



AGENDA ITEM: 10

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

15th October 2007

LOCATING DUAL ROLE APPLIANCES – Executive Panel Recommendation

**Report by Paul Claydon,
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)**

Purpose of Report

- 1.** To inform Members of the Executive Panel's recommendation to locate a dual role appliance at Dolgellau.

Introduction

- 2.** 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, 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.
- 3.** The Executive Panel met on 25th July 2007 and following deliberations over the supplementary information provided (see Attachment A) resolved to recommend locating a dual role appliance at Dolgellau.

Recommendation

- 4.** The Authority accepts the recommendation of the Executive Panel to locate a dual role appliance at Dolgellau.



ATTACHMENT A
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.



Appendix 1
AGENDA ITEM: 7

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

18th June 2007

**LOCATING DUAL ROLE APPLIANCES –
IRMP 3rd YEAR ACTION PLAN 2006/7**

**Report by Paul Claydon,
Assistant Chief Fire Officer (Service Delivery)**

Purpose of Report

- 1.** To provide Members with further information in relation to locating dual role appliances. Establishing dual role appliances was part of the IRMP (Integrated Risk Management Plan) 3rd Year Action Plan for 2006/7 titled "Maintaining Momentum".

Introduction

- 2.** Members of the Executive Panel met on the 18th May 2006 to review the 39 responses received to the draft 3rd Year Action Plan following the public consultation period which concluded after an extended deadline of 8th March 2006.
- 3.** The Executive Panel recommended a number of amendments which included the section on Dual Role Appliances. These amendments were discussed at the Authority meeting of the 19th June 2006. The section on Dual Role Appliances was amended to state –



Introduction *(continued)*

This will see the introduction of six specifically designed dual role appliances being introduced into the Service with a further four appliances being modified to become dual role appliances. These appliances to be strategically located across North Wales to provide a 30 minute attendance standard (Appendix 1). In addition, enquiries will be made on the availability of financial resources that would, in the long term, enable the Authority, based on risk, to extend the provision of dual role appliances to other stations across North Wales.

4. The Authority resolved to accept the recommendations.

Current Situation

5. Following approval of the 3rd Year Action Plan the Authority received a letter of concern from Barmouth Town Council in December 2006, eight months after the extended consultation period. The letter was read at the Authority meeting of the 18th December 2006 and as a consequence Members resolved that further considerations on the location of dual role appliances should be undertaken.
6. Pending those considerations the locating of dual role appliances was suspended, although updating the four existing Pinzgauers to dual role capability continued as funding had been allocated and the financial requirements within the appropriate financial year needed to be met.



Considerations

- 7.** The original plan for dual role appliances came from the special appliance review which was instigated by the Authority's very first IRMP. This review considered a number of factors which included:-
 - Geographical location of special/secondary appliances; number, location and type of incident attended.
 - How often each appliance booked in attendance at incidents.
 - What use, if known, was each vehicle put to at incidents.
 - Time taken to provide a second appliance where required.
 - General availability and demand.
 - How often a second appliance was mobilised as a support appliance, with locations.
 - How many water relay incidents occur and their locations.
 - How many incidents have occurred where more than two hoses have been required and their locations.
 - How many occasions have 4 or more Breathing Apparatus wearers been used and locations.
- 8.** Based on the above information the Service's recommendations with regards to the adoption and location of dual role appliances was to provide as near as possible a 30 minute coverage across the whole of North Wales as per Appendix 1 shown in blue.
- 9.** This was based on the need to protect both life and the environment.
- 10.** The information used to make the recommendation has been reviewed and updated and there is no new information that would suggest the original strategy requires amendment.



Implications

- 11.** Barmouth Town Council advocates that the dual role appliance should remain in Barmouth and not be relocated to Dolgellau. The area of coverage in 30 minutes is shown in blue in Appendix 2 the purple boxes indicating the areas that Barmouth can cover within 30 minutes that Dolgellau could not.
- 12.** Appendix 3 marked with red boxes indicates the areas Dolgellau would cover in 30 minutes that Barmouth could not. The benefit of locating at Dolgellau is the 360° coverage. Barmouth's geography limits it initially to North and East coverage only, until it reaches Dolgellau.
- 13.** In the past six years since 2000 there have been 15 incidents in Barmouth in areas of restricted access, 6 have been false alarms good intent (FAGI) related to controlled burning in the open, 5 have been gorse or small rubbish fires in the open, 3 fire alarm (AFA) system faults resulting in false alarms at one premises and a fire in a derelict building that was started deliberately. An attendance was made to 14 of these incidents, a frontline appliance attended each one, and a secondary appliance attended 10, 4 of which were attended by Harlech and Dolgellau's landrovers.
- 14.** Therefore, in six years Barmouth's Pinzgauer attended 6 incidents in areas of restricted access - 3 AFAs and 3 FAGI, none of which represented a threat to life, a central issue for the Town Council.



Implications *(continued)*

- 15.** The Service recognises the very individual character of the town of Barmouth and as a consequence has carried out a considerable amount of Community Fire Safety work to ensure those premises with restricted access have been visited and the appropriate advice given with smoke alarms being either fitted or checked as required. This was acknowledged by the Town Council on a visit by Officers to explain the Service's strategy.
- 16.** Although recognising the individual character of Barmouth it is not unique in having areas of restricted access. Caernarfon, Bangor, Llanberis, Wrexham, Johnstown, Nefyn and Chirk all have more properties with restricted access within ten minutes of the fire station than Barmouth. However, the rationale for locating dual role appliances is not purely based on the number of restricted access properties, but rather on the overall risk profile giving the best possible coverage to all the residents of North Wales.

Options

- 17.** As a result of the considerations and their implications there are two options for Members.
- 18.** Option 1 would be to implement the original proposal to provide a 30 minute attendance standard for locating dual role appliances which would see the Pinzgauer currently located in Barmouth relocated to Dolgellau.
- 19.** Option 2 would be to locate the dual role appliance at Barmouth rather than Dolgellau which would take into account the concerns of Barmouth Town Council. Although the information in paragraphs 10 and 12 should be considered.

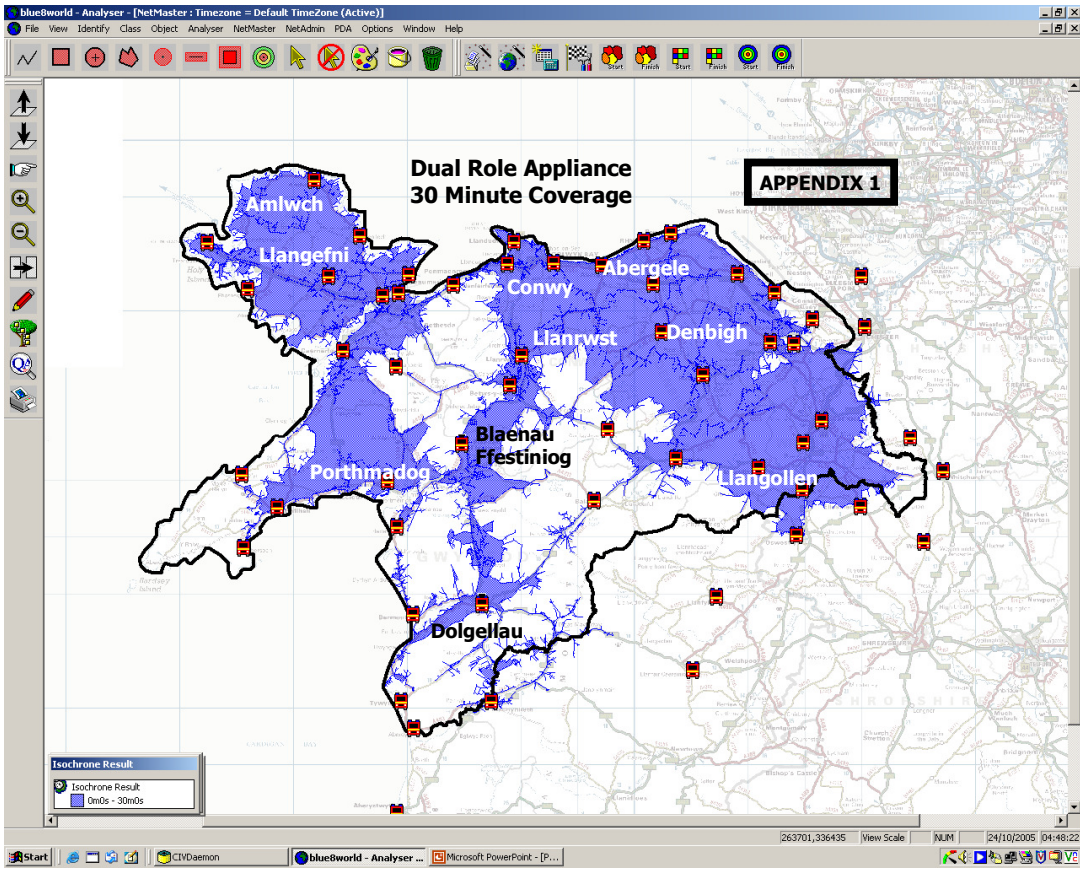


Options

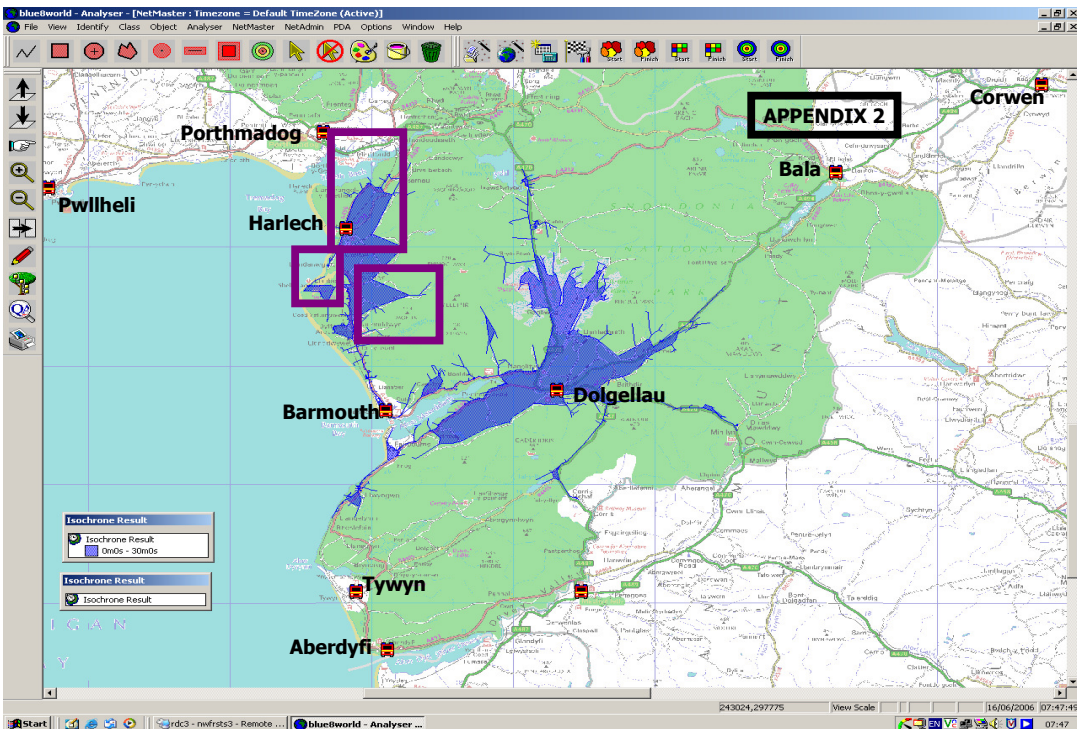
- 20.** A third option was considered that would locate a dual role appliance at both Dolgellau and Barmouth. An additional dual role appliance would cost in the region of £120,000. There is no funding allocated for this option and therefore other projects would have to be removed from the Capital Programme to allow the purchase of an additional appliance. The coverage in this option is shown in Appendix 4 the black box indicating the relatively small gain in coverage in addition to the area covered by an appliance at Dolgellau only. This option is not realistic given the financial impact on the existing approved capital programme and the likely conflict with the Authority's duties under Best Value legislation.

Recommendations

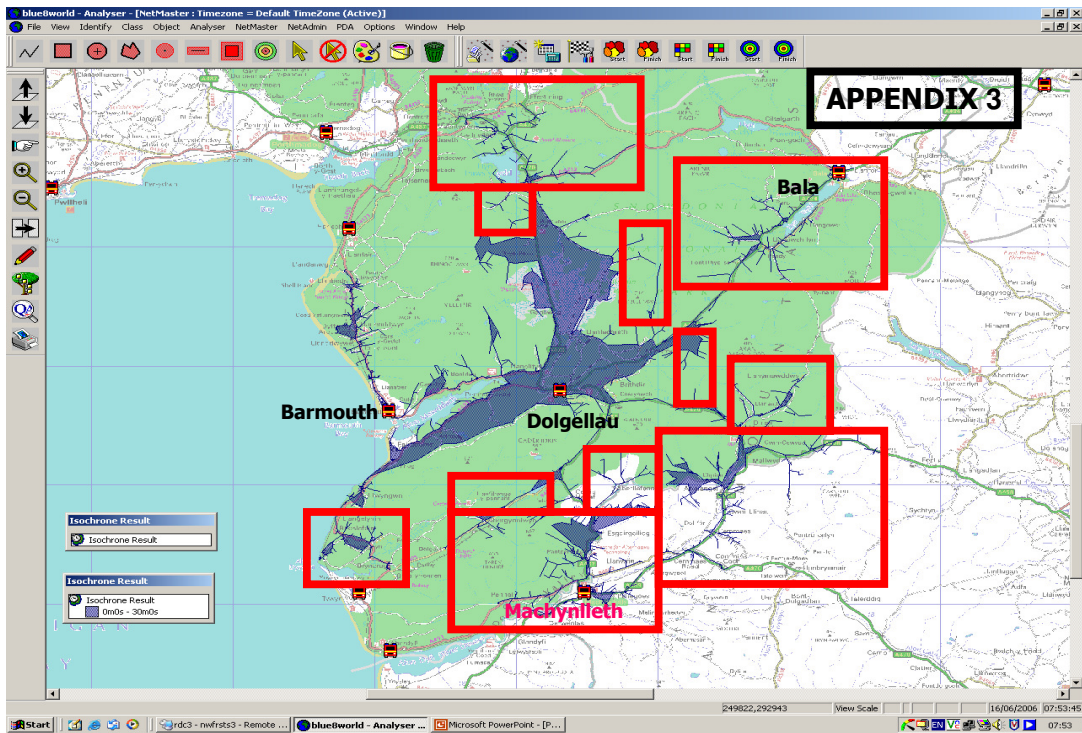
- 21.** That members consider the information contained in this report and choose their preferred option.



Barmouth - 30 Minutes



Dolgellau - 30 Minutes



Combined - 30 Minutes

