absence review) will help reduce overall costs & increase efficiency & availability.
- Welcome a discussion with Senior Officer/Head of HR to further clarify.

Equality Impact Analysis

on the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority
Emergency Cover Review (ECR)



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Introduction

This report has been commissioned by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFR) and sets out the Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) for the Emergency Cover Review (ECR).

The ECR relates to the way resources are managed to keep people safe and as part of this review North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) has been working with staff and representative bodies, members of the public, council representatives, local vulnerable groups and Members of NWFR to understand what really matters to everyone.

The focus of this report is to scope out the impact on the options presented during the public consultation of the ECR to support NWFR Members in their decision making on which option to request the Service to implement.

The overarching aim of the EIA is to establish whether there will be any specific groups or communities within North Wales who will be disadvantaged in any way in relation to the options consulted upon as part of the ECR.

As defined by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 (more information on this is in the next section of the report), this EIA will focus on the protected characteristics which fall within the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and within the Socio-Economic Duty in Wales, as well as consideration of any possible implications on the Welsh Language, according to the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards.

Accompanying this EIA are two separate Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) contained in Appendix 2 and 3.

Background and Context of the Emergency Cover Review and Consultation

The key objective of the ECR was to consider current emergency response arrangements and to recommend options to provide a fair, sustainable and equitable emergency response across the whole of North Wales, balancing demand and current and anticipated future community risks.

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

- The fact that on-call firefighters, who operate the retained duty system (RDS), are not as available as they have been traditionally, and their recruitment is also proving challenging;

- The risks faced by North Wales communities are changing with climate change and new technology; and
- The financial challenges being faced are now greater than ever.

The Service currently has guaranteed emergency cover at eight fire stations, which are located predominantly along the A55 dual carriageway corridor in North Wales.

Elsewhere in the region, operational response is provided by on-call firefighters – and their availability during the daytime is challenging.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service is working hard to recruit and retain these firefighters but there is a need to be certain of being able to provide a response crew within the optimum response times across the whole of North Wales.

The Service has therefore been exploring scenarios for providing emergency cover in the future – with a view to improve existing cover whilst also recognising the current financial challenges. Working with independent specialists, it has been modelling exactly how to optimise resources and respond in the most effective and efficient way.

The number of incidents attended increases throughout the day, peaking in early evening and then dropping at night. The Service looked at matching this demand by changing the way some of its crews work in certain areas.

The ECR aimed to enable the Service to respond more effectively to all the emergencies, including road traffic collisions and events due to extreme weather, and crucially to respond at the right time.

The ECR has been overseen by a member led Emergency Cover Review Working Group. The membership consisted of six NWFRA Members, one from each constituent local authority.

An independent company, ORH, was commissioned to work with the ECR team. ORH are industry experts and provide data analytics to a range of organisations working in the emergency sector. They have provided 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.

Through their deliberations Members discounted two options:

- To continue with existing emergency cover arrangements, accept the daytime availability risk and to no longer put in place the daily relocation of firefighters to mitigate those risks.

- To continue with the existing emergency cover arrangements and introduce three additional day staffed stations at an extra additional cost of £2.25 million.

In summary, the existing status quo was rejected because of the inequality of response service across North Wales, the risks involved to firefighters and to the public, and the costs involved.

Members indicated that they wished to consult on those options which seek to meet the aims of the ECR by reallocating existing firefighters to new day staffed stations. The options were presented 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. 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 RDS 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, 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 RDS 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 and the closure of five RDS fire stations is included. This is a reduction of 36 wholetime and 38 RDS firefighter posts realises savings of £2.4m thus limiting the year-on-year cost increase to £3.6m. It was noted that Option 3 does not have the professional support of the Chief Fire Officer. This is because it does not improve emergency cover, reducing the number of households in North Wales who are able to receive a response within 20 minutes by 2,087.

It was noted that Option 3 does not have the professional support of the Chief Fire Officer. This is because it does not improve emergency cover, reducing the number of households in North Wales who are able to receive a response within 20 minutes by 2,087.

Option 3 also removes 74 firefighter posts which would reduce the capacity of the Service to deal with spate conditions and with major incidents. In

addition, any possible merger of RDS fire stations can only be considered in the future when the three additional day staffed stations are in place and providing guaranteed day time emergency cover.

The Authority is obliged to consult the public when considering major service change under a variety of legal obligations including the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and common law.

In April 2023, the Service engaged The Consultation Institute (tCI), a not for profit, well-established institute promoting best practice public and stakeholder consultation in the public, private and voluntary sectors. They have previously worked across the sector including Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

The Institute provided Certificate of Consultation Readiness which certifies that the Authority had appropriately prepared for public consultation in line with the requirements of the tCI Consultation Charter. The Service subsequently commissioned tCI to provide Quality Assurance to ensure that the public consultation met the required standards expected.

Following approval from Members, a public consultation commenced on 21 July and continued until 30 September 2023. The results of the consultation were then presented at the NWFRA meeting on 16 October 2023.

Equality Impact Analysis: The Legal Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is part of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and came into force in April 2011. Section 149 of the Equality Act sets out the main duty and states that authorities must, in the exercise of their functions, “have due regards to the need to” eliminate any conduct that is prohibited by the Act. This includes discrimination, harassment and victimisation related to the ‘Protected Characteristics’;

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Whilst 'marriage and civil partnership' is also a protected characteristic, under the Equality Act 2010, it is not covered by the PSED in the same manner as the other protected characteristics, listed above and is for the purposes of the duty to eliminate discrimination. It is important to note that Section 1 of the Equality Act 'Socio-economic duty' came into force in Wales on 31st March 2021, and this requires the same due regard as the nine protected characteristics listed above.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 is also another legal consideration which has been included in the EIA. In compliance with the Policy Making standards within the Service's Welsh Language Standards compliance notice, it states that consideration should be made of any effects, whether positive or adverse to the Welsh Language. The EIA must include any identifiable effects on the opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The PSED has three main facets, and these are to:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act;
2. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
3. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to 'advance equality of opportunity' between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not includes having due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by them. Having due regard also means public organisations, such as NWFRS, take measures to meet the needs of such persons where those needs are different from persons who do not have that characteristic, and encourage those who have a protected characteristic to participate in public life.

As an essential part of meeting their PSED, public authorities conduct Equality Impact Analysis. This will be documented through the completion of an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). An Equality Impact Analysis is an assessment of a proposed organisational policy, or a change to an existing one so that it can be determined whether the policy has a disparate impact on persons from the protected characteristics. Whilst there is no longer a prescriptive way of doing this case law has provided guidance in how to undertake an equality impact analysis, namely:

- Ensure there is a written record of the equality considerations that are taken into account;

- Ensure any decision-making included consideration of the actions that would help to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts on particular equality groups;
- Ensure the decisions made are done so on evidence; and
- Ensure the decision-making process is transparent.

Methodology

Underpinned by the three main facets of the PSED (listed earlier), the EIA sets out information to support NWFRA Members in their decision making on the ECR option to implement.

This report and the accompanying EqlAs (Appendix 2 and 3) focus on the equality related findings of the pre-consultation and full public consultation conducted by NWFRA between 21 July and 30 September 2023.

This EIA draws together the detail around engagement and consultation activity; the demographics of the NWFRA area, with specific reference to protected characteristics; the anticipated differential impact when looking at the three potential options, specifically in terms of equality; any mitigating factors which will help to manage any risks associated with the impact. Although this report concludes with recommendations it must be noted that equality impact assessment process will continue through implementation.

The NWFRA undertook primary data collection throughout the consultation which has fed directly into this EIA. This is set out in the section of this report on engagement and consultation.

The review of data formed part of the methodology as follows:

Function within methodology	Information or data reviewed, or method
Understanding of how inequalities are manifest in the lives of people bearing protected characteristics (as relevant to the proposed options).	Based on a combined experience of over 16 years in the field of equalities. Review of Biennial report of the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which highlight inequalities for protected characteristics.
Understanding of the distribution of protected characteristics across North Wales, to inform the	Interrogation of the Instant Atlas data for North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority area.

assessment of the impact of ECR Options.	Desk based research into existing published sources.
Interrogate feedback expressed by internal and external stakeholders about the options contained within the ECR consultation options to determine any variations by protected characteristics.	Full Equality Impact Assessment completed by Equality and Diversity and Inclusion Officer. This process assessed the potential impact on internal and external stakeholders separately.
Review case law to identify learning to inform this methodology, to learn from the experiences of similar organisations undertaking reviews of service provisions.	Cases identified via the Consultation Institute.
Use of key lines of enquiry with the consultation questionnaire to determine if the options presented would have a detrimental impact on one or more protected characteristic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel there are any other risks we should be considering or planning for? A free text question that would allow for equality concerns to be raised. • Are there any other criteria that you think should be included? Following the evaluation criteria, a free text question that would allow any further criteria regarding equalities to be raised. • We have undertaken an equality impact assessment to ensure our decision-making process is fair and does not present barriers to taking part or disadvantage anyone, especially protected groups. • Are there any other equality issues that we could be thinking about? A specific question to draw out equalities' issues. • Are there any other areas of emergency cover that you would like us to consider? A free text question that would

	allow for equality concerns to be raised.
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Table 1: Methodology and sources of data and information

Case Law

To date there are three cases in law which have shaped the way EIA need to be carried out. The first is **R (Brown) v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2008]** , the second; **Branwood v Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council [2013]** and the third; **R (Bracking & others) v Secretary of State for Work & Pensions [2013]**.

The Brown case is a well-known case, which was important solely for its ruling on Impact Assessments and the promulgation of the six ‘general principles’. These are:

- **Knowledge** – Those in the public authority who have to take decisions must be made aware of their duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality and foster good relationships across all protected characteristics.
- **Proportionality** – A higher or lower level of “due regard” must be exercised, depending on volume and severity.
- **Consultation** – This must be timely, based on giving clear information and asking the right questions.
- **Timeliness** – “Due regard” must be exercised before and at the time the policy is being considered.
- **Sufficient information** – All relevant factors must be taken into account, so in other words the decision must be exercised in substance, with rigour and an open mind.
- **Real consideration** – Considering the duty in substance, with rigour and an open mind; it is not a question of ‘ticking boxes’.
- **No delegation** – The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public body subject to the duty.

The judge in the Branwood case sought to supplement and update the ‘Brown Principles’ and in the Bracking case the judge set out another set of Principles, some of these confirmed the “Brown Principles”. As the case of Brown was heard in the High Court and Bracking in the Supreme Court, Bracking has primacy and therefore the Bracking Principles are the legal tests which will be used in judicial review.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Area and Service Demographics

North Wales has a population of circa 687,000 people spread over a geographical area of 2383 square miles (or 6,172 square kilometres). The region is made up of six counties which include Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Ynys Mon, and Wrexham. It encompasses a diverse landscape, including Eryri National Park, coastal areas, and rural communities. The region is well connected, with major highways, railways, and ports providing access to the rest of the UK and Europe.

The largest city in North Wales is Wrexham, which serves as a hub for commerce and industry, while other major conurbations include Bangor, Caernarfon, Colwyn Bay, Deeside, Llandudno and Rhyl.

The region is also home to several universities and colleges, providing a strong talent pool for local and international businesses that are located here. Additionally, the region is a popular tourist destination, attracting visitors from all over the world with its stunning coastline, rich history, and unique culture.

Welsh, as a language for living, remains at the heart of the modern Welsh identity. Enjoying family life, education, work and leisure all through the medium of Welsh is testimony to the importance of the language to the people of Wales.

With regards to the 687,000 people that reside in North Wales, the 2021 Census data¹ states that 22.3% of the population were aged 65 years and over. Out of all local authorities across Wales, Conwy (27.4%) and Anglesey (26.4%) have the highest percentages of people aged 65 years and over. Conwy (1.5%) has the highest percentage of people aged 90 years in Wales.

With intersectionality in mind, it is useful to explore disability and age due to a notable difference in the data between 2011 and 2021, particularly in the younger and older age groups². For females aged 15 to 19 years, the

¹ Office of National Statistics (2021) Population and household estimates, Wales: Census 2021, Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimateswales/census2021#local-authority-populations-in-wales

² Office for National Statistics (2023b) Disability by Age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Source%3A%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20-%20Census%202021,-

percentage of disability was 13.3% in 2021, 8.1 percentage points higher than in 2011 and 7.9 percentage points higher than in 2001. This trend continued into the 20 to 24 year age group, where disability prevalence increased substantially, from 6.2% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2021. For males, the increased prevalence of disability in 2021 began at earlier ages; 8.6% of males aged 5 to 9 years were disabled in 2021, compared with 5.6% in 2011 and 6.5% in 2001³.

The population of North Wales is much less ethnically diverse than across England and Wales as a whole and 96.8% of the population identified as “White” in the 2021 Census. In North Wales, the highest proportions of people from “Any other White background” in 2021 were in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3.9%) and the lowest found in Anglesey (1.9%)⁴.

Age

The age of an individual, when accompanied with additional factors such as other ‘protected characteristics’ may affect their access to public services. Individuals may also experience discrimination and inequalities because of their age.

The European Social Survey 2012 found that age discrimination was the most common form of prejudice experienced in the UK, with 28% of respondents saying they had experienced prejudice based on age. In this section the age category to which most attention is given is 65+, as this is the age band that faces the most age-based discrimination.

Analysis of the 2021 Census data shows that North Wales residents aged 65 or over were more likely than those under 65 to:

- Have a long-term limiting illness;
- Be in poor health;
- Be living on their own;

[Embed%20code&text=In%20Wales%2C%2022.3%25%20of%20females,10.4%25%20and%209.5%25%20respectively](#)

³ Office for National Statistics (2023b) Disability by Age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at:

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Source%3A%20Office%20for%20National%20Statistics%20-%20Census%202021,-

[Embed%20code&text=In%20Wales%2C%2022.3%25%20of%20females,10.4%25%20and%209.5%25%20respectively](#)

⁴ Welsh Government (2022) Ethnic group, national identity, language and religion in Wales - Census 2021, Found at: <https://www.gov.wales/ethnic-group-national-identity-language-and-religion-wales-census-2021-html#:~:text=90.6%25%20of%20the%20population%20identified,to%202.3%25%20in%202011>)

- Be without access to a car;
- Be providing unpaid care of 50 hours or more a week;
- Be living in a household without central heating.

People aged 50 or over were more likely than those under 50 to:

- Be living on their own;
- Be isolated and excluded;
- Be providing unpaid care; and
- Have no qualifications.

The ageing population will have financial and resource implications, as this will likely to be the age at which the health and social care needs of individuals will increase.

Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. This is consistent with the Census definition of a limiting long-term health problem.

According to 2021 Census data, North Wales has 20.7% of the total population reporting a disability and/or long-term health condition. The national average in Wales is 21.1% and for comparison purposes 17.7% in England⁵.

Disability and age are closely related, with older people being more likely to be disabled. In North Wales, Census 2021 data shows that the age group with the highest proportion of people with below average health are those aged 65 and over (12.5%), with the lowest proportion in those aged 15 years and under (0.5%). This was seen in all local authorities with some minor variation in the percentages.

In North Wales, the highest percentage within the population aged 17 years or under with below average health were aged 16 to 17 years (1.2% of this population), and the lowest percentage in North Wales was in those aged 2 years and under (0.3% of this population). There was some variation in the local authorities although the highest percentage was in those aged 16 to 17 years in all local authorities except Denbighshire where the highest percentage was in those aged 15 years (1.7% of this population). It is not

⁵ Office for National Statistics (2023c) Disability, England and Wales: Census 2021. Found at: [www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,\(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/healthandwellbeing/bulletins/disabilityenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%20in%202021%2C%20a,(23.4%25%2C%20696%2C000))

possible to compare this data with the data included in the previous report as an alternative data source was used.

Gender

According to the Census 2021 data, the North Wales population by gender is 51% female and 49% male. When combined with additional factors such as living alone, employment status, financial income, health and social care needs, research suggests that one's gender can have disproportionate outcomes.

People are disproportionately affected by their gender when different concepts are explored which include Hate crime and domestic abuse⁶, gender pay gap and financial income⁷, accessing health care⁸, mental health⁹, domestic abuse¹⁰ and individuals may also experience discrimination and inequalities because of their gender¹¹.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation is an umbrella term covering sexual identity, attraction, and behaviour. According to Stonewall¹², approximately 7% of people identify as having a sexual orientation that involves being attracted to people of more than one gender.

According to the Census 2021¹³, 89.4% of the Welsh population identify as heterosexual or straight, 7.6% of the population 'did not answer', with 3% of the population identifying as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or 'other'.

⁶ Stop Hate (2023) Gender Based Hate Crime, Found at www.stophateuk.org/about-hate-crime/gender-based-hate-crime/

⁷ ONS (2022) Gender Pay Gap 2022, Found at www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/bulletins/genderpaygapintheuk/2022

⁸ WHO (2023) Gender and Health, Found at www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/gender-and-health

⁹ Mental Health Foundation (2023) Men and Mental Health, Found at www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/men-and-mental-health

¹⁰ ONS (2021) Domestic Abuse Victims, Found at www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabusevictimcharacteristicsenglandandwales/yearendingmarch2022

¹¹ CIPD (2023) Gender Equality Work, Found at www.cipd.org/uk/views-and-insights/cipd-viewpoint/gender-equality-work/

¹² Stonewall (2022) Rainbow Britain Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/rainbow_britain_report.pdf

¹³ ONS (2021) Sexual Orientation, Age and Sex in England and Wales, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/articles/sexualorientationageandsexenglandandwales/census2021

Research investigating people's experience of accessing public services has found that people that identify as Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual or an orientation other than heterosexual, often involves inequality and restricted access. Although there is very limited research on fire and rescue services, restricted access has been highlighted in various public services including health care¹⁴ and Police and Local authorities¹⁵.

Gender Reassignment

Gender reassignment is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as a person who is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning their sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. This means an individual does not need to have undergone any treatment or surgery to be protected by law.

Evidence shows that when transgender (41%) and/or non-binary (31%) people reveal their gender variance, they are exposed to a risk of discrimination, bullying and hate crime¹⁶.

67% of transgender people and 70% of non-binary people had experienced depression in the past year¹⁷. Almost half of the people who identified as transgender (46%) thought about taking their own life in the past year; 60% thought their life was not worth living; and 12% had made a suicide attempt.

By comparison, it is estimated that around 20% of the general population experience suicidal feelings in their lifetime¹⁸ and around 13% self-harm¹⁹. Therefore, transgender and non-binary people are at a much greater risk of a range of suicidal experiences, as they face mental health problems and

¹⁴ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain Report 2018, Found at:

www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf

¹⁵ Stonewall (2017) LGBT+ in Britain: Hate Crime, Found at:

www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_hate_crime.pdf

¹⁶ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain: Trans Report, Found at:

www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf

¹⁷ Manchester University (2018) Found at:

<https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/carms/2020/06/17/gender-identity-why-are-transgender-and-non-binary-people-more-at-risk-of-suicide/>

¹⁸ Time To Change (2020). Suicidal feelings, Found at: <https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/about-mental-health/types-problems/suicidal-feelings#toc-2>

¹⁹ Selfharm UK (2020) Self-harm statistics, Found at: <https://www.selfharm.co.uk/get-information/the-facts/self-harm-statistics>

suicidal experiences at significantly higher rates than the general population, especially amongst younger people^{20,21}.

Research has also found that trans and/or non-binary people encounter significant difficulties in accessing and using health and social care services due to staffs' lack of knowledge and understanding and sometimes prejudice²².

Research carried out by Stonewall²³ found that a quarter of health and social care staff were not confident in their ability to respond to the specific care needs of trans and/or non-binary people patients and service users.

An increasing number of trans people are accessing Gender Identity Clinics; it is unclear if this represents an increase in the trans population or an increasing proportion of the trans population accessing Gender Identity Services²⁴.

Whilst there are no official estimates of gender reassignment at either national or regional level, Stonewall estimates²⁵ that around 1% of the population identify as trans, including people identifying as non-binary. Therefore, a logical estimation would suggest between 6,000 and 7,000 people in North Wales are experiencing some degree of gender variance.

Pregnancy and Maternity

The Equality Act 2010 protects people who are pregnant, have given birth in the last 26 weeks (non-work context) or are on maternity leave (work context) against discrimination in relation to their pregnancy.

In the past 20 years, North Wales range between 7,086 and 7,826 live births each year. Over this period, the largest proportions of these deliveries were in the 25 to 29-year-old age group. The second largest proportion of births were

²⁰ Stonewall (2017) School Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/resources/school-report-2017

²¹ Transgender Trend (2016) The Suicide Myth, Found at: www.transgendertrend.com/the-suicide-myth/

²² Royal College of Nursing (2020) Fair Care for Trans and Non-Binary, Found at: www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/publications/rcn-fair-care-trans-non-binary-uk-pub-009430

²³ Stonewall (2018) LGBT+ in Britain: Trans Report, Found at: www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_-_trans_report_final.pdf

²⁴ LGBT Foundation (2017) Transforming Outcomes A review of the needs and assets of the trans community, Found at: <https://dx.fy8lrzbp.ywr.cloudfront.net/Files/acd2bcc5-a2d4-4203-8e22-aed9f4843921/TransformingOutcomesLGBTFdn.pdf>

²⁵ University of Bristol (2018) Ensuring trans people in Wales receive dignified and inclusive health and social care in later life: The Trans Ageing and Care (TrAC) project, 2016-18, Found at: www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/trans-ageing-and-care-project/

in the 30 to 34-year-old group, whereas the over 40's group were the lowest. Over the past two decades, teenage births have made up between 4.7% to 9.6% of overall births in North Wales each year. With exception of the occasional year, teenage births have reduced year-on-year since 2003.

Race

The Equality Act 2010 states that race includes colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin. 96.8% of people in North Wales identify as White Welsh/British. Asian or Asian Welsh/British was the second largest ethnic group (1.4%), followed by mixed or multiple ethnic groups (1.1%), other ethnic group (0.4%) and Black, British Welsh/British, Caribbean or African (0.3%).

The population of North Wales is much less ethnically diverse than across England and Wales as a whole and 96.8% of the population identified as "White" in the 2021 Census. In North Wales, the highest proportions of people from "Any other White background" in 2021 were in Wrexham (4.8%) and Flintshire (3.9%) and the lowest found in Anglesey (1.9%).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a disproportionate impact on people from ethnic minority communities and recently the Welsh Government²⁶ highlighted that highlighted many people, including those who were born in Wales, still experience racism on a regular basis.

An Equality and Human Rights Commission report²⁷ from 2016 highlighted various issues that are still relevant in 2023 for people from ethnic minority groups that continue to experience discrimination and inequality in education, employment, housing, pay and living standards, health, and the criminal justice system.

Amongst people aged 65 and over, Asian/Asian British people and Black African/Caribbean/Black British people were more likely than people from other ethnic backgrounds to have a long-term limiting illness and to be in poor health.

People of Gypsy or Irish Traveller origin were considerably more likely to be in poor health compared with all other ethnic groups (15.9% of Gypsy/Irish Travellers compared with 4.6% of White British people). Gypsies and Travellers

²⁶ Welsh Government (2022) Anti-Racism Action Plan, Found at: www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-06/an-introduction-to-an-anti-racist-wales.pdf

²⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission (2016) Healing a divided Britain, Found at: www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/2021/healing-a-divided-britain-august-2016.pdf

are still regarded as having the poorest health and lowest life expectancy in the UK.

Households headed by people from 'other White', mixed/multiple, Asian/Asian British, Black African/Caribbean/Black British and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were all more likely than households headed by people from White British backgrounds to have fewer bedrooms than was required.

People from mixed/multiple and Black African/Caribbean/Black British backgrounds were more likely than other ethnic groups to live in social housing.

People from White British and White Irish backgrounds were less likely than other ethnic groups to be living in private rented housing.

People from all groups which were not White British were more likely than White British people to be living in a household without access to a car or van.

Amongst people aged 25-34, people from White backgrounds were less likely to be unemployed than people from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds.

Amongst people aged 25-34, people from White Irish and Asian/Asian British backgrounds were more likely to have level 4 qualifications (a degree or higher) than White British people, whilst people from Black African/Caribbean/Black British, 'other' White, and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were less likely than White British people to have this level of qualification.

Amongst people aged 16-24, people from mixed multiple, White Irish, 'other' White and 'other' ethnic backgrounds were all more likely than people from White British backgrounds to have no qualifications. In the same age group, people from Asian/Asian British backgrounds were less likely than White British people to have no qualifications. The percentage of people in this age group with no qualifications was similar for Black African/Caribbean/Black British people and White British people.

Amongst people aged 25-49, people from White Irish, White British and 'other' White backgrounds were less likely to be unemployed than people from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds.

Amongst people aged 25-49, White Irish and Asian/Asian British people were more likely to be in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations than White British people, whilst people from Black African/Caribbean/Black British, 'other' White, mixed/multiple, and 'other'

ethnic backgrounds were less likely than White British people to be in such occupations.

Religion and/or Belief

According to the 2021 Census²⁸, Christianity is the most common religion within all ages in North Wales and represents 49.8% of the population. Whilst the next main group stated they had no religion at 41.7%, statistics show 1.8% of the population account for people who follow Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh religions. 6.7% of people chose not to state their religion or belief.

In summary, North Wales has a higher proportion of people who are Christian, have no religion, or have not stated a religion than the national figures. In contrast it has a lower proportion of people who follow a religion other than Christianity, which reflects the ethnic composition of the region.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

As mentioned earlier in the report, marriage and civil partnership do not fall under the PSED in the same way as the other protected characteristics, however the Equality Act 2010 does protect individuals who are in a civil partnership, or marriage, against discrimination. The Service has considered this protected characteristic in the same way, mainly because a person's relationship status is one of the many factors that may place them at more 'risk' of fire in the home. For example, if people live alone, they are more at risk of experiencing fire in the home. People aged 65 and over that live alone are at even further risk.

Evidence suggests being married is associated with better mental health²⁹, and physical health³⁰. There is less evidence on the benefits of being in a civil partnership, but it is likely the benefits will also be experienced by people in similarly committed relationship such as civil partnerships. Where heterosexual couples differ from couples in same-sex relationships and civil partnerships, they experience hate crime, discrimination, and victimisation because of

²⁸ Office for National Statistics (2021) Religion, England and Wales: Census 2021 Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/bulletins/religionenglandandwales/census2021

²⁹ Kiecolt-Glaser, J. K. & Newton, T. L. (2001) Marriage and health: his and hers. Psychological bulletin, Vol 127(4), 472.

³⁰ Johnson, D.R. & Wu, J. (2002) An empirical test of crisis, social selection, and role explanations of the relationship between marital disruption and psychological distress: A pooled time-series analysis of four-wave panel data. Journal of marriage and family, Vol 64(1), 211-224.

their sexual orientation³¹ and this is likely to negatively impact on their mental wellbeing and sense of safety. This may also relate to a lack of public recognition and a consistent social framework on which such relationships can be built³².

Across older age groups, both men and women living as a couple were more likely to be in very good or good health compared to those not living as a couple, regardless of whether those not living as a couple lived with other people³³.

As you would expect, people aged 16-24 are the most likely to be single, while those aged 65+ are the most likely age group to be widowed or a surviving partner from a same sex civil partnership³⁴. Same sex civil partnerships are most common amongst 35-49-year-olds, where they account for 0.2% of the total age group. The proportion of people that are married, separated or divorced increases with age, until 65+ when it begins to fall, to consider the increasing proportion of people who have lost a partner.

Welsh Language Considerations

According to the 2021 Census³⁵, significantly, the highest percentages of Welsh speakers in Wales can be found in the North Wales counties of Gwynedd (64.4%) and Anglesey (55.8%). North Wales as a region is home to over a third of Wales' Welsh speaking population.

The Service is committed to promoting and facilitating the use of Welsh as a language of the workplace and community, and reports on this annually as required under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure (2011). Alongside this, the Service supports the Welsh Government's 'Cymraeg 2050' Welsh language strategy with the target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050 (Welsh Government, 2017). The strategy aims to increase both the number of Welsh

³¹ King et al (2003) Mental health and quality of life of gay men and lesbians in England and Wales: controlled, cross-sectional study. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, Vol 183(6), 552-558.

³² King, M. & Barlett, A. (2006) What same sex civil partnerships may mean for health
Found at: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2465551/

³³ Office of National Statistics (2021) People Population and Community, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/profileoftheolderpopulationlivinginenglandandwalesin2021andchangessince2011/2023-04-03

³⁴ Office of National Statistics (2021) People Population and Community, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/ageing/articles/profileoftheolderpopulationlivinginenglandandwalesin2021andchangessince2011/2023-04-03

³⁵ Welsh Government (2022) Welsh Language in Wales, Found at: www.gov.wales/welsh-language-wales-census-2021-html

language speakers and to create favourable conditions for this to happen, including increasing the use of Welsh within the workplace across all sectors.

More information is published in the Equalities and Human Rights Commission monitoring report [here](#).

Socio-economic Considerations

The Service area demographics are outlined earlier in this report on page 10.

According to the Census 2021, some of the most deprived areas in Wales are concentrated in North Wales coastal and border towns^{36,37}. These areas include Rhyl and Kinmel Bay. In Rhyl South West, around 70% of households are affected by deprivation according to the map. Other areas, such as Abergele, Denbigh West and Gronant also have some high rates of deprivation, at around 60%. Around 50% of homes are affected by at least one type of deprivation in St Asaph, Dyserth and Mostyn. Caia Park Community in Wrexham lies within the 10 most deprived areas for the income, education and community safety domains. Other deprived areas include coastal communities across Flintshire such as Deeside, Delyn and Alyn. Comprehensive engagement was conducted in these deprived areas and a full breakdown is provided in full consultation report.

North Wales (14.4%) has the highest proportion of young people (aged 16 to 24) who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), when compared to 13.1% in South Wales who have the lowest³⁸. With intersectionality in mind, 55.8% (26,600) of males aged 16 to 24 years old were NEET, compared to 44.2% (21,100) of females aged 16 to 24. Disabled young people are more likely to be NEET than young people that are not disabled and the proportion of disabled people who are NEET rises from 18.1% at age 16 to 18 to 41.2% at age 19 to 24³⁹.

³⁶ Welsh Government (2022) Analysis of population characteristics by area deprivation (Census 2021), Found at: www.gov.wales/analysis-population-characteristics-area-deprivation-census-2021-html

³⁷ Welsh Government (2021) Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): April 2020 to March 2021. Found at: www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2021/9/2/1632824878/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-neet-april-2020-march-2021.pdf

³⁸ Welsh Government (2023) Participation of young people in education and the labour market: 2021 and 2022 (provisional), Found at: www.gov.wales/participation-young-people-education-and-labour-market-2021-and-2022-provisional-html

³⁹ Welsh Government (2022) Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): April 2020 to March 2021, Found at: www.gov.wales/young-people-not-education-employment-or-training-neet-april-2020-march-2021-html

The employment rate for people aged 16 to 64 in Wales was 73.0% in the year ending March 2023, down 0.6 percentage points on the previous year⁴⁰.

Unemployment rates differ across North Wales with Gwynedd (26.4%), Denbighshire (26.1%), Conwy (24.2%), Anglesey (22.6%) (Wrexham (22.1%) and Flintshire (21.3%)⁴¹.

Employment (or working) does not preclude experiencing poverty and deprivation. Low-paid work is the biggest contributor to in-work poverty as it makes it very difficult to escape poverty, mainly because some people don't get paid enough or there are not many well-paying jobs in a particular area⁴². Pay gaps and in-work poverty affect certain groups much more than others and the risk of in-work poverty is greater for disabled and ethnic minority workers⁴³.

In terms of health, a household is classified as deprived if any person in the household has general health that is bad or very bad or is identified as disabled⁴⁴. A breakdown of disability can be found in the relevant section on page 12, it is worth noting that 21.1% of the North Wales population have a disability and/or long-term health condition⁴⁵. Although, Gwynedd (18.1%) is one of the local authorities with the lowest proportion of disabled people in Wales, the average percentage of disabled people across the region is higher than other parts of the UK. With intersectionality in mind, 22.3% of females and 19.8% of males were disabled. The percentage of those who were limited a little was 11.9% for females and 10.3% for males. A higher proportion of females than males indicated that they were limited a lot; 10.4% and 9.5% respectively⁴⁶.

⁴⁰ Welsh Government (2023) Labour market statistics (Annual Population Survey): April 2022 to March 2023. Found at: www.gov.wales/labour-market-statistics-annual-population-survey-april-2022-march-2023.html

⁴¹ Welsh Government (2023) Labour market statistics (Annual Population Survey): April 2022 to March 2023. Found at: www.gov.wales/labour-market-statistics-annual-population-survey-april-2022-march-2023.html

⁴² Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2020) UK Poverty Report 2019/20. Found at: www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2019-20

⁴³ Welsh Government (2019) Most children in poverty living in working households. Found at: www.gov.wales/most-children-poverty-living-working-households-new-report

⁴⁴ Office of National Statistics (2021) Household deprivation variable: Census 2021, Found at: www.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/demographyvariables/census2021/householddeprivation#:~:text=A%20household%20is%20classified%20as%20deprived%20in%20the%20health%20dimension,or%20illnesses%20are%20considered%20disabled

⁴⁵ Welsh Government (2023) Health disability and provision unpaid care Wales Census 2021, Found at: www.gov.wales/health-disability-and-provision-unpaid-care-wales-census-2021.html

⁴⁶ Office of National Statistics (2021) Disability by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census 2021, Found at:

With intersectionality in mind, there is a direct link between the cost-of-living crisis and health with 60% of people in Wales saying that their health has worsened due to rising costs⁴⁷.

Life expectancy is an important consideration when exploring living standards and health. In Wales, life expectancy at birth was 82 years for women and 78 years for men for 2018-20⁴⁸. This was a slight reduction for both males and females, following higher death rates in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Healthy life expectancy was 62 years for females and 61 years for males in 2018 to 2020.

Welsh Government statistics⁴⁹ suggest the highest life expectancy for women in North Wales was 83.1 years in Conwy and Gwynedd, while in men it was Gwynedd (79.5). The lowest life expectancy for women in North Wales was in Denbighshire (81.1) and in men it was Denbighshire and Wrexham (78.3).

Pre-consultation Engagement Activity

A key element of the consultation process is that of pre-consultation. This included focus groups with a range of stakeholders including blue light partners, community groups, local authorities, staff and representative bodies. The purpose of pre-consultation was to gain a wider insight and understanding to inform the decision making and to shape the full consultation.

During pre-consultation a variety of different scenarios were explored through a series of workshops, seminars and focus groups, during which insights and feedback from a wide range of people were gathered to inform the Authority decision making process.

Key themes arising from this engagement included:

- Finance – Understanding the budgetary pressures.

www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/disability/articles/disabilitybyagesexanddeprivationenglandandwales/census2021

⁴⁷ National Health Service (2022) 60 per cent of people in Wales say their health has worsened due to rising cost of living. Found at: www.nhsconfed.org/news/60-cent-people-wales-say-their-health-has-worsened-due-rising-cost-living

⁴⁸ Welsh Government (2022c) Wellbeing of Wales, 2022. Found at: www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-

[html#:~:text=Life%20expectancy%20at%20birth%20was,males%20in%202018%20to%202020](https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-)

⁴⁹ Welsh Government (2022c) Wellbeing of Wales, 2022. Found at: www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-

[html#:~:text=Life%20expectancy%20at%20birth%20was,males%20in%202018%20to%202020](https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2022-healthier-wales-)

- Future risks – Climate change and new technology may place more demand on resources.
- Prevention and protection – how will our engagement with the public and businesses be affected.
- Communication - Key to aid understanding of the challenges faced and impacts of any proposals.

During the pre-consultation phase, various equality interest groups were approached to participate in the consultation. Twenty-eight established groups can be broadly described as local equality charities, community groups, equality advisory groups, support groups and faith-based organisations from across North Wales.

As part of the pre-consultation, engagement methodology included focus groups which were conducted online and in person, while some groups wished to communicate initially via email and telephone. The range of communication methods used has widened access and feedback was captured. This feedback reinforced and informed the methodology the Service adopted to engage and communicate with different stakeholders during the full consultation. The feedback from the equality interest groups during the pre-consultation was extremely valuable, especially their views concerning fire prevention and protection activity which highlighted the need to include information that related to all three options.

In summary, pre-consultation feedback from equality interest groups themed mostly around prevention activity and the Service's capacity to attend community events, deliver Safe and Well Checks and provide fire safety advice in the future. Therefore, the three options have been developed to have some focus on prevention activity and the literature provided highlights the potential impact on presentation activity. Two options will add value in terms of capacity to deliver prevention work in the local community. This engagement enabled the Service to explain how most prevention activity is delivered by prevention staff, but operational teams do add value. No other concerns were raised during the pre-consultation phase.

The Service concluded its pre-consultation activities with the guidance and support from the Consultation Institute in June, to ensure consultation readiness in time for a full consultation process.

A pre-consultation summary report based on the Regional and EDI focus groups was produced and published as part of the 'How the options were developed' section of the consultation information found [here](#).

Engagement and Consultation with Specific Equality Groups

A series of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion focus groups were held as part of the consultation where members of the team attended sessions to present and discuss the consultation and to gather feedback; this helped to ensure that all members of the community had the opportunity to share their views based on the options presented within the ECR.

A total of 17 focus groups were organised in partnership with equality interest groups, charities, faith-based organisations, places of worship and educational institutions. The number of attendees is detailed in the table found within section 4.2 [here](#).

Those attending sessions represented a range of community members, with those who may otherwise find accessing the consultation difficult encouraged to take part without support. Consultation questionnaires were completed during sessions, with other attendees choosing to take the questionnaire / information away to complete following the session. Focus groups at local universities, colleges and at local youth groups helped to capture the views of young people and those from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

A specific question was developed within the consultation questionnaire to support the understanding of the impact of the ECR in relation to its equality impact.

Namely: Are there any other equality issues that we could be thinking about?

The Equality Impacts collated as part of the consultation can be found in section 3.2.3 of the consultation report, which can be found [here](#).

Midway through the consultation, it was identified that not many people aged 25 and under were engaging in the consultation sessions or completing the online questionnaire. As a result, focus groups were arranged at various youth groups and colleges in Wrexham and Flintshire, although it can be acknowledged that some students live in Denbighshire. University freshers' fairs were also used to engage with youths and young adults.

The Service received feedback from a group of older people that were unable to attend the public engagement event in Conwy and unable to access the online questionnaire. To widen access, the Service organised a specific focus group in partnership with the 'Brew and Biscuit' Group in Llandudno Junction.

During the Emergency Cover Review consultation, focus groups were organised with operational staff at various locations based on request. The feedback provided has been included in the Equality Impact Assessment which identifies and assesses the potential risk of discrimination and disadvantage to firefighters because of the proposed changes. Although over 50 staff attended the internal focus groups, only 37 wholetime firefighters provided feedback.

The Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer attended four focus group sessions organised by firefighters at Deeside, Rhyl (x 2) and Wrexham. Notes were taken by a Women in the Fire Service representative at one of the Rhyl sessions, but staff were asked to email their individual concerns at the other focus groups. This approach helped ensure the EDI Officer could focus on what was being said and feedback provided by firefighters was not misunderstood.

This staff engagement is summarised below:

Fire Station Location	Female	Male	Total
Deeside	2	8	10
Holyhead	0	1	1
Llandudno	0	1	1
Rhyl	7	9	16
Undisclosed	1	2	3
Wrexham	1	5	6
Total	11	26	37

As a public body, North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority has a duty to pay due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty to consider the impact of its decisions on people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, as well as the Human Rights Act 1998 and Welsh Language Standards 2011. Optional questions were therefore included in the consultation questionnaire. Approximately one in five (20%) respondents chose not to provide equality monitoring information.

The full equality monitoring information collated during the consultation can be found in section 3.1.4 of the Consultation Report which can be found [here](#).

Summary of Engagement and Consultation

As part of the ECR, NWFRA administered a public consultation to gather feedback about the future of how they provide emergency cover services in North Wales.

The consultation mandate invited those who live, work and travel in the region to share their views on what risks concern them most, what decision-making criteria are important to them, and how they felt the options presented meet the needs of their communities.

The formal consultation ran from 21 July to 30 September 2023. The original closing date of the consultation was extended from 22 September to 30 September following feedback and requests from stakeholders and the public.

The consultation survey was available online (via the [Your Voice consultation hub](#)) and in paper copies as required with a Freepost address for replies along with easy-read and bilingual versions. The full consultation documents can be found [here](#).

A series of 17 in-person and on-line community engagement events were held across the area between 15 August 2023 and 14 September 2023 giving the public the opportunity to learn more about the Emergency Cover Review and to ask questions that informed their ability to respond and provide feedback in via the consultation questionnaire.

Representatives from NWFRS also attended several community events and summer shows during the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation.

A series of focus groups with people across different equality interest groups were delivered. An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of an initial stakeholder mapping exercise during pre-consultation phase, it can be found [here](#) attached as Appendix 2.

Workforce Equality Analysis

Consultation with members of staff was carried out through a programme of visits by senior managers and principal officers to fire stations, at seminars held for middle managers and supervisory managers, and via fire station watch briefings by station support officers and middle managers. Internal communication channels were also used to help raise regular awareness of the consultation amongst staff, including the Chief Fire Officer's Update in the Weekly Brief and a dedicated section on the Service's intranet.

Engagement with staff representative bodies was carried out via the Joint Consultative Forum, while Frequently Asked Questions were collated from

station visits; these were developed and updated throughout the consultation period and made available via the Service's intranet.

Stakeholder mapping analysis was undertaken to ensure that all those with an interest or who might be affected were engaged in the consultation.

A database of stakeholders and contacts was established, and a bilingual e-mail sent from the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Chair to all contacts on the day of the consultation launch. This database included members of the Senedd, members of Parliament, member liaison officers for local authorities, town council clerks, members of the Local Resilience Forum, senior officers from partner organisations, contacts from the three partnership managers and contacts from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Members of the public who had requested to join the database to be kept informed about any consultations were also included. A further e-mail was forwarded to contacts to inform them that the consultation deadline had been extended.

Printed copies of the ECR consultation leaflets, booklets and questionnaires were distributed by the local partnership managers at various community venues and locations. Flyers were also left at every house that had a Safe and Well Check during the consultation period.

The full consultation ran from 21 July to 30 September 2023, and the consultation survey received a total of 1,726 responses (1,500 online and 226 paper-based).

191 responses were received from employees of North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

More than 400 people attended community engagement events and more than 480 attended Equality, Diversity and Inclusion focus groups or engaged with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer as part of the consultation.

A total of 119 enquiries and / or objections to the ECR were received during the consultation period, with the majority of these in the form of e-mails. Smaller numbers were received as letters, telephone calls and face-to-face enquiries.

Enquiries / objections included responses from members of the Senedd, members of Parliament, party candidates, local authorities, town councils, councillors, government representatives and representative bodies. Five petitions were also received during the consultation period.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service responded and reacted to feedback throughout the consultation period.

A final summary report was compiled by an independent research consultant. This report was presented to the Full Fire and Rescue Authority on the 16 October 2023, it can be found [here](#).

Summary of the Findings of the Equality Impact Analysis

Comprehensive feedback captured during the consultation period enabled the Service to identify and assess the potential impacts to external and internal stakeholders.

This section summarises the multiple equality themes that emerged and the various measures the Service will implement to mitigate the impact on people, but more importantly, to eliminate discrimination.

Sub sections have been used to provide some commentary of each protected characteristic and other equality related themes which link to the Welsh language, socio-economic status and geographical location.

Age

External Stakeholders

Population aging: With a significant portion of North Wales' population aged 65 and over, concerns were raised during the consultation about the potential impact of changes on older individuals, particularly in areas where slower emergency response times might affect their safety.

Disability and age: The report highlighted an increasing prevalence of disability in different age groups, which could affect emergency response needs and the ability of certain individuals to escape during emergencies, such as fires.

Engagement challenges: There were difficulties engaging younger demographics (25 and under) in the consultation process. Efforts were made to increase participation among youth and young adults, including organising focus groups at various youth groups and colleges.

Language and cultural barriers: Concerns were raised about older members of the Muslim community facing risks due to limited mobility, language barriers, and cultural practices affecting fire safety measures. The proposal suggests providing fire safety interventions and support tailored to this community.

Infrastructure and access concerns: Issues were raised regarding access for emergency services in areas with older buildings, narrow access, and limited

parking. Additionally, concerns about speed restrictions impacting emergency response times were highlighted.

Mitigation Efforts for External Stakeholders

Engagement strategies: The Service made efforts to engage underrepresented groups, including older individuals and youths, through focus groups, public events, and collaborations with community organisations.

Tailored interventions: Specific actions were proposed to address identified risks, such as offering Safe and Well Checks, organising group visits, and promoting awareness campaigns regarding parking and access issues.

Residual Risks

Some concerns around slower emergency response times for certain demographics, despite attempts to address these through policy clarifications and engagement strategies, may persist.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Travel and fatigue concerns: Firefighters expressed worries about increased travel times impacting fatigue, especially for older firefighters commuting longer distances, potentially affecting their wellbeing.

Intersectionality: There were concerns regarding the impact of longer travel distances on female firefighters experiencing extreme menopause symptoms.

Mitigation Efforts for Internal Stakeholders

Work location flexibility: Efforts will be made to accommodate firefighters' preferred work locations, although this cannot be guaranteed for everyone.

Support for specific needs: Policies and support mechanisms are in place, including disability coverage and the recent development of a new menopause policy, to address specific concerns and provide necessary support.

Residual Risks

Overall, the EqIA highlights various efforts made to address concerns and mitigate risks for both external stakeholders and internal firefighters. However, some residual risks, particularly related to slower emergency response times impacting specific demographics and individual concerns of firefighters, may persist.

Disability

External Stakeholders

Population with disabilities: A significant portion of the North Wales population has disabilities or long-term health conditions, as highlighted by the latest Census data.

Comprehensive feedback was gathered through public engagement events and equality focus groups organised with various partner organisations.

Concerns raised: During the consultation, concerns were expressed about the ageing population, vulnerability to falls, and difficulties in escaping fires, particularly for individuals with limited mobility or health conditions. Access issues and the impact of the new 20mph speed limit were also highlighted, especially in specific areas like Conwy, Deeside, Holywell, and Wrexham.

Engagement with specific groups: Representatives from Autistic UK sought clarification on how the Service interacts with autistic and disabled individuals, emphasising the need for better engagement and understanding.

Mitigation Efforts for External Stakeholders

Engagement and awareness: The Service made significant efforts to engage with and capture feedback from individuals with disabilities or long-term health conditions through various events and partnerships.

Training and support: Assurance was given that the Service's prevention team sought to connect with representative stakeholder groups within North Wales and plans were outlined to ensure staff receive Autism Awareness training to improve interactions and support for neurodiverse individuals.

Residual Risks

Challenges related to access issues, especially in specific areas with narrow streets, concerns regarding falls and the vulnerability of ageing populations, and potential difficulties in catering to specific needs during emergencies for individuals with disabilities or health conditions, may persist despite engagement efforts.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Concerns raised: Firefighters expressed concerns about potential adverse impacts on their physical and mental health due to increased travel distances across North Wales. There were worries about boredom, poor posture, and fatigue resulting from longer shifts and distances.

Impact on female firefighters: There were concerns that longer travel distances would disproportionately affect female firefighters, especially those

experiencing extreme menopause symptoms, potentially impacting their performance, concentration, and overall wellbeing.

Specific circumstances and caring responsibilities: Some firefighters disclosed caring responsibilities for family members with chronic conditions or disabilities. Concerns were raised about potential relocation impacting their ability to provide care and support.

Mitigation Efforts for Internal Stakeholders

Health and wellbeing support: Efforts were made to provide advice on safe driving habits to mitigate physical health concerns related to longer travel distances. Additionally, plans for accommodating requests regarding work locations and providing reasonable adjustments were outlined.

Consideration for caring responsibilities: The Service aims to consider and accommodate the specific needs of firefighters with caring responsibilities during any relocation process, ensuring no discrimination or adverse impacts due to their circumstances.

Residual Risks

Despite efforts to accommodate preferences and provide support, challenges related to the impact of longer travel distances on firefighters' health and wellbeing, especially for female firefighters experiencing menopause symptoms, and potential difficulties in accommodating caring responsibilities, might persist.

The EqIA report emphasises the importance of addressing these concerns for both external stakeholders with disabilities or health conditions and internal stakeholders, particularly firefighters, by ensuring engagement, support, and accommodation wherever possible.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

External Stakeholders

Mental health and wellbeing: The report acknowledges that mental health and wellbeing concerns, encompassing low mood, stress, anxiety, and depression, were prevalent among the public. Comprehensive engagement efforts were made to capture these impacts on both the public and the Service's workforce.

Public feedback and priorities: The consultation revealed concerns about workforce wellbeing, emphasising the importance of an efficient and well-trained workforce, maintaining work-life balance, and addressing potential impacts on staff and their families. Option 1 was perceived as providing the best fire cover by 68% of respondents, with concerns raised about job insecurity and adverse impacts on mental health linked to other options.

Mitigation Efforts for External Stakeholders

Engagement and public views: Efforts were made to capture and address public concerns regarding workforce wellbeing, job security, and the impact of proposed options, especially regarding mental health. Option 1 was favoured for its perceived protection of firefighter jobs.

Understanding Public Perception: While the public perceived Option 1 as having minimal adverse impacts, it was noted that further consultation with staff indicated potentially greater impacts, especially on mental health.

Residual Risks for External Stakeholders

Despite public favour towards Option 1, there was a concern that while the public perceived minimal adverse effects, the actual impacts on Service staff could be more substantial.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Mental and physical health concerns: Firefighters expressed anxiety over increased travel time impacting their physical and mental health. Adverse mental health effects resulting from uncertainty and potential changes in duty systems or workplace locations were prevalent.

Support and communication: The Service recognises and will address these mental health concerns by providing support mechanisms and communicating with affected firefighters.

Impact on social life and mental health: Firefighters voiced concerns about potential changes impacting their social lives, leading to compromised mental health. The importance of managing individual circumstances during the redeployment process was highlighted to minimise negative impacts.

Mitigation Efforts for Internal Stakeholders

Addressing concerns: Efforts will be made to mitigate risks by allowing firefighters to express their preferred work locations and individual situations during any relocation process. Support mechanisms and relevant advice will be provided to help manage stress, fatigue, and physical strain due to increased travel time.

Residual Risks for Internal Stakeholders

Despite efforts to address concerns and provide support, potential residual risks remain regarding the adverse impact of increased travel time on firefighters' physical health, mental health, and social lives due to changes in duty systems or workplace locations.

The EqIA report underlines the importance of understanding and addressing mental health concerns for both external stakeholders, such as the public,

and internal stakeholders, specifically firefighters, while implementing changes and conducting consultations.

Gender

External Stakeholders

Engagement and gender groups: The Service engaged various gender-based organisations to connect with specific gender groups and gathered feedback.

Concerns were raised regarding potential duty system changes affecting women, especially primary carers and parents. Gender imbalances in carer roles were noted, raising issues related to childcare responsibilities and socio-economic status.

Likelihood and impact: Concerns around the impact of duty system changes on women's participation and carer responsibilities were expressed. The likelihood of such impacts was rated moderately, with an overall impact score indicating significant concern.

Mitigation Efforts for External Stakeholders

Further research and surveys: This includes plans for public perception surveys across different age groups to explore concerns further and gather evidence and utilising recent staff surveys to inform decisions concerning women and parenting responsibilities.

Understanding Intersectionality: Acknowledgment of intersectional concerns such as the impact on individuals living alone, is covered in various sections of this report (I.e. Age).

Residual Risks for External Stakeholders

Gender impact concerns: Despite planned surveys and use of staff feedback, there is a risk of overlooking specific concerns, especially those affecting women as primary carers, during potential duty system changes.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Parenting concerns: Feedback highlighted concerns among male and female firefighters regarding their roles as primary carer. The potential impact of duty system or location changes on parenting responsibilities, childcare costs, and family routines were emphasised.

Pregnancy and maternity: Firefighters expressed concerns that changes could hinder recruitment and retention of young parents, especially women, due to work-life balance issues, travel times, and childcare costs.

Mitigation Efforts for Internal Stakeholders

Accommodating individual needs: This includes plans to allow firefighters to express their preferences during any relocation, which will consider their individual circumstances, equality needs and preferences, especially for pregnant staff or those returning from maternity leave.

Addressing recruitment concerns: Efforts to mitigate concerns about potential female firefighters leaving by considering individual needs, preferences, and providing support for maternity-related issues.

Residual Risks for Internal Stakeholders

Recruitment and retention challenges: Despite efforts to accommodate preferences and support pregnant staff, there's a residual risk of hindering recruitment and retaining female firefighters due to potential work-life balance challenges and childcare issues.

The EqIA report identifies significant concerns regarding gender-specific impacts, especially related to caring responsibilities, parenting, and recruitment challenges. It emphasises the importance of considering individual needs and preferences while implementing any changes in duty systems or locations to mitigate adverse impacts on both internal and external stakeholders.

Pregnancy and Maternity

External Stakeholders

Engagement with pregnant individuals and those on maternity leave revealed no specific equality issues related to pregnancy or maternity. Collaborations with organisations like North Wales Women's Centre, North Wales Pride, and universities facilitated connections with the target audience. Some students expressed interest in the duty system of Options but raised concerns about flexibility, particularly for individuals with new babies.

Mitigation for External Stakeholders

Organic engagement: The Service's approach was aimed at comprehensive engagement without specifically targeting individuals based on pregnancy and maternity, ensuring diverse perspectives were captured.

Residual Risk for External Stakeholders

Potential unidentified concerns: While no explicit concerns arose, there remains a residual risk of unexplored issues related to marriage or civil partnerships that might not have been voiced during the consultation.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Future impact: Firefighters without children but aspiring for families expressed concerns about potential relocation to new stations affecting recruitment and retention.

Recruitment challenges: Concerns arose concerning the impact of all three options on recruiting young parents, particularly women, due to work-life balance, increased travel, and childcare costs.

Mitigation for internal stakeholders

Individual consideration: Measures proposed include allowing input in workplace preferences during any relocation and considering individual needs during the process, especially for pregnant individuals and those returning from maternity leave

Residual Risks for Internal Stakeholders:

Despite mitigation measures, potential challenges remain in retaining and recruiting young parents, particularly women, due to perceived work-life balance issues, travel constraints, and childcare costs. Balancing the Service's needs with individual needs could pose an ongoing challenge.

Gender Reassignment / Identity

External Stakeholders (Transgender and/or Non-Binary Individuals)

Engagement and themes: Engagement with transgender and non-binary communities provided comprehensive feedback, highlighting concerns about potential barriers. Unique Transgender Network expressed interest in prevention work and engagement with the fire service. Concerns were raised about potential station closures, duty system changes, and impact on the Service's involvement in community events like Pride.

Mitigation Efforts for External Stakeholders

Clarification on Service activities: The Service clarified its non-operational departments' roles in community engagement, emphasising that proposed changes could enhance community outreach in key locations.

Residual Risks for External Stakeholders

Perception concerns: Despite explanations, there is a residual risk that perceptions of reduced staff or station closures might impact the Service's ability to engage with the transgender and wider community.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Engagement with internal groups: The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer consulted with the FirePride LGBTQ+ Staff Network during the pre-consultation, and no concerns specifically relating to transgender and/or non-binary individuals were raised during internal focus groups.

Since no direct concerns emerged in internal focus groups, the risk related to transgender and/or non-binary individuals is deemed low internally.

Overall, the report suggests that concerns from external transgender and non-binary stakeholders primarily revolve around potential impacts of station closures and changes in service provision. The Service aims to mitigate these concerns by emphasising the broader outreach capability in strategic locations. Internally, the lack of specific concerns from staff groups indicates a lower risk concerning transgender and/or non-binary issues within the Service. However, there might still be residual risks in managing external stakeholders' perceptions regarding the Service's community engagement capabilities.

Sexual Orientation

External Stakeholders (LGB+ Community)

Engagement and profile: Engagement with the LGB+ community involved partnerships with LGBTQ+ charities, support groups, and pride events, aiming to capture comprehensive feedback. A considerable percentage (10%) of respondents identified as LGB+. The consultation feedback suggested Option 1 was preferred, with opposition toward Options 2 and 3.

Overall perception: The wider LGBTQ+ community did not express concerns regarding direct or indirect impacts from proposed changes. The views of the LGB+ community regarding the options were aligned with those identifying as heterosexual or straight.

Mitigation for External Stakeholders

Comprehensive representation: The feedback gathered from the LGB+ community during the consultation was deemed comprehensive and representative.

Residual Risks for External Stakeholders

Potential disparities in impact perception: While no direct concerns were raised, there might be residual risks in misalignment between perceived impacts of the options within the LGB+ community.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

ED&I engagement: The EDI Officer collaborated with the FirePride LGBTQ+ Staff Network before the consultation without identifying any specific concerns. However, during the main consultation, internal focus groups revealed certain concerns related to parenting, childcare, and caring responsibilities within same-sex relationships.

Challenges highlighted: Discussions in internal focus groups unveiled potential challenges faced by individuals in same-sex relationships concerning parenting processes like IVF and adoption. Firefighters emphasised the additional hurdles LGB+ individuals might face during adoption or IVF processes, highlighting concerns about potential relocation's impact on their support networks and access to childcare provision.

Mitigation for Internal Stakeholders

Individual consideration: The Service aims to consider individual needs during any potential workplace relocations to alleviate risks and minimise impacts, acknowledging the importance of accommodating diverse family structures and support needs.

Residual Risks for Internal Stakeholders

The report underscores the need for personalised consideration in potential workplace relocations, especially for individuals in same-sex relationships, to address their unique challenges and support networks. Residual risks persist in ensuring stress reduction and accommodating diverse support needs amidst any potential change.

Marriage or Civil Partnership

Although marriage and civil partnership is not covered within the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Service still wanted to show due regard for this protected characteristic based on fact that people that are in a relationship or 'single' may be placed at a disadvantage as a result of the proposed changes.

External Stakeholders

Engagement and identified risks: Around 48.1% of individuals aged 16 and over are married or in civil partnerships⁵⁰. The Service anticipated organic engagement during the pre-consultation and felt confident in capturing comprehensive feedback. During the consultation, no specific concerns

⁵⁰ Welsh Government (2022) Statistics Wales Demography newsletter: December 2022, Found at: www.gov.wales/statistics-wales-demography-newsletter-december-2022-html#:~:text=In%20Wales%2C%2043.8%25%20of%20all,or%20in%20a%20civil%20partnership

emerged in public sessions or equality focus groups regarding a person's relationship status, indicating a low risk.

Mitigation for External Stakeholders

Organic engagement: The Service's approach was aimed at comprehensive engagement without specifically targeting individuals based on relationship status, ensuring diverse perspectives were captured.

Residual Risks for External Stakeholders

Potential unidentified concerns: While no explicit concerns arose, there remains a residual risk of unexplored issues related to marriage or civil partnerships that might not have been voiced during the consultation.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Intersectionality of concerns: Internal focus groups revealed concerns among firefighters that directly or indirectly impacted their partners or ex-partners regarding childcare and relationship status. This section of the report explores how the proposed changes might affect individuals' relationship statuses, intersecting with other protected characteristics.

Gender and parenting impact: Female firefighters, often primary carer, might face a greater impact from proposed changes, especially if they are single parents, aligning with national statistics indicating a higher percentage of single-parent households among females.

Intersection with sexual orientation: Data suggests a higher likelihood of being single among individuals identifying as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual. Such insights enable a deeper understanding of how relationship statuses vary among different groups, potentially affecting financial situations.

Mitigation for Internal Stakeholders

Individual consideration: Acknowledging the intersectionality of relationship status with other protected characteristics, the Service aims to consider individual needs during any relocation process, encouraging transparency about relationship status to inform decision-making and mitigate potential impacts.

Residual Risks for Internal Stakeholders

Incomplete understanding: Despite insights into relationship statuses, there's a residual risk of overlooking specific challenges or impacts related to marriage or singlehood, especially regarding financial considerations, which will be explored in more detail in the socio-economic status section. The Service must remain open to ongoing dialogue to capture any unaddressed concerns.

Religion and/or Belief

External Stakeholders

Religious diversity: North Wales exhibits diverse religious affiliations, with Christianity being the largest (46.3%), followed by smaller groups like Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jewish, Pagan, Spiritualist, and others. Nearly half the population (46.5%) report no religious affiliation, making places of worship ideal for engagement.

Engagement strategies: The Service extensively promoted the consultation within religious groups, faith-based organisations, and places of worship, connecting with various communities. The engagement aimed to gather feedback and promote fire safety messages.

Identified Risks and Mitigation

Reduced fire cover concerns: Some feedback expressed worries about reduced fire cover, especially in areas with higher concentrations of religious communities. Engagement efforts aimed to address these concerns by explaining dedicated fire safety teams and arranging visits to promote services.

Wrexham Islamic Centre concerns: Specific concerns from this group highlighted the potential impact of relocating Wrexham's third fire appliance on non-emergency work, emphasising the importance of prevention activity and community engagement. The Service intends to connect with such organisations to ensure continued support.

Residual Risks for External Stakeholders

Addressing engagement concerns: Despite efforts, there may still be unaddressed worries or feedback regarding the Service's engagement with religious communities and its impact on fire safety messages and services.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Pre-Consultation and main consultation findings: The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Officer collaborated with the Religion, Ethnicity, and Cultural Heritage (REACH) Staff Network in the pre-consultation phase. During the main consultation, no direct concerns relating to religion emerged among internal stakeholders, indicating a low risk.

Residual Risks for Internal Stakeholders

Potential unvoiced concerns: Despite no reported concerns, there might be undisclosed issues or worries among internal stakeholders regarding religious aspects that have not been vocalised during the consultation.

Race

External Stakeholders (Ethnic Diversity, Language, and Culture)

Ethnic diversity: North Wales has witnessed an increase in ethnic minority groups, rising from 4.4% in 2011 to 6.2% in 2021. The largest group was "Other White," with varying ethnicities across local authorities. Additionally, households with multiple ethnicities increased to 5.3% from 4.2% in 2011.

Language and culture: Language and cultural barriers were identified as potential challenges. Efforts were made to engage diverse communities, arranging translations, and providing information in various formats and languages, ensuring accessibility.

Risks Identified and Mitigation

Language barriers: Concerns about language barriers and communication gaps were raised, especially in non-English-speaking communities. Mitigation included translation services, creating materials in various languages, in easy read formats and arranging focus groups for feedback.

Community engagement: Feedback highlighted worries about reduced firefighter presence impacting community work, particularly in conducting Safe and Well Checks. The Service clarified its non-operational task teams' roles and commitment to community engagement regardless of the number of fire appliances.

Elderly community risks: Concerns about elder members of the Muslim community, particularly those without English or Welsh as their first language, were raised. The Service aims to recruit staff from diverse backgrounds that represent the communities they serve. Communications from the Service will be provided multilingually, with co-ordination between prevention and corporate communications teams to ensure messaging reaches the heart of our diverse communities.

Internal Stakeholders (Firefighters)

Consultation findings: No direct concerns about race, ethnicity, or nationality were reported during the main consultation. While the current risk is considered low, ongoing consideration of cultural practices is essential, particularly regarding caring responsibilities for elders among certain ethnic groups.

Residual Risks for Internal Stakeholders

Policy and cultural considerations: Existing policies handle considerations related to duty systems and workplace location for firefighters, yet ongoing attention to cultural practices remains crucial. Some cultural nuances in

caring responsibilities may need further attention and consideration within the organisation.

Socio Economic Duty

This duty, effective from 31 March 2021 requires public bodies in Wales to consider reducing inequalities linked to socio-economic disadvantage. The Service has used a comprehensive approach to analyse socio-economic aspects like education, employment, health, living standards, justice, and participation within North Wales.

External Stakeholders

Regional profile: The diverse landscape and population of 687,000 in North Wales covers six counties. Deprivation in areas like Rhyl, Kinmel Bay, and others was highlighted, prompting extensive engagement in these deprived localities.

Barriers to engagement: Efforts were made to engage those facing barriers to participation, considering internet access, transport, and financial constraints. Multiple methods like public events, online sessions, and printed questionnaires were used to widen accessibility. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer attended various equality groups as a way of ensuring people that wouldn't usually access the public engagement events could have a voice and provide feedback.

Education and employment: Feedback did not surface specific equality themes but revealed disparities in Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) rates, employment, and in-work poverty across different demographics. Option 1 received considerable support from respondents.

Health and living standards: While generic feedback emerged, specific equality issues were limited. Concerns over the cost-of-living crisis impacting health were noted and older people, especially those with a disability being less able to escape an emergency situation.

Internal Stakeholders

Socio-Economic Disadvantage: Internal focus groups highlighted potential increased costs affecting firefighters, including travel, childcare, caring responsibilities, and pet welfare. Proposed mitigation strategies include absorbing any relocation-related expenses and considering individual circumstances during potential relocation.

Mitigation and Remaining Risks

Individual Consideration: Strategies include absorbing additional costs for any potential relocated employees, considering childcare and caring

responsibilities, and enabling employees to explain individual needs during relocations.

Residual risks: Despite proposed mitigation efforts, potential financial disadvantages to firefighters due to increased costs post-relocation remain, necessitating ongoing consideration and individualised assessments.

Overall, the Service has employed a multifaceted approach to engage external stakeholders, identify inequalities, and mitigate risks. However, residual risks related to potential financial disadvantages for firefighters' post-relocation persist, requiring continued attention and individualised support.

Welsh Language

External Stakeholders

Language consideration: The Emergency Cover Review has been communicated in Welsh and English, ensuring information accessibility. The Welsh language's growing popularity is noted, especially in areas like Gwynedd and Anglesey.

Impact on Welsh speakers: Option 3, involving closure of on-call or RDS fire stations, could affect areas with high Welsh-speaking populations like Cerrigydrudion, Llanberis, Abersoch, and Beaumaris. This may hinder public interactions in Welsh and impact employment opportunities for Welsh speakers in rural areas.

Welsh 'Heartlands': Fire stations like Conwy, despite not being immediate Welsh 'Heartlands', serve as bilingual employment hubs and are significant in areas sensitive to language decline.

Mitigation and Positive Impact

Relocation of staff: Creating day staffed stations in Welsh 'Heartlands' could positively influence Welsh language engagement and perception of the Service as bilingual.

Public perception: Retaining existing Welsh-speaking firefighters under Option 1 is viewed positively by 68% of respondents and supports the Welsh language within the Service.

Internal Stakeholders

Staff responses: Internal comments revolve around employment diversity and the Welsh language. There is a spectrum of opinions regarding the necessity of Welsh proficiency, with some seeing it as vital for recruitment and others viewing it as limiting.

Service commitment: While balancing skills and language requirements for roles, the Service is committed to meeting Welsh Language Standards to ensure equitable access to services in Welsh and English.

Mitigation and Residual Risk

Mitigation efforts: During potential relocation of staff, retaining Welsh-speaking firefighters under Option 1 would aim to support the Welsh language within the Service.

Residual risks: The varying opinions among staff regarding Welsh language requirements may pose ongoing challenges in recruitment and diversity, potentially impacting the Service's linguistic capabilities. The closure of stations in Welsh-speaking areas under Option 3 might negatively affect both public interaction and Welsh-speaking employment opportunities.

Mitigating Potential Adverse Impacts on Equality

Various potential risks have been highlighted within the EIA and how the Service will mitigate this risk has been explained in most parts. However, at an individual level, some risks associated with firefighters that could potentially work a different duty system or be relocated to another place of work are still unknown.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Officer organised internal focus groups which saw various potential risks emerge and the Service has explained how they mitigate these potential risks. The preferencing exercise which will be conducted as part of the potential relocation of firefighters will help identify further risks where mitigation can be considered and implemented where possible.

Creating an implementation team to comprehensively address potential equality impacts is crucial for the success of the ECR. This team will comprise diverse expertise from within NWFRS. Its primary objective will be to rigorously evaluate and strategise ways to mitigate any adverse impacts on firefighters and their families because of any proposed changes.

The team's composition will include representatives from various departments and roles within the Service, ensuring a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. It will involve individuals with expertise in equality and diversity, operational management, community engagement, human resources, and any other relevant stakeholders.

This team will ensure that the ECR not only adheres to legal and ethical equality standards but also embodies a commitment to creating a fair and inclusive operational framework.

It should be noted that it is not expected that any other organisations will be involved in addressing potential equality impacts but NWFRS will aim to continue to work collaboratively with other agencies and partners as it already does.

Equality Impact Assessment Summary by Options

As described earlier in this report, (attached as Appendix 3) a full EqIA was completed based on the engagement and consultation with specific equality groups and staff (page 25). As described above, these engagement sessions involved the presentation of all options within the ECR. However, feedback was not received to align to each individual option but was given against the ECR and all options as a whole. There were some observations during these sessions that can be attributed to specific options and these are reflected in the following tables. The risk rating within the following tables supports decision modelling where the intended course of action (Options 1-3) is considered in the context of equality risk, i.e. how likely is the assumed impact upon any protected groups to occur.

Risk Rating	Description
Manageable	The risk may be so low that the Service chooses to accept it and instead simply records that the risk has been identified and that, due to its low likelihood or impact, no further action will be required. Alternatively, minor considerations may be needed upon implementation.
Medium	The EqIA owner will mitigate identified risks through slight amendments or implement further controls that reduce or eliminate the risk. Alternatively, the owner could confirm that all reasonable steps have been taken to mitigate the risk and no further reasonable action is possible.
High	This policy, project or service cannot be rolled out until detailed external and / or internal consultation has taken place with those that this area of work affects.
Very High	High risks have been identified, so take immediate action. If legal action is likely, then the Service cannot go ahead with the policy without fundamentally changing it. If the impact remains severe even with this mitigation, then consultation with internal and / or external groups will have to take place.

Protected Characteristic or Equality Theme	Option1	Option 2	Option 3
Age - External Stakeholders	Some concerns raised that older people being less mobile may be less likely to escape in a developing fire, this emphasised concerns around response times due to shift changes.	Young people at the Wrexham Islamic group were concerned about the impact upon community work and safe and well visits if staff numbers were reduced.	Young people at the Wrexham Islamic group were concerned about the impact upon community work and safe and well visits if staff numbers were reduced.
		Some concerns raised that older people being less mobile may be less likely to escape in a developing fire, this emphasised concerns around response times due to shift changes.	Objections raised to closures of stations due to vulnerable residents living in the areas directly affected.
			Some concerns raised that older people being less mobile may be less likely to escape in a developing fire, this emphasised concerns around response times due to shift changes.
Age - Internal Stakeholders	Some concerns from staff who advise that they have caring responsibility for either a child or an older relative.	Some concerns from staff who advise that they have caring responsibility for either a child or an older relative.	Some concerns from staff who advise that they have caring responsibility for either a child or an older relative.
Disability - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified.	No equality impacts identified.	Objections raised to closures of stations due to vulnerable residents living in the areas directly affected.
Disability - Internal Stakeholders	Concerns raised by a small number of staff that have caring responsibilities for a child with a disability or suspected disability	Concerns raised by a small number of staff that have caring responsibilities for a child with a disability or suspected disability.	Concerns raised by a small number of staff that have caring responsibilities for a child with a disability or suspected disability.

Protected Characteristic or Equality Theme	Option1	Option 2	Option 3
Mental Health and Wellbeing - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	Concerns raised that a reduction in firefighters would impact mental health of staff through 'job insecurity'.	Objections raised to closures of stations due to vulnerable residents living in the areas affected.
			Concerns raised that a reduction in firefighters would impact mental health of staff through 'job insecurity'
Mental Health and Wellbeing - Internal Stakeholders	Concerns raised that changes of shift patterns would impact staff wellbeing.	Concerns raised that changes of shift patterns would impact staff wellbeing.	Concerns raised that changes of shift patterns would impact staff wellbeing.
Gender - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified
Gender - Internal Stakeholders	Concerns were raised that longer travelling distances to work may have a detrimental impact on those experiencing menopause symptoms.	Concerns were raised that longer travelling distances to work may have a detrimental impact on those experiencing menopause symptoms.	Concerns were raised that longer travelling distances to work may have a detrimental impact on those experiencing menopause symptoms.
	Concerns raised about changes to duty systems that would have a greater impact on women (as primary carers/parents)	Concerns raised about changes to duty systems that would have a greater impact on women (as primary carers/parents)	Concerns raised about changes to duty systems that would have a greater impact on women (as primary carers/parents)
	Concerns were raised that all options could impact recruitment of young parents, especially women.	Concerns were raised that all options could impact recruitment of young parents, especially women.	Concerns were raised that all options could impact recruitment of young parents, especially women.
Pregnancy and Maternity - External Stakeholders	Concerns raised about changes to duty systems that would have a greater impact on women (as primary carers/parents)	Concerns raised about changes to duty systems that would have a greater impact on women (as primary carers/parents)	Concerns raised about changes to duty systems that would have a greater impact on women (as primary carers/parents)

Protected Characteristic or Equality Theme	Option1	Option 2	Option 3
Pregnancy and Maternity - Internal Stakeholders	Concerns raised that changes to shift patterns are not family friendly and will impact those who are pregnant or have young families.	Concerns raised that changes to shift patterns are not family friendly and will impact those who are pregnant or have young families.	Concerns raised that changes to shift patterns are not family friendly and will impact those who are pregnant or have young families.
Gender Re-assignment/identity - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified.	No equality impacts identified.
Gender Re-assignment/identity - Internal Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified.	No equality impacts identified.
Sexual Orientation - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	Concerns that reductions in staff numbers could negatively impact the services ability to conduct important prevention work.i.e. attendance at Pride events.	Concerns that reductions in staff numbers could negatively impact the services ability to conduct important prevention work.i.e. attendance at Pride events.
Sexual Orientation - Internal Stakeholders	Concerns raised that any changes to shift systems could make attendance at adoption/IVF appointments challenging.	Concerns raised that any changes to shift systems could make attendance at adoption/IVF appointments challenging.	Concerns raised that any changes to shift systems could make attendance at adoption/IVF appointments challenging.
	Data indicates LGB+ are more likely to be single, or live alone with a potential single income household this may be more impactful in a relocation process.	Data indicates LGB+ are more likely to be single, or live alone with a potential single income household this may be more impactful in a relocation process.	Data indicates LGB+ are more likely to be single, or live alone with a potential single income household this may be more impactful in a relocation process.
Marriage or Civil Partnership - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified

Protected Characteristic or Equality Theme	Option1	Option 2	Option 3
Marriage and Civil Partnership - Internal Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified
Religion and/or Belief - External Stakeholders		Some concerns that reduction in fire cover would come from areas that have higher concentrations of religious people, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds.	Some concerns that reduction in fire cover would come from areas that have higher concentrations of religious people, especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds.
		Concerns that reduction in fire cover would reduce the services capacity to engage in non-emergency work, such as attending community events.	Concerns that reduction in fire cover would reduce the services capacity to engage in non-emergency work, such as attending community events.
Religion and/or Belief - Internal Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified
Race - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified
Race - Internal Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified
Socio Economic Duty - External Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	Objections raised to closures of stations due to vulnerable residents living in the areas affected.
Socio Economic Duty - Internal Stakeholders	Concerns raised that changes to shift systems could see increased costs for staff e.g. travel and childcare.	Concerns raised that changes to shift systems could see increased costs for staff e.g. travel and childcare.	Concerns raised that changes to shift systems could see increased costs for staff e.g. travel and childcare.

Protected Characteristic or Equality Theme	Option1	Option 2	Option 3
Welsh Language - External Stakeholders			Closure of Stations in traditional Welsh speaking areas would be linguistically sensitive, reducing the opportunity to communicate with the Service in Welsh and employment opportunities for Welsh speakers.
Welsh Language - Internal Stakeholders	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified	No equality impacts identified

Conclusion

From an external perspective, the North Wales population continues to grow, people are living longer, more people are living in poverty, hate crime and domestic abuse remains high and there are increasing concerns surrounding mental and physical health. Other considerations, such as people with disabilities, health conditions and living alone, are just some of the factors that impact on people in society and their risks to fire and other emergencies.

The ECR presented three options for enhancing emergency cover across North Wales to enable the Service to be better placed to keep people safe through prevention work and responding effectively to emergency incidents when they occur. The consultation demonstrated overwhelming support for Option 1 (or an adapted version of this) - that will enable the Service to achieve this (see [ECR consultation outcomes report](#)). Emergency response aside, all three options presented benefits in social value and increase the Service's capacity to conduct important prevention activity and engage with the communities it serves.

Across different age groups, concerns were voiced regarding response times and mobility during fire emergencies. Older individuals, seen as potentially less mobile, were particularly highlighted in concerns regarding shift changes impacting their ability to escape developing fires. Similarly, internal stakeholders, particularly staff with caring responsibilities for children or older relatives, expressed worries across all options.

In terms of disability, external stakeholders mostly flagged concerns in Option 3 due to objections against station closures, which could affect vulnerable residents. Internally, a small group of staff with caring responsibilities for children with disabilities expressed concerns across all three options.

Mental health and well-being emerged as a significant theme, especially in Options 2 and 3. External stakeholders voiced worries about reduced firefighter numbers potentially causing job insecurity and impacting staff mental health. Internally, all options raised concerns about changes in shift patterns affecting staff well-being.

Gender-related considerations were noted internally, especially regarding the impact of longer commutes on menopausal symptoms. Recruitment concerns for young parents, particularly women, surfaced across all options among internal stakeholders.

For pregnancy and maternity, external stakeholders expressed concerns across all options about changes impacting pregnant individuals or those with young families. Similarly, internal stakeholders highlighted worries about shift patterns not being family-friendly across the board.

Concerns regarding gender reassignment or identity were not specifically highlighted for either external or internal stakeholders across the options.

In terms of sexual orientation, external stakeholders raised concerns in Options 2 and 3 about reduced staff impacting the service's participation in events like Pride. Internally, challenges were noted in attending adoption/IVF appointments due to changes in shift systems across all options.

Marriage or civil partnership considerations did not emerge as significant concerns for either external or internal stakeholders across the three options.

Religious implications were highlighted by external stakeholders, expressing concerns about reduced fire cover in areas with higher religious concentrations. Internally, no specific impacts were identified across all options.

Race-related considerations were not explicitly raised by either external or internal stakeholders across the options.

For socio-economic duty, both external and internal stakeholders expressed concerns about increased costs for staff (e.g., travel, childcare) across all three options.

Regarding the Welsh language, external stakeholders were concerned about station closures impacting Welsh-speaking areas, reducing opportunities for Welsh communication and employment.

The Service sees its people as its biggest asset and any potential impacts will be mitigated wherever possible. Various potential impacts have emerged which focus on increased costs that are associated with the proposed changes to duty systems and/or change of workplace location. These costs relate to fuel, wear and tear on firefighter's personal vehicle and childcare. Other issues relate to work/life balance, potential restricted ability to manage childcare arrangement with partners and family members and welfare of family pets. The Service will show due regard to all risks that have been identified during the consultation and any additional risks that may emerge during preferencing exercise and individual meetings that occur as part of the relocation of firefighters.

Specific detail regarding identified risks and mitigation can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment (Consultation and Decision-making Phase), Appendix 3.

Appendix 1

North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority Emergency Cover Review (ECR) Consultation and Engagement Communications Strategy

A comprehensive communications strategy was produced to support the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's public consultation as part of the Emergency Cover Review.

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service worked with the Consultation Institute, an independent, not-for-profit, best practice advisory body throughout to ensure that the public consultation was delivered to the required standards.

Best practice included conducting a detailed stakeholder mapping exercise and risk profiling workshop prior to beginning any consultation.

Constructive engagement was fostered with communities and key stakeholders across North Wales, including staff and their representative bodies, local politicians and council leaders, community groups, local authorities and other emergency services.

The consultation mandate invited those who live, work and travel in North Wales to share their views on what risks concern them most, what decision-

making criteria are important to them, and how they felt the options presented meet the needs of their communities.

To help develop future options, as a pre-consultation exercise, Staff from NWFRS worked with staff and representative bodies, members of the public, council representatives, local vulnerable groups and members of their Fire and Rescue Authority to understand what really matters should they, or someone they care for or represent, require their services in an emergency.

The feedback from pre-consultation engagement, along with professional opinion, modelling, and risk profiling, was used in the options appraisal phase to develop viable options for the future of emergency cover services across North Wales. The formal consultation ran from 21 July to 30 September 2023. The original closing date of the consultation was extended from 22 September to 30 September following feedback/requests from stakeholders and the public.

A variety of communication channels, messages, and target audiences were adopted to ensure effective delivery of the consultation and engagement process.

Clear and concise communications materials were developed to engage with stakeholders, including bilingual printed, easy read and digital content, to provide accessible information about the emergency cover arrangements and the consultation and engagement process, to ensure diverse perspectives could be incorporated into the review process.

Multiple communication channels included printed materials, social media, website, face to face meetings, and traditional media, to reach diverse audiences and maximise engagement.

Both online and face to face briefings and workshops provided opportunities for direct engagement, information sharing, and gathering input.

An online consultation and engagement platform was established, signposted via the Service website and social media, hosted on a consultation hub to enable access to information and the ability to submit feedback related to the emergency cover arrangements review. Printed questionnaires were also available to return via Freepost.

More information on the communications approach adopted is contained in the report on the response to the consultation presented to Fire and Rescue Authority members on 16 October which can be found [here](#). An update following consideration of this report by Fire and Rescue Authority Members can be found [here](#).

Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessment (Pre-consultation Phase)

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment (Consultation and Decision-Making Phase)