



hwb awen



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
Fire and Rescue Service

Outline Business Case New Training and Development Centre

December 2025



**ATAL AMDDIFFYN YMATEB
PREVENTING PROTECTING RESPONDING**

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2 Document Control

Document Title Training Centre Outline Business Case

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3 Version Control

Version	Date	Description of change/s	by
3.0	15/07/25	Initial content for all 5 Cases	G Grant
4.0	22/09/25	Further development of content for all 5 Cases	G Grant
5.0	22/10/25	Incorporated content from NWFRS project documents, including Programme Strategy, draft Executive Summary	G Grant
6.0	04/11/25	Drafting edits to all chapters, added new branding	G Grant
6.5	02/12/25	Restructured Economic Case, drafting edits to all chapters	G Grant
8.0	10/12/25	Formatting updates, final edits to content	G Grant
9.0	29/12/25	Formatting updates	L Bourne

4 Executive Summary

4.1 Introduction

This Outline Business Case (OBC) sets out the rationale, options and preferred option for developing a new North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS) Training Centre, to be called Hwb Awen, at St Asaph Business Park.

The name Hwb Awen reflects the purpose and ambition of the facility. Hwb conveys the idea of a central point - a hub of energy, activity and connection that strengthens the organisation by bringing people and capability together. Awen, meaning inspiration, draws on Welsh cultural heritage and the tradition of learning, creativity and transformation. Together, Hwb Awen represents a place where skills are strengthened, inspiration is fostered and people are supported to grow, aligning directly with the Service's commitment to developing a capable, confident and resilient workforce.

The proposal seeks to replace the Service's outdated and geographically dispersed training sites with a single, modern, inclusive and sustainable facility that meets statutory training requirements, supports workforce development and contributes to Wales' wider sustainability and well-being goals.

The OBC follows HM Treasury's Five Case Model and the Welsh Government Better Business Case guidance. It demonstrates that the proposed investment is strategically necessary, economically advantageous, commercially viable, and deliverable within realistic governance and risk frameworks, with affordability contingent on securing full Welsh Government capital funding.

The Service has already secured a suitable site within its existing estates programme and is self-funding all preparatory and design stages to ensure that the project is fully developed and ready for Welsh Government construction funding consideration.

4.2 Strategic Case Summary

The Service currently operates multiple training sites across Dolgellau, Rhyl, Wrexham and Deeside, plus limited use of a third-party fire-behaviour facility. These facilities are ageing, environmentally inefficient and no longer meet modern standards for safety, inclusivity or operational realism.

The proposed new training centre directly addresses three major challenges:

- **Quality and condition** - existing sites are nearing the end of their operational life and do not meet current standards for ventilation, simulation or welfare.
- **Fragmented location** - multiple small sites create inefficiency, excessive travel and inconsistent training.

- **Regulatory and environmental compliance** - new health, safety and Net Zero requirements cannot be met within the current estate.

The project aligns strongly with:

- The **NWFRS Community Risk Management Plan (2024–2029)**;
- The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** goals;
- The **Welsh Government's sustainability and decarbonisation priorities**; and
- Recommendations from the **Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor (CFRA) for Wales** on training consistency and capability.

The Service's preferred option is a purpose-built, centralised facility at St Asaph, offering realistic training environments, modern welfare provision and full accessibility. It represents a strategic, long-term solution that enables NWFRS to train safely, inclusively and sustainably.

4.3 Economic Case Summary

The Economic Case demonstrates that the preferred option for a new, centralised training centre at St Asaph offers the best overall value for money for NWFRS and the wider public sector. A rigorous options appraisal was undertaken in line with HM Treasury's Green Book and Welsh Government Better Business Case methodology. This process considered over 100 initial ideas, refined to 37 long-listed options, and then consolidated into four shortlisted options:

1. **Do Nothing** - continue using current sites.
2. **Do Minimum** - limited compliance upgrades only.
3. **New Training Centre (Preferred Option)** - construct a purpose-built single-agency facility at St Asaph.
4. **New Enhanced Training Centre** - As per Option 3 plus additional non-statutory props and specialist areas.

Each option was assessed against defined Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors (CSFs). The appraisal concluded that **Option 3** provides the best overall value for money.

Preliminary economic analysis indicates that Option 3 delivers significant whole-life cost efficiencies, operational savings and non-monetised benefits including:

- Improved operational efficiency and return on training investment (BTC01);
- Enhanced training quality, safety and effectiveness (BTC02);
- Improved workforce welfare, equality, diversity and inclusion (BTC03);
- Reduced environmental impact through a sustainable, energy-efficient design (BTC04); and

- Increased social value through local employment, apprenticeships and community engagement (BTC05).

The breakeven analysis demonstrates the compelling economic rationale for investment. Preventing approximately **1.6 fatalities per year** would justify the entire capital outlay for the new training centre. This calculation excludes additional benefits such as injury reduction, property damage avoidance, and improved operational resilience. When these wider benefits are considered, the case for investment becomes even stronger, underlining the life-saving potential and public value of the preferred option.

Quantitative metrics such as Net Present Social Value (NPSV) and Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) will be finalised at Full Business Case stage following detailed financial modelling. However, the combined evidence from cost analysis, breakeven thresholds, and qualitative benefits strongly supports Option 3 as the preferred way forward.

In summary, the proposed new training centre represents a strategic, future-proofed investment that maximises public value, enhances operational capability, and aligns with national sustainability and inclusion goals.

4.4 Commercial Case Summary

The project is commercially viable and will be delivered through a two-stage Design and Build approach using established public-sector frameworks.

Design services have been procured via the SCAPE framework, and the Service intends to appoint a principal contractor through the North Wales Construction Framework.

This approach ensures transparency, market competition and social value delivery consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

Legal support will be provided by Veal Wasbrough Vizards LLP (VWV) under the Crown Commercial Services Framework.

Commercial risks (including cost escalation, design changes and contractor performance) will be managed through standardised contractual mechanisms, including clear change control and value-engineering provisions.

4.5 Financial Case Summary

North Wales Fire and Rescue Service has already secured the site at St Asaph Business Park as part of its wider estates strategy, funded through existing capital resources. This acquisition was a strategic decision to secure a scarce and suitable location rather than a commitment to any single delivery option. Should the preferred option change at Full Business Case stage, the site retains marketable value and could be sold or repurposed without financial detriment.

The Service will continue to self-fund all activities up to and including RIBA Stage 4, covering feasibility, design development, planning and technical documentation. From RIBA Stage 5 onwards, the Service intends to seek Welsh Government capital funding, estimated at **£50 million**, to deliver construction, fit-out and commissioning.

Affordability modelling is underway and will be finalised before Full Business Case submission. Early indications suggest that the preferred option can be accommodated within the Service's medium-term financial plan, subject to confirmation of Welsh Government grant funding. Historic and enabling costs of approximately **£6.7 million** have already been committed, demonstrating the Service's strong commitment to the project.

Revenue and lifecycle costs have been modelled on an indicative basis and are expected to be manageable within the Service's emerging financial strategy. Operational efficiencies, including consolidation of training sites and reduced travel, are forecast to deliver annual savings of over £0.3 million, supporting long-term affordability.

In summary, the Financial Case confirms that the preferred option is affordable on the assumption of Welsh Government support for the main capital phase. The Service will continue to engage with Welsh Government to secure funding and will refine cost estimates, risk allowances and cost saving opportunities at Full Business Case stage.

4.6 Management Case Summary

Robust governance arrangements are already in place, with oversight from the Project Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer responsible for Training. The project is being managed by the Head of Training and Development and supported by a multi-disciplinary project team and external advisors.

A clear Project Plan, Risk Register and Benefits Realisation Plan have been established in line with Welsh Government guidance.

Gateway Reviews will be undertaken at key stages to ensure readiness and assurance before progressing to Full Business Case and procurement.

The project is expected to reach completion and become operational in 2029, subject to planning approval and funding confirmation.

4.7 Summary Conclusion

The Outline Business Case demonstrates a clear and compelling case for investment in a new Training Centre at St Asaph.

The preferred option delivers the strongest balance of strategic alignment, value for money, deliverability and affordability, while advancing Wales' sustainability and well-being goals. It

consolidates dispersed, ageing facilities into a modern, inclusive and environmentally responsible hub that meets statutory training requirements and future workforce needs.

Subject to securing full Welsh Government capital funding, the project is affordable within the Service's medium-term financial strategy. This support will enable NWFRS to realise significant operational efficiencies, reduce long-term costs and deliver measurable social value.

The new Training Centre will provide a fit-for-future environment that enhances firefighter safety, supports equality and diversity, and demonstrates public-sector leadership in sustainability. It ensures the Service can continue to protect the people and communities of North Wales effectively, efficiently and responsibly for decades to come.

5 Business Case Details

Project Name	Training Centre
Project Sponsor (PO)	Justin Evans, Assistant Chief Fire Officer
Project Manager	Lee Bourne, Head of Training and Development
Project Reference	OBCNP001
NWFRS Core Values	Striving for Excellence By offering accessible, high-quality training, the centre supports all staff in building on their strengths and addressing areas for growth - helping everyone reach their full potential. Cutting edge training methods and realistic scenarios will create an environment that fosters innovation, continuous learning and professional growth. People By offering equal access to training and development opportunities, the centre helps ensure that achievement and effort are recognised and rewarded fairly. The centre is being designed to be inclusive and accessible, ensuring that all staff -regardless of background or role - can train in a safe, supportive environment that respects individual needs. The project has been developed with transparency and collaboration at its core. This open approach builds mutual trust and reinforces the Service's commitment to integrity Diversity & Inclusivity The training centre is being designed with a clear emphasis on equality, diversity, and inclusion. It will feature modern welfare facilities that address current shortcomings and ensure accessibility for all staff, regardless of background or circumstance. The project's governance includes active staff engagement, such as working groups and feedback loops, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and valued. Service to the Community The training centre props will enable locally relevant training scenarios to better protect the communities we serve. The centre can serve as a shared facility for joint training with other emergency services and community groups. This fosters collaboration, improves interoperability, and strengthens collective response capabilities - key to working effectively with partners. The stakeholder engagement and

communications plan will ensure that we deliver the project with transparency, holding ourselves accountable to those that we serve.

Our Core Values



Risk Mitigation

The following risks have been taken from the Service's Corporate Risk Log and use the same reference IDs (e.g. TD1) to support cross-referencing.

TD(RR)1 - Due to uncertainties in the availability of funding for capital investment, there is a risk that training facilities could be no longer fit-for-purpose if investment in the maintenance and improvement of facilities is not provided in the future.

TD(RR)2 - The availability of current training facilities is heavily dependent on existing infrastructure and third-party locations. There is a risk that unforeseen changes to external agreements or environmental restrictions could disrupt access to these facilities, impacting the continuity of training delivery.

The new training centre would mitigate this risk as the site will support environmental objectives. Also owning the site would mitigate issues associated with using third-party facilities.

TD(RR)7 - Due to [recommendations](#) made by the Chief Fire Officer Advisor and Inspector there is a risk that significant changes will need to be made in how firefighting tactics is taught.

The new training design aims to be future proof with the ability to adapt to evolving training needs.

TD(RR)10 - Due to a lack of inclusive facilities there is a risk that members of minority groups may feel excluded or discriminated against.

	Accessibility and inclusivity will be at the forefront of the training centre design. TD(RR)11 - Due to cramped welfare spaces with poor ventilation and lighting at some training sites there is a risk that neurodiverse individuals or those with sensory sensitivities may experience increased discomfort or distress. Accessibility and inclusivity will be at the forefront of the training centre design.
Departmental Objective	TD(DP)01- Delivery of the Training and Development Centre Project This departmental objective contributes towards our longer-term goal of training to deliver operational excellence and to ensure we have training and people development that harnesses technology for efficient delivery. TD(DP)03 - Continue to foster an inclusive workplace culture that empowers all staff members to excel and effectively address the diverse needs of our communities The new training centre will create a supportive, accessible and inclusive environment where staff feel valued and empowered to perform at their best.
Well-being of Future Generation Act Goals	The new training centre supports Wales' Well-being Goals by creating a modern, inclusive and sustainable facility that benefits staff, communities and the environment. • A prosperous Wales - The centre will create local employment and support local suppliers, helping stimulate the regional economy. • A resilient Wales - Better training means stronger operational readiness, improving public safety and resilience. • A healthier Wales - No carbonaceous burns without approved scrubber technology, protecting local air quality and public health. • A more equal Wales - Fully accessible, inclusive facilities ensure everyone can train and work safely and confidently. • A Wales of cohesive communities - Community visits, joint exercises and open days will build trust and strengthen local relationships.

- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** - Bilingual signage, use of Welsh place names and cultural events will reflect and celebrate Welsh identity.
- **A globally responsible Wales** - Targeting BREEAM "Excellent", reducing travel emissions and consolidating facilities to lower carbon footprint and resource use.

The project also supports key national indicators, including skills and qualifications, renewable energy, reduced carbon emissions, Welsh language use, community participation and healthy local environments.

6 Approval Route

Submission from Project Manager to:

Approved By	Date	Signature
Environment & Climate Change Manager	18/12/2025	T: AL
Head of Performance Planning & Transformation	18/12/2025	MR Plat
Finance Subgroup	10/12/2025	AE ER on behalf of subgroup
Procurement Subgroup	15/12/2025	Jack Millward JM on behalf of Subgroup
HR Subgroup	18/12/2025	LMH on behalf of subgroup
Comms Subgroup	15/12/2025	LLRE on behalf of subgroup
Project Group	05/01/2026	LB on behalf of Group
Project Board	19/12/2025	ACFO Justin Evans
Project Sponsor (PO)	17/12/2025	ACFO Justin Evans
Formal SLT	17/12/2025	CFO Dawn Docx on behalf of SLT
Fire Authority	19/01/2026	

7 Strategic Case

The Strategic Case sets the context for the proposed investment and describes how it aligns with national and local priorities. It includes:

- A profile of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS);
- A summary of how the scheme aligns to national priorities;
- How the scheme will support the achievement of NWFRS priorities;
- The case for change;
- How stakeholders have been engaged and contributed to the development of the case; and
- Interdependencies and constraints on the proposed scheme.

7.1 The Organisation

The proposal for a new centralised training centre is being led by the NWFRS, which is responsible for delivering fire and rescue services across the region. The Service operates under the direction of the North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority (NWFA), which has a statutory duty under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to ensure that appropriate training is in place for responding to fires, road traffic collisions and other emergencies.

Governance of the project involves several key stakeholders within the Service. The business case has received support in principle from the Training Centre Members Working Group¹, the Members Budget Scrutiny Committee and Trade Union representatives. In October 2024, the [NWFA formally approved](#) the Strategic Outline Case. Final approval for the development rests with the NWFA. The project is being led by Justin Evans, Assistant Chief Fire Officer and managed by Lee Bourne, Head of Training and Development.

¹ The Training Centre Members Working Group was comprised of nominated members of the North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.

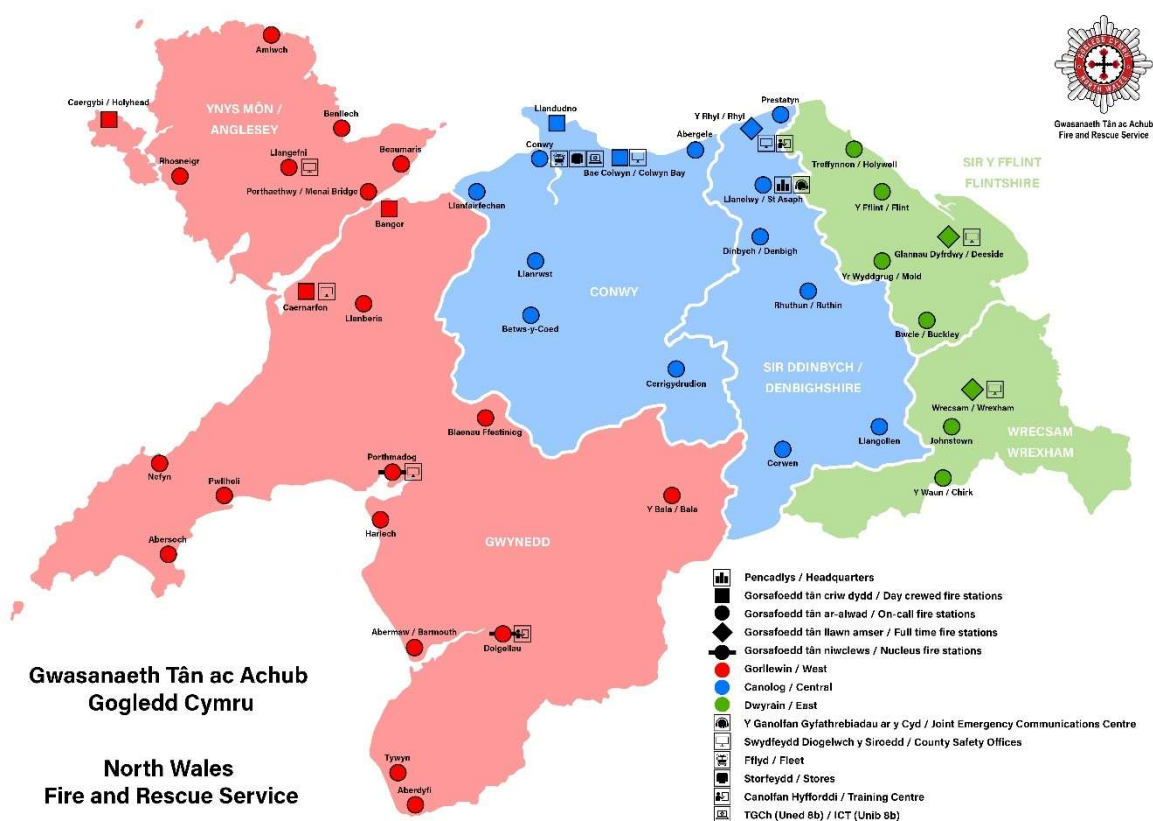


Figure 1 : The NWFRS Service Area

7.2 The Proposal

The proposal is for the development of a new, centralised training centre at St. Asaph Business Park in Denbighshire. This purpose-built facility is envisioned as a modern hub equipped with contemporary resources designed to meet the evolving training needs and operational demands of the fire and rescue service.

The new training centre will adopt a thematic architectural approach, establishing distinct zones that mirror the current and anticipated risks prevalent in North Wales. These interconnected sectors will enable the simulation of complex, multi-agency emergency scenarios within a secure and realistic training environment. This will ensure that all service personnel receive thorough, practical and immersive training, enhancing their skills, coordination and decision-making abilities.

Furthermore, the vision includes fostering collaboration with partners from the [North Wales Local Resilience Forum \(LRF\)](#) through multi-agency training exercises. This integration will promote effective implementation of [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles \(JESIP\)](#) and strengthen overall emergency response capabilities across the region.



Figure 2 : Artist's Impression of the new Hwb Awen Training Centre

The new centre will be designed with a focus on compliance with increasing environmental regulations and sustainability goals, aiming for a standard of Zero Carbon for regulated energy and a BREEAM² assessment as 'Excellent'. It will also address current shortcomings in welfare facilities and equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) provision. Ultimately, the Service's vision is to create a fit-for-the-future training environment that ensures the safety and effectiveness of service personnel, meets statutory duties and promotes a globally responsible approach to emergency preparedness.

Following a comprehensive options appraisal, which is detailed within the Economic Case, the Service evaluated various approaches for addressing the significant challenges with the existing training facilities. The development of a new centralised training facility at St Asaph was identified as the preferred option. This option was selected as it offers the best balance of operational improvement and fiscal responsibility. Analysis demonstrated that this option provides the best 'value for money' among the options considered. Furthermore, it significantly mitigates the residual risks associated with maintaining or upgrading the dispersed, ageing facilities, aligning with the Service's need for modernised, centralised and flexible training capabilities that meet core requirements and allow for future expansion.

² BREEAM is a global standard for assessing & certifying sustainability of the built environment.

7.3 The Case for Change

7.3.1 Background

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 places a statutory duty upon NWFR to make provision for training to deal with fires, road traffic collisions and other prescribed emergencies. Currently, the Service operates training facilities at Dolgellau, Rhyl, Wrexham and Deeside, plus has limited use of a third party facility for Fire Behaviour Training. While these sites were fit for purpose when first built, an estate-wide review indicates they can no longer keep pace with modern standards or with the Service's commitment to reach net-zero carbon by 2030.

The case for change is built around the three core challenges of the current facilities:

- 1) Their quality and nature
- 2) The location
- 3) Meeting new regulatory requirements

These are described in detail in the following paragraphs.

7.3.2 Challenges with the Quality and Outdated Nature of the Current Facilities

Age and Condition: Most existing buildings date from the 1990s or earlier, with outdated ventilation, extraction, IT and simulation systems that are costly to maintain. For example, Dolgellau, built in 1992, lacks smoke extraction or safety lighting and an external review by IKG Consulting has highlighted that it has fewer than five serviceable years remaining without significant investment. Rhyl's audio-visual kit is dated, and its incident-command suite needs a full technology refresh, requiring a major upgrade within ten years to sustain the current functionality.

Capacity and Realism Gaps: There is no medium- or high-rise capability across the estate, no capacity for safe training foam use, insufficient hard-standing for large-scale scenarios and no dedicated centre for conferences or large incident-command courses. Crucially, existing Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CFBT) facilities do not reflect the reality of modern fires, which have significantly higher heat release rates due to contemporary building contents and insulation. Trainers frequently have to borrow equipment from other Service sites, highlighting the lack of dedicated resources for realistic and effective training.

Inadequate Welfare and EDI Provision: Current facilities fall short in providing adequate welfare facilities, demonstrating limited provision for equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). This includes poor separation of facilities, absence of faith or quiet room, and a specific lack of gender-neutral facilities in communal shower areas, failing to meet contemporary EDI standards and future workforce requirements.

Limitations in Decontamination: While existing training facilities comply with current Health & Safety legislation, they were not designed to reflect the latest sector research and best practice on firefighter contaminant exposure. Recent studies highlight the importance of rapid and comprehensive decontamination facilities (e.g. "shower within the hour" protocols). The dispersed and ageing nature of the Service's current training sites makes it difficult to consistently achieve these emerging standards, with some exercises requiring personnel and equipment to move between sites (e.g. third party facility and Deeside) in a potentially contaminated state.

7.3.3 Challenges with the Location of Current Facilities

Fragmented Footprint and Operational Inefficiencies: The spread of training sites (Dolgellau, Rhyl, Wrexham, Deeside and limited use of a third party facility) forces crews, appliances and instructors to travel long distances, hampers multi-pump and multi-agency exercises and leads to inconsistent training delivery.

Accessibility Issues: The location of the Dolgellau site means that it is not easily accessible for the majority of stations across the Service's area. Travel to and between multiple dispersed locations increases logistical complexities and operational costs and also contributes to carbon emissions.

Dependence on Third-Party Facilities: The third party fire-behaviour unit is utilised under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) rather than a formal lease, posing a high risk of the site becoming unavailable at short notice due to the company's operational needs. This facility also presents operational challenges like limited access due to high security, difficulty in maintenance and limited access to classroom and welfare facilities, often requiring joint usage with Deeside Fire Station.

Site-Specific Constraints (Noise/Planning): Wrexham and Deeside are close to housing, which shortens operating windows, limits noise-generating exercises and faces planning limits that restrict burn-off exercises and curb future expansion. Dolgellau sits in a flood zone within Snowdonia National Park and training burns where the smoke is not currently captured or filtered have prompted local complaints and pose a risk of enforcement action or sudden closure.

7.3.4 New Regulations and Evolving Requirements for Facilities

Statutory Duties and National Standards: Continued reliance on current facilities would leave clear gaps against national standards for incident command, operational response and joint working. The evolution of incident command principles, with a heightened focus on risk assessment, situational awareness and collaborative working, necessitates modern facilities.

Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales (CFRA) Recommendations: The [CFRA's 2022 thematic review](#) of operational training identified critical challenges, including insufficient time for training, lack of standardised practical training, issues with travel distances and Compartment Fire Behaviour Training not reflecting modern fire realities. The proposed new centre directly addresses

these, providing efficient facilities, dedicated spaces for standardised training, a more accessible location and realistic fire training props for contemporary fire conditions.

Environmental Regulations and Sustainability Goals: None of the existing sites currently have smoke-cleaning technology or modern energy systems, leaving the estate out of step with evolving environmental regulations and the Authority's commitment to reach net-zero carbon by 2030. A "do-minimum" approach would fail to meet this commitment and risks environmental prosecution or planning objections. The new centre aims for Zero Carbon for regulated energy and a BREEAM assessment as 'Excellent', aligning with these critical targets.

The project is now formally registered under BREEAM Version 6 (Registration Number: BREEAM-0136-2847). This early registration demonstrates the Service's commitment to delivering a high-performance, sustainable building and ensures that BREEAM requirements are embedded from the outset of design.

The Service will ensure that these Net Zero and sustainability standards are not only design principles but are also contractually embedded in the procurement process, with compliance monitored and enforced through supplier KPIs and project governance structures.

In addition, the Service will ensure that construction products are responsibly sourced, with requirements contractually embedded in procurement and verified through recognised certification and reporting standards.

Future Workforce Needs: The inability of current facilities to meet future workforce requirements, particularly in respect of EDI and gender-neutral facilities, highlights a critical gap. The new facility is designed with a clear emphasis on EDI, featuring modern welfare facilities to ensure accessibility and respect for individual needs.

7.3.5 Alignment with strategic objectives/priorities

The proposed new training facility demonstrates clear alignment with strategic objectives and priorities at local, regional and national levels. It supports the Service's statutory duties and Community Risk Management Plan, contributes to Welsh Government policy goals around sustainability and resilience, and reflects national standards set by the NFCC (National Fire Chiefs Council) and other regulatory bodies. These alignments are detailed further in the following sub-sections.

7.3.5.1 North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority's Strategic Objectives

NWFRA is guided by five core principles, as detailed in its [Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\) 2024-2029](#). The development of a new, centralised training centre is a strategic initiative that will support the delivery and enhancement of each of these principles, ensuring that the Service can continue to provide effective and efficient services to the communities it serves.



Figure 3 : The Service's Five Principles

Fire Service Principle	How the Training Centre Supports This Principle
Our People Principle <i>Being in the right place, at the right time, with the right skills</i>	The centre will enable consistent, high-quality and centrally located training for operational crews and specialist roles, ensuring personnel have the right skills and confidence when deployed. Improved facilities will also support recruitment, retention and staff wellbeing.
Our Prevention Principle <i>Working with partners to help make communities safer</i>	The site will support multi-agency and community-based training activities, allowing prevention officers to train and collaborate with external partners (e.g. schools, health and local government) in a more inclusive and accessible environment.
Our Protection Principle <i>Making businesses safer together</i>	The centre will support practical training for fire safety officers and risk assessors, enabling scenario-based learning that reflects real-world commercial and industrial environments. It will also allow for collaborative exercises with local businesses and regulatory partners, supporting more consistent and effective fire safety outcomes across the region.
Our Response Principle	By consolidating training assets into a purpose-built hub, the centre will enhance the Service's preparedness, consistency and capability

Fire Service Principle	How the Training Centre Supports This Principle
<i>Providing an effective emergency response</i>	across incident command, technical rescue and operational deployment.
Our Environment Principle <i>Protecting and preserving our natural environment for future generations</i>	The centre will meet high sustainability standards, reduce travel-related emissions and phase out inefficient, high-emission legacy buildings - supporting both carbon reduction and environmental compliance.

Table 1 : Aligning the New Training Facilities with the Service's Core Principles

7.3.5.2 Welsh Government Priorities

The proposed new Training Centre demonstrates clear and measurable alignment with Welsh Government priorities across five core policy areas:

- Net Zero and Environmental Sustainability**

The project will deliver a BREEAM 'Excellent', Zero-Carbon for regulated energy facility, directly supporting the [Net Zero Wales \(2021–2025\)](#) plan and the [Welsh Government's 2030 carbon-reduction targets](#). Consolidating five dispersed sites into one modern campus will reduce vehicle mileage and associated emissions, aligning with the Programme for Government commitment to decarbonise the public estate and embed net-zero thinking in all public investments.

- A Prosperous and Resilient Wales**

Construction and operation of the Training Centre will create local employment, apprenticeships and supply-chain opportunities, supporting the [North Wales Regional Economic Framework](#) and the [North Wales Growth Deal](#) objectives of sustainable jobs and skills investment. By enhancing training realism and interoperability, the project also builds organisational and community resilience in line with the Fire and Rescue National Framework for Wales.

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The new centre embeds inclusive design and gender-neutral welfare provision, meeting [Strategic Equality and Human Rights Plan 2025 to 2029](#) commitments and advancing the Socio-economic Duty under s.1 of the [Equality Act 2010 \(Wales\)](#). It supports the Well-being of Future Generations goal of "a more equal Wales" by ensuring that all staff, regardless of background, language or ability, can train safely and confidently.

- Partnership and Collaboration**

The centre will act as a regional hub for multi-agency training across the North Wales Local Resilience Forum, directly supporting JESIP principles and Welsh Government priorities for integrated public-service delivery under Future Generations Wales. It offers a tangible platform for cross-sector innovation, emergency-response preparedness and shared community engagement.

- Culture, Language and Community**

Consistent with [Cymraeg 2050 - A Million Welsh Speakers](#), all signage and safety materials will be bilingual, with Welsh given equal prominence. The Service intends to use the building to host community events and school engagement programmes, strengthening the cultural

fabric of Denbighshire and contributing to “a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.”

The proposed new Training Centre supports the seven well-being goals of the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#):

- **A prosperous Wales** - Due to the increased scale and operational needs of a larger site, there is a potential opportunity that additional roles will be required to support the facility, such as security personnel, catering staff, and site maintenance, which may result in the creation of new local job opportunities and enhanced community engagement.
- **A resilient Wales** - Enhanced training provision leads to improved operational response, which in turn strengthens community safety and contributes to a more resilient Wales.
- **A healthier Wales** - By providing accessible wellbeing spaces and on-site gym facilities, the centre encourages healthier lifestyle choices for staff, supporting improved physical and mental wellbeing and contributing to a healthier Wales.
- **A more equal Wales** - By ensuring the training centre is fully inclusive and accessible, there is a positive outcome that all individuals - regardless of ability, gender identity, or background - can participate equally and safely, which may result in greater equity of opportunity, improved community trust, and progress toward a more equal Wales.
- **A Wales of cohesive communities** - The training centre is designed not only as a facility for operational excellence but also as a hub for community interaction. The centre will host open days, awareness programmes, and joint exercises with local communities. These activities foster mutual understanding and trust between emergency services and the public, which is essential for cohesive communities.
- **A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language** - By embedding Welsh language and culture into the fabric of the training experience - from safety briefings to immersive simulations - the centre becomes a space where cultural identity is not only respected but celebrated. The building will have bilingual signage with Welsh given equal prominence. Rooms or building will be named after Welsh places to reflect regional identity. Conference space will allow staff to join together, hosting events that celebrate our culture.
- **A globally responsible Wales** - The training centre aims to attain a BREEAM score of 'Excellent' demonstrating a commitment to sustainability. By consolidating training into a centralised, efficient facility, NWFRS reduces duplication, travel emissions, and resource waste. This supports Wales' broader climate commitments and demonstrates how public services can lead by example in reducing environmental impact.

The training centre project will also contribute to the following [National Wellbeing Indicators and Milestones](#):

- **08** Adults with qualifications
- **12** Renewable energy
- **14** Global footprint
- **23** People feeling involved
- **36** People speaking Welsh everyday
- **41** Greenhouse gas emissions
- **43** Healthy ecosystems

In combination, these alignments show that the new training centre will advance the delivery of multiple Welsh Government outcomes - decarbonisation, fair work, equality, community resilience, skills development and cultural preservation.

Accordingly, the project represents an exemplary fit with the [Programme for Government \(2021-2026\)](#) and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, reinforcing the case for full capital grant support.

7.3.5.3 National Fire Sector Priorities

The Chief Fire & Rescue Advisor for Wales' [thematic review](#) highlighted in section 7.3.4 underscores the importance of evidence-based training analysis and addressing challenges related to firefighter availability and training standardisation. The development of a centralised hub with modern facilities directly responds to these national considerations by enabling consistent and high-quality training delivery. The evolution of incident command with a focus on risk assessment and collaborative principles is also supported by the ability to conduct complex, multi-agency training scenarios in the new centre. The emphasis on health and safety, EDI, environmental protection and public safety standards within the project aligns with national regulatory requirements and best practices within the Service.

7.3.5.4 Local Resilience Forum Objectives

The explicit aim to invite partners from the North Wales LRF for multi-agency training and collaboration directly supports the Forum's objectives of enhancing interoperability and joint working amongst emergency responders in the region. This aligns with JESIP and contributes to a more coordinated and effective response to local emergencies.

7.3.6 Spending Objectives

The Spending Objectives for this project are:

7.3.6.1 High Quality & Future-Proofed Training Facilities

To provide a modern, immersive training environment that improves firefighter safety, enables realistic scenario-based learning and addresses local risk profiles, including capabilities like decontamination and can adapt to future changes in training demands, technology and regional development.

7.3.6.2 Inclusive and Accessible Facilities

To provide a training centre that reflects modern values (including EDI) and caters for the training needs of the Service, including the scheduling requirements of retained firefighters.

7.3.6.3 Environmental Sustainability

To deliver a carbon-neutral, cost-efficient centre that aligns with wider environmental goals and offers value for money, while supporting long-term operational affordability through rationalisation of assets.

BREEAM registration has been secured under Version 6 (Registration Number: BREEAM-0136-2847), enabling formal assessment and tracking against the target rating of 'Excellent'.

Performance thresholds (% reduction, % improvement, etc.) will be calibrated during the Full Business Case stage, following baseline confirmation and commercial dialogue with suppliers, and then contractually embedded as KPIs.

7.3.6.4 Summary

These Spending Objectives establish the outcomes that the investment must achieve. In the subsequent Economic Case, each potential option is assessed against a set of Critical Success Factors (CSFs) that reflect these objectives and test their deliverability, affordability and strategic alignment.

The proposed new centralised training centre at St Asaph, selected as the preferred option, will meet these Spending Objectives. It aims to create realistic and immersive training facilities, representing a strategic investment to elevate the skills, preparedness and adaptability of service personnel by providing a high-quality training environment that can adapt to emerging risks and meet statutory duties effectively. This option is intended to meet the core training requirements of a modern fire and rescue service while offering flexibility and provision for future expansion and development. It specifically includes features such as a Breathing Apparatus School with decontamination facilities and provision for the needs of the evolving and diverse workforce, addressing existing shortcomings in welfare facilities and EDI provision identified with current sites.

Furthermore, the project has a target of achieving a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating and aims for Zero Carbon standards for regulated energy. This significantly mitigates the environmental risks associated with the current dispersed facilities, aligning with increasing environmental regulations and the statutory requirement to achieve net zero by 2030.

The evaluation of the short-list of potential options and the detailed quantitative and qualitative appraisal demonstrates how the preferred option aligns with and delivers against these Spending Objectives is set out in the Economic Case.

7.4 Project Scope and Strategic Delivery Considerations

This section outlines the defined parameters and scope of the proposed new training centre. It further details the anticipated benefits of the investment, identifies key strategic risks to be mitigated and clarifies the primary constraints and dependencies that will influence the project's successful delivery and long-term impact.

7.4.1 Benefits

The development of a new centralised training centre is projected to deliver a wide range of significant benefits. These benefits have been identified, defined and approved through the Service's Benefits Realisation Plan and are grouped under five main benefit categories (BTC01 – BTC05).

Together they ensure that the project delivers meaningful operational, environmental and community outcomes that align with Welsh Government priorities and the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

BTC01 - Improved Operational Efficiency - Higher Return on Training Investment

Investing in a centralised and well-supported training environment leads to significantly improved outcomes and cost-efficiency. By streamlining delivery, reducing duplication of effort and resources, and enhancing the overall quality of training, organisations can maximise the impact of their training programmes.

Improved attendance, better access to equipment, and reduced logistical overheads contribute to more effective learning experiences. Trainers can focus on delivering high-quality content rather than managing fragmented setups, while learners benefit from consistent, well-resourced sessions. These efficiencies not only reduce operational costs but also ensure that training delivers measurable value—both in terms of learner outcomes and organisational performance.

BTC02 - Enhanced Training Quality and Effectiveness – More Motivated and Skilled Workforce

Improved job satisfaction will be achieved by enhancing the overall training experience, ensuring staff feel supported, valued, and equipped to perform their roles confidently. This includes delivering high-quality, consistent training that reflects operational realities, encourages feedback, and fosters a positive workplace culture.

By investing in training that builds competence and confidence, the organisation supports staff development, improves recruitment appeal, and strengthens operational performance. A motivated and skilled workforce is better prepared to meet service demands, adapt to challenges, and contribute to a resilient and high-performing organisation.

BTC03 - Enhanced Culture, Welfare, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Enhanced culture, welfare, equality, diversity, and inclusion will be supported through improvements to the physical training environment, ensuring it is welcoming, accessible, and reflective of the diverse needs of the workforce. This includes the introduction of inclusive facilities such as a dedicated prayer room, gender-neutral toilets, and accessible spaces that promote dignity, privacy, and respect for all individuals.

By creating an environment where everyone feels safe, valued, and able to be themselves, the organisation reinforces its commitment to fairness and belonging. These changes help remove barriers to participation, support underrepresented groups, and contribute to a more inclusive and supportive culture - ultimately improving staff wellbeing, engagement, and retention.

BTC04 - Improved Environmental Sustainability

Improved environmental sustainability will be achieved by embedding environmentally responsible practices into the design, operation, and delivery of training. This includes reducing travel through better access to on-site equipment, using energy-efficient facilities, and minimising waste through digital resources and sustainable procurement. By prioritising sustainability, the organisation demonstrates its commitment to environmental stewardship and responsible resource management.

BTC05 – Increased Social Value

Increased social value will be achieved by embedding community benefit into the planning, delivery, and operation of the training centre project. This includes using procurement frameworks that prioritise social value, engaging local contractors to support the regional economy, and creating employment and apprenticeship opportunities as part of the build and ongoing operations.

The project will also enhance community engagement through events and outreach activities, and by making conference and meeting spaces available for community bookings.

The full Benefits Realisation Plan is included in section 13.4, but the following tables provide a summary of the main benefits within each of the five categories.

Benefit	Outcome	Measurement	Target	Long Term Owner	Timescale for Delivery
BTC01 Improved operational efficiency - Higher return	BTC01.01 Better attendance on courses = less courses run & less courses cancelled	Course utilisation rate	5% increase	People and Organisational Development Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly

Benefit	Outcome	Measurement	Target	Long Term Owner	Timescale for Delivery
on training investment	BTC01.02 Reduced travel costs.	Distance travelled in Service vehicles	70% reduction	People and Organisational Development Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 48 months after centre launch Monitor: Annually
	BTC01.03 Reduced vehicle costs	Number of cars assigned to Operational Trainers	75% reduction	Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 12 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC01.04 On site training equipment.	Amount of time in lieu accrued collecting training equipment	75% reduction	People and Organisational Development Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 12 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly

Table 2 : Benefits within category BTC01

Benefit	Outcome	Measurement	Target	Long Term Owner	Timescale for Delivery
BTC02 Enhanced training quality and effectiveness - More motivated and skilled workforce	BTC02.01 Stronger recruitment appeal	Number of applicants Feedback from 12 month new starter survey Feedback on facilities	2% increase Increase to 4/5 Increase to 4/5	People and Organisational Development Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC02.02 Increased staff confidence and skill	Staff feedback on realism	Increase to 4/5	People and Organisational Development Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC02.03 Reduction in accidents in work related to training needs	Number of accidents Number of personal injury claims on training sites	1. 5% reduction 2. 25% reduction	Health, Safety & Wellbeing Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC02.04 Improved multi-agency working	Number of multi-agency events hosted by NWFRS	Increase to 3 per year	Local Resilience Forum	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Annually

Table 3 : Benefits within category BTC02

Benefit	Outcome	Measurement	Target	Long Term Owner	Timescale for Delivery
BTC03 Enhanced welfare, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	BTC03.01 Demonstrated commitment to inclusion and accessibility	Staff feedback on facilities Feedback from staff networks Number of job applicants from minority groups	5% increase in positive comment Positive feedback 5% increase	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC03.02 More Transparent Leadership	Staff feedback on leadership in the Fire Family Survey	3% increase	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Every 2 years
	BTC03.03 Demonstrated commitment to Welsh language and culture	Number of attendees at Paned a Sgwrs sessions Number of Welsh courses run internally Level of Welsh courses run internally	5% increase in attendance 5% increase Start running level 4 courses	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Quarterly

Table 4 : Benefits within category BTC03

Benefit	Outcome	Measurement	Target	Long Term Owner	Timescale for Delivery
BTC04 Improved environmental sustainability	BTC04.01 Reduction in carbon footprint	Travel emissions	25% reduction in travel miles by students	Land & Property Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Annually
	BTC04.02 Reduced potable water consumption	Annual potable water use (m³) % of non-potable water demand met by rainwater / grey water	5% reduction in potable water use 25% of non-potable water demand on site met by grey water	Land and Property Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Annually
	BTC04.04 On-site renewable energy generation	% of site's annual electricity demand met	>20% of site's annual electricity demand	Land and Property Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post launch Monitor: Annually

Table 5 : Benefits within category BTC04

Benefit	Outcome	Measurement	Target	Long Term Owner	Timescale for Delivery
BTC05 Increased social value	BTC05.01 Social value through procurement frameworks	Community/ Reputation	Amount of social value contractors have given	Finance & Procurement Committee	Start: At feasibility when first consultants procured End: Post project evaluation Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC05.02 Economic benefits by using local contractors.	Community	Locations of contractors used	Finance & Procurement Committee	Start: When first contractors are procured End: Post project evaluation Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC05.03 Jobs/ apprenticeships created by project	Community	Number of jobs and apprenticeships created with contractors Number of jobs and apprenticeships created internally	People & Organisational Development Committee	Start: When contractors are first procured End: Post project evaluation Monitor: Quarterly
	BTC05.04 Increase in community engagement events	Community	Increased number of community engagement events hosted by NWFRS Increased number of participants in events.	Prevention & Protection Performance Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post project Monitor: Annually
	BTC05.05 Community bookings of conference space	Community	Increased number of event space bookings	Finance & Procurement Committee	Start: Centre launch End: 24 months post project Monitor: Annually

Table 6 : Benefits within category BTC05

Each of these benefits has defined ownership, measurement indicators and target timescales, as set out in the Benefits Realisation Plan and monitored through the Service's established governance framework.

7.4.2 Strategic Risks

The following risks represent the long-term strategic consequences for NWFRS if investment in a new training centre does not proceed. They highlight the exposure associated with continuing reliance on ageing, fragmented sites and demonstrate why change is essential.

Delivery of the proposed training centre is essential for mitigating several long-term strategic risks currently faced by the Service. These risks are not confined to construction or project execution but relate to the broader strategic outcomes that the project is designed to secure. The key strategic risks identified are as follows:

- **Failure to meet national standards and modern operational requirements**

There is a risk that the Service will be unable to maintain compliance with national training and operational standards. This could be caused by continued dependence on ageing, geographically dispersed sites that are not designed to meet current incident command, operational response or modern training requirements. This could lead to reduced operational preparedness, inconsistent training quality and the Service falling behind in maintaining national capability expectations.

- **Workforce and inclusion risk**

There is a risk that the Services will be unable to attract, retain and support a modern and diverse workforce. This could be caused by the ongoing use of training environments that lack gender-neutral facilities, accessible welfare spaces and inclusive design features aligned to contemporary workforce needs. This could lead to lower staff satisfaction, reduced retention - particularly among underrepresented groups - and reputational impacts regarding the Service's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

- **Environmental and planning non-compliance**

There is a risk that the Service will face increasing environmental, regulatory and planning challenges at its existing training sites. This could be caused by the age, location and emissions profile of current facilities, which may no longer meet environmental standards or planning expectations. This could lead to regulatory intervention, planning objections, enforcement action and reputational damage, particularly in relation to the Service's sustainability commitments.

- **Inability to meet carbon and climate targets**

There is a risk that the Service will fail to meet statutory and local net-zero and decarbonisation targets. This could be caused by a "do-minimum" or piecemeal investment approach that cannot deliver the required carbon reductions or modern energy-efficient design standards. This could lead to increased long-term costs, greater complexity in future decarbonisation works, and non-alignment with Welsh Government and local climate objectives.

- **Operational efficiency and cost escalation**

There is a risk that organisational efficiency and training effectiveness will continue to deteriorate. This could be caused by the fragmented nature of the training estate, resulting in excessive staff travel, inconsistent delivery models and inefficient use of instructor time

and physical resources. This could lead to higher operating costs, lost training hours, reduced resilience during critical incidents and wider organisational performance impacts.

Each of these risks strengthens the strategic case for investment. They are not easily mitigated through small-scale upgrades or reconfigurations of existing assets. Without intervention, the Service faces increasing cost pressure, reduced capability and an erosion of public value over time.

7.4.3 Constraints

The successful delivery of the new training centre is subject to several critical constraints that must be managed effectively to keep the project on track and within scope.

- **Financial Resources:** The total capital cost for the preferred option is estimated at £49.95million. Securing the necessary capital financing, within acceptable affordability levels and sustainable financing options, is a key constraint. The project's progression is contingent on the approval of funding and the development of a robust financing model.
- **Timescales:** The project plan will impose timescales for design, procurement, construction and commissioning. Maintaining momentum in the development of the proposals is crucial.
- **Site Suitability:** The site at St Asaph Business Park has inherent physical constraints, including topography that requires retaining walls and earth movement. While due diligence has been undertaken, these characteristics will need to be accommodated in design and delivery. The project must also comply with ecological constraints pertaining to the site.
- **Planning and Regulatory Approvals:** Obtaining necessary planning permissions and adhering to building regulations and other statutory requirements will be a key constraint.
- **BREEAM 'Excellent' Target:** The project has a target of achieving a BREEAM 'Excellent' rating. This will impose constraints on design and material selection to meet the required criteria.

7.4.4 Dependencies

The progression and success of the project is heavily reliant on a number of key dependencies, each of which plays a vital role in ensuring that the project can move forward smoothly and achieve its intended outcomes.

1. **Capital Financing Approval:** The project is dependent upon securing Welsh Government capital funding to deliver RIBA Stages 5 to 7 (construction through to hand-over). The Service has already funded land acquisition and will meet the cost of all work up to and including RIBA Stage 4 from its own resources. Progression to construction will be subject to confirmation of Welsh Government support.
2. **Welsh Government Engagement:** The project is dependent on constructive engagement with Welsh Government, including exploring financial assistance, grants or joint initiatives that contribute to affordability.
3. **NWFRA Approval:** The project is dependent on timely formal approvals from the Authority at key decision-making gateways.

4. **Planning and Regulatory Approvals:** The project is dependent on securing planning permission and meeting building regulations and other statutory approvals to allow construction to proceed.
5. **Procurement Processes:** The project is dependent on successful and timely procurement of consultants and contractors through compliant frameworks (e.g. SCAPE, North Wales Construction Framework).
6. **Stakeholder Support:** The project is dependent on continued support in principle from internal stakeholders, including the Budget Scrutiny Working Group and Trade Union representatives.
7. **Utility Connections:** The project is dependent on securing agreements and timely delivery of electricity, water, drainage and telecommunications connections from utility providers, including Welsh Water and SPEN.
8. **Collaboration with North Wales LRF Partners:** The realisation of multi-agency training benefits is dependent on the willingness and availability of Local Resilience Forum partners (Police, Ambulance Service, Local Authorities) to participate in joint exercises.
9. **Addressing Site Conditions:** The project is dependent on accommodating known site characteristics (e.g. topography requiring retaining walls, presence of historic buried foundations, drainage design restrictions due to Great Crested Newt mitigation).
10. **Maintaining Momentum:** The project is dependent on maintaining programme discipline, with key milestones and gateway reviews achieved in line with the project plan.

In addition to these project-specific dependencies, there are also strategic interdependencies with wider organisational programmes that will influence the realisation of certain long-term benefits. These include the Service's Estates Strategy, Workforce Development Plan and EDI objectives. The effective alignment and timing of these parallel initiatives will be essential to maximising the full value of the training centre investment.

These broader interdependencies will be tracked and managed through the Project Board, which will maintain shared risk registers and ensure appropriate cross-representation.

7.5 Key Stakeholders

The Service has carried out structured consultation with key internal and external stakeholders throughout the development of the Outline Business Case. Engagement has been designed to capture operational insight, financial assurance, workforce views and governance oversight at each stage of the process.

The Consultation Log is included in *Appendix 9 – Stakeholder Consultation Log*, but the key engagement activities have included:

- **Elected Members**
 - Members Budget Scrutiny Committee
 - Provided scrutiny and strategic input throughout development.
 - The Strategic Outline Case was formally approved by the NWFRA in October 2024.

- **Service Leadership Team**
 - Formal oversight and strategic direction through SLT meetings.
- **Project Governance Groups**
 - Project Board (meeting every six weeks)
 - Project Group (meeting every six weeks)
 - Oversight of progress, risk and delivery planning.
- **Workforce Engagement**
 - Consultation sessions with operational training staff and wider personnel
 - Feedback used to shape training needs, welfare provision and site functionality.
- **Trade Union Representatives**
 - Ongoing engagement to represent workforce interests and ensure fair staff considerations.
- **External Advisors & Technical Specialists**
 - Input from architects, building services engineers, cost consultants and project management partners to refine technical, financial and delivery assumptions.
- **Welsh Government**
 - Engagement as a potential funding partner and strategic stakeholder, including discussion of capital support.
- **Local Resilience Forum (LRF) Partners**
 - Engagement to consider future joint training potential and interoperability requirements.
- **Local Communities**
 - Personalised communications with local residents, community groups and neighbouring businesses.

In keeping with the Welsh Government Better Business Case practice, the Consultation Log also records ongoing programme communications and approvals at defined gateway stages.

Further engagement is planned during detailed design and through the Full Business Case stage to ensure continued alignment with operational and strategic needs.

7.6 Strategic Case Summary

The Strategic Case sets out a clear and compelling rationale for investment in a new, centralised Training Centre at St Asaph. It demonstrates that the project directly addresses the operational, environmental and organisational challenges currently faced by the Service, while fully aligning with Welsh Government and national fire-sector priorities.

The case for change is founded on three core drivers:

1. **Ageing and inadequate facilities** - existing sites at Dolgellau, Rhyl, Wrexham and Deeside are outdated, inefficient and non-compliant with modern safety, accessibility and environmental standards.

2. **Fragmented delivery model** - multiple dispersed sites create duplication, excessive travel, inconsistent training and lost efficiency.
3. **Evolving statutory and workforce requirements** - new regulations, sustainability commitments and EDI expectations cannot be met within the current estate.

The proposed centre will consolidate all major training activities into a single, purpose-built, net-zero-ready campus that provides realistic, immersive and inclusive learning environments. It will enable the Service to deliver training that is safer, more consistent and more representative of modern operational risks, while reducing its environmental impact and long-term costs.

The project aligns with:

- The NWFRS Community Risk Management Plan (2024–2029) and the Authority's core principles of People, Prevention, Protection, Response and Environment;
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its goals for a prosperous, resilient, equal and globally responsible Wales; and
- Recommendations from the Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor for Wales on modernising and standardising operational training.

By meeting the three Spending Objectives of High-Quality and Future-Proofed Facilities, Inclusive and Accessible Design and Environmental Sustainability, the project will improve firefighter capability, enhance staff wellbeing and demonstrate public-sector leadership in decarbonisation.

In summary, the Strategic Case confirms that the new Training Centre is essential, achievable and strategically aligned, providing a long-term, sustainable solution that will strengthen the Service's ability to protect the people and communities of North Wales.

8 Economic Case

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Economic Case is to demonstrate that the preferred option represents the best value for money for the public sector by optimising the balance of costs, benefits, risks and outcomes over the life of the investment.

The Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors (CSFs) were shaped during an early workshop that brought together a broad mix of stakeholders. These included operations, estates, training and finance leads as well as representation from the NWFR and the Union. This approach ensured that the criteria reflected the Service's statutory responsibilities, day-to-day operational needs and longer-term ambitions. The draft objectives and CSFs were subsequently reviewed and endorsed by the Project Board to confirm alignment with the wider Community Risk Management Plan and the Service's long-term estates strategy.

These Spending Objectives and CSFs formed the foundation of the options appraisal process described in Section 8.3. Every potential option was assessed qualitatively against these agreed criteria to determine its strategic fit, feasibility and likely contribution to the Service's long-term aims. This ensured that only those options offering a clear line of sight to the Spending Objectives and meeting the minimum CSF thresholds were carried forward for detailed consideration.

This section sets out the longlist of options that were initially considered for meeting the Service's training and operational needs, the rationale for shortlisting and the identification of a preferred option. It also explains how the shortlist options have been assessed against CSFs and how non-monetary benefits have informed the overall value-for-money judgement.

In line with HM Treasury's Green Book and Better Business Case methodology, the analysis considers both qualitative and quantitative evidence where available, with particular emphasis on strategic fit, deliverability and public value.

8.2 The Process

The options appraisal followed the standard two-stage approach set out in HM Treasury's Green Book and the Five Case Model (Better Business Case) guidance. This process was designed to ensure that all reasonable options for delivering the Service's training needs were identified, tested and narrowed down in a transparent and evidence-based way.

8.2.1 Stage 1 : Long-list development and qualitative screening

An extensive list of 101 potential ideas was first generated through internal workshops with Service personnel, project partners and advisors. These ideas explored different ways of meeting the

identified training and operational challenges and were grouped under the five standard appraisal lenses: Scope, Solution, Delivery, Implementation and Funding.

Each idea was then screened qualitatively against the agreed Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors (CSFs) to assess its strategic fit, deliverability and potential affordability. Options that were clearly unrealistic, unaffordable or inconsistent with statutory duties and sustainability targets were discounted at this stage.

This initial screening process reduced the 101 ideas to a long list of 37 credible options that were considered both feasible and strategically aligned. These 37 long-listed options were then analysed in greater detail to understand how they might combine into realistic delivery approaches.

8.2.2 Stage 2 : Short-list appraisal and the Preferred Option

The 37 long listed options were reviewed to identify representative combinations of scope, solution, delivery and funding approaches that captured the full range of viable choices available to the Service. Similar or overlapping options were consolidated into four coherent short-listed options, reflecting increasing levels of intervention and ambition.

These four short-listed options were then appraised qualitatively (and, where possible, quantitatively) against the same Spending Objectives and CSFs to assess their relative strengths, weaknesses and overall value for money.

The resulting short list led to the following solutions for further appraisal:

1. **Do Nothing** - Maintain existing facilities without further investment.
2. **Do Minimum** - Limited compliance and maintenance upgrades.
3. **New Training Centre (Preferred)** - Construct a new single-agency, purpose-built training centre at St Asaph.
4. **New Enhanced Training Centre** - As per Option 3 plus additional non-statutory props and specialist areas.



Figure 4 : Process for Developing the Solutions Short List

This two-stage process provided a clear and auditable pathway from an initial wide-ranging set of ideas to a concise set of robust options for detailed appraisal within this Outline Business Case.

8.3 Spending Objectives

The Spending Objectives that underpin this Economic Case are defined within the Strategic Case (Section 7.3.6). These objectives establish the outcomes that the investment must deliver and provide the basis for assessing the relative performance of each option.

Each shortlisted option has therefore been appraised against its ability to:

- Deliver modern, high-quality and future-proofed training facilities;
- Provide inclusive and accessible environments for all staff; and
- Achieve long-term environmental sustainability and value for money.

The detailed appraisal that follows demonstrates how each option performs against these objectives and the associated Critical Success Factors.

8.4 Critical success factors (CSFs)

The following Critical Success Factors have been developed to assess the viability and desirability of each option considered. These CSFs reflect the strategic objectives of the Service and are consistent with Better Business Case methodology:

Critical Success Factor	Explanation
Strategic Fit & Business Needs	The extent to which the option supports the Service's long-term operational and training needs, aligns with national and regional fire service priorities and delivers the intended strategic outcomes.
Potential Value for Money	The option's potential to deliver a balanced combination of benefits and costs, including lifecycle and operational efficiency.
Supplier capacity and capability	The likelihood that the market has the capacity, skills and experience to deliver the option successfully within the required timeframes and quality standards.
Potential affordability	The option's alignment with anticipated capital and revenue budgets, including its ability to attract funding and avoid unsustainable cost burdens.
Potential achievability	The degree to which the option can be successfully implemented, taking into account project complexity, dependencies, risk, governance arrangements and organisational readiness.

Table 7 : Critical Success Factors

8.5 Long Listed Options

8.5.1 Preference of Long Listed Options

The table below summarises the 37 long-listed options that emerged from the initial screening. Each option is presented under the five appraisal lenses and has been colour-coded red, amber or green (RAG) to show its relative alignment with the Spending Objectives and Critical Success Factors. The RAG ratings were based on structured discussions with the Project Team, drawing upon their professional judgment rather than formal scoring.

Green indicates strong alignment and inclusion within the preferred way forward, amber reflects partial alignment or limited applicability and red identifies options that were discounted at this stage. This summary provides a clear record of how the Service assessed the feasibility and strategic fit of each potential approach before developing the short list of four representative options.

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
SCOPE Accommodate	Space for NWFRS Training Services	Space for NWFRS Corporate Services	Combination of Options A & B			
SCOPE Training Services	Hot firefighters centre	Classrooms/ lecture theatres	VR suites for incident command	Open-air training grounds	Combination of Options A-D	
SCOPE Corporate Services	Conference facilities.	Headquarters.	General office space.	H&S.	Fleet function.	Combination of Options A-C
SOLUTION Location	Build new premises on one site that can accommodate the agreed scope.	Collaboration build (NWP / WAST) with private industry / MOD	Lease from an external provider.			
SOLUTION If Build	Build on the existing NWFRS owned site.	Build on a site owned by a public sector partner (incl military).	Build on a new site (yet to be purchased).			

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
SOLUTION Build Style	Standard building method.	Low carbon building.	LPG/Carbon Mix (Clean Burn).			
DELIVERY	In-House Delivery with a Dedicated Project Team	Traditional 'Design-Bid-Build' Approach	'Turnkey' or Single Contractor Delivery	Design + Build Project: Single Stage	In-House Delivery with External Support	
IMPLEMENTATION	Within 1 Year (from FBC approval)	Within 3 Years (from FBC approval)	Within 5 years (from FBC approval)	Within 7 years (from FBC approval)		
FUNDING	Welsh Government / Grant Funding	Philanthropy, Sponsorship or Corporate Social Responsibility	Denbighshire County Council (and their partners)	Collaboration Funding (NWP/WAST)	Local Councils (FRA)	

Table 8 : Summary of Long List Options

8.6 Shortlisted Options

The short-listing process was undertaken through a structured workshop with representatives from the Project Board, Training Centre Members Working Group, Finance, Estates and external advisers. Each long-listed option was assessed qualitatively against five lenses - Scope, Solution, Delivery, Implementation and Funding - and scored according to its strategic fit, potential value for money, deliverability and affordability.

Options that failed to meet statutory training requirements, carried disproportionate risk, or offered poor alignment with the Service's sustainability and inclusion priorities were discounted. The remaining options were refined into a shortlist of four credible choices for further appraisal within this Outline Business Case. These represent a progressive range of intervention. From maintaining the status quo through to an enhanced training centre they provide a sound basis for identifying the preferred option.

The shortlisted options are:

- **Option 1 - Do Nothing:** Maintain the existing dispersed facilities without further investment.
- **Option 2 - Do Minimum:** Undertake only essential maintenance and limited compliance upgrades (e.g. meeting minimum EDI requirements).
- **Option 3 - New Training Centre (Preferred):** Develop a new, purpose-built, single-agency training centre at St Asaph.
- **Option 4 – New Enhanced Training Centre:** As per Option 3 plus additional non-statutory props and specialist areas.

The following sections describe each option in more detail, summarising their key features, assumptions, costs, benefits and risks.

8.6.1 Option 1 – Do Nothing

This option assumes that NWFRS continues to operate its existing portfolio of training facilities at Dolgellau, Rhyl, Wrexham, Deeside and a third party facility with no further investment beyond basic statutory maintenance. Training would remain dispersed across multiple sites, using outdated props and infrastructure that no longer reflect modern fire-fighting environments or national standards.

The Do Nothing option provides the baseline for comparison in the economic appraisal. While it involves no new capital outlay, it fails to address the significant operational, environmental and inclusion-related risks identified in the Strategic Case. Service capability would continue to erode as facilities deteriorate, creating increasing costs, reduced realism of training and growing exposure to regulatory and reputational risk. For this reason Option 1 has been discounted as a viable way forward.

8.6.2 Option 2 – Do Minimum

The Do Minimum option would involve targeted investment at existing sites to maintain basic operational safety, meet immediate compliance obligations (e.g. electrical, structural and health-and-safety works) and extend the usable life of the facilities for a limited period. Improvements would be minimal - covering only essential repairs and minor compliance updates (e.g. meeting minimum EDI requirements).

This option offers short-term risk reduction but does not resolve the fundamental issues of geographic fragmentation, poor accessibility, lack of realism, or environmental performance. It would deliver limited benefit relative to cost and would not align with Welsh Government sustainability objectives or the Service's Net Zero 2030 commitment. As such, it is considered a temporary and low-value intervention.

8.6.3 Option 3 – New Training Centre

This option involves the design and construction of a new, purpose-built training centre at St Asaph Business Park to serve as the Service's central training hub. The centre would consolidate existing functions – including fire-behaviour training, incident command, technical rescue, breathing-apparatus school, classrooms and welfare spaces - into a single, modern campus designed to BREEAM 'Excellent' and Zero Carbon standards.

The new centre would provide immersive, realistic training environments, improved welfare and inclusion facilities, and modern decontamination infrastructure. It would deliver operational efficiencies, reduce travel and maintenance costs, and ensure compliance with statutory and

environmental requirements. This option is considered the best balance of affordability, deliverability and long-term public value, and therefore represents the preferred option.

8.6.4 Option 4 – New Enhanced Training Centre

This option builds on Option 3 by adding a wider set of training props and non-statutory elements proposed through stakeholder engagement (e.g., additional simulation sets, specialist scenario areas, expanded classrooms/ancillary spaces). These features are desirable but not essential to meet statutory obligations. This is often referred to as the “Do Maximum” option in the Better Business Case methodology.

While the additional features could enhance training experience, Option 4 has been discounted at OBC stage because: (i) it exceeds the Service's core requirements; (ii) the current site cannot accommodate the expanded footprint without significant compromise; and (iii) it does not improve Value for Money relative to Option 3 due to higher capital and lifecycle costs.

Option 3 remains the preferred solution as it meets all statutory requirements and critical success factors at lower cost and complexity.

8.6.5 Comparison of Short Listed Options

Option	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
1 – Do Nothing	Maintain existing training facilities without further investment.	- No immediate capital cost. - No short-term operational disruption.	- Fails to meet statutory training standards. - Continued health & safety and compliance risks. - Increasing maintenance and inefficiency costs. - Does not address workforce development or sustainability objectives. - Business continuity risk - Unexpected failures or enforcement issues - Fails to extend the life of the buildings beyond five years
2 – Do Minimum	Undertake essential maintenance and limited refurbishment to maintain basic compliance.	- Lower upfront cost. - Delivers short-term statutory compliance.	- Short lifespan; limited improvement in training quality. - Does not future-proof facilities. - Poor long-term value for money.

Option	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
		Minimises immediate disruption.	Fails to achieve operational consolidation or efficiency gains.
3 – New Training Centre	Construct a new single-agency, purpose-built training centre on the central site at St Asaph.	- Modern, fit-for-purpose environment supporting all training types. - Delivers strategic consolidation and efficiency. - Improves safety, inclusivity and sustainability. - Provides long-term value for money and reduced operating costs. - Enhances staff morale and recruitment.	- Higher initial capital requirement. - Requires site development approvals. - Longer lead time to realise benefits.
Option 4 – New Enhanced Training Centre	Option 3 scope plus non-statutory “nice-to-have” props and elements identified during engagement.	Potentially richer training scenarios; improved user experience.	- Not required to meet legal obligations - Larger footprint than the site can sensibly accommodate - Highest initial capital requirement - Weaker Value for Money than Option 3 - Adds delivery complexity with no commensurate public value gain. - Extended development timeline and increased delivery risk. - Longest lead time to realise benefits.

Table 9 : Advantages & Disadvantages of Short List Options

8.7 Site Accessibility Analysis

To support the appraisal of options, the Service engaged external consultants to analyse travel times to various potential sites across North Wales. The analysis demonstrated that St Asaph was the most accessible location in terms of journey time for the majority of the region. The outcomes of this

accessibility assessment are summarised in the following map and were a key factor in identifying St Asaph as the preferred location for the new training centre, taking into account availability of land and likelihood for planning consent.

- Area 1 : **89%** of fire stations can reach this area within 60 minutes
- Area 2 : **73%** of fire stations can reach this area within 60 minutes
- Area 3 : **59%** of fire stations can reach this area within 60 minutes
- Area 4 : **44%** of fire stations can reach this area within 60 minutes

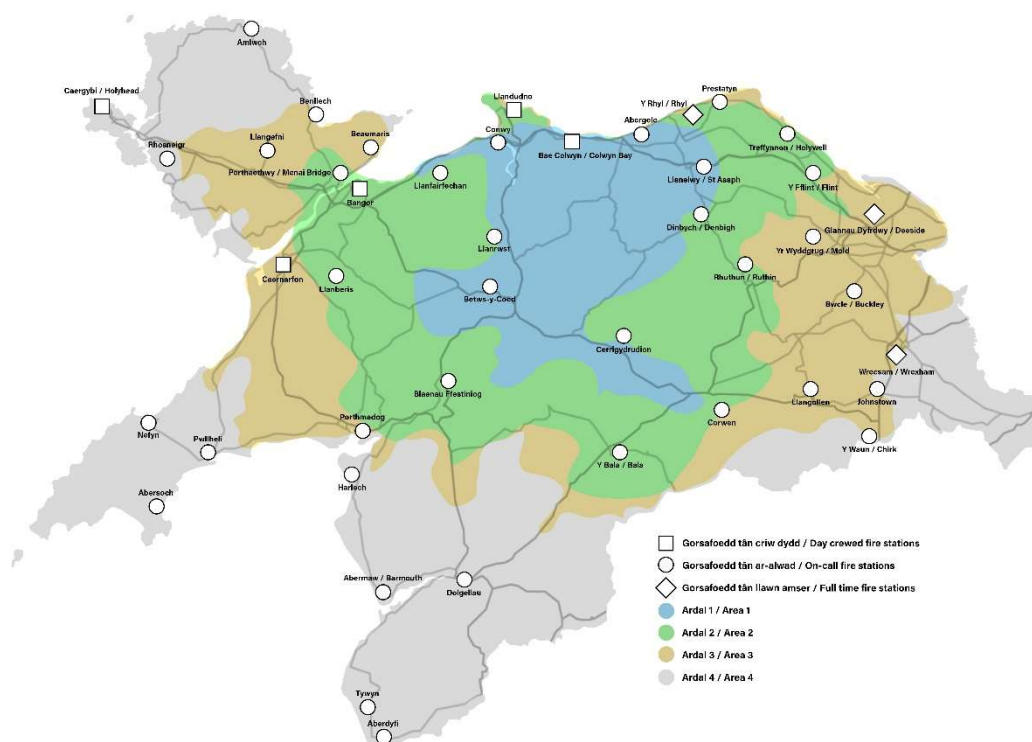


Figure 5 : Map highlighting accessibility of each area within 60 minutes

8.8 Benefits Appraisal

The primary goal of any public sector proposal is to maximise social or public value, defined as "all significant costs and benefits that affect the welfare and wellbeing of the population, not just market effects." (HM Treasury, 2022, Green Book)

The benefits were categorised as:

1. **Monetisable:** where monetary-equivalent benefits can be reliably estimated
2. **Quantifiable:** where benefits can be measured but not monetised
3. **Qualitative:** benefits that can neither be measured nor monetised

This framework provides a comprehensive view of the investment case whilst being transparent about analytical limitations and uncertainties.

8.8.1 Monetised Benefits

8.8.1.1 Economics and social benefits

The Service has a statutory obligation under the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 to maintain a service capable of dealing effectively with fire and other emergencies. Investment in the Training Centre directly supports this core duty by ensuring firefighters are equipped with the skills, knowledge and operational readiness to protect both themselves and the public.

Effective training can plausibly be expected to reduce the economic and social costs of fire incidents. The Home Office (2023) provides robust estimates of these costs as follows³:

Cost type	
Home Office (2023) estimates	
Cost Per Fire: All Fires Attended (2019/20 prices)	£20,900
Cost Per Fatality: All Fires (2019/20 prices)	£1,282,339
Inflation adjustment	
GDP Deflator Index (2019/20 to 2025/26)	1.27
Cost Per Fire: All Fires Attended (2025/26 prices)	£26,501
Cost Per Fatality: All Fires (2025/26 prices)	£1,282,339
Present Value over 30-year operating period	
Standard discount rate	3.50%
Health discount rate	1.50%
PV Cost Per Fire: All Fires Attended	£14,443.70
PV Cost Per Fatality: All Fires	£993,389.71

Table 10 : The Economic & Social Costs of Fire Incidents

³ Inflation: The Home Office's cost per fire has been uprated for inflation. The cost per fatality is based on the impact of fire-related fatalities on quality-adjusted life years (QALYs), a standardised health measure. Following Treasury guidance, the value of a QALY has remained at £70k between 2019/20 and 2025/26 and so this value has not been uprated. Discounting: since the potential reduction in fires and fatalities, associated with the training centre, would occur over the 30-year operating period, these costs are discounted to present values (PV), using the Treasury standard and health discount rates, respectively.

Over the operating period of the training centre, the estimated present value cost per fire attended is approx. £14,400. Similarly, the cost per fatality is just under £1 million.

Whilst it is possible to value these unit costs of fire, it is not possible to reliably quantify the causal link between investment in the new training facility and potential risk reductions. Specifically, it is not possible to estimate with confidence:

- how many fewer incidents might occur through improved operational effectiveness; or
- by how much incident costs (e.g. property damage, injuries, deaths) might be mitigated.

This evidence gap is not unique to the Service: it reflects a fundamental challenge in evaluating safety training across emergency services and other high-consequence sectors. Training outcomes - changes in firefighter behaviour, decision-making under pressure, tactical proficiency - are difficult to observe and even harder to link causally to population-level safety outcomes, which are influenced by numerous confounding factors beyond training quality.

As the Green Book acknowledges, where full cost-benefit analysis is not possible or appropriate, other forms of value for money analysis can still inform the options analysis. The approach is, therefore, to use breakeven analysis (below). The method asks: what reduction in fatalities would be required to justify the investment costs?

8.8.1.2 Operational cost savings

The current training estate comprises five dispersed sites across North Wales (Dolgellau, Rhyl, Wrexham, Deeside, and a third party facility). Consolidation to a single St Asaph facility generates substantial annual cost savings, totalling over £300,000 annually under Options 3 and 4.⁴

Item	Option 3	Option 4
Travel cost savings	£67,500	£67,500
Reduction in leased vehicles	£72,509	£72,509
Reduction in TOIL/Overtime	£68,772	£68,772
Third-party hire avoided	£15,975	£30,975
Utility cost savings (energy, water, waste)	£60,000	£60,000
Non-domestic rates saving	£15,250	£15,250
PV export income	£4,358	£4,358
Total annual savings	£304,364	£319,364

Table 11 : Annual Revenue Cost Savings

⁴ Zero savings are projected under Options 1 and 2

These savings are incorporated into the net revenue cost projections, and amount to a £5.5 million saving under Option 3. The savings for Option 4 are £5.82 million, a relatively modest increase when compared to the preferred option.⁵

Option	Total (£m)
Nominal, undiscounted	
Offsets: Option 3	£16.15
Offsets: Option 4	£16.94
Real terms, present value	
Offsets: Option 3	£5.54
Offsets: Option 4	£5.82

Table 12 : Savings for Options 3 and 4

8.8.2 Quantifiable Benefits

The Training Centre delivers other measurable operational improvements that are quantifiable, but not easily monetised, including:

- Improved training course utilisation rates through better scheduling coordination at a single site; and
- Reduced course cancellations due to facility unavailability or maintenance issues.

The Service will establish baseline metrics for these indicators and set improvement targets as part of the 11.8 Benefits Realisation Plan (see the Management Case). They primarily represent internal efficiency gains rather than direct value creation.

8.8.3 Qualitative Benefits

Beyond quantifiable improvements in operational efficiency, the Training Centre is expected to deliver substantial qualitative benefits that are central to the strategic case for investment but cannot be readily measured or monetised in economic terms. These benefits are nonetheless critical to achieving the Service's statutory obligations, strategic objectives and Welsh Government priorities. This section sets out the most significant qualitative impacts, structured around five key themes.

⁵ They are treated as fiscal saving accruing to the Service and thus treated as a cost 'offset' rather than an economic benefit.

8.8.3.1 Training quality and operational readiness

The current dispersed estate suffers from fundamental limitations that constrain training effectiveness. The facilities vary in age, condition and capability.

In future, this fragmentation will begin to force more compromises in course design, limit the complexity of scenarios that can be delivered, and restrict the Service's ability to prepare personnel for the full spectrum of risks they will encounter across North Wales.

The new facility will transform training provision through:

- **Purpose-built training zones:** distinct environments simulating incident scenarios that reflect the geographic and risk diversity of North Wales;
- **Immersive, realistic training settings:** enabling firefighters to experience high-pressure decision-making in conditions that closely replicate operational incidents, enhancing muscle memory, tactical proficiency, and crew coordination;
- **Modern safety systems and monitoring technology:** allowing instructors to observe trainee performance in real-time, provide immediate feedback, and capture learning outcomes that can inform continuous improvement;
- **Fit-for-purpose welfare facilities:** including changing rooms, decontamination areas, rest spaces, and catering provisions that meet contemporary health, safety, and dignity standards; and
- **Technological infrastructure:** supporting the integration of simulation and data analytics into training delivery, future-proofing the facility against evolving operational requirements.

Consolidation will enable instructors to dedicate their focus to training delivery rather than the extra logistics, facility management and coordination required of dispersed sites. This should improve both the consistency and quality of training experiences for all personnel.

The Service will measure changes in training quality through end-of-course participant evaluations, triennial workforce surveys, instructor assessments of competency progression and tracking of operational incident performance indicators. Whilst these metrics will not be monetised, they will form part of the Benefits Realisation Plan supporting ongoing evidence of value delivery (see the Management Case).

8.8.3.2 Multi-agency collaboration and JESIP compliance

The [Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles](#) (JESIP) provide the operational framework for effective multi-agency working during major incidents and regular joint exercising is essential to embed these principles into practice.

The current facilities are likely to constrain multi-agency training opportunities. Site limitations - including capacity, access arrangements and welfare provision - will make it more difficult to host partner organisations for joint exercises.

The new Training Centre has been designed from the outset with multi-agency collaboration in mind. Its scale, facilities and strategic St Asaph location will enable the Service to deliver JESIP-

compliant training covering command structures, communication protocols and shared situational awareness.

It will also allow the Service to offer training facilities to other partner organisations, strengthening collaborative working relationships and demonstrating public sector efficiency through shared asset use.

These capabilities directly support the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, particularly the goals of building a [more equal Wales](#) through collaborative public service delivery and [a resilient Wales](#) capable of adapting to emergencies and systemic risks. While difficult to monetise, this is nonetheless critical to operational success during complex, high-consequence incidents where effective coordination saves lives.

8.8.3.3 Workforce recruitment, retention, and wellbeing

Fire and rescue services across the UK face growing workforce challenges, including recruitment difficulties, competition from other emergency services and private sector employers, and increasing expectations from existing staff regarding workplace standards and equality of treatment. The quality of training facilities sends a powerful signal about organisational culture, professionalism and commitment to staff development.

These benefits in turn reduce barriers to workforce wellbeing, recruitment and retention, particularly among individuals from underrepresented backgrounds. At this stage, it is not possible to quantify the potential impact of facility quality on these outcomes, but the training environment will be a material factor in driving improvements.

8.8.3.4 Environmental sustainability and reputational leadership

The Service's [Environment Strategy 2023-2030](#) has committed to achieving net-zero carbon by 2030, aligning with [Welsh Government's climate emergency declaration](#) and statutory decarbonisation targets under the [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016](#). The new Training Centre is designed to meet this commitment through:

- Zero Carbon for regulated energy (heating, cooling, lighting and fixed building services)
- BREEAM 'Excellent' certification;
- On-site renewable energy generation through photovoltaic arrays, reducing grid dependency;
- Energy-efficient building design incorporating passive heating/cooling, high-performance insulation, and advanced building management systems; and
- Sustainable drainage and water management systems reducing environmental impact and operational costs.

Beyond direct cost reductions (above), the project anticipates delivering reduced carbon impacts that have not been quantified at this OBC stage.

The facility also addresses a significant environmental and reputational risk inherent in the current estate: live fire training is conducted within Snowdonia National Park, an internationally recognised protected landscape. This practice is increasingly incompatible with environmental protection standards, generates reputational risks for the Service and is likely unsustainable in the medium term given intensifying scrutiny of public sector environmental stewardship.

Relocating live fire training to a purpose-designed facility at St Asaph mitigates this risk whilst demonstrating environmental leadership across the Welsh public sector. The Training Centre will serve as a visible exemplar of how essential public services can be delivered sustainably, supporting the Welsh Government's ambition to make Wales a global leader in responding to climate change.

The reputational benefits extend beyond environmental credentials. A modern, flagship training facility positions the Service as a forward-thinking, professionally managed organisation, which may have material but unquantifiable benefits for partnership working, Welsh Government relations and public confidence in the Service.

8.8.3.5 Strategic flexibility and future-proofing

The fire and rescue operating environment continues to evolve. Incident types are becoming more diverse, including increased risks from flooding, extreme weather events, hazardous materials and complex technical rescues. Building standards, vehicle technologies and operational tactics all continue to change. Digital technologies - including simulation, data analytics and remote monitoring - are transforming how training can be delivered and assessed.

The current dispersed estate offers more limited flexibility to adapt to these changes over the next 30 years, and beyond. Sites are constrained by their original design, age and location. Adding new training capabilities often requires significant investment across multiple locations or could prove impractical due to each site's limitations.

The new facility provides strategic flexibility and 'future proofing' through:

- More adaptable training zones that can be reconfigured to simulate emerging risk scenarios without requiring major infrastructure changes;
- Sufficient physical scale to accommodate expanded training programmes, new operational requirements or additional partner agency use; and
- A 35-year design life with planned lifecycle maintenance ensuring the facility remains fit-for-purpose throughout its economic lifetime.

This strategic flexibility represents a significant 'option value' - the ability to respond more effectively to future changes that cannot be fully anticipated at this OBC stage. Whilst difficult to monetise, this option value is recognised in HM Treasury guidance as a legitimate consideration in public investment decisions, particularly for long-lived assets serving critical emergency functions.

8.8.3.6 Integration with monetised and quantifiable benefits

The qualitative benefits outlined above are not alternatives to the monetised and quantifiable impacts presented earlier in this Economic Case - they are complementary. Improved training quality, multi-agency collaboration, workforce wellbeing, environmental sustainability and strategic flexibility all contribute to the ultimate objective: a more capable, resilient and effective fire and rescue service that keeps people safe.

8.9 Value for Money Analysis

8.9.1 Analytical Approach

The aim of any shortlist appraisal is to assess the costs, benefits and risks of the shortlisted options in more detail. The purpose is not, necessarily, to provide a fully quantified and monetised assessment of all impacts. Indeed, the UK Government plans to "clamp down on the over-emphasis on Benefit Cost Ratios (BCRs) in government decision making" (HM Treasury, [Green Book Review 2025](#)).

Investment in the training centre is one such example where BCRs are likely to be inappropriate and misleading, as a decision metric. An alternative approach combines:

- **Cost analysis:** Absent a full cost-benefit analysis, it remains important to estimate the 'economic' (rather than financial) costs of each shortlisted option;
- **Breakeven analysis:** Estimate the number of fatalities that would need to be prevented to justify the incremental cost of each option. This serves to illustrate the scale of safety improvements required to justify investment; and
- **Risk and sensitivity analysis:** Testing key assumptions related to the above to recognise uncertainties, particularly around longer-term impacts.

The preferred option is then identified, with reference to the full range of quantifiable and unquantifiable impacts.

8.9.2 Key Assumptions

This project assumes a 35-year appraisal period.⁶ For the purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the new centre will be operational from the first day of the financial year following completion of capital works.

The Financial Case gives costs in nominal (cash) terms since the main question there relates to the affordability of the preferred option. This includes a long-run inflation estimate of 3% p.a. for both operating costs and savings/offsets.

⁶ Covering financial years 2025/26 (year 0) to 2059/60 (year 34). This includes the four-year construction phase (2025/26 to 2029/30) and a 30-year operating period (2030/31 to 2059/60)

To compare the economic costs of each shortlisted option, costs are given in 'real' terms removing the effects of general inflation. Following Treasury guidance the calculations remove inflation using the latest, long-run GDP deflator series, published by the Office for Budget Responsibility in June 2025. The price base year is 2025/26.

Costs and benefits are discounted to present values. The Treasury standard rates are applied: 3.5% for years 0-30, 3% for years 31-35. For the benefits of reduced fatalities only, the lower health discount rates are applied: 1.5% for years 0-30, 1.29% for years 31-35.

Cost assumptions relate to the project budget estimated in October 2025. These include key assumptions on buildings, utilities, facilities management and staffing (see Financial Case). The cost scenario assumes 100% Welsh Government grant funding and so borrowing costs are not included in the economic scenarios below. Sunk costs in the development of the scheme to date are excluded, following HM Treasury guidelines.

Operational costs savings (see Benefits Appraisal above) assume the following:

- Baseline travel miles/year (do nothing, dispersed site): 500,000 miles
- New miles/year (new facility): 350,000 miles
- Mileage rate: £0.45/mile (HM Revenue and Customs proxy)
- Vehicle costs: £72,509 saving from reduction leases
- TOIL/Overtime reduction: £68,772 saving
- Third-party hire avoided: £15,975/year
- Non-domestic rates saving: £15,250
- Energy costs avoided: £50,000/year
- Waste costs avoided: £10,000/year

Photovoltaic solar arrays:

- Capacity: 250 kWp (placeholder)
- Yield: 830 kWh/kWp/yr (North Wales average 830-890)
- Self-consumption: 70% (share used on-site)
- Export tariff: £0.07/kWh (conservative SEG export rate)

Optimism bias (OB)

Capital costs initially incorporated a 24% optimism bias uplift, in line with HM Treasury Green Book guidance for standard building projects. This was applied to Option 3, resulting in a capital cost of £46.3m in present value terms. However, following a detailed assessment of project-specific risks and the application of recognised mitigation measures, the OB adjustment has been reduced to **16%**. This reduction reflects proactive steps taken to address key risk drivers identified in the Green Book and evidenced in comparable business cases.

Mitigation measures include early contractor involvement during the design phase and the use of established frameworks with experienced contractors in the Fire and Rescue Service sector, significantly reducing procurement risk. The business case has been strengthened through rigorous appraisal, stakeholder involvement and sector expertise from MIAA, and Oaagrove-Mission Economics'. Furthermore, early engagement with neighbouring properties and Denbighshire Council members has mitigated reputational and environmental risks. These actions collectively provide assurance that cost estimates are more robust, justifying the reduction in OB to 16%.

Revenue costs continue to incorporate a 15% OB uplift, based on the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Cost Benefit Framework. This framework applies a conservative Grade 4 adjustment (+15%) where some assumptions are derived from ready reckoners. While cost estimates are based on sound methodologies, long-term projections carry inherent uncertainty. These assumptions will be revisited at Full Business Case (FBC) stage, where OB can typically be further reduced.

These prudent adjustments recognise that, whilst the cost estimates are based on sound methodologies, the project cannot be fully confident in long-term projections. There is scope to revisit these assumptions at the FBC stage, where OB can typically be reduced.

Confidence Grade	Colour Coding	Data Source	Age of Data	Known Data Error		Optimism Bias Correction
1		Independently audited cost data	Current Data (<1 year old)	+2%	→	0%
2		Formal service delivery contract costs	1-2 years old	+5%	→	+5%
3		Practitioner monitored costs	2-3 years old	+10%	→	+10%
4		Costs developed from ready reckoners	3-4 years old	+15%	→	+15%
5			4-5 years old	+20%	→	+25%
6		Uncorroborated expert judgement	>5 years old	+25%	→	+40%

Table 13 : Confidence Grade for Cost Data

8.9.3 Summary of Capital and Revenue Costs

The table below summarises the estimated costs for all four shortlisted options over the appraisal period. Net revenue figures incorporate the annual operational savings estimated above.

Cost (£ millions)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Nominal (cash) terms, undiscounted				
Net revenue	£13.53	£37.60	£51.04	£58.60
Capital	£16.46	£35.12	£49.95	£58.21
Public Sector Cost	£29.99	£72.72	£100.99	£116.81
Real terms, present value				
Net revenue	£4.37	£12.75	£17.51	£20.17
Capital	£15.51	£32.64	£43.21	£49.70
PV Public Sector Cost	£19.88	£45.39	£60.72	£69.87
Optimism Bias				
Net revenue (+15% OB)	£5.02	£14.66	£20.13	£23.20
Capital (+16% OB)	£18.00	£37.86	£50.12	£57.65
PV Public Sector Cost	£23.02	£52.52	£70.26	£80.85

Table 14 : Capital & Revenue Costs for Options 1-4

Option 3 emerges with an estimated present value (PV) public sector cost of £70.26 million. The incremental investment is £47.23 m when compared to the 'Do Nothing' baseline (Option 1).

8.9.4 Breakeven Analysis Findings

Breakeven analysis establishes a threshold outcome improvement required to justify the net public investment. In this case, the analysis focuses upon the circa £1 million unit cost per fire-related fatality (above) and estimates the number of fatalities that would need to be prevented to justify the additional costs of different options.

Breakeven Analysis	Option 3 vs 1	Option 3 vs 2	Option 4 vs 3
Additional Cost (£ms)	47.23	17.73	10.60
Fatalities Prevented to Breakeven: Over 30 years	47.55	17.85	10.67
Fatalities Prevented to Breakeven: Annually	1.58	0.59	0.36

Table 15 : Breakeven Analysis for Options 1-4

The £47.23m incremental investment in Option 3 (compared to Option 1) would be justified by preventing around 48 fatalities over the 30-year operating period, equivalent to 1.6 fatalities each year.

The estimate applies to both firefighter and civilian deaths, representing the combined value of:

- Improvements in firefighter capability to keep themselves safe
- Their ability to protect colleagues during operations
- Their ability to keep the public safe through more effective response

The extra cost of upgrading to Option 4 (Do Maximum) requires preventing a further 11 fatalities, or 0.36 per year. Option 3 is preferred on the basis that it meets all core requirements to meet core safety objectives, whilst maintaining affordability.

Note that this analysis above is illustrative: it assumes the only benefit of training investment is through reduced fatalities. In practice, it is anticipated that most of the benefits would relate to reductions in non-fatal injuries, alongside reductions in other economic and social costs (e.g. property damage). If these wider benefits were quantified, the number of fatalities to breakeven would reduce significantly.

8.10 Risk Assessment

8.10.1 Optimism Bias

Optimism bias (OB) is included in the cost scenarios above to account for the systematic tendency to underestimate costs and overestimate benefits in project appraisals.

Such adjustments are necessary to meet Treasury standards for a compliant, economic value for money appraisal. We note that the financial costs already accounted for cost contingencies, before these adjustments are made. The costs inclusive of OB are therefore conservative and we do not, in practice, expect costs to be this high.

The Service will refine its cost estimates at the Final Business Case stage. This could reduce the appropriate level of optimism bias, given the greater cost certainty in these final estimates.

8.10.2 Key Programme Risks

Beyond optimism bias, programme risks could affect costs, benefits, or delivery. Key economic risks include:

- **Cost inflation:** Inflation for some items may exceed the long-run cost inflation assumption of 3%. Mitigation: Early market engagement, contingency allowance, value engineering, and target cost contracts
- **Site-specific issues:** Ground conditions or utilities may require additional remediation. Mitigation: Comprehensive surveys; contingency allowances.

- **Planning delays:** Delays in approvals could extend timelines. Mitigation: Early engagement with Denbighshire County Council.
- **Operational transition:** Consolidating five sites may create temporary disruption. Mitigation: Phased transition; parallel running.
- **Revenue savings not fully realised:** Estimated £304k savings may not materialise fully. Mitigation: Benefits realisation tracking; early site disposal strategy.

These risks are reflected in the project risk register and will be actively managed through governance arrangements in the Management Case.

8.10.3 Sensitivity Analysis

To understand sensitivity to cost uncertainty, variation in the PV Public Sector cost across all options is considered, assuming:

- **Lower scenario:** No optimism bias (OB). Forecast costs materialise.
- **Central estimate:** As above, 16% OB on capital and 15% on revenue costs.
- **Higher scenario:** Additional 20% accounting for more extreme cost increases, such as a sustained period of high UK cost inflation.

PB Public Sector Cost (£ millions)	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Low: Without Optimism Bias	£19.88	£45.39	£60.72	£69.87
Central: With Optimism Bias	£23.02	£52.52	£70.26	£80.85
High: Plus +20% Cost	£27.63	£63.03	£84.31	£97.02

Table 16 : Comparison of Costs

The key observation from this risk analysis is that overlaps in the cost range for Options 1, 2 and 3 are unlikely.

There is a more significant overlap between the preferred option and 'Do Maximum' (Option 4). However, the main cost drivers for Option 3 and 4 are similar. Option 3 therefore remains a lower-cost option than Option 4, in most plausible scenarios.

8.11 Preferred Option

8.11.1 Selection Criteria

The optimal option balances economic justification, operational impact, strategic alignment, and practical deliverability - not simply minimising cost or maximising the theoretical benefit. Selection is informed by four primary considerations:

1. **Breakeven analysis:** Does the monetisable reduction in fatality risk represent a credible threshold, even before we consider other benefits?
2. **Quantifiable operational benefits:** What measurable efficiency gains and cost savings does each option deliver, beyond the primary safety case?
3. **Qualitative strategic benefits:** How effectively does each option deliver the Service's strategic objectives and Welsh Government priorities?
4. **Affordability and deliverability:** Can the option be funded within anticipated resources and delivered within the required timeframe?

8.11.2 Value for Money Assessment

8.11.2.1 Option 1: Do Nothing

This option perpetuates limitations in the current dispersed training estate. Whilst it has the lowest upfront cost, it delivers no capability improvements, and leaves the Service exposed to escalating maintenance costs and operational inefficiencies. The option is inconsistent with the spending objectives established in the Strategic Case.

Recommendation: Not recommended.

8.11.2.2 Option 2: Do Minimum

The Do Minimum option delivers minimal strategic benefit. Facilities remain fragmented. Travel, energy, environmental and workforce inefficiencies persist. The Service would operate with increasingly outdated infrastructure that is not future-proofed. Option 2 therefore represents poor value: it commits additional substantial resources to a 'half-measure' that fails to resolve the fundamental problems driving this investment.

Recommendation: Not recommended.

8.11.2.3 Option 3: Preferred Option – New Training Centre with HQ, Stores, and Overnight accommodation for course attendees

Option 3 consolidates all training provision into a single, purpose-built facility at St Asaph. This represents the optimal balance across all four selection criteria:

1. **Public safety:** The investment requires preventing 1.70 additional fatalities per year. If non-fatal injuries and wider benefits were included, the threshold would drop to a highly attainable level.
2. **Cost savings:** Consolidation generates £304,000 in annual operational savings (£5.54 million present value) through reduced travel, eliminated third-party hire, lower utility costs, and avoided TOIL/overtime. These provide material value beyond the public safety case.
3. **Qualitative benefits:** The facility delivers modern inclusive facilities supporting workforce recruitment, Zero Carbon and BREEAM Excellent environmental standards, resolution of the national park live fire training risk, and strategic flexibility for future requirements - all aligned with Welsh Government priorities under the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015.
4. **Affordable and deliverable:** The £49.95 million capital cost (nominal) is more affordable than the 'Do Maximum' option below. The project supports OBC submission by December 2025 and operational use from 2030/31, using proven construction methodologies that mitigate delivery risk.

Recommendation: Preferred option. Recommended for approval at OBC stage.

8.11.2.4 Option 4: Do Maximum -New Enhanced Training Centre with HQ, Stores, and overnight accommodation for course attendees

Option 4 costs an additional £11.95 million (total present value). However, core strategic objectives are fully met by Option 3. In public sector capital appraisal, it is prudent to secure approval for a robust core solution, rather than to pursue enhanced specifications that may exceed these objectives.

Recommendation: Not recommended at OBC stage.

8.12 Conclusion

Option 3 represents strong value for money on multiple, mutually reinforcing grounds. We noted the Home Office's research, highlighting significant economic and social costs per fire, and per fire-related fatalities. Our conservative 'breakeven' analysis focuses on fatalities alone; actual benefits will include substantial reductions in non-fatal injuries, property and other damage costs. Beyond the safety case, the new facility is expected to deliver over £300,000 in annual operational savings, comprehensive strategic benefits, workforce inclusivity and environmental leadership.

The Commercial, Financial, and Management Cases further demonstrate that it can be procured efficiently, funded sustainably and delivered successfully.

9 Commercial Case

9.1 Introduction

The Commercial Case outlines how the preferred option for delivering a new training centre at St Asaph Business Park can be delivered commercially. It explains the procurement strategy, market engagement, contracting and payment arrangements and sustainability considerations. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that the project is commercially viable, attractive to the market and compliant with public procurement regulations.

9.2 Procurement strategy

The procurement will be managed by the Service's experienced in-house procurement team.

9.2.1 Route to market

The Service has considered a range of procurement options for securing the required design and construction services to deliver the new training centre. These options included:

- A restricted or open procurement procedure;
- Use of a pre-procured public sector framework;
- Single-stage design and build procurement;
- Two-stage design and build procurement.

Following internal review and market engagement, the Service intends to pursue a two-stage design and build route, using a recognised public sector framework. This approach is expected to deliver the best balance of speed, risk management, market attractiveness and value for money. It also allows for early contractor involvement, which is important in light of the specialised nature of the training centre and the need to achieve specific operational outcomes.

The Service intends to use the [North Wales Construction Framework](#) for contractor procurement. This framework is tailored for the Welsh public sector and embeds the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, supporting local supply chains and delivering measurable social value. It includes Key Performance Indicator (KPI) reporting on outcomes such as employment, apprenticeships and community benefit.

For design services, the Service is working with [SCAPE](#). This decision reflects SCAPE's prior involvement in feasibility work on the training centre and their extensive experience in Wales including projects such as Rhyl Leisure Centre and multiple health sector facilities. SCAPE's design partners also bring deep expertise in the fire sector, having delivered training centres for the services in Cleveland, Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Lancashire.

Legal advice for the project is being provided by VWV, procured through the [Crown Commercial Services Framework](#) (CCS). VWV are a trusted supplier who are already providing employment law and HR advisory services to the Service. They also bring direct experience of reviewing contracts with Gleeds and SCAPE, making them well-placed to support the legal and commercial dimensions of this scheme.

Should the North Wales Construction Framework be used for the procurement of the principal contractor, the process will involve inviting expressions of interest from all framework members. Contractors that confirm capability and capacity will be invited to tender using the standardised templates and evaluation process established under the framework.

The use of the North Wales Construction Framework will also ensure value for money is achieved through a further competition process. While all participating contractors have already met framework requirements regarding financial standing, technical capacity and project scale experience, the further competition mechanism reopens the framework to competitive pricing and quality submissions. The framework includes pre-agreed baseline rates but allows contractors to submit bespoke pricing and delivery proposals in response to the specific project brief. This approach ensures fair market tension, transparency and the selection of the most economically advantageous tender based on both price and quality - including a strong weighting for social value outcomes in Wales.

Appointments will be made on the basis of highest overall score, which includes both price and quality, with a strong emphasis on social value for Wales in accordance with the framework's principles and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

The Service is using the SCAPE framework for its design team appointments, having already engaged current design partners through this route to support feasibility work. SCAPE enables direct award to pre-qualified providers, allowing for rapid mobilisation, continuity of team knowledge, and confidence in cost and quality control. With a strong track record of delivery across Wales and the UK, the framework offers robust governance, capped fees, and embedded social value obligations. It is fully compliant with UK procurement regulations and supports the Service's objectives around efficiency, quality and public value.

In selecting the North Wales Construction Framework, SCAPE and the CCS framework for legal support, the Service has considered not only compliance and suitability but also the procurement-specific risks, costs and benefits associated with this approach.

The following summary demonstrates that the chosen route is robust, affordable and capable of delivering additional social and community value beyond the core construction project.

Aspect	Outline	Notes
Risks	- Limited market interest despite framework appointment. - Inflationary pressures in the construction sector. - Potential delays in framework call-off or approvals. - Risk of legal challenge if framework use is not fully compliant.	These will be managed through early market engagement, clear contract management and specialist legal support via VWV.

	Over-reliance on a single design partner.	
Costs	- Internal procurement resource time. - Legal fees for contract drafting and review. - Framework management fees (where applicable).	These costs are relatively small compared to overall project spend but should be recognised as part of the project overheads.
Benefits	- Frameworks pre-vet suppliers, reducing procurement risk. - Supports the Well-being of Future Generations Act (social value, local supply chains). - Faster route to market compared with a full OJEU/Find a Tender procedure. - Built-in KPI reporting on employment, apprenticeships and community benefit. - Access to suppliers with direct fire training centre expertise.	These benefits align directly with the Service's strategic objectives of compliance, sustainability and value for money.

Table 17 : Summary of Route to Market Approach

9.2.2 Contracting Approach

The preferred contracting approach is a two-stage design and build process.

- Stage 1 (Pre-Construction Services Agreement – PCSA):** A principal contractor will be appointed under a PCSA via the North Wales Construction Framework. This allows the contractor to support the development of the design, refine project details, and assist with risk and cost planning from an early stage. Early contractor involvement will improve cost certainty, buildability and programme management.
- Stage 2 (Design and Build Contract):** Subject to satisfactory agreement of Stage 2 tender submissions, the Service will enter into a full design and build contract with the appointed contractor. The preferred form of contract is the JCT Design and Build Contract (2024 Edition), which provides a well-established framework for large-scale capital projects with clear provisions for time, cost and quality control. This form is widely used across the public sector and aligns with the procurement route being pursued. However, the Service is also considering the NEC4 Engineering and Construction Contract (Option A or B) as an alternative, particularly if early contractor engagement or risk-sharing arrangements suggest greater benefit. The final decision will be made following legal and commercial review during the pre-construction phase. This contracting approach secures a single point of responsibility for both design and construction, ensuring alignment between the pre-construction and delivery phases and reducing the risk of costly changes during build.
- Design Services:** SCAPE's design partners will continue to be engaged under their framework arrangements. Their prior involvement in feasibility work ensures continuity, while their track record in delivering fire service training facilities elsewhere in the UK brings sector-specific expertise and reduces mobilisation risk.
- Legal Oversight:** VWV, appointed through the Crown Commercial Services Framework, will provide independent legal review and advisory services throughout both stages. Their role

will include contract drafting, risk allocation review, and ensuring that contractual arrangements are compliant with statutory and framework requirements.

The contract will be managed by the Service's project team, with professional support from a retained technical advisor and cost consultant. This approach combines the benefits of early contractor involvement, continuity of design expertise and strong legal assurance - maximising cost certainty, programme control and risk management.

9.2.3 Procurement timescales

The indicative procurement timetable is as follows:

Milestone	Target Date
Issue Stage 1 Tender (via framework)	April-2026
Return of Stage 1 Tenders	May-2026
Evaluation & Appointment of Contractor (Stage 1)	June-2026
Stage 1 Design Development / PCSA	January-2027
Issue Stage 2 Tender	January-2027
Return of Stage 2 Tenders	March-2027
Final Evaluation & Contract Award (D&B)	June-2027
Work Starts On Site	August-2027
Works Completed	May-2029

Table 18: Procurement Timetable

These timescales are subject to internal governance approvals and framework processes but have been tested for feasibility with potential suppliers.

9.2.4 Market engagement

The Service has undertaken initial informal market engagement with framework providers and construction industry stakeholders. This has confirmed that the opportunity is considered attractive to the market, particularly due to:

- The clarity of the operational brief
- The potential to develop a showcase fire training centre
- The use of a public sector framework which de-risks the procurement route.

Date	Supplier / Organisation	Engagement Method	Key Feedback	Impact on Procurement Strategy
13/01/25	Galiford Try (Building Contractor)	1:1 meeting	Strong desire to undertake a training centre project in North Wales. Advised two stage procurement, willing to invest in PCSA works and experienced team that have delivered fire service projects previously. Happy with the anticipated client team.	Supported proposal to use two stage Design & Build as the procurement model. Gave some clarity on chosen framework.
16/06/25	Morgan Sindall (Building Contractor)	1:1 Meeting	Strong desire to undertake a training centre project in North Wales. Advised two stage procurement, willing to invest in PCSA works. Gave further clarity on potential frameworks, market view on initial proposals. Happy with the anticipated client team.	Confirmed selection of North Wales Construction Framework.
19/11/25	Morgan Sindall	1:1 Meeting	Requested by Contractor for update. Also providing briefing to allow the Contractor to cost check the project for NWFRS.	Further reassurance on budget.

Table 19 : Summary of Market Engagement

The procurement process for the project has followed a phased and strategic approach, aligned with the project's development milestones. Early-stage feasibility studies were commissioned to support land identification and acquisition decisions. This was followed by the appointment of a Project Manager, and subsequently a design team via the SCAPE framework, to support technical due diligence, concept development, and pre-application planning engagement.

The next major procurement activity will be the appointment of a principal contractor to deliver the build, expected to be via the North Wales Construction Framework. This will allow early contractor involvement through a two-stage design and build route, supporting both cost control and project delivery.

9.3 Risk allocation and transfer

A clear allocation of risks between the Service and its delivery partners will be established through the Stage 2 contract. The overarching principle is that risks will be allocated to the party best placed to manage and mitigate them, ensuring value for money and minimising the likelihood of disputes.

- **Time Risks:** The contractor will be responsible for programme delivery risks within its control, including subcontractor performance and construction sequencing. The Service will retain responsibility for external approvals, such as planning or statutory consents and for changes to scope.
- **Cost Risks:** The contractor will carry the risk of cost overruns arising from design development, construction delivery and supply chain performance. The Service will retain responsibility for client-driven changes and for risks identified as "client-retained" in the risk register (e.g. unforeseen statutory changes).
- **Quality Risks:** The contractor will be responsible for workmanship, materials and compliance with agreed specifications. The Service will oversee quality assurance through its retained technical advisor and clerk of works, supported by VWV for contractual enforcement.
- **Ground Condition Risks:** Site investigations will be undertaken during the PCSA stage to identify potential ground condition risks. To the extent that unforeseen conditions remain, an appropriate risk-sharing arrangement will be embedded in the Stage 2 contract to balance certainty of price with equitable allocation of unforeseen risks.
- **Design Risks:** Under the two-stage design and build approach, design responsibility will transfer to the contractor at Stage 2, subject to the employer's requirements and any retained elements of specialist design.

This approach reflects public sector best practice and is consistent with both the JCT Design and Build Contract (2024 Edition) and NEC4 ECC options under consideration. The final risk allocation schedule will be confirmed during the pre-construction phase and incorporated into the Stage 2 contract.

9.3.1 Risk Allocation Strategy

Effective risk allocation is essential to achieving value for money and ensuring the successful delivery of the project. In line with HM Treasury's Green Book guidance and standard public-sector procurement practice, the Service intends to allocate each category of risk to the party best able to manage, mitigate or control it. This approach ensures that risks are priced appropriately, managed proactively and aligned with contractual responsibilities.

At this stage, the allocation of many risks is still subject to further market engagement, commercial negotiation and legal advice. However, the table below sets out the preliminary risk allocation matrix based on the current preferred procurement approach and project structure. This matrix will be refined during the next stages of project development and incorporated into the final contract documentation.

Risk Category	Description	Likely Owner	Rationale / Comments
Planning and Consents	Delays or conditions imposed through planning approval process	NWFRS	Outside contractor control; mitigation through early engagement with planning authority.
Design Risk	Errors, omissions or failure to meet specification	Contractor	Contractor will be responsible for design development under the design-and-build approach.
Ground Conditions	Unforeseen ground conditions or contamination	Shared / TBC	Site investigations before contract award aim to minimise this risk; residual risk to be agreed in contract.
Construction Programme	Delay in construction delivery	Contractor	Contractor is best placed to control programme once site is available and design is agreed.
Construction Cost Overrun	Costs exceed agreed contract price	Contractor	Fixed-price design-and-build contract expected to transfer this risk.
Inflation / Market Volatility	Higher-than-forecast inflation impacting material or labour costs	Shared / TBC	Final position subject to procurement outcome and contract terms.
Utilities / Third-Party Dependencies	Delays in utility connections or statutory approvals	NWFRS	Outside contractor control; requires early coordination with third parties.
Health & Safety Compliance	Failure to meet legal requirements during construction	Contractor	Contractor has legal duty to manage site safety.
Environmental / Sustainability Performance	Failure to achieve required sustainability or environmental standards	Contractor	Controlled through design specification and contract requirements.
Force Majeure	Acts of God, war, pandemic, etc.	Shared	Managed via standard contract clauses and insurance.
Operational Performance	Centre fails to meet operational needs of NWFRS	NWFRS	Linked to requirements definition and acceptance testing.
Commissioning and Handover	Failure to deliver a fully operational centre at handover	Contractor	Contractor responsible for commissioning and testing before handover.

Maintenance and Lifecycle Performance	Defects or poor performance during defects liability period	Contractor	Contractor responsible under warranty / defects period.
Post-Construction Demand or Usage Risk	Centre under-utilised due to changes in operational requirements	NWFRS	Outside contractor influence.

Table 20 : Preliminary Risk Allocation Matrix

9.3.2 Key commercial risks

The following commercial risks have been identified at this stage of the project development:

Risk	Proposed Mitigation	Preferred Allocation
Market uncertainty or insufficient bidder interest	Early engagement with framework providers and suppliers	NWFRS
Cost escalation or inaccurate cost planning	Two-stage design & build approach with early contractor involvement and value engineering	Contractor
Frequent staff turnover affecting project continuity	Deputy Project Manager assigned; internal succession plan in place	NWFRS
Delayed decision-making impacting delivery timelines	Updated governance model with defined authority levels	NWFRS
Inadequate financial oversight or lack of commercial clarity	Strengthened project strategy and reporting requirements	NWFRS
Delays due to contractor performance or poor coordination	Performance KPIs, milestone payments and regular contract monitoring	Contractor

Table 21 : Allocation of Key Commercial Risks

A full risk register (Appendix 2 – Site Plan



Training Zones

- Z1 General Training
- Z2 Highways
- Z3 Urban
- Z4 Industrial
- Z5 FBT
- Z6 Rural

Principal Buildings

- B1 HQ & Admin. Hub
- B2 Health & Wellbeing
- B3 Trainee Accommodation

- B4 Training Hub
- B5 Fireground Stores
- B6 Logistics Stores
- B7 Appliance Garage
- B8 Wood Store

Training Scenarios

- T1 Training Tower
- T2 High Rise Building
- T3 Domestic Properties
- T4 Industrial Structure
- T5 BA Training Building
- T6 FBT Containers
- T7 Farm Building

Appendix 3 – Risk Register) is maintained and owned by the Project Group and will continue to be updated as the project progresses into the procurement and delivery phases.

9.3.3 Approach to risk transfer

The preferred two-stage design and build approach enables more effective risk transfer by ensuring early engagement of the contractor in the development of the detailed design, cost plan and delivery methodology. This approach allows risks to be identified and priced before entering into the full construction contract.

In addition to allocating design, delivery and performance risks through the contract, the Service will further protect its position by negotiating appropriate indemnities with contractors, guided by specialist legal advice. The procurement will include the use of indemnity bonds (such as performance bonds and parent company guarantees) where appropriate, to ensure financial protection in the event of contractor default or failure to meet agreed obligations.

The principle is to transfer delivery risks (time, cost, quality and performance) to the contractor where they are best managed, while the Service retains strategic, regulatory and operational risks.

Incentives for performance and penalties for non-performance will be built into the contractual terms to ensure alignment of interests between the Service and its delivery partner.

9.4 Contractual arrangements

This section outlines the proposed contractual structure for the delivery of the new training centre, including the intended contract form, payment arrangements, and approach to contract management. The structure is designed to ensure clarity of responsibility, effective risk management and value for money.

9.4.1 Change control

A formal change control process will be established as part of the design and build contract. This will ensure that any proposed changes to the building specification, scope, layout or functional requirements are assessed in terms of cost, project impact, risk and operational implications before approval.

All change requests will be reviewed by the project management team and, where appropriate, the design team and cost consultant. Recommendations will be escalated to the Project Board for decision in line with agreed governance thresholds.

The change control process will include:

- A standardised template for change requests;
- Assessment of financial and operational impact;
- Sign-off protocols based on the scale and type of change; and
- A log of approved changes to maintain a clear audit trail.

This process will help the Service to manage scope creep, maintain control over the construction project and ensure that any modifications remain aligned with the project's strategic objectives and budget constraints.

9.4.2 Proposed contractual structure

The preferred contractual approach is to appoint a single principal contractor to deliver the works under a design and build contract. This will ensure a single point of accountability for both the design and construction phases and reduce the risk of scope gaps or interface issues between separate suppliers.

As outlined in Section 9.2.1, the contractor will be appointed via a two-stage procurement process through a recognised public sector framework. The preferred form of contract is expected to be the [JCT Design and Build Contract \(2024 Edition\)](#), which offers a well-established framework for large-scale capital projects and provides clear provisions for time, cost and quality control. However, the Service is also considering the [NEC4 Engineering and Construction Contract](#) (Option A or B) as an alternative, particularly if early contractor engagement or risk-sharing arrangements suggest greater benefit. The final decision will be made following legal and commercial review during the pre-construction phase.

Performance under the contract will be monitored through formal KPIs aligned to the framework requirements, including time, cost, quality, health and safety and social value outcomes. These will be reviewed monthly by the Service, supported by IKG Consultants, and reported to the Project Board.

9.4.3 Payment mechanism

The payment mechanism will be structured to incentivise quality, timeliness and cost control. It will likely include:

- Milestone-based payments linked to the achievement of defined stages (e.g. completion of enabling works, structural completion, fit-out, commissioning);
- Retention arrangements to ensure satisfactory completion and defect rectification; and
- Provisions for withholding payments in the event of delays or underperformance.

During Stage 1, a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) will be used to cover design development, planning support and cost planning activities.

9.4.4 Demonstrating Value for Money through Commercial Arrangements

The contractual approach has been designed to secure value for money by incentivising efficiency, quality and timely delivery from the appointed contractor. Key mechanisms will include:

- **Two-stage procurement:** Early contractor involvement under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) will enable design input, buildability reviews and risk management, helping to reduce cost escalation and deliver more efficient construction solutions.
- **Milestone-based payments:** Payments will be linked to the achievement of agreed construction milestones, ensuring that public funds are only released against demonstrable progress.
- **Retention provisions:** A proportion of payments will be retained until practical completion and the end of the defects liability period, incentivising quality and timely resolution of any defects.
- **Performance-linked provisions:** The main contract will include provisions allowing the Service to withhold payment, apply liquidated damages or enforce step-in rights in the event of significant underperformance or delay.
- **Sustainability and quality KPIs:** As part of the Service's Net Zero strategy, the contract will include measurable KPIs (e.g. BREEAM credits, energy performance) with reporting requirements and potential performance mechanisms.
- **Framework assurance:** By using established public sector frameworks (North Wales Construction Framework, SCAPE), the procurement will benefit from market-tested rates, embedded social value commitments and additional assurance on compliance and value for money.

These arrangements, supported by the Procurement Sub Group and commercial advisers, will ensure that the contractor is incentivised to deliver the project efficiently, to the required quality, and in alignment with the Service's wider sustainability and community benefit objectives.

This commercial approach complements the funding and income strategy described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**, which is structured to maximise public value through prudent use of resources and collaborative income opportunities.

9.4.5 Contract duration and exit strategy

The main construction contract is expected to run for approximately 21 months from site commencement, in line with the project plan. Clear provisions will be included for:

- Regular progress reviews and reporting;
- Mechanisms for addressing delay or underperformance;
- Step-in rights in the event of serious breach; and
- A structured handover and defect liability process.

An exit strategy will be defined to ensure that the Service retains control of the site, design rights and key documentation in the event of early termination. This will protect the public investment and ensure continuity of the project if required.

9.4.6 Dispute Resolution

In the event of disputes, the contractual framework provides for a clear, staged process. Day-to-day issues will be managed by IKG Consultants in liaison with the Service's project team. Where disputes cannot be resolved at this level, they will be escalated through the dispute resolution mechanisms embedded in the chosen framework, which may include adjudication, mediation or arbitration as appropriate. This staged approach is consistent with public sector best practice and will minimise the likelihood of protracted disputes.

9.4.7 Sustainability and Net Zero Commitments

Sustainability and Net Zero objectives will be embedded as contractual requirements within the main construction contract and supply chain agreements. This will ensure that environmental performance is treated as a core project deliverable alongside time, cost and quality.

Key measures will include:

- Contractual KPIs on energy efficiency, waste reduction, recycling and carbon emissions.
- Supply chain reporting requirements, with data provided monthly to the project team.
- Use of payment mechanisms and performance deductions, where appropriate, to incentivise compliance with sustainability targets.
- Alignment with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and relevant Welsh Government Net Zero policies.

The Project Group will oversee delivery of these commitments, review performance reports and escalate any concerns to the Project Board. Detailed sustainability specifications and enforcement mechanisms will be finalised at Full Business Case stage in line with the selected contract form.

The Service has formally registered the project under BREEAM Version 6 (Registration Number: BREEAM-0136-2847). Contractors appointed through the delivery frameworks will be required to work towards achieving a certified rating of 'Excellent' at both Design Stage and Post-Construction Review.

9.4.7.1 Responsible Sourcing of Construction Products

The Service will require the principal contractor and supply chain to demonstrate responsible sourcing of materials in line with recognised standards such as BES 6001 and PAS 2080. These requirements will be contractually mandated within the procurement documentation and verified through the contractor's supply-chain reporting, certification and periodic audit.

This approach ensures that key construction products are procured sustainably, with a clear audit trail, and supports the achievement of targeted BREEAM credits as well as compliance with Welsh Government sustainable procurement policy.

9.4.7.2 Renewable Energy Generation and Export

The design includes the integration of photovoltaic (PV) arrays to support the Service's Net Zero objectives. While the primary purpose of these systems is to reduce the building's own energy consumption, there is potential for periods of surplus electricity generation.

Commercial arrangements for managing any exported electricity - such as grid export tariffs or Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) - will be considered during the detailed design stage, informed by the appointed Building Services Advisor and the BREEAM pre-assessment. At this Outline Business Case stage, no export income has been assumed in the financial modelling, but the opportunity is recognised as a potential benefit to be developed further at the Full Business Case stage.

9.4.7.3 Performance-Based Incentives

The Service intends to embed sustainability performance requirements contractually within the main construction contract. Subject to advice from the appointed BREEAM Assessor (via Perfect Circle) and the outcome of the BREEAM pre-assessment, these may include performance-based incentives or penalties linked to achievement of BREEAM credits, energy performance targets and carbon reduction measures.

At this Outline Business Case stage, the detail of such mechanisms is not yet defined, but the Service confirms that these options will be considered during Stage 2 procurement and formalised at Full Business Case stage in line with legal and commercial advice.

9.4.8 Commercial Risks

In addition to the project-level risks set out in Section 11.7, a number of risks are specific to the proposed commercial and procurement arrangements, as shown in the table below:

Risk	Description	Mitigation	Responsibility
Procurement delay or challenge	Risk of delay or legal challenge during framework procurement.	Use of established frameworks (North Wales Construction Framework, SCAPE, CCS) with proven compliance.	Procurement Sub Group (with VWV legal support)
Contract form and terms	Selection of contract form (JCT vs NEC4) may not fully align with risk-sharing preferences.	Final decision to be taken at PCSA stage, informed by legal and commercial advice.	Project Board (with VWV legal support)

Supply chain capacity	Risk of limited contractor/consultant capacity in North Wales region.	Early market engagement via framework partners; staged procurement approach.	Procurement Sub Group
Inflation/market volatility	Risk that tender returns exceed budget due to market conditions.	Early contractor involvement via two-stage D&B; application of optimism bias; contingency allowances.	Project Board (with Cost Consultant)
Performance on sustainability targets	Contractor may not deliver BREEAM/Net Zero requirements.	Contractual KPIs, Project Group oversight and potential performance mechanisms.	Project Group

Table 22 : Summary of Key Commercial Risks

This commercial risk assessment will be developed further by the Procurement Sub Group and incorporated into the Service's overarching risk register at Full Business Case stage.

9.5 Personnel implications

The delivery of the new training centre is not anticipated to result in any direct changes to the terms and conditions of employment for existing Service staff, except for potential relocation requirements. The project is focused on replacing and consolidating existing facilities rather than outsourcing or transferring operational services to an external provider.

However, the construction and operation of the new centre are expected to generate wider employment and training opportunities for the local community. In line with Benefit BTC05.03 (Jobs and Apprenticeships Created by the Project), the Service will work with contractors and framework partners to secure local labour participation, apprenticeships and work placements throughout the build and commissioning phases. These social value outcomes will be monitored through the project's Benefits Realisation Plan and reported as part of the Service's Social Value commitments.

9.5.1 TUPE considerations

No Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) implications have been identified at this stage. The training functions that will be delivered at the new centre will continue to be managed and delivered by the Service's personnel. All support functions related to the operation of the training centre are also expected to remain in-house.

Should the detailed design or operating model change during later phases of the project (e.g. involving contracted facilities management or specialist services), a further review of TUPE and workforce impact will be undertaken and consulted upon appropriately.

9.5.2 Workforce transition

While no redundancies are expected, the move to a new centre will involve a carefully planned transition process for relevant staff. This will include:

- Engagement with affected teams (e.g. training instructors, support staff)
- Orientation and familiarisation with the new site and equipment
- Updated health and safety training where required
- Communication support and change management planning

The Service is committed to supporting its workforce through the transition and ensuring that staff are well-equipped and confident to operate within the new environment.

9.6 Commercial Case Summary

This Commercial Case has demonstrated that the preferred option for the development of a new training centre for the Service is commercially viable and can be delivered in a way that is compliant, market-attractive and capable of securing value for money.

The Service proposes to use a two-stage design and build procurement route via a recognised public sector framework. This approach allows for early contractor involvement, supports effective risk transfer and ensures a manageable balance between cost certainty and project control.

Market engagement to date has confirmed there is supplier interest in the opportunity, particularly given the specialist nature of the centre and its potential to become a benchmark for fire and rescue training infrastructure.

Key risks have been identified and will be managed through clear contractual allocation, supported by a standard form contract and performance-based payment mechanisms. The contracting approach will provide a single point of accountability and flexibility to respond to design refinements as required.

There are no anticipated TUPE implications. The investment will be treated as a capital asset on the Service's balance sheet, in line with public sector accounting requirements, with funding arrangements detailed in the Financial Case.

In summary, the Commercial Case confirms that the proposed solution is deliverable, fundable and attractive to the market and that appropriate commercial strategies are in place to support successful procurement and delivery.

10 Financial Case

10.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Financial Case is to assess whether the preferred option set out in the Economic Case is financially affordable and to demonstrate how the associated capital and revenue implications will be managed within the Service's funding framework.

As this is an Outline Business Case, the financial analysis is based on indicative costs and funding assumptions. These will be refined further at the Full Business Case stage, informed by ongoing design development, market engagement and updated cost modelling.

The long-term context for this Financial Case is provided by the Service's Capital Strategy. The current Capital Strategy 2024-2034 could only touch on the emerging project by indicating that the future costs identified in this Capital Strategy did not include the proposed development of a new training centre, as the business case would be submitted at a later date. The refreshed 10-year Capital Strategy will be reviewed at the Audit Committee in March 2026 and subsequently approved at the Authority meeting in April 2026. This will enable the proposed development to be driven by the key objectives and priorities in the Capital Strategy and affordability to be assessed on a whole Service basis.

The refreshed Capital Strategy will be supported by the emerging Estate Strategy, expected to be completed by March 2026. As part of this ongoing work, the Service is undertaking all necessary condition surveys. The ambition is to create a comprehensive capital plan for next 50 years, ensuring a clear understanding of priorities and financial commitments.

10.2 Financial appraisal

10.2.1 Capital delivery costs

Construction costs for the preferred option are estimated based on RIBA Stage 1 (Preparation and Briefing) designs and total £50 million. The estimate construction costs have been prepared with the support of Gleeds, a property and construction company engaged by NWFRS for this project. These estimates, provided in November 2025, include construction costs, professional fees, statutory approvals, project management, risk allowances and irrecoverable VAT where applicable. Table 25 summarises the construction costs by major cost line, excluding historic project costs and other committed enabling costs which are described in paragraph 9.3 (Historic project costs and other enabling works).

Item	£ million
Core works (site clearance, construction, fit-out, services etc)	28.9
Main contractor preliminaries, risk allowance, overheads and profit	11.8

Client risk and allowances	4.6
Inflation	4.7
Total construction cost	50.0

Table 23: Construction costs summary

10.2.2 Capital delivery cash flow

A capital cash flow profile has been developed to show the anticipated timing of expenditure across the construction period (see Figure 25). This provides assurance that the project's funding requirements are affordable and that resources will be available at the points they are needed.

The profile reflects the programme for design, procurement and delivery of the new training centre. Costs have been phased in line with expected milestones, with peak expenditure occurring during the main construction phase. The profile also includes allowances for pre-construction services, design development and statutory approvals.

	Financial year, all figures £ millions					
	25/26	26/27	27/28	28/29	29/30	Total
Total construction cost (£ million)	0	0	18.73	24.98	6.24	49.95

Table 24: Construction costs cashflow forecast

10.2.3 Capital delivery key assumptions

The table below highlights the key assumptions, inclusions and exclusions that underpin the estimate construction costs and cashflows.

#	Heading	Assumption
1	Scope	All future work packages are included (eg construction, fit-out, external works, utilities/services, equipment, professional fees)
2	Historic costs	Historic (sunk) project costs, including site acquisition, are not included in the construction costs summary and are instead separately described.
3	Other exclusions	NWFRS' internal project management costs to further plan and deliver the project are excluded from the construction costs.
4	Inflation and base year	Construction costs have been inflated using the BCIS All-In Tender Price Index (TPI) using BCIS' forecast percentage cost increase from the point of cost estimation (quarter 3, 2025) to the mid-point of construction (quarter 2, 2028). Cashflows are therefore nominal.

5	Allowances and cost contingencies	In line with standard industry practice, allowances for specific, known risk items have been included totalling £4.6 million (including inflation). A client risk allowance of 10% of NWFRS' direct construction-related costs has also been included (£0.4 million). No optimism bias cost uplift or programme delay has been included for systemic underestimations in figures 25 and 26 above—Optimism bias is addressed separately below.
6	Design stage	The cost plan reflects RIBA Stage 1 (Preparation and Briefing) designs.
7	Supply chain	Cost forecasts based on latest information from the supply chain at date of issue (November 2025). The cost plan will again be reviewed and updated for supply chain events, including significant supply chain disruption due to geopolitical tensions, post OBC-stage.
8	VAT	No irrecoverable VAT has been identified, therefore all figures included are VAT exclusive.
9	Stamp duty land tax	Any stamp duty land tax obligations arising from the acquisition of the proposed site are reflected in the historic project costs.

Table 25: Construction costs key assumptions

10.3 Historic project costs and other enabling costs

NWFRS has already committed capital costs of £6.7 million in this project, funded through NWFRS' core capital resources (prudential borrowing, usable capital receipts, capital reserves, general capital grant). £2.7 million of this total relates to the acquisition of the proposed site for the new, centralised training centre. The remaining £4 million cost represents professional services and some pre-construction and enabling works that are currently recognised on NWFRS' balance sheet as assets under construction seen in figure 28. The preferred intervention option will crystallise the value of this work.

Historic and enabling cost	£ million
Feasibility studies and strategic case	0.1
Land Purchase	2.7
Enabling works	3.9
Total Cost	6.7

Table 26: Historic and enabling cost summary

10.4 Treatment of excluded costs and risk allowances

The capital cost estimates for the shortlisted options are intended to be comprehensive. They include construction, design and professional fees, statutory approvals, surveys, project management, VAT (where irrecoverable), contingency and an optimism bias allowance.

At this stage, no material excluded costs have been identified. Should any additional items outside the contractor's scope arise (for example, site acquisition, decanting, or enabling works not yet identified), these will be captured in the cost plan as design development progresses. Minor Service-side costs (such as legal support or staff time) are expected to be met from existing Service revenue budgets and are not material to the overall affordability assessment.

Risk allowances have been incorporated in line with standard cost planning practice and will be further refined at Full Business Case stage as risks are quantified and contractor input is secured. The Commercial Case outlines a robust risk management approach through procurement and contracting activities, including an approach to minimising risks to be managed and owned by the Service, while the Management Case outlines the Service's approach to managing project risks.

10.5 Financial appraisal – operating and lifecycle costs

The operational and lifecycle costs of the preferred option have been modelled on an indicative basis at this OBC stage. Lifecycle costs for the new training centre were estimated by Gleeds using figures provided by BCIS, with an assumed weighting of 80% for an allowance for asset renewal (capital expenditure) and 20% for maintenance (revenue expenditure). Wider impacts on NWFRS' operating budgets have been estimated by NWFRS with support from Oaagrove-Mission Economics' CIPFA-qualified professionals who have supported NWFRS in the development of this business case. Figure 28 provides a summary of the forecast implications of the preferred option on NWFRS' revenue budgets. All figures below are nominal—long-run inflation forecasts have been incorporated (average annual cost and income increase of 3%).

Item	First full year of operation (2030/31, £ million)	Lifecycle (30 years, £ million)
Lifecycle costs (revenue expenditure)	0.03	2.58
Operating costs	1.11	52.58
Income / savings offsets	(0.33)	(15.82)
Net revenue budget impact	0.81	39.34
Lifecycle costs (capital expenditure)	0.12	10.31

Table 27: Lifecycle costs

Operating costs include estimate costs of utilities, waste, non-domestic rates, facilities management, additional staff, ICT subscriptions/licences, insurance and consumables. Income and savings offsets include travel cost savings (cashable), third party facility hire costs, and impacts of photovoltaic energy generation.

The financial appraisal will be reviewed and updated at Full Business Case stage to inform medium- and long-term financial planning. While refinements to these estimates will be developed at Full Business Case stage, early indications are that recurring revenue and lifecycle costs can be managed within the Service's emerging medium-term financial strategy, which will be reviewed at the Audit Committee in March 2026 and subsequently approved by the Authority in April 2026.

10.6 Optimism bias

In accordance with HM Treasury's Green Book and Welsh Government guidance, an optimism bias (OB) adjustment has been calculated to account for the risk of systematic underestimation at this project stage. As in the Economic Case, this adjustment has been calculated by applying an OB uplift of 16% to initial capital costs, appropriate for standard building projects, and 15% to lifecycle (net of revenue income and savings) costs. Refer to Economic Case section 7.10.1 for a fuller explanation of how the applied OB percentages have been established. Figures 29, 30 and 31 show how construction costs and lifecycle costs would alter the financial resources required at the applied levels of OB cost uplift.

Total construction cost (pre-OB)	£50.0 million
<i>Of which, specific, known risk items</i>	<i>£5.0 million</i>
OB cost uplift (16%)	£7.2 million
Total construction cost (post-OB)	£57.2 million

Table 28: Optimism bias applied to capital delivery costs

Net operating cost, first full year of operation (pre-OB)	£0.8 million
OB cost uplift (15%)	£0.1 million
Net operating cost, first full year of operation (post-OB)	£0.9 million
Total net operating cost, 30 years (pre-OB)	£39.3 million
OB cost uplift (15%)	£5.9 million
Total construction cost, 30 years (post-OB)	£45.2 million

Table 29: Optimism bias applied to revenue lifecycle costs (net of revenue income/ cost savings)

Asset renewal allowance (capital), first full year of operation (pre-OB)	£0.1 million
OB cost uplift (15%)	£0.0 million
Asset renewal allowance (capital), first full year of operation (post-OB)	£0.1 million
Asset renewal allowance (capital), 30 years (pre-OB)	£10.3 million
OB cost uplift (15%)	£1.5 million
Asset renewal allowance (capital), 30 years (post-OB)	£11.8 million

Table 30: Optimism bias applied to capital lifecycle costs

10.7 Funding and affordability

The Service has adopted a phased funding approach. All expenditure up to and including RIBA Stage 4 at £6.7 million (covering surveys, feasibility studies, concept, developed and technical design and planning) will be met from the Service's own capital resources. This includes the cost of land that has been purchased at St Asaph Business Park under the Service's wider estates strategy. That purchase does not commit the Service to any single delivery option but provides a viable and available site should Welsh Government approve the preferred way forward.

For RIBA Stages 5 to 6 (the construction, hand-over and post-occupancy phases), the Service will seek Welsh Government capital funding of approximately £50 million for the preferred option. This two-stage funding strategy ensures that the project is fully designed, costed and construction-ready before external funding is required. The capital funding sought is specifically for the initial capital delivery of the new training centre: capital asset renewal/replacement costs (during RIBA Stage 7) will be funded through the Service's core capital resources.

Early engagement with Welsh Government has indicated that this level of support is potentially achievable, subject to confirmation of detailed costings and alignment with national priorities. The assumption of future capital programme costs being fully funded through Welsh Government grants has therefore been used for the purposes of this Outline Business Case.

Should full Welsh Government funding not be secured, the only remaining options for the Service would be earmarked reserves, capital receipts, and borrowing as last resort. This would need to be considered at Full Business Case stage to ensure affordability.

However, based on the Service's current financial position, and projected position in its Medium Term Resource Strategy 2024-2027, it is highly likely that affordability will not be met due to the following:

- **Use of earmarked reserves**

- the earmarked reserves balance as at 31st March 2025 was £8.938m and there is a commitment in 2025/26 to apply £2.1m of earmarked reserves to cover training centre project costs.
- the remaining £1.65m of training centre cost up to RIBA Stage 4 will need to be funded from borrowing in 2026/27, as the Service cannot deplete earmarked reserves further without detrimentally impacting on other Service priorities.
- this demonstrates that the Service is not in a position to apply earmarked reserves as part of a backstop funding package for delivery of the new training centre.

- **Application of capital receipts**

- any potential capital receipt(s) resulting from the rationalisation of the Service's estate following the development of the new Training Centre, will be part of corporate decision-making aligned with the new Estate Strategy expected to be completed by the end of March 2026.
- at the time of OBC reporting, the Service is in transition, from its estate strategy being supported by North Wales Police via its Service Level Agreement, to the development of its own formal Estate Strategy.
- Each site identified as potentially surplus to Service requirements will be considered outside of the training centre project context, to ensure that all options have been explored before disposal is considered.
- Capital receipts from any surplus asset disposals will become corporate capital receipts to be applied in line with the Service's refreshed Capital Strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy, heading for Authority approval in April 2026.
- No assumption is made at this stage for capital receipts to be applied as part of a backstop funding package for the new Training Centre.

- **Borrowing**

- the Service has already financed the acquisition of the land at St Asaph at just over £2.7m from borrowing.
- as a consequence, the Service is affording the associated capital financing costs from 2025/26, increasing the capital financing budget in 2025/26 by £0.054m.
- the current Medium Term Resource Strategy does not include any potential impact of fully funding or partly funding the training centre development and delivery.
- the Service is striving to set a balanced budget year-on-year, as set out in its current Medium Term Resource Strategy 2024-2027 and annual Budget reports.
- resources are becoming scarcer, which coupled with increasing pressures and demands on services, makes it more challenging to ensure that resources are effectively targeted.
- the majority of the funding for the Service is received by way of a levy from its six constituent authorities, alongside grant funding, although this has reduced significantly in recent years.
- a significant increase in borrowing, as part of a backstop funding package for the new training centre, would put further strain on the Service's levy, with the uplift in 2024/25 at 8.85%, 2025/26 at 7% and 2026/27 at 4.4%.
- This demonstrates that additional borrowing, potentially up to a level equivalent to the whole of the current 10-year capital programme, would place unsustainable pressure on the future levy.
- as a result, securing external grants and funding for both capital and revenue schemes remains a strategic priority for the Service.

Further review and updates to the quantity and phasing of all costs and income will be conducted at Full Business Case stage, alongside further sensitivity testing and whole-life costing, once operational budgets and service delivery models have been finalised. At this Outline Business Case stage, indicative totals are provided to confirm affordability within the current and emerging medium-term financial strategies, assuming future capital delivery (RIBA stages 5 and 6) is funded through Welsh Government grants.

10.7.1 Borrowing and Treasury Management

Borrowing is not included in the current funding strategy, given the working assumption of 100% Welsh Government support. If further borrowing requirements emerge at Full Business Case stage, detailed modelling will be undertaken to test affordability, repayment profiles and compliance with the Service's Treasury Management Strategy 2026/27 and MRP Statement, which will be reviewed by the Service's Audit Committee in March 2026 and approved by the Authority in April 2026.

Capital expenditure is primarily funded through external borrowing. However, in the short term, the Service continues to utilise surplus revenue cash, referred to as internal borrowing, to reduce financing costs and generate revenue savings.

It is important to note that as reserves are utilised, the need to transition from internal to external borrowing increases. It must also be stressed here that the increase in interest rates in recent years is a key risk area and is exacerbated as a number of loans require refinancing during the 2026/27 financial year.

10.7.2 Capital Funding Options

The phased funding model is summarised below:

- Phase 1 (RIBA 0–4): Self-funded through an approved capital programme and reserves.
- Phase 2 (RIBA 5–6): Welsh Government capital grant sought for construction and delivery.

This approach aligns with the Green Book guidance by ensuring that early-stage expenditure is proportionate and that full construction funding is sought only once the project design, scope and cost certainty are established.

To date the Service has acquired the St Asaph site for just over £2.7m in 2023/24, financed by borrowing, and applied reserves to the above committed cost (refer section 9.3). The remainder of the committed costs will be included in the Budget for 2026/27, to be financed by borrowing. This is a significant commitment for the Service, currently representing just over 13% of the current 10-year capital programme of £50.7m (11 years including 2023/24), as per the Medium Term Resource Strategy 2024-2027.

10.7.3 Potential Income & Collaboration Opportunities

The facility has the potential to generate external income and collaborative value that could strengthen long-term affordability. While the primary focus remains meeting the Service's statutory training requirements, opportunities include:

- **External training provision:** Specialist courses offered to other UK fire and rescue services, Local Resilience Forum partners and private-sector organisations requiring compliance training.
- **Facility hire:** Making training props, classrooms and the incident command suite available for use by Police, Ambulance, Military and other partners, improving interoperability while generating income.
- **Academic partnerships:** Collaborating with universities and colleges on accredited training, research, and work placements to strengthen the skills pipeline.
- **Community and third-sector use:** Limited use of seminar and classroom spaces for events, supporting public engagement while recovering modest costs.

Indicative benchmarking against other UK fire and rescue training facilities suggests that external income could make a modest but valuable contribution to annual running costs. However, the actual level of take-up will depend on demand from partners, the competitive landscape and the charging framework to be developed.

Therefore, at this stage, income from these sources has been treated as an upside opportunity: they are not included in affordability calculations or wider project financial modelling. Such income opportunities will be explored further during the Full Business Case stage.

The integration of photovoltaic (PV) arrays also presents the potential for surplus electricity export; income and cost savings from the PV arrays has been prudently estimated and included in the financial modelling.

10.7.4 Maximising Public Value through Funding and Income

The approach to funding and income generation has been structured to maximise public value. By prioritising the use of potential grants ahead of borrowing, the Service will minimise financing costs and safeguard affordability.

At the same time, the exploration of collaborative income streams - such as joint training with partner agencies, resilience exercises, academic partnerships and community use - ensures that the benefits of the investment extend beyond the Service to the wider public sector and communities of North Wales.

This combined approach demonstrates that the project delivers wider economic, social and environmental value, consistent with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.

10.8 Accountancy treatment

This section outlines the anticipated accounting treatment of the investment in the new training facility, in line with applicable financial reporting standards and public sector accounting principles.

This Outline Business Case has been developed on the assumption that the scheme will be on-balance sheet for the Service.

10.8.1 Capitalisation of costs

The new training facility is intended to be a long-term operational asset for the Service. Accordingly, the capital costs associated with its development including design, enabling works, construction, fixtures and directly attributable project management costs will be capitalised on the Service's balance sheet as a tangible fixed asset.

This treatment is in line with:

- International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) as adopted in the UK public sector;
- The CIPFA Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting; and
- HM Treasury's Consolidated Budgeting Guidance and the Financial Reporting Manual (FRM).

Depreciation of the asset will be applied over its useful economic life, which for operational buildings is typically assumed to be at least 30 years, subject to final confirmation by the Service's finance team and auditors. Depreciation is a non-cash item which does not hit the Service's financial bottom line - it therefore does not affect the Service's levies.

10.8.2 Revenue and operational costs

Ongoing operational and revenue lifecycle costs (e.g. maintenance, utilities, staffing, equipment replacement below capitalisation thresholds) will be treated as revenue expenditure in the Service's annual accounts and funded from its existing revenue budgets or through collaborative arrangements, where applicable.

These costs will be incorporated into medium-term financial planning and monitored as part of the Service's normal budget-setting and reporting processes.

10.8.3 Capital Charges

As the working assumption for this Outline Business Case is that 100% of the capital costs will be met through Welsh Government funding, no borrowing-related capital charges have been modelled at this stage.

10.8.4 VAT and Tax Treatment

The Service can recover VAT on most expenditure under Section 33 of the VAT Act 1994. However, input VAT associated with exempt or non-business use will be subject to the Service's partial exemption calculation.

The project team will continue to work with the Service's finance and tax advisers to confirm the VAT treatment of all procurement and construction activities. The Service will ensure full compliance with HMRC guidance on VAT recovery for capital schemes.

10.8.5 Projected Impact on Financial Statements

Based on the current funding strategy and accounting assumptions, the scheme is expected to have the following high-level impacts on the Service's financial statements:

- **Balance Sheet:** The new training facility will be recognised as a tangible fixed asset on the Service's balance sheet, with an expected useful economic life of at least 30 years. Capital costs will be capitalised, including construction, design and directly attributable project management costs. Components making up the capital cost (eg buildings, training props, other equipment) will be recognised and accounted for in line with the Service's policies governing the accounting treatment of fixed assets.
- **Comprehensive Income & Expenditure Statement (CIES):** The principal impact will be ongoing revenue expenditure associated with operating the new facility (utilities, facilities management, training consumables). No borrowing-related capital charges are modelled at this stage, on the assumption of 100% Welsh Government funding.
- **Cash Flow Statement:** Capital expenditure will occur primarily during the build phase, in line with the cash flow profile set out in Section 9.2.2. Operating cash flows are expected to remain broadly consistent with current revenue budgets, with potential for modest income generation to partially offset increased costs.

Phase	Balance Sheet Impact	CIES Impact	Cash Flow Impact
Construction (Years 1–4)	Capitalisation of costs; asset under construction.	Minimal revenue effect (project team and advisor costs that aren't capitalised).	Outflows in line with capital cash flow profile.
Operational (Year 5 onwards)	Asset recognised; depreciated over 30 years (or less, in line with depreciation policy).	Revenue costs for facilities management, ICT, training props; potential income.	Operating costs broadly in line with existing budgets with small uplift forecast; modest inflows from external income sources.

Table 31: Summary of impact on financial statements

10.9 Affordability Assessment

The Service's Initial affordability assessment indicates that the capital cost of the Preferred Option, for Phase 2 – RIBA (stages 5–6), cannot be delivered within the Service's available internal resources, leaving a funding gap of £50m. Based on current assumptions, the Preferred Option is considered affordable for the Service, with Phase 2 capital costs expected to be met through 100% Welsh Government funding.

Revenue and lifecycle costs are projected to increase in line with the Medium Term Resource Strategy for 2026–2029 and will be funded through gradual increases in the levy. This approach aligns with the Service's long-term financial planning and supports sustainable delivery of the Preferred Option.

A full affordability assessment, including sensitivity testing against different funding scenarios, will be undertaken at Full Business Case stage, once final costs are confirmed.

10.10 Financial Case Summary

The Financial Case confirms that the preferred option requires a capital funding injection ranging from £50 million to £57 million to be financially viable according to the current assumptions and available resources. Capital and revenue estimates will be developed further during the next phase of the project, supported by detailed design, procurement and funding plans.

The Financial Case also demonstrates the strength of commitment that the Service has to the project, having already invested considerable financial resources, approaching £7 million, in site acquisition and other project activities to enable the full programme to proceed.

Realisation of operational efficiencies and revenue savings will be tracked through the Benefits Realisation Plan (Section 11.8).

At this Outline Business Case stage, the capital, revenue and lifecycle cost figures remain indicative and subject to refinement through detailed design and cost consultant input. Updated estimates, along with a full affordability assessment, will be included in the Full Business Case.

Affordability at this Outline Business Case stage is based on the working assumption of Welsh Government support as the primary source of capital funding. The Service will continue engagement with Welsh Government to establish the optimal funding package.

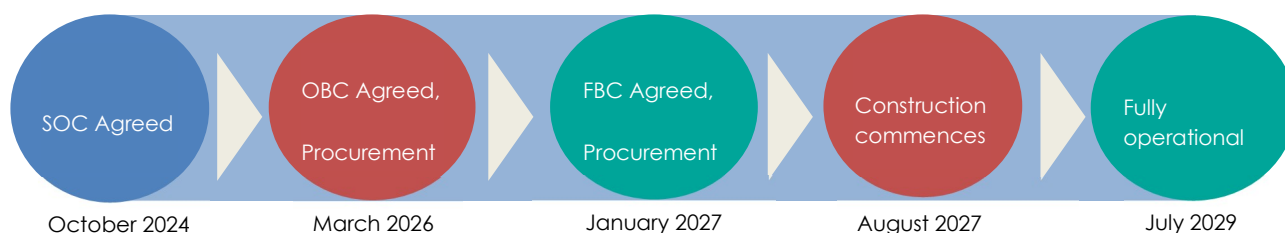
11 Management case

11.1 Introduction

The Management Case sets out how the proposed investment in the new centralised training centre will be successfully delivered, managed and realised. It demonstrates that the preferred option, to build a new training centre in St Asaph, is capable of being delivered successfully in accordance with recognised best practice and aligns with the Services' strategic objectives. This section outlines the proposed project management approach, governance structure, stakeholder engagement strategy, approach to benefits and risk management, proposed change management strategy and the high-level procurement and implementation plans necessary to translate the strategic vision into a tangible and operational training centre.

11.2 Project timescales

The Service has developed a five-year project that is due for completion in 2029.



The following elements have been considered, to ensure a credible and realistic solution:

- An established procurement route - the Service will agree contracts via the applicable frameworks.
- Sufficient time early in the project to develop a high-quality, well defined technical specification that will duly consider all project complexities, to ensure that the project can accommodate the requirements and deliver value to the Service.
- Adequate time allowances for all approvals.

The Service's financial commitment extends to completion of RIBA Stage 4. Progression into RIBA Stage 5 (Construction) will depend on confirmation of Welsh Government capital funding following approval of this Outline Business Case.

11.3 Project Management Approach and Governance

The project is being managed as a major capital investment within the Service's overall infrastructure programme. The project structure enables close integration between strategic oversight, operational delivery and statutory compliance.

A dedicated internal team has been established, supported by external specialists in construction project management, planning and design. The project is being delivered in phases, with clearly defined gateways linked to design development, procurement, construction and commissioning.

Each phase is supported by a detailed project plan and delivery schedule, with key dependencies and milestones tracked via Microsoft Teams and SharePoint-based project dashboards. Detailed project plans and delivery schedules are maintained internally by the Project Management Team and will be appended to the Full Business Case once design and procurement programmes are confirmed.

The Project Board will also maintain a specific watching brief on capital funding risk, with Welsh Government engagement and affordability to be reviewed at each gateway decision point.

The Project Group will oversee the delivery of sustainability and Net Zero commitments, monitor contractor performance against environmental KPIs, and escalate any non-compliance for resolution.

Project documentation (including the risk register, issue log, action log and lessons learned) is version-controlled and centrally stored. Gateway reviews and assurance checkpoints are scheduled to ensure continued alignment with scope, time, cost and quality parameters.

Gateway / Phase	Target Date (Indicative)	Purpose
OBC Approval	January 2026	Secure NWFRA approval to proceed to detailed design and procurement planning.
Stage 1 Procurement (PCSA)	February 2026	Appoint contractor for pre-construction services and cost planning.
FBC Approval	August 2026	Secure full funding and contract award.
Construction Start	June 2027	Commence enabling works and site preparation.
Midpoint Review	June 2028	Confirm programme, cost and risk position during peak construction.
Practical Completion & Handover	May 2029	Commissioning, fit-out, testing and operational handover.
Post Project Evaluation	December 2029	Check progress of benefits realisation and lessons learned for future capital projects

Table 32 : Delivery Schedule

11.3.1 Governance Structure

Governance of the project involves several key stakeholders within NWFRS and external partners.

The diagram below illustrates the main governance groups and their relationships.

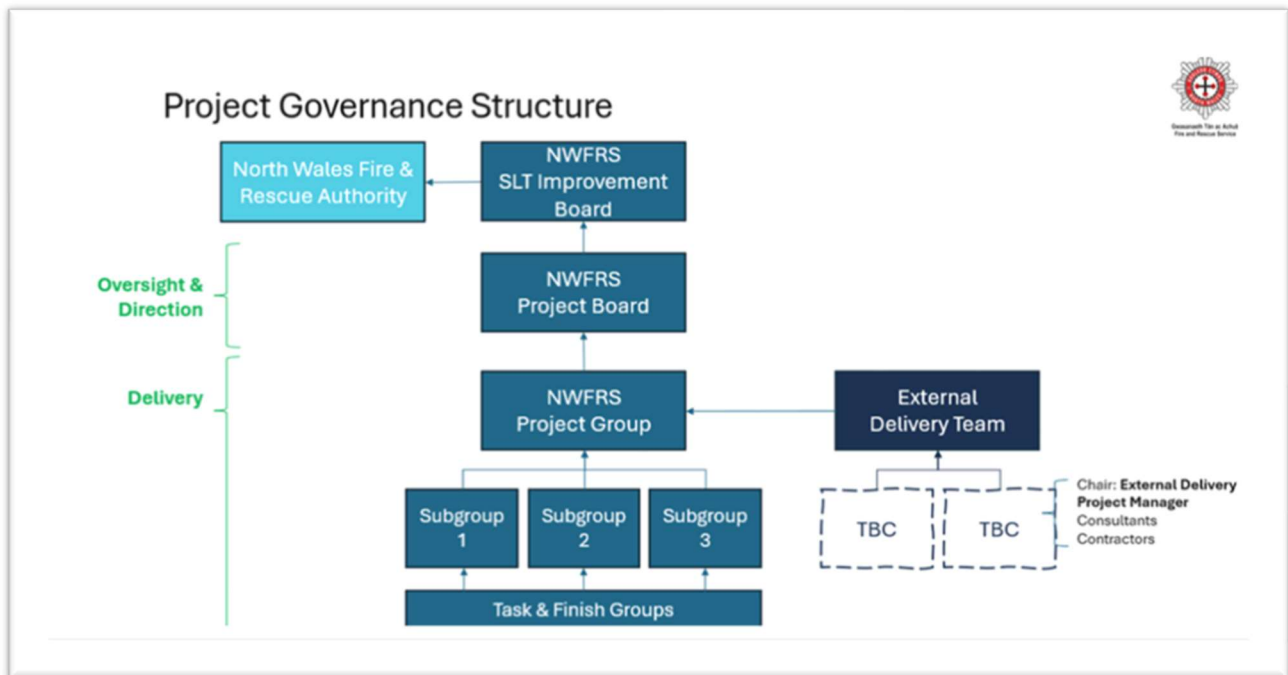


Figure 6 : Project Governance Structure

The business case has received support in principle from the Training Centre Members Working Group, the Members Budget Scrutiny Committee and Trade Union representatives. In October 2024, the NWFRS formally approved the Strategic Outline Case. Final approval for the development rests with the NWFRS.

The project is being led by Justin Evans, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, and Lee Bourne, Head of Training and Development, is the main point of contact. Louisa Morris, Deputy Project Manager, is providing full-time support and co-ordination for the project.

The governance structure includes submissions from the Project Manager to the Finance and Procurement Committee and the Formal Service Leadership Team (SLT). NWFRS Members, as the decision-making body, require approval at key stages. The NWFRS Service Leadership Team, including the Chief Fire Officer and Assistant Chief Fire Officer, are responsible for driving the project and ensuring alignment with strategic objectives.

Staff engagement is also embedded within this governance framework, with representation through the Training Centre Project Team and periodic workforce consultation sessions. This ensures that operational staff input is captured throughout design development and that the centre continues to reflect the needs of its end users.

This multi-layered governance structure aims to provide oversight, ensure strategic alignment, manage risks and facilitate timely decision-making.

Appendix 1 – Programme Strategy provides further details of the governance framework.

11.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities

Key roles and their responsibilities within the project governance and management framework include:

- **NWFRA Members:** Hold the statutory duty for training provision and provide final approval for the project development.
- **Chief Fire Officer:** As Senior Responsible Officer, accountable for the overall success of the project and for ensuring that it meets its agreed objectives, delivers the expected benefits and remains aligned with the Service's strategic priorities.
- **Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Justin Evans:** Leads the project and chairs the Project Board.
- **Head of Training and Development, Lee Bourne:** Provides strategic oversight and chairs the Project Group.
- **Deputy Project Manager, Louisa Morris:** Responsible for project management, overall delivery and co-ordination of workstreams.
- **External Delivery Project Manager, Iain Gammick:** Leads and chairs the External Delivery Team, which is focussed upon the construction of the new training facilities.

11.3.3 Project Board

The project will be overseen by a Project Board which will provide governance and leadership, approve the project's key milestones and respond to the escalation of matters from the Project Group. The Project Board meets every six weeks.

11.3.4 Project Group

The Project Group co-ordinates and manages the work of the Sub-Groups (delivery workstreams). The Group ensures that the project remains on track and is delivering within its agreed budget. The Group meets every six weeks.

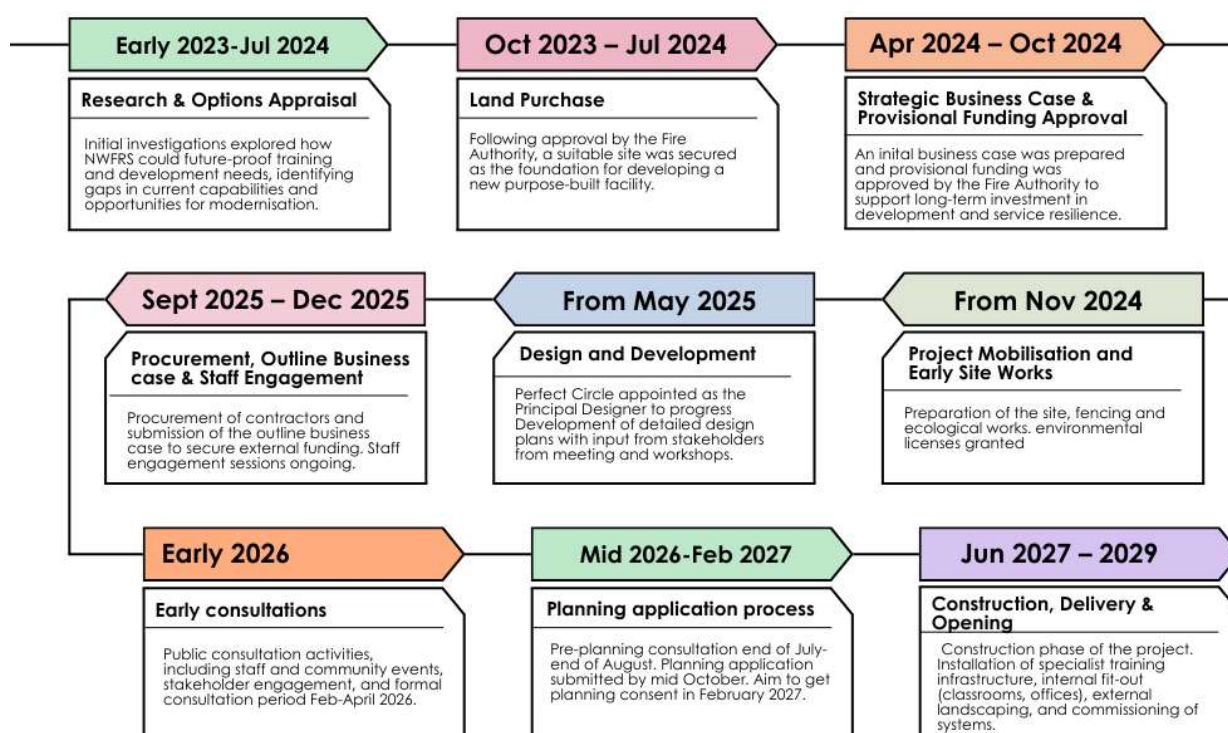
11.3.5 Project Team and Resources

The development of the business case and options appraisal has involved officers from the Service and external experts. The consultancy team assisting the Service includes IKG Consulting Limited, Axis Consulting and Perfect Circle (a consortium comprising BGH (Architects), Harley Haddow (Building Services & Low Carbon) and Gleeds (Quantity Surveying)). IKG Consulting and Axis Consulting have been involved in site appraisal.

The project is led by Lee Bourne (Project Manager), who is providing strategic oversight and support. Day-to-day coordination and delivery are being managed by Louisa Morris (Deputy Project Manager). Together, they ensure consistent progress across workstreams and provide a single point of coordination across internal and external contributors.

The project has a dedicated team with the necessary expertise in project management, procurement, construction, technical design and stakeholder engagement. This includes ensuring the availability of appropriate Service personnel to support the project alongside their operational duties. Please see *Appendix 10 – Resource Plan* for further details of the project's resourcing.

11.4 Project Management Plans



11.5 Resource Planning

A comprehensive resource plan (see 13.10 Appendix 10 – Resource Plan) has been developed covering all stages of project delivery. This includes:

- Project management;
- Technical, design and planning consultants;
- Procurement and commercial specialists;
- Construction delivery partners; and
- Internal leads for training, ICT, operations, HR and facilities

Roles are resourced through internal secondments where feasible, promoting continuity and staff development. External consultants (e.g. BGH Architects, Harley Haddow, Gleeds, IKG Consulting) have been appointed to provide specialist input.

All resources follow structured onboarding processes and are allocated based on delivery priorities, critical path activities and risk exposure. Operational roles are backfilled where long-term commitments are required to preserve service continuity (see 12.10 Appendix 10 – Resource Plan).

11.6 Workforce Planning

The development of the new training centre does not involve any redundancies or outsourcing of core functions. All training and support services will remain under the Service's control. Workforce transition planning will ensure that relevant staff are supported throughout the move to the new centre, including:

- Orientation and familiarisation with new equipment and layout;
- Health and safety training; and
- Change management and internal communications support.

Where longer-term operational changes are required (e.g. changes to instructor deployment or facilities staffing), these will be subject to formal consultation and engagement with staff and trade union representatives.

Recruitment associated with the new centre will follow the Service's established HR and procurement policies, ensuring fair and transparent processes. In line with Benefit BTC05.03 (Jobs and Apprenticeships Created by the Project), the initiative will generate employment and apprenticeship opportunities both within the Service and through appointed construction and facilities partners. These opportunities will be actively promoted as part of the Service's wider Social Value commitments, helping to maximise local employment and skills development.

11.7 Risk management

A comprehensive risk management strategy is in place within the Programme Strategy (see 13.1 Appendix 1 – Programme Strategy). Risks are identified, scored and managed according to standard impact/likelihood matrices. Each risk is assigned an owner, and all red-rated risks are escalated to the Project Board for review.

Risks are tracked in a central register (maintained in Microsoft SharePoint) (see 13.2 Appendix 2 – Site Plan)



Training Zones

- Z1 General Training
- Z2 Highways
- Z3 Urban
- Z4 Industrial
- Z5 FBT
- Z6 Rural

Principal Buildings

- B1 HQ & Admin. Hub
- B2 Health & Wellbeing
- B3 Trainee Accommodation

- B4 Training Hub
- B5 Fireground Stores
- B6 Logistics Stores
- B7 Appliance Garage
- B8 Wood Store

Training Scenarios

- T1 Training Tower
- T2 High Rise Building
- T3 Domestic Properties
- T4 Industrial Structure
- T5 BA Training Building
- T6 FBT Containers
- T7 Farm Building

Appendix 3 – Risk Register) and reviewed at every Project Group meeting. An exception reporting process is in place for any risks that exceed agreed thresholds. Mitigation strategies are in place and monitored regularly, particularly for high-impact areas such as site conditions, planning approval and procurement.

The project also distinguishes between project-level risks (e.g. cost escalation, scope creep) and strategic risks (e.g. non-compliance with statutory duties), with appropriate escalation pathways to the Service Leadership Team and Authority.

In addition to the overarching risk management process, an outline risk assessment has been undertaken to highlight the key risks at this OBC stage, their likelihood and impact and proposed mitigations. These risks are aligned to the risk allocation principles set out in Section 9.3 of the Commercial Case.

ID	Risk	Owner	Initial Score	Residual Score	Significance	Mitigation
1	Solo External Project Manager is a single point of failure	Head of Training & Development	20	5	Engaging a solo external project manager lacks redundancy if he cannot continue	Procurement team have identified alternative providers if required
2	Lack of dedicated internal Project Manager	Head of Training & Development	15	5	Other responsibilities could distract Project Manager	Dedicated Project Manager assigned to this project
6	Failure to secure sufficient external funding	Head of Finance	15	10	Could lead to project delays, reduced scope, compromised quality and potential cancellation of critical components.	External consultants engaged to draft the Business Case Funding Sub-group created
8	Dolgellau may become unusable so we have no hot BA training facilities across the Service	Property Team	10	10	This may be caused by environmental shut down or structural and compliance	Facilities plan to maintain this facility until the new training centre is built

ID	Risk	Owner	Initial Score	Residual Score	Significance	Mitigation
					issues that are too costly to fix.	
12	There is a risk that one of contractors could go into liquidation. This could be caused by supply chain uncertainty.	Procurement Team	20	8	This could lead to the Service experiencing financial loss which would significantly impact the project.	NWFRS have agreed an uplift to £10m from £5m indemnity on the Perfect Circle appointment. NWFRS & PM to monitor design team financial risks over the lifetime of the project. NWFRS have separate £10m indemnity for BGH, HH & £5m from Ridge respectively.
13	There is a risk of misunderstandings or negative public and stakeholder perception.	Communications Team	9	4	This could result in reputational damage, loss of public trust, stakeholder dissatisfaction, increased scrutiny from media or political bodies, and potential delays or opposition to the project.	Develop a flexible comms approach to support early engagement, ensuring clear, consistent messaging. Begin informal stakeholder briefings to build awareness and manage expectations. Use internal updates and light-touch public messaging to maintain transparency. Monitor sentiment and be ready to

ID	Risk	Owner	Initial Score	Residual Score	Significance	Mitigation
						adapt as the project evolves.

Table 33 : Key Risks

This outline assessment will be developed into a full quantitative risk register at Full Business Case stage, with active monitoring and monthly reporting to the Project Board.

Commercial and procurement-specific risks, including those relating to framework procurement, contract form, supply chain capacity and sustainability performance, are set out in Section 9.4.8 of the Commercial Case. These will be managed through the Procurement Subgroup and integrated into the Service's overarching risk register.

11.8 Benefits Realisation Plan

The Service has developed a comprehensive Benefits Realisation Plan (Appendix 4) which sets out how the benefits of the Training Centre project will be identified, delivered and sustained.

The plan follows best practice from the Infrastructure and Projects Authority, HM Treasury Green Book, the Teal Book and the Welsh Government Better Business Case methodology.

The plan defines clear ownership, measurement, governance and review mechanisms for each benefit. Benefits are grouped into five categories (BTC01–BTC05) as summarised below:

Benefit Group	Primary Outcomes	Governance Owner
BTC01 – Improved Operational Efficiency	Better attendance on courses, reduced travel and vehicle costs, better access to equipment	People & Organisational Development Committee
BTC02 – Enhanced Training Quality & Effectiveness	Improved retention, staff confidence, accident reduction, multi-agency working	People & Organisational Development Committee / Local Resilience Forum
BTC03 – Enhanced Welfare, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	Inclusive facilities, visible commitment to accessibility and Welsh language	Health Safety & Wellbeing Committee
BTC04 – Improved Environmental Sustainability	Reduced carbon footprint, BREEAM Excellent rating	Land and Property Committee
BTC05 – Increased Social Value	Local jobs and apprenticeships, community engagement, social value via procurement	Finance and Procurement Committee

Table 34: Summary of Outcomes and Owners of each Benefit

11.8.1 Monitoring and Reporting

Benefit owners will collect data at agreed intervals and report progress to the Project Board and relevant Committees. Post-project evaluation will take place at the following milestones:

Milestone	Title	Timing	Objective
1	Full Business Case Evaluation	When Full Business Case has been approved.	To confirm alignment of benefits with strategic and spending objectives.
2	Pre-Construction Evaluation	Prior to start of construction.	To validate readiness for delivery and confirm benefit plans are integrated.
3	Mid- Construction Evaluation	At 50% completion of construction	To review progress on enabling changes and assess risks to benefit delivery.
4	Post-project Evaluation	100 days after handover	To assess how well the change itself was affected and to hand over responsibility for ongoing benefits management to the relevant committees within the Service's Governance and Assurance Framework.
5	Operations Review	12 months after operational start	To assess the impact on service delivery.
6	Benefits Realisation	Quarterly at relevant Committees	To continue benefits management until benefits are verified as being realised in line with the expectations agreed at investment approval.

Table 35: Summary of Evaluation Milestones

This structured process ensures ongoing alignment with organisational strategy and continuous learning for future capital projects.

11.9 Gateway Approval Process

The project uses a gated assurance model, with each major phase subject to approval before progression.

Gateway Stage	Description	Stage in Lifecycle
Gateway 0	Strategic overview	Project initiation; can be repeated at any stage throughout

Gateway 1	Business Justification	Pre-SOC submission
Gateway 2	Delivery Strategy	Pre-OBC submission
Gateway 3	Investment Decision	Pre-FBC submission
Gateway 4	Ready for Service	During construction; before handover
Gateway 5	Operations review (benefit realisation)	During operation; prior to the End Project Report

Table 36 - Summary of Gateways

At each gateway, a decision is made by the appropriate governance body (Project Board, Service Leadership Team or Authority), informed by updated cost plans, risk profiles and delivery performance.

Formal Gateway Reviews (aligned with HM Treasury and Welsh Government guidance) will be conducted to test readiness and delivery confidence. These will include internal reviews and, where appropriate, independent assurance.

11.10 Post Project Evaluation Arrangements

A Post-Project Review will be undertaken to assess the delivery of the project against the original objectives, spending criteria and benefit expectations. The review will include:

- Assessment of delivery against time, cost and quality metrics;
- Analysis of realised vs planned benefits (e.g. training quality, cost savings, carbon impact);
- Evaluation of user feedback and stakeholder satisfaction;
- Documentation of lessons learned and recommendations for future capital projects.

Findings will be reported to the Project Board and Authority and used to inform future Service investment planning.

11.11 Transformation and Change Management

The investment in a new training centre is not solely a construction project but a transformation in how training is planned, delivered and managed across the Service.

- **Current Training Delivery (As-Is):** Training is delivered across five dispersed sites (Dolgellau, Rhyl, Wrexham, Deeside and a third party facility), each with limitations in capacity, realism

and modern welfare provision. Training management is fragmented, with duplication of instructor effort, inconsistent facilities and significant travel time for crews.

- **Future Training Delivery (To-Be):** The new centralised centre at St Asaph will allow the Service to consolidate training resources into a single, modern hub. Training will be delivered through immersive, scenario-based props; digital command suites; and improved welfare facilities aligned to EDI standards. This will enable more consistent training quality, greater efficiency and expanded opportunities for joint training with partners.
- **Change Requirements:** To achieve this transition, the Service will need to:
 - Redesign training timetables and instructor deployment models to reflect the centralised centre;
 - Update policies and standard operating procedures to reflect new capabilities (e.g. decontamination protocols, carbon reduction practices);
 - Develop new ICT and AV systems for digital training and assessment;
 - Implement a phased transition plan for closing and decommissioning existing training sites; and
 - Provide change management support for staff, with clear communications and engagement to support adoption of the new model.

The stakeholder working groups identified in Section 6.5 will continue through design and delivery, ensuring continuity of engagement.

This transformation will be overseen by the Project Board, with the Training Department leading the operational change elements and reporting progress through the Benefits Realisation Plan.

11.12 Management Case Summary

The Management Case demonstrates that the Training Centre project is governed, planned and deliverable within an established and well-resourced framework.

Clear structures are already in place to ensure strong oversight, accountability and assurance at every stage of the project's lifecycle. The Project Board, chaired by the Assistant Chief Fire Officer, provides strategic direction and decision-making authority, supported by the Project Team and specialist advisors.

Comprehensive project management and reporting arrangements are in operation, consistent with the Service's governance framework and the Welsh Government Gateway Review process. Risks are actively managed through a live risk register and reviewed routinely by the Project Group, while interdependencies with the Estates Strategy, Workforce Plan and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion priorities are closely monitored.

A detailed Benefits Realisation Plan underpins delivery of the project's intended outcomes. More than twenty measurable benefits, covering operational efficiency, training quality, inclusion, environmental sustainability and social value, have been defined with clear ownership and monitoring responsibilities.

Post-project evaluation will take place at six key stages, during and after the project, to confirm that the forecast benefits have been achieved and to capture lessons learned for future capital programmes.

Overall, the Management Case provides strong assurance that the project can be delivered on time, within budget and to the expected quality standards, with clear arrangements for governance, risk management, benefits realisation and continuous improvement.

12 Conclusions

This Outline Business Case demonstrates a clear and evidence-based rationale for investment in a new, centralised Training Centre for North Wales Fire and Rescue Service. The proposal aligns with national and regional priorities, delivers measurable operational, environmental and social benefits and provides a long-term, sustainable solution to replace an ageing and inefficient training estate.

The Preferred Option, to develop a purpose-built centre at St Asaph, offers the best balance of strategic fit, value for money, and deliverability. It provides the foundation for improved firefighter capability, enhanced inclusion and wellbeing and reduced environmental impact.

Subject to approval of this OBC by the Authority, the project will proceed to Full Business Case development, detailed design and market engagement in line with the governance and assurance arrangements set out in this document.

12.1 Salient Issues for Further Consideration

- Securing Welsh Government capital funding for RIBA Stage 5 onwards.
- Finalising detailed design and cost plans to inform the Full Business Case.
- Developing a comprehensive Benefits Realisation Plan, including KPIs for training quality, operational efficiency, and carbon reduction.
- Continuing stakeholder engagement, particularly with NW LRF partners, to maximise multi-agency training benefits.
- Maintaining rigorous risk management and gateway assurance throughout the project lifecycle.

13 Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1 – Programme Strategy



Programme
Strategy v1.0.pdf

13.2 Appendix 2 – Site Plan



Training Zones

- Z1 General Training
- Z2 Highways
- Z3 Urban
- Z4 Industrial
- Z5 FBT
- Z6 Rural

Principal Buildings

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Training Scenarios

T1	Training Tower
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T3	Domestic Properties
T4	Industrial Structure
T5	BA Training Building
T6	FBT Containers
T7	Farm Building

13.3 Appendix 3 – Risk Register



Risk Register
050126.xlsx

13.4 Appendix 4 – Benefits Realisation Plan



Benefits Realisation
Plan v0.3.pdf

13.5 Appendix 5 – Alignment with Spending Objectives & CSFs

The following tables consider each option in turn and assess its alignment with the Spending Objectives and CSFs.

Legend

■ Green indicates strong alignment and inclusion within the preferred option

■ Amber reflects partial alignment or limited applicability

■ Red identifies options that were discounted at this stage.

	Option A	Option B	Option C
SCOPE Accommodate	Space for NWFRS Training Services	Space for NWFRS Corporate Services	Combination of Options A-B
Spending Objectives	This option delivers the training needs of the Service.	This option delivers the corporate needs of the Service.	This options delivers the best of both worlds for the training and corporate needs of the Service.
Critical Success Factors	This option delivers the training needs of the Service, but not the best value of money as the existing Headquarters will still be retained.	This option delivers the corporate needs of the Service, but not the training needs.	This option provides facilities that meet the needs of the Service, provide good value for money and are achievable.
Conclusion			

Table 37 : Alignment of Scope (Accommodate) Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
SCOPE Training Services	Hot firefighting facilities	Classrooms/ lecture theatres	VR suites for incident command	Open-air training grounds	Combination of Options A-D
Spending Objectives	This option supports the objectives but is incomplete on its own.	This option supports the objectives but is incomplete on its own.	This option supports the objectives but is incomplete on its own.	This option supports the objectives but is incomplete on its own.	This option provides training facilities that meet the needs of the Service.
Critical Success Factors	This option doesn't cover a sufficient range of the training services that are	This option doesn't cover a sufficient range of the training services that are	This option doesn't cover a sufficient range of the training services that are	This option doesn't cover a sufficient range of the training services that are	This option provides training facilities that meet the needs of the Service.

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
	required, so the existing facilities would need to remain open.	required, so the existing facilities would need to remain open.	required, so the existing facilities would need to remain open.	required, so the existing facilities would need to remain open.	
Conclusion					

Table 38 : Alignment of Scope (Training Services) Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E	Option F
SCOPE Corporate Services	Conference facilities.	Headquarters.	General office space.	H&S.	Fleet function.	Combination of Options A-C
Spending Objectives	This option supports the objectives but is incomplete on its own.	This option supports the objectives but is incomplete on its own.	This option supports the objectives but is incomplete on its own.	This option doesn't sufficiently support the objectives.	This option doesn't sufficiently support the objectives.	This option provides supports the needs of the Service and the objectives.
Critical Success Factors	This option doesn't represent value for money as existing Headquarters would need to remain open.	This option doesn't represent value for money as existing Headquarters would need to remain open.	This option doesn't represent value for money as existing Headquarters would need to remain open.	These options do not represent value for money.		This option represents the best value for money, whilst being a strategic fit for the Service.
Conclusion						

Table 39 : Alignment of Scope (Corporate Services) Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C
SOLUTION Location	Build new premises on one site that can accommodate the agreed scope.	Collaboration build (NWP / WAST) with private industry / MOD	Lease from an external provider.
Spending Objectives	These options deliver the modern needs of the Service.		
Critical Success Factors	This option delivers the strategic fit and business needs of the Service.	This option does not deliver the strategic fit and specific business needs of the Service due to the need to accommodate other partners' requirements.	This option does not deliver the future-proof requirements of the Service.
Conclusion			

Table 40 : Alignment of Solution (Location) options

	Option A	Option B	Option C
SOLUTION If Build	Build on the existing NWFRS owned site.	Build on a site owned by a public sector partner (incl military).	Build on a new site (yet to be purchased).
Spending Objectives	These options deliver the modern needs of the Service.		
Critical Success Factors	This option delivers value for money.	These options do not deliver the value for money requirements of the Service.	
Conclusion			

Table 41 : Alignment of Solution (If Build) Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C
SOLUTION Build Style	Standard building method.	Low carbon building.	LPG/Carbon Mix (Clean Burn).
Spending Objectives	These options deliver the environmental sustainability needs of the Service.		
Critical Success Factors	This option delivers value for money.	These options do not deliver the value for money requirements of the Service.	
Conclusion			

Table 42 : Alignment of Solution (Build Style) Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
DELIVERY	In-House Delivery with a Dedicated Project Team	Traditional 'Design-Bid-Build' Approach	'Turnkey' or Single Contractor Delivery	Design + Build Project: Single Stage	In-House Delivery with External Support
Spending Objectives	These options deliver the modern needs of the Service.				
Critical Success Factors	This option doesn't deliver value for money or the necessary potential achievability as these skills do not exist in-house.	This option doesn't deliver value for money or the necessary potential achievability.	This option doesn't deliver value for money or the necessary potential achievability as a single contractor limits the number of potential contractors in the market.	This option doesn't deliver value for money or the necessary potential achievability as a single stage project presents increased risk.	This option delivers value for money and the necessary potential achievability.

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Conclusion					

Table 43 : Alignment of Delivery Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C
IMPLEMENTATION	Within 1 Year (from FBC approval)	Within 3 Years (from FBC approval)	Within 5 years (from FBC approval)
Spending Objectives	This option cannot deliver the high-quality requirement within this timescale.	These options deliver the modern needs of the Service.	These options take too long to deliver the benefits.
Critical Success Factors	This option is not achievable due to the timeframe being too short.	This option delivers value for money, affordability and achievability.	These options take too long, which will impact the affordability and value for money.
Conclusion			

Table 44 : Alignment of Implementation Options

	Option A	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
FUNDING	Welsh Government / Grant Funding	Philanthropy, Sponsorship or Corporate Social Responsibility	Denbighshire County Council (and their partners)	Collaboration Funding (NWP/WAST)	Local Councils
Spending Objectives	These options deliver the modern needs of the Service.				
Critical Success Factors	This option delivers the best potential achievability and affordability.	These options do not deliver potential achievability due to the additional complexity of securing partnership funding.			
Conclusion					

Table 45 : Alignment of Funding Options

13.6 Appendix 6 – Collaboration and Charging Opportunities

Opportunity / Partner Group	Description	Potential Scale (Indicative)	Potential Delivery Partners	Timing	Notes
External Training Provision	Deliver specialist fire, rescue and compliance training courses beyond the Service's own needs.	Medium–High (offset a proportion of annual operating costs).	Other UK Fire & Rescue Services; Local Resilience Forum partners; private sector.	From Year 1 of centre operation.	Builds on the Service's recognised training expertise.
Centre Hire (Props & Classrooms)	Hire out training props, incident command suite, and classroom/lecture spaces for joint use and exercises.	Medium (steady revenue stream).	Police, Ambulance, Military; private sector.	From Year 1.	Enhances interoperability across blue light services.
Academic Partnerships	Collaborate on accredited courses, research projects, and work placements.	Medium (tuition/research income + reputational value).	Universities; FE colleges.	Year 2–3.	Supports skills pipeline and knowledge transfer.
Community and Third-Sector Use	Selective use of seminar and classroom spaces for public engagement and community safety campaigns.	Low (modest supplementary revenue).	Local authorities; charities; voluntary groups.	From Year 2 (post-establishment).	Strengthens community links; cost recovery focus.
Resilience & Civil Contingencies Training	Host exercises for local authorities and health partners, supporting wider preparedness.	Medium (cost recovery or service charge).	Local Resilience Forum; NHS and public health partners.	From Year 1–2.	Directly supports statutory resilience duties.

Charging Mechanisms	Establish a transparent charging framework covering cost recovery, market-comparable rates, and tiered structures for partners vs. private sector clients.	N/A (enabler for income opportunities above).	NWFRS Finance; Project Board oversight.	To be developed during FBC.	Ensures compliance with subsidy control and public sector accounting rules.
Projected Income and Reliability	Income forecasts have not been included in OBC affordability modelling. Projections will be developed at FBC, with risk-adjusted estimates based on demand analysis and benchmarking.	To be quantified at FBC.	NWFRS Finance; partner engagement.	FBC stage.	Treated as an upside opportunity at OBC rather than a core assumption.

Table 46 : Collaboration & Charging Opportunities

13.7 Appendix 7 – Procurement Strategy



Procurement
Strategy v1.0.pdf

13.8 Appendix 8 – Stakeholder Engagement and Communications Strategy



Communications &
Engagement Strateg

13.9 Appendix 9 – Stakeholder Consultation Log



Consultation Log
060125.xlsx

13.10 Appendix 10 – Resource Plan



Resourcing Plan
v1.0.pdf

13.11 Appendix 11 – Glossary

Initials	Full Term	Notes
AV	Audio Visual	
BCR	Benefit Cost Ratio	
BREEAM	Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method	Global standard for assessing & certifying sustainability of the built environment
CCS	Crown Commercial Services	Supplier of public sector contracts & frameworks
CFRA	Chief Fire and Rescue Advisor	
CRMP	Community Risk Management Plan	
CSF	Critical Success Factor	
D&B	Design & Build	
EDI	Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	
FBC	Full Business Case	third & final stage of the Better Business Case methodology
FM	Facilities Management	
HVAC	Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning	
ICT	Information & Communications Technology	
JCT	Joint Contracts Tribunal	Supplier of construction contracts & frameworks
JESIP	Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Programme	
LRF	Local Resilience Forum	Multi-agency partnerships made up of representatives from local public services
NFCC	National Fire Chiefs Council	
NWFRA	North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority	
NWFRS	North Wales Fire & Rescue Service	

Initials	Full Term	Notes
OBC	Outline Business Case	2 nd stage of the Better Business Case methodology
PCSA	Pre-Construction Services Agreement	Formal contract used to appoint a design and build contractor to perform specific services (such as design input, buildability advice, and detailed cost information) before entering into the main building contract
PPA	Power Purchase Agreements	Agreement between electricity supplier and organisation
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment	
PV	Photovoltaic	Solar Panels
RIBA 1-6	Royal Institute of British Architects (stages 1-6)	These stages outline the process of designing and constructing a building, from initial client requirements to the final handover.
SCAPE	SCAPE	Supplier of construction contracts & frameworks
SO	Spending Objectives	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) outcomes that justify the financial investment for a project
SOC	Strategic Outline Case	1 st stage of the Better Business Case methodology
SLT	Service Leadership Team	
VWV	Veal Wasbrough Vizards LLP	Supplier of legal support for the project

Table 47 : Glossary