

Case study pro-forma

Case Study Title	Merger of Bargoed and Cefn Fforest Fire Stations into a new purpose-built Community Fire and Rescue Station
Partner Organisation (s)	Unitary Authority, Local Council, Stakeholders, Planning, Highways
Key words	New purpose-built Community Fire and Rescue Station



1. Brief Introduction

The South Wales Fire and Rescue Fire Authority (SWFRA) has bought 3 acres of land between New Tredegar and Hengoed for the construction of the new Bargoed / Cefn Fforest Community Fire Station., to be named 'Aberbargoed Community Fire and Rescue Station'. This decision has been imposed on the Authority by budget enforced by the Welsh Government and is unavoidable and is not negotiable. Therefore there is no possibility of consultation on the decision but the SWFRA and South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) are keen to engage with the communities, its staff and the general public of South Wales to make this difficult decision easier for them to understand and realise its potential.

2. Details of the issue addressed

The issues addressed in this case study are:

- the concerns of the SWFRS staff (crews on Station).
- the concerns of the local communities which are affected by the new development.
- the effect it would have on local community groups.
- the benefits the new station would have over the existing sites.
- reassurance to both the communities and the staff of the benefits of this station.

concerns over maintaining the same high standard of service currently provided.

3. Actions/approach taken

Members of the local community, Local Authority, Local Community Council, Community Groups, local businesses and wholetime and retained duty system crews from both Bargoed and Cefn Fforest Station, were invited to attend an open meeting held, at a venue near the new site, to give people the chance to see exactly where the joint Station would be and give a better geographical visual of its locality to both community areas. Free transport to and from the venue was provided and light



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refreshments were available throughout the duration of the meeting.

4. Benefits such as: improvements to service, improved dialogue about funding and service planning between third sector organisations and local authorities, in-kind support arrangements etc

The benefits to the communities concerned:

- Purpose built 'state of the art' station with advanced capabilities allowing for a higher standard of service delivery.
- More consistent response times to incidents throughout the area.
- New training facilities to facilitate an ever changing response requirement.
- An eco-friendly design to help reduce the carbon footprint.
- Improved engagement with the community by the inclusion of a community room, which could be used 'free of charge' for community groups, home fire safety courses, meetings, drop-in centre, thus improving future engagement with the communities served by SWFRS and in turn helping to make South Wales a safer place to live, work and visit.

5. Sustaining and or building on the benefits realised

If this merger proves to be a success, the possibility to look at different sites within the SWFRS area, and incorporate some of the ideas used in this project to further develop/benefit other communities that we serve.

As our consultation panel develops further we will actively engage and encourage more communication with members to shape future service delivery and improve on the high standards we already set.

6. How would you rate your approach to the project against the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales?

Evaluation

1= very poor: 2 = poor: 3 = average: 4 = good: 5 = excellent

Principle	Evaluation
Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference	4
Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose	3
Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way	3
Work with relevant partner organizations	3
The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable	4
Make it easier for people to take part	4
Enable people to take part effectively	4
Engagement is given the right resources and support to be effective	3

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People are told the impact of their contribution	2
Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement	3

7. How would you rate your approach to the project against the National Principles for Public Engagement in Wales?

*****Below is an evaluation on the engagement carried out and the reasons for the scores to question 6*****

Principle	Score	Reason
Engagement is effectively designed to make a difference	4	The engagement in this instance was to reassure the communities that the differences that the new merged station would be of great importance and improvement on the service already delivered.
Encourage and enable everyone affected to be involved, if they so choose	3	By actively promoting an open event for the communities, businesses and stakeholders via SWFRS website, station personnel making leaflet drops in their areas, a large billboard erected outside the stations concerned. The addition of free transport for those with mobility difficulties aided the elderly, disabled, low income families and hard to reach groups, helped to enable a greater participation.
Engagement is planned and delivered in a timely and appropriate way	3	In this instance the planning although well thought out, could have started earlier in the process. This would have given the Service a better chance of talking to the communities in advance of rumours and public perception.
Work with relevant partner organisations	4	The event consisted of the Chief Fire Officer, personnel from SWFRS property Management team, the contractors of the development and the principle Architects to assist in the process. Each of the partners was able to give their perspective and professional thoughts and facts etc.
The information provided will be jargon free, appropriate and understandable.	4	The leaflets and information distributed were in plain English giving a brief overview of the development encouraging people to attend to air their views and concerns.
Make it easier for people to take part.	4	The inclusion of transport for those with mobility difficulties as previously mentioned. Central location near to the site of the new Station made it fair for all parties to attend and illustrate how well situated the Station would be for all residents in both communities.
Enable people to take part effectively.	4	As above
Engagement is given the right	3	With the inclusion of all partners concerned in



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resources and support to be effective.		the project, a broad and comprehensive panel was available to answer questions and dispel any fears of worries people may have had.
People are told the impact of their contribution	2	The contribution on this occasion was purely for SWFRS to re-iterate the necessity of the development and to get a “buy-in” from the effected communities. (Informing rather than consulting)
Learn and share lessons to improve the process of engagement.	3	Lessons were learnt from this, with regard to the importance of communicating from the very early stages and therefore not create a barrier and create issues that could have been avoided.

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