



WALES **AUDIT** OFFICE
SWYDDFA **ARCHWILIO** CYMRU

October 2009

Making the Connections 3

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service

Buildings Management





Background

- The Wales Audit Office is committed to an ongoing programme of work focussing on the Making the Connections (MtC) agenda across the public sector in Wales. In 2007 the Wales Audit Office undertook a baseline assessment of progress made in implementing the MtC agenda. Following on from this baseline assessment, it was decided that a review of Asset Management would provide a framework for future work. A programme of examining Asset Management across the Welsh public sector in four phases:
 - 2008 – Fleet Management.
 - 2009 – Buildings Management
 - 2010 – Management of Plant, Equipment and Machinery.
 - 2011 – Management of IT Assets.
- In March and April 2009, we carried out a review of the procedures in place for land and buildings management within North Wales Fire and Rescue Service in order to answer the key question:

Is North Wales Fire and Rescue Service ensuring that its land and buildings management arrangements support improvements in efficiency and service delivery to meet the needs and expectations of users for the 21st century?



Background

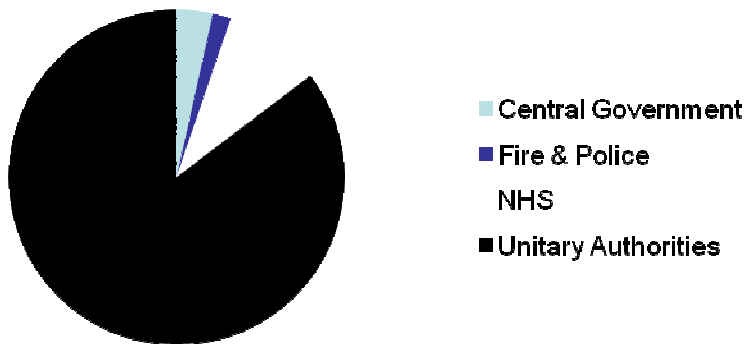
Number of properties	48
Value	£19,757,439
Gross internal area m2	21,593
Revenue expenditure in 07/08	£1,118,765
Value of maintenance backlog at 31/3/08	£10,000,000



Analysis of assets in Wales

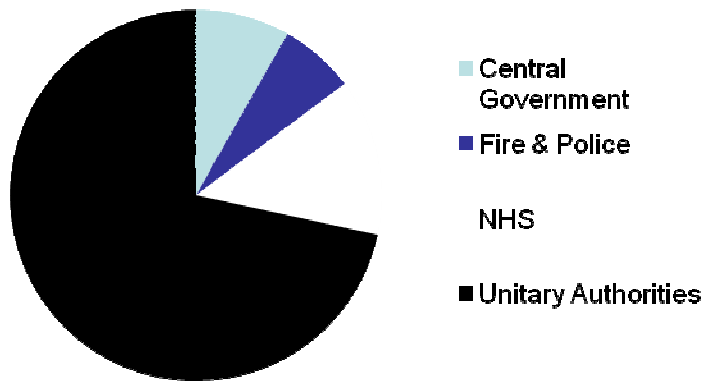


Value £m



	Value £m	Expenditure £m
Central Government	315	30
Fire & Police	162	24
NHS	858	50
Unitary Authorities	7787	262
Total	9122	366

Expenditure £m



These charts provide a summary of buildings held/owned across the Welsh public sector and the value of revenue maintenance spent thereon.



What questions have we asked?

Is North Wales Fire ensuring that its land and buildings management arrangements support improvements in efficiency and service delivery to meet the needs and expectations of users for the 21st century?

A - Has North Wales Fire developed a robust strategy for the management of its land and buildings?

B – Does North Wales Fire have robust performance management arrangements in place to inform and deliver the corporate land and buildings strategy?

C – Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its strategic management of land and buildings?

D – Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its operational management of land and buildings?



A – Has North Wales Fire developed a robust strategy for the management of its land and buildings? (1)

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has developed a robust land and buildings strategy

- Good asset management plan in place
- Incorporates needs of all stakeholders
- Five year plan is reviewed and updated regularly
- Partnership working should be covered more extensively in the plan
- Asset management plan and strategy should be accessible to all staff and officers



A – Has North Wales Fire developed a robust strategy for the management of its land and buildings? (2)



Recommendations for improvement:

- Plan should be made available on the intranet with consideration of placing items of interest on the internet
- Consideration of partnership working and collaboration within the plan should be extended
- Plan could be further developed by considering in more detail how long term objectives will be met
- Plan could include details of the resource required to deliver the land and buildings strategy



B – Does North Wales Fire have robust performance management arrangements in place to inform and deliver the corporate land and buildings strategy? (1)

Performance management arrangements are in place which monitor progress against the strategy

- Good performance management arrangements
- Progress against performance management targets is measured regularly
- Performance management is reported appropriately



B – Does North Wales Fire have robust performance management arrangements in place to inform and deliver the corporate land and buildings strategy? (2)

Recommendations for improvement:

- Key Performance Indicators within the asset management plan should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely)
- Actions within the performance management system should be expanded to include clear strategies and targets
- KPIs should be benchmarked with other organisations
- Consider adding more specific KPIs ie energy consumption



C – Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its strategic management of land and buildings? (1)

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has procedures in place that should deliver value for money in terms of strategic management

- Robust project management process
- Reporting of projects and focus at senior levels is good



C – Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its strategic management of land and buildings? (2)

Recommendations for improvement:

- Procedures for option appraisal should be more detailed within the asset management plan
- Process for acquiring and disposing of property should be documented (including consideration of collaboration)
- Project management and document retention would be improved by having a clear file structure and covering document setting out steps within each project



D – Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its operational management of land and buildings?



North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has procedures in place that should deliver value for money in terms of operational management

- Good operational management process through use of Helpline
- Examples of cost savings through collaboration
- Service Level Agreement with North Wales Police is working well
- Role of “Buildings manager” could be more clearly defined at each premises



D – Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its operational management of land and buildings? (2)



Recommendations for improvement:

- Land and buildings responsibilities of the County Operations Manager or Watch Manager could be more clearly defined
- Service Level Agreement with North Wales Police should be reviewed within the next 12 months to determine whether it continues to work effectively



What is our overall conclusion?

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has arrangements in place that should support improvements in efficiency and service delivery to meet the needs and expectations of users for the 21st century

We have come to this conclusion as:

- **Good, clear asset management plan in place**
- **Performance management arrangements work well**
- **Robust procedures to obtain value for money**
- **Clear processes to deal with large projects and ongoing maintenance work**
- **Good examples of cost savings through collaboration**



Appendix 1 Recommendations

A - Has North Wales Fire developed a robust strategy for the management of its land and buildings?

Recommendation	Management response	Due date and responsible officer
1. The asset management plan is currently not publicly available on the internet or intranet . It should be placed on the intranet so all staff and officers and consideration should be given to whether relevant parts should be added to the internet site Also, whilst the plan covers joint working (partnership working and collaboration), this section could be extended	Asset Management Plan (AMP) will be placed on the intranet and internet after its been updated in accordance with the recommendations of this report. Commercially sensitive information such as disposal and acquisitions will be excluded.	Stephen Roberts, Head of Facilities Management 31 st December 2009
2. Whilst the plan includes long term objectives, it would be beneficial to consider and document how the longer term objectives will be met	AMP will be updated to meet the recommendation.	Stephen Roberts, Head of Facilities Management 31 st December 2009
3. Whilst the plan includes details of the finance available for the asset programme, it does not include details of the resource required from a staffing perspective which would help in providing the full information of the requirements to carry out the plan	AMP will be updated to meet the recommendation.	Stephen Roberts, Head of Facilities Management 31 st December 2009



Appendix 1 Recommendations (continued)

B - Does North Wales Fire have robust performance management arrangements in place to inform and deliver the corporate land and buildings strategy?

Recommendation	Management response	Due date and responsible officer
1. The KPIs within the asset management plan are not SMART and are quite high level. They do not provide full details of how they will be measured and the action plans in place to achieve them. Targets could also be given to all sites particularly in the areas of energy saving and recycling.	AMP will be updated to meet the recommendation.	Stephen Roberts, Head of Facilities Management 31 st December 2009
2. North Wales Fire does not currently participate in any benchmarking. Whilst there may be informal benchmarking as it is a shared department with the police, this is not formalised. It would benefit the authority to take part in benchmarking or at a minimum to establish communication links with the other fire services in order to exchange information.	Communication to be established with the other 2 Welsh Fire & Rescue Services' Estates/Facilities Departments with a view to meeting to share information and explore the feasibility of future benchmarking.	Andy Mayers FM Operations Manager 31 st October 2009



Appendix 1 Recommendations (continued)

C - Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its strategic management of land and buildings?

Recommendation	Management response	Due date and responsible officer
1. There are high level policies in place which govern the procedures for acquisition and disposal of land and buildings. These procedures could be more detailed and could make it very clear which options should be considered when considering, for example, whether to build or refurbish and how the results of option appraisal should be reported.	Awaiting option appraisal template from Wales Audit Office to appraise future capital projects.	Stephen Roberts, Head of Facilities Management 1 st April 2010 onwards.
2. Whilst the department appear to have good project management procedures, this could be enhanced by having a brief document setting out the key steps in each project and providing an overall structure for the files. This would enable others to review and assist in projects should the person leading the project become unavailable.	Recommendation to be implemented for all future capital projects and standard index adopted for each project.	Ian Poole, Capital Projects Manager 1 st October 2009 onwards.



Appendix 1 Recommendations (continued)

D - Can North Wales Fire demonstrate that it is securing value for money from its operational management of land and buildings?

Recommendation	Management response	Due date and responsible officer
1. Whilst there was awareness that County Operations Managers and Watch Managers have responsibility with respect to land and buildings ie completion of Health & Safety checklists, the role of the County Ops Managers or Watch Managers should be more formally defined.	Compile list of duties for local station managers which defines their responsibility for the premises they manage and circulate to each Watch Manager and County Operations Manager.	Andy Mayers, FM Operations Manager 30 th November 2009
2. The Service Level Agreement with North Wales Police commenced on 1 June 2006 and is a 5 year agreement. It would be sensible to review the arrangement within the next 12 months to consider whether it continues to work effectively and plan whether the agreement should be renewed at the end of the 5 years or if alternative arrangements should be made.	Head of FM Department and Assistant Chief Fire Officer responsible for Estates to review SLA performance to assess if SLA should be extended, subject to Executive Panel approval.	Assistant Chief Fire Officer Colin Hanks and Stephen Roberts, Head of Facilities Management. 31 st March 2010