

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



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

**NOTE: THESE MINUTES ARE SUBJECT TO CONFIRMATION BY THE FIRE AUTHORITY AT ITS  
NEXT MEETING ON 10 MAY 2010**

**COFNODION  
CYFARFOD YR AWDURDOD**

Ganolfan Gynadledda,  
Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub, Caerfyrddin  
**8 CHWEFROR 2010**

**MINUTES  
OF THE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,  
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen  
**8 FEBRUARY 2010**

**11.00 – 12.30**

**64% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CADEIRYDD/CHAIRMAN:	TE Evans
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:	C Philpott
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: A Davies, D Davies, J J J Davies, J Dinham, J Dudley, J Holmes, R Llewellyn, G Thomas, A Woolcock, P James, P Llewellyn, D Thomas, R Lewis, F Torrens
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	Cyng/Cllrs: E Kirchner, T Tudor, S Lloyd-Janes, M Williams, WEA Jones, D Howells
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	R Smith, P Coleman, A Howells, E Aitken, W Edwards

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

The Clerk made reference to the Draft Guidance on the Code of Conduct from the Public Services Ombudsman which had recently been considered by the Authority's Standards Committee. Under the Guidance Members were required to declare membership of their own Constituent Authorities at the start of each meeting and in their Register of Members Interests Declaration. Members were further asked to declare any interests they had which could affect issues within certain Community areas and accordingly the following members declared an interest in their local community council :

Councillor J J J Davies:

Councillor D Thomas:

Councillor D Davies:

Councillor J Dudley:

Councillor P James:

Councillor R Llewellyn:

Councillor F Torrens:

Councillor A Woolcock

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was resolved that copies of the Register of Members Interests Declaration Forms would be re-sent out to all Members in order to ensure that they declared membership of their own Constituent Authority in accordance with the draft Guidance on the Code of Conduct.***

## **2 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS/PERSONAL MATTERS**

The Chairman reminded the meeting that all Members had the right to speak in the language of their choice at Fire Authority meetings and encouraged the use of the simultaneous translation service made available to them.

## **3 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETINGS HELD ON 14 DECEMBER 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2009 were confirmed and approved as a true record.

Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Fire Authority Meeting held on 14 December 2009

Councillor P James made reference to the discussion on the forward work plan for scrutiny which had taken place at the last meeting. It was noted that the Corporate Head of Strategic Planning, Derek Masson, would be presenting a paper to the next PRAC Meeting with the intention of re-energising the Scrutiny Process.

## **4 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2010**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Resources Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2010 and specific consideration was given to the following items which required decision from the full Fire Authority:

- i) the Joint Report of the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Resources on the Budget Requirement for 2010/11.
- ii) the Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators for 2010/ 11.
- iii) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement for 2010/11.
- iv) the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2010-11 together with the statement of Treasury Management Practices
- v) the detailed Revenue Budget for 2010/11.

Councillor Gillian Thomas, Chair of Resources, commended the recommendations of the Resources Committee in regard to the above listed items and informed Members that the resolve of Committee had been unanimous.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the following items be approved:***

- i) the Joint Report of the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Resources on the Budget Requirement for 2010/11***
- ii) the Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators for 2010/ 11***
- iii) the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement for 2010/11***
- iv) the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2010-11 together with the statement of Treasury Management Practices***
- v) the detailed Revenue Budget for 2010/11***

## **5 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2009**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Member Development Working Group held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009 and it was noted that the Group had achieved a 'first' in that one of the Members, Councillor Gillian Thomas, had participated by video link. It was hoped that video conferencing could be made further use of in the future by Fire Authority Working Groups, as the pilot had worked very effectively.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that:***

***The minutes of the meeting of the Member Development Working Group held on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2009 be received and noted***

## **6 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 18<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2010**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the People and Organisational Development

Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the People and Organisational Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2010 be received and noted***

### **7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION ON SCRUTINY AND POLITICAL STRUCTURES**

The Clerk made reference to a consultation document which had been received from the Welsh Assembly Government on proposals to further develop the scrutiny function as a vital part of accountability and good governance in local authorities and the wider public sector.

It was noted that whilst most of the proposals related to local authorities, some of the proposals impacted on Fire & Rescue Authorities and these areas had been highlighted for Members' attention within the report.

Particular consideration was given to the following points for which the Clerk had made initial comments for Members' approval :

#### **2.3 Scrutiny beyond the functions of a local authority**

Of particular concern to the Authority was the absence of any details of the public services the local authorities would be able to scrutinise and "required" information and/or attendance from at a meeting. This had created some difficulty in making a concise response to this section as different scenarios have had to be considered.

The Fire Authority was particularly concerned that Fire and Rescue Authorities should NOT be included within the list of public services that local authorities can scrutinise under these proposals. It was asserted that this would be inappropriate for the following reasons:

- The Fire and Rescue Authority is comprised of Councillor representatives from the six constituent local authorities that make up the Mid & West Wales Fire & Rescue Authority.
- Although not required to do so by statute, the Authority has set up a formal scrutiny structure as a matter of good practice.
- If the Fire & Rescue Service was to be included in the schedule of "devolved public services" for which local authorities would have responsibility for scrutiny then there was the potential for this Fire and Rescue Authority and Service being subject to 6 separate scrutiny committees. It was highly likely that each would have different terms of reference, reporting requirements etc. leading to unnecessary complexity and bureaucracy for those servicing the committees.
- The prospect of scrutiny being undertaken by members not familiar with the Fire and Rescue Service would result in an inefficient use of resources (both officer and member time)

- In a similar manner, servicing up to 6 scrutiny committees would result in an inefficient use of resources (officer and member time) with again the potential for the proposed scrutiny committees considering the same or similar issues at differing times throughout the year.
- Additionally, the servicing of such committees would provide an additional burden for Fire and Rescue Authorities.

## **2.7 Forward Planning**

As a matter of good practice, the Fire and Rescue Authority already utilised a forward work programme for its scrutiny committee and supports this proposal.

## **2.8 Officer Support for Scrutiny**

The proposal to provide, adequate and independent officer support for scrutiny does not appear to apply directly to Fire & Rescue Authorities. In a single service authority the benefits of such a proposal would not seem to be cost effective.

## **3. Review of Political Structures and Council Organisations**

Whilst the proposal does not apply directly to Fire & Rescue Authorities, the establishment of an Audit Committee as a statutory requirement is supported, the Authority already having established such a Committee. As noted in 2.2. the Authority recognises the benefits of the expertise and challenge that can be provided by co-opted members. The proposal to appoint an independent Chair and a maximum of one third of lay appointees would however not be supported in a Fire & Rescue Authority context given that membership of such an Authority's Audit Committee is made up of members representing its six constituent authorities.

## **4. Strengthening the links within the Community**

- a. Duty to consult
- b. Councillor / community calls for action
- c. Promotion of democracy and petitions

None of these apply directly to Fire & Rescue Authorities, it being noted that there will be further consultation on guidance to be issued on the promotion of democracy and petitions, whilst there will be separate consultations as to whether Fire & Rescue Authorities (along with Community Councils and National Park Authorities) should be subject to petition schemes. The Authority would reserve any comments on such issue until that consultation document is published.

## **5. Conclusion & Recommendations**

The Clerk concluded that whilst the majority of the proposals contained within the

consultation document related to unitary authorities, there were issues which were relevant to Fire & Rescue Authorities as discussed and on which representations should be made.

Councillor A Woolcock spoke of the need for clarity within the scrutiny process in order to make it a positive and achievable procedure. Councillor D Thomas stressed the importance that the Fire Authority were seen to go about their business in an open and honest manner without the impression that they had anything to hide.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED:***

***That the response prepared by the Clerk be sent to the Welsh Assembly Government on behalf of the Fire Authority***

### **8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE SHORTLISTING FOR THE POST OF MONITORING OFFICER AND CLERK**

The Clerk reminded Members that the People and Organisational Development Committee had recommended to the Fire Authority that an Appointments Committee be set up in relation to the appointment of all Principal Officers with the exception of the Chief Fire Officer. The first appointment under such new arrangements would be for the post of Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Authority which had a closing date for applications of the 29<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Accordingly it was necessary to establish a Shortlisting Panel, it being suggested that such a panel should comprise of 5 members drawn from the Appointments Committee and be politically balanced i.e. Chair of the Authority, Chair of People & Organisational Development Committee, Chair of Resources, Chair of Performance Review & Audit and Leader of the Labour Group

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that***

A Shortlisting Panel be set up, comprising of 5 Members as detailed above, and, convened to shortlist potential candidates for the post of Monitoring Officer and Clerk to the Authority.

### **9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE RISK REDUCTION PLANNING 2011/2012**

It was reported that the Fire Authority has a five year strategic plan setting out its key goals for 2010 /2015 in terms of reducing community and corporate risk whilst continually improving how the Service is managed. As a driving force for this plan the Fire Authority develops and implements an annual risk reduction plan (RRP), bringing the five year plan to life.

A number of themes were presented to Members for consideration within the 2011/2012 RRP (year two of the five year strategy) and following approval the Strategic

Planning & Performance Department will commence the work in developing the RRP with the support and direction of the RRP Member Working Group.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The Authority approve the broad themes for inclusion in the 2011/2012 RRP plan for development by the Member Working Group.*

### **10 TO RECEIVE THE SERVICE DELIVERY REPORT**

The Service Delivery Report was received for consideration

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that*

*The report be received and noted.*

### **11 RETIREMENT OF THE CLERK**

The Chair announced that Arwyn Howells, the Clerk and Monitoring Officer, would be retiring on 31<sup>st</sup> March and this would be his last meeting of the Fire Authority. Members were aware that Arwyn has had a long and very prestigious background working in Local Government, starting his career in 1968 in the Finance Department at Carmarthen District Council. He was appointed Director of Finance & IT of Carmarthenshire County Council in 1997 and in 2001 he was made acting Chief Executive a role he fulfilled until his retirement on April, 2002.

He was appointed as Clerk and Monitoring Officer to the Fire Authority commencing on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2002 and during almost eight years of service he has worked with and given advice to, three different Chief Fire Officers and five different Chairs.

Members joined the Chair in thanking him for his sound advice, support and friendship during the last eight years and wished him a long and a very happy retirement. The Clerk responded by thanking members for their very kind remarks and stated that it had been a pleasure to serve the Authority, albeit on a part time basis, during a period of considerable change. He stated that he would look back with great fondness at his period of office with the Authority and extended his best wishes to the Authority, its members and officers in meeting the challenges all the public sector would face in the years ahead.