

NORTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY REPORT

DATE:	27 th March 2006
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PURPOSE OF REPORT:	To update members on the Phoenix Project. A youth intervention programme delivered by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The principal aim of the Phoenix Project is to invest in the adults of tomorrow by helping to educate the young people of today. The project addresses the issue of anti-social behaviour by challenging the attitudes of the young people along with their actions. This is done by utilising the skills, experience and reputation of the North Wales Fire & Rescue Service in a week long programme of activities which includes problem solving, first aid and using operational equipment while working as part of a team.
- 1.2 The Phoenix Project targets young people aged between 13 and 17 who may be, or have been, involved in anti-social behaviour, bullying or behavioural problems at home or school. Other children identified within the target group are those with low self-esteem and confidence, those who have difficulty in communicating and in particular young people who have been excluded, or are likely to be excluded, from school.
- 1.3 The objective is to reform some, if not all of those involved, and help them to become more motivated and positive about themselves. It is hoped that this in turn will have the knock on effect of making them better citizens. The course promotes discussions about real life problems related to anti-social behaviour.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Phoenix Project was established in September 2000 in Tyne and Wear at Sunderland Central fire station. Although Tyne and Wear discontinued the course because of financial constraints the scheme was such a success that Cornwall Fire Brigade adopted the project and has been running it successfully for the last four years.
- 2.2 While investigating the effectiveness of youth intervention programmes North Wales Fire & Rescue Service evaluated the advantages of the Phoenix Project and subsequently ran a trial course in April 2004.

3. **CURRENT SITUATION**

3.1 As a result of the success of the trial course, based on the positive feedback from all those involved, which includes referring authorities, youth justice provision, police, parents and guardians, further projects were run in 2005 and are planned as follows:

- 2004/5 – 4 courses - 3 in Wrexham and 1 in Flintshire.
- 2005/6 – 16 courses - 8 in Wrexham, 4 in Flintshire, 2 in Ynys Môn, 1 in North Gwynedd and 1 in South Gwynedd.

There are already 6 courses scheduled for 2006/7 – 1 in Denbighshire, 1 in Conwy, 1 in Wrexham and 3 in Flintshire.

3.2 Funding for all the courses delivered to date, and those scheduled for this coming year, has come from each respective Unitary Authority. This has been via either internal funding streams or through securing grant funding from various sources. Sources include Communities First and the Arson Small Grant fund established by the Welsh Assembly Government.

3.3 One of the consequences of running the course is the personnel requirement to oversee and work with the participants. This was originally carried out by highly motivated and committed volunteers from the Service. However, the course's success and the desired expansion of the number of courses would have made the staffing provision difficult to sustain on a voluntary basis.

3.4 The Service has recently learned that a bid by the Community Fire Safety department for funding from the Welsh Assembly Government has been successful. This will lead to the appointment of two full time dedicated course staff for the Phoenix Project to enable the project to be extended for a pilot period of three years to undertake qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the benefits to both the individuals, the communities affected and the Service.

The funding totals £143K for the duration of the 3 year project to be paid as follows:

2006/7 - £53k

2007/8 - £45k

2008/9 - £45k

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Members note the contents of the report