



AGENDA ITEM: 5

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE PANEL

25th July 2007

LOCATING DUAL ROLE APPLIANCES – SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

**Report by Paul Claydon, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
(Service Delivery) and Ian Miller, Monitoring Officer.**

Purpose of Report

- 1.** To provide Members with further information so that a recommendation can be made to the Authority on locating a dual role appliance at either Dolgellau or Barmouth fire and rescue station.

Introduction

- 2.** Establishing dual role appliances was part of the IRMP (Integrated Risk Management Plan) 3rd Year Action Plan for 2006/7 titled "Maintaining Momentum".
- 3.** At the Authority's meeting on 18th June 2007 Members resolved to implement the overall plan to locate dual role appliances strategically across North Wales using the principle of a 30 minute attendance for those appliances, but deferred a final decision on locating a dual role appliance at either Dolgellau or Barmouth pending the Executive Panel examining the matter further at its next meeting.



Introduction *(continued)*

- 4.** This report supplements the report submitted as agenda item 7 (Appendix 1) from the last Authority meeting held on the 18th June 2007.

Supplementary Information

- 5.** At the Authority meeting on 18th June 2007 Members were concerned that the report did not mention population coverage in any depth.
- 6.** Population coverage was an integral part of the original special appliance review. The information was recently checked to ensure there had been no significant changes that would affect the decision making process and this was reported to the Authority in paragraph 10 of agenda item 7 (Appendix 1).
- 7.** However following the last Authority meeting the population coverage information has been completely re-evaluated to ensure robustness. The analytical tool utilised in the original special appliance review focussing on coverage and the effect on population is the FSEC (Fire Service Emergency Cover) Model. This is the preferred analysis model of the Welsh Assembly Government and CLG in London and has been used for the re-evaluation with the most recent incident data. The model is based on utilising background information from the Census coupled with five years of historical incident data.
- 8.** What FSEC has shown is that in 30 minutes:-
 - Dolgellau can reach 6,946 dwellings, approximately 15,280 persons.
 - Barmouth can reach 6,666 dwellings, approximately 14,660 persons.



Supplementary Information *(continued)*

These figures are broadly comparable. When considering the fact that the stations are neighbours it can be seen that coverage of a large number of dwellings is shared within 30 minutes.

- 9.** It is a comparison of the unshared areas (Appendix 2) that highlights matters of significance when looking at the strategic placement of dual role appliances.
- 10.** A dual role appliance located at Barmouth can reach 29 dwellings (approximately 63 persons) that could not be reached by Dolgellau or Porthmadog in 30 minutes (Appendix 2, Orange). 14 of these dwellings have restricted access and all of these properties are within 13 to 21 minutes of the frontline appliance (standard fire engine) from either Harlech or Barmouth. The FSEC model would rate the areas that these dwellings are located as ranging from average to below average in predicting a risk of fatality.
- 11.** In 30 minutes, a dual role appliance from Dolgellau can reach 1,535 dwellings (approximately 3,370 persons) that could not be reached from Barmouth or any other fire and rescue station in North Wales where a dual role appliance is located (Appendix 2, Red). 1 of these dwellings has restricted access. The FSEC model rates the areas that these dwellings are located as ranging from average to well above average in predicting a risk of fatality.
- 12.** The overall impact is that a 30 minute standard will see Barmouth reaching 362 dwellings with restricted access, Dolgellau reaching 349 dwellings. Again these figures are broadly comparable.



Supplementary Information *(continued)*

- 13.** It must be stressed that the dual role appliances are supplementary to frontline appliances. The Service protocol is to mobilise two appliances to dwelling fires. Therefore a frontline appliance will always be mobilised to a dwelling fire. Whether a dual role appliance is one of the two appliances mobilised will be dependent on the access requirements. Based on the location of incidents in the unshared areas frontline appliances are mobilised from Dolgellau, Barmouth, Harlech, Tywyn, Aberdyfi or Bala, whichever is the closest available.
- 14.** Members will recall that the majority of the work undertaken by dual role appliances is dealing with grass and gorse fires on terrain inaccessible to frontline appliances. The design of the vehicle makes them ideal for operating cross country.

What FSEC has shown is that in 30 minutes:-

- Dolgellau covers approximately 550 Km².
 - Barmouth covers approximately 267 Km².
- 15.** Again it is a comparison of the unshared areas that highlights matters of significance when looking at the strategic placement of dual role appliances. A dual role appliance located at Barmouth covers 20 Km² (Appendix 2, Orange) that could not be reached by Dolgellau or Porthmadog in 30 minutes. A dual role appliance located at Dolgellau covers 320 Km² (Appendix 2, Red) that could not be reached in 30 minutes by Barmouth or any other fire and rescue station in North Wales where a dual role appliance is located.



Supplementary Information *(continued)*

- 16.** The incident profile over the past five years in these two distinct unshared areas show that in the Orange area (Appendix 2) the Service attended 5 incidents made up of 1 tent fire, 1 grass fires, 2 false alarms and a RTC (Road Traffic Collision). There were no dwelling fires. In the Red area (Appendix 2) the Service attended 163 incidents which included 24 property fires of which 8 were dwelling fires, 42 grass and gorse fires and 42 RTCs/Rescues the remainder being false alarms and other minor incidents.

Monitoring Officer's Advice

- 17.** "The Panel's recommendation and the Authority's decision need to take account of the risk that, as with any decision of the Authority, it may be challenged by way of judicial review. In this particular case, there was a clear process of consultation following which the Authority decided in June 2006 that the second vehicle should be located at Dolgellau rather than Barmouth. The process by which this matter has been reopened, namely in response to a very late letter from Barmouth Town Council, is unsatisfactory and leaves the Authority vulnerable to judicial review if it now goes back on the decision that it took in June 2006. Moreover some matters were raised at the Authority's meeting in June 2007, such as caravan parks, that are irrelevant (if a caravan can reach a site, so can a standard fire engine).
- 18.** The Authority might be considered to have behaved unreasonably and irrationally if it were to give greater weight to a late representation that is not based on facts than to the information set out in paragraphs 10 to 16 above.



Monitoring Officer's Advice *(continued)*

The evidence presented in those paragraphs is so compelling in my view that it could also be considered simply irrational for the Authority to do anything than conclude that the second vehicle should be located at Dolgellau. There is no resource available to fund the purchase of an additional vehicle, so that both stations could have one. In any event, given the information in paragraph 10 and about the orange area in paragraphs 15 and 16, there would be considerable doubt about whether such a purchase would represent best value, which the Authority is under a duty to achieve. I appreciate that these comments will not be welcome to some members but I would be failing in my duty to protect the Authority's interests if I did not raise them."

Recommendations

- 19.** Based on the information in the report submitted as agenda item 7 to the Authority on the 18th June 2007 (Appendix 1) and this supplementary information Members recommend to the Authority the location of the 10th dual role appliance.