

**AWDURDOD TÂN AC ACHUB CANOLBARTH A GORLLEWIN  
CYMRU**



**MID AND WEST WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

**COFNODION  
CYFARFOD YR AWDURDOD**

Ganolfan Gynadledda,  
Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub, Caerfyrddin  
**4 CHWEFROR 2008**

**MINUTES  
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,  
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen  
**4 FEBRUARY 2008**

**11.00am – 12.10pm**

**PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN: C J Crowley

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: T E Evans

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: J S Allen-Mirehouse,  
J J J Davies, K Harris, D R James,  
R Lewis, C Morgan, G Phillips,  
Mrs C Philpott, T Theolphilus,  
J D A Thompson, C Waller, P James,  
Mrs F M Jones, G Seabourne,  
M Williams, D C Prothero, P Llewellyn

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: Mrs T Devichand, Mrs J  
Dudley, Mrs K Becton

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: D Mackay, R Smith, E Aitken, A Howells,  
J Maunder

## **1 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL INTERESTS**

None were declared

## **2 CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL MATTERS**

The Chair reminded Members of the forthcoming FSSAA Rugby Event hosted by the Service which would be taking place on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2008 at St Helens Rugby Ground and encouraged Members to attend.

Councillor G Seabourne made reference to the recent fire related death in Gorseinion where his cousin tragically lost his life. On behalf of the family Cllr Seabourne wished to convey sincere thanks to the crew who attended for the professional and dignified manner in which the incident was dealt with.

## **3 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 10<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2007**

The Minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

## **4 TO CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Councillor F M Jones made reference to Item 5, namely consideration of the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 26<sup>th</sup> November and 3<sup>rd</sup> December and the budget approval for 2008/2009. Councillor Jones mentioned that no reference had been made in the minutes of any discussions concerning the Capital Programme or the Vehicle Replacement Programme and also queried whether any progress had been made in setting up the Member Review Groups. The Director of Finance reminded Committee that both the Capital Programme and the Vehicle Replacement Programme had been fully discussed in the Resources Committees of 26<sup>th</sup> November and 3<sup>rd</sup> December and that the subsequent decisions had been re affirmed in the Fire Authority meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> February. It was suggested that the minutes should have made it clear that discussions on these two items had taken place at the Fire Authority meeting. Members of the Resources Committee, however, pointed out that a full discussion had taken place at the two Resources Committee meetings and that there had therefore been no need for further debate.

The Clerk made reference to the Efficiencies Work Streams, reporting that all Members had been sent a letter asking if they had a particular area of interest or concern they would wish to engage in. Once replies had been received the meeting dates would be set. Mr Howells confirmed that the detail of the Vehicle Replacement Programme would be an area that could be examined further within the transport work stream.

Members also welcomed the suggestion made by the Modernisation Working Group that Chairs of Committees would formally present their respective minutes and Committee related reports to the Fire Authority in order to provide a greater involvement in decisions of the Authority.

**5 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES:**

- i) Resources Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008*

**RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***The minutes of the above meeting be received and noted***

- ii) Modernisation Working Group held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2008*

Councillor J Thompson commended the meeting of the Modernisation Working Group as having dealt with a number of very important pieces of work relating to Member engagement and scrutiny. Members of Performance Review and Audit Committee who had recently taken part in the Task and Finish Groups indicated that they had found them to be very successful and useful and looked forward to similar work being carried out within the Efficiencies Work Streams.

It was noted that problems had been experienced when arranging the Task and Finish Groups in finding dates to suit all Members. The suggestion was made that the Modernisation Working Group could give due consideration to the use of video conferencing as an alternative in future.

**RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

***i) The minutes of the above meeting be received and noted***

***ii) On occasions when a Chair of Committee was unable to attend the pre Fire Authority briefing meeting, the Vice Chair of that Committee be asked to attend in his/her place.***

***iii) Following a vote by show of hands the idea of providing a wallet sized card with dates of future meetings be not approved.***

**6 TO APPROVE THE FINAL BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2008/09 FOLLOWING THE FINAL REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT (RSG) SETTLEMENT FROM THE ASSEMBLY**

The Director of Finance reported that the Final RSG Settlement for 2008/09 had been announced on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 and that unfortunately there had been no additional resources of any kind for the Fire Service within the Final Settlement over and above those indicated in the Provisional Settlement. As a result of both this and the consultation process, it was noted that the recommended Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Prudential Indicators for 2008/09 were as previously agreed by either the Fire Authority or the Resources Committee. The full detail of the recommendations were outlined for Members attention.

Members indicated that they would welcome specific training on the Prudential

Code and it was agreed that this would be arranged.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

**1) The budget requirement for 2008/09 be part funded by a contribution of £745,000 from the Elective Pensioners Provision.**

**2) The net budget requirement (and net of the above contribution) at £41,792,718 (+5.36%) for 2008/09 be approved**

**3) The Capital Programme for 2008/09 agreed at the full Fire Authority meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 be approved.**

**4) The intention to continue to replace and upgrade vehicles in line with the programme provided at the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 be approved**

**5) Whilst it had been assumed that the majority of vehicles would be leased in the budget build up, it was recommended that the Director of Finance and Procurement be authorised to decide on the appropriate method of financing at the time of procurement**

**6) The 2008/09 prudential indicators be approved.**

**7) Delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance and Procurement to change the balance between borrowing and other long term liabilities within the Authorised Limit for external debt and within the Operational Boundary while keeping within the overall limits.**

**8) It be noted that the above recommendations were either presented and agreed for consultation at the full Fire Authority meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> December 2007 or recommended by the Resources Committee meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008.**

**9) Members receive specific training on the Prudential Code as required**

## **7 TO RECEIVE A FURTHER REPORT ON CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE THREE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY CHAIRS AND THE MINISTER**

The Chief Fire Officer reported that as part of the ongoing correspondence between the Fire and Rescue Authorities in Wales and the Minister for Social Justice and Local Government, the Authority's officers had drafted a response to the letter of 20<sup>th</sup> December 2007 from the Minister, which had been reported to the January Resources Committee meeting. The draft had been approved by the Chair to the Authority and had been forwarded to the other two Chairs for their comments. Should there be any amendments, these would be reported back and considered in due course.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The draft response and the action be noted*

### **8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE RISK REDUCTION PLANNING 2009/10 ACTION PLAN**

Members were aware that the process for the production of the Draft Action plan for 2009/10 for the Risk Reduction Plan 2007/10 had commenced. There were a number of areas remaining of the three year plan that needed to be reviewed as part of the Member Working Group, and the Authority were asked to confirm Membership of the Member Working Group for the 2009/10 Plan.

A schedule of the time scale for the 2009/10 Action plan was also provided for approval.

Reference was made to letters from AM Gwenda Thomas and the Chief Fire Officer concerning the proposed changes in the crewing system at Pontardawe Fire Station. Concern was expressed that Mrs Thomas' letters had been published in the press but that the Service had not been given the opportunity to respond publicly. The Chief Fire Officer indicated that he would be sending his response to Mrs Thomas' list of 31 questions for publication in the press and further suggested that Mrs Thomas be invited to discuss her concerns directly with Members of the RRP Working Group. Members welcomed this course of action and asked that they continued to be kept informed of correspondence as appropriate.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

- i) Members confirm the current Membership of the Member Working Group for 2009/2010*
- ii) Members agree the time-scale for the Risk Reduction Planning 2009/2010 Action plan*
- iii) Members to continue to be kept informed of correspondence with Mrs Thomas and invite her to meet with Members of the RRP Working Group.*

### **9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CIVIL CONTINGENCIES AND RESILIENCE DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE**

At the Fire Authority meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2007, Members had discussed proposals to enhance the Civil Contingencies and Resilience Department, to address the difficulties in meeting the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act. Members had resolved that a bid would be made to the Welsh Assembly Government for an additional £40k to fully fund the department. Following that

meeting, the Chief Fire Officer had written to the Minister to request the funding, and a response had been received from the Minister on the 14<sup>th</sup> January, rejecting the bid, stating '*...this is a pressure that has to be managed alongside other pressures that are faced by Fire and Rescue Authorities across Wales.*'

Due to the unavoidable nature of the expenditure, Members had included the necessary funding in the 2008 /2009 budget deliberations. The revised Departmental arrangements would therefore fall into place at the start of the new financial year.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The Ministerial response be noted*

### **10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

The Clerk provided a report which gave consideration the impact of the local government elections on the date of the Authority's Annual General Meeting (AGM), together with the delegation arrangements required in the period from the elections up to the holding of the AGM.

As Members were aware the local authority elections would be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008 and the Annual General Meeting of the Authority could not take place until the Constituent Authorities had appointed Members to sit on the Authority. Confirmation had been sought from the Constituent Authorities as to the timing of this process and whilst all would have met towards the middle of May, appointments to outside bodies such as to the Fire Authority would not have been made by all authorities, based on current information, until the end of May / beginning of June. Accordingly it would be necessary to reschedule the Authority's AGM from the 4<sup>th</sup> June to the 11<sup>th</sup> June. Should there be any delay in such notification then the date of the Authority's AGM would require further review.

It was further noted that Members would cease to be Authority Members four days after the election on the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008. Accordingly from this date up to the date of the Annual General Meeting there would be no constituent authority Members to sit on the Fire & Rescue Authority. It was therefore necessary for the Authority to consider interim delegation arrangements so that any urgent matters, which under the Constitution were reserved to the Authority or its Standing Committees, could be dealt with during this period. In accordance with previous practice, it was recommended that the Authority delegate to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Clerk and Director of Finance and Procurement, the power to act on behalf of the Authority and its Standing Committees, subject to such power being exercised in accordance with Part 3 of the Constitution i.e. Authority and Financial Procedure Rules.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

- I. Standing Orders be suspended*
- II. The Annual General Meeting for the 2008/09 Municipal Year be held on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008*
- III. Should the need arise to further review this date, delegated Authority be granted to the Clerk in consultation with the Chief Fire Officer to determine the date of the Annual General meeting.*
- IV. From the 5<sup>th</sup> May 2008 up until the date of the Authority's Annual General Meeting, the Authority delegates to the Chief Fire Officer, in consultation with the Clerk and the Director of Finance and Procurement, the power to act on behalf of the Authority and its Standing Committees, subject to such power being exercised in accordance with Part 3 of the Constitution i.e. Authority and Financial Procedure Rules.*
- V. Standing Orders be reintroduced.*

### 11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER APPOINTMENT

The Chief Fire Officer, Mr Douglas Mackay, had recently given formal notice of his intention to retire from the Service on 15 June 2008.

Members were asked to note the outstanding contribution Mr Mackay had given to the Service over the past 8 years (5 years as Chief Fire Officer and 3 years as Deputy Chief Fire Officer) during a period of great change within the Fire and Rescue Service. It was further recommended that the forthcoming Personnel Committee meeting on 3 March 2008 consider the appointment process for his successor.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The Selection Process for a new Chief Fire Officer be considered at the Personnel Committee meeting to be held on 3 March 2008.*

### 12 TO RECEIVE ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

A number of items were received for information and Members from the Powys and Ceredigion areas particular wished to thank the local crews who had assisted in the recent spate flooding incidents within their areas.