

**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**

**COFNODION
CYFARFOD YR AWDURDOD TAN**

**Ganolfan Gynadledda,
Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub, Caerfyddin
5 RHAGFYR 2011**

**MINUTES
OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING**

**The Conference Centre,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
5 DECEMBER 2011**

11.00 – 1.30PM

68 % PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

**GADEIRYDD/ CHAIRMAN: C Philpott
IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN: R Llewellyn**

**AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: Dyfrig Thomas, N Holley,
S Lloyd-Janes, M Pepper, M Williams,
G Ratcliffe, D Howells, G Thomas, Des
Thomas, J J J Davies, A Woolcock,
D Davies, T Tudor, J Newbury, J Dudley**

**YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: T E Evans, P James, P Smith,
J Dinham, P Llewellyn, J Holmes,
A Davies, H Morris**

**YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: R Smith, D Daycock, E Aitken,
D Masson, K J Jones, C Margetts,
J Maunder**

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T E Evans, P Smith, P Llewellyn, P James, J Holmes, A Davies, H Morris and J Dinham

2 DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in any matters affecting or relating to their own Constituent Authority.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made reference to the recent Celebrating Success event which had taken place on 17th November 2011 and which had focussed on awarding the outstanding achievements attained by Service personnel over the past year. The Chair thanked the Head of Corporate Communications and Member Support and her team for arranging such a successful and enjoyable event.

Members were reminded that the Annual Carol Service would be held at 7.00pm in St Mary's Church, Tenby that evening and that the Welshpool Carol Service would be held on 10th December 2011 to which all Fire Authority Members were invited.

4 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 24th OCTOBER 2011

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 24TH October 2011 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings.

5 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND AUDIT COMMITTEE HELD ON 10th OCTOBER 2011

The minutes of the Performance Review and Audit Committee held on 10th October 2011 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising from the Minutes:

7.4 – Performance Indicator Report Quarter 1

It was noted that a report on the Wildfire Strategy would be reported to the February meeting of the Fire Authority

12 – Wales Audit Office Report on Information Management Review Feedback

Members were informed that a Scrutiny Exercise had been convened on 28th November 2011 which had been tasked with reviewing the arrangements for ICT Information Management. Members had specifically asked that this area be scrutinised following the Wales Audit Office report on Information Management which had been considered at the meeting held on 10th October 2011.

The Scrutiny Members confirmed that the Scrutiny Exercise had been robust and that they had been pleased with the final outcomes, a report on which would be presented to the next meeting of the Performance Review and Audit Committee.

6 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 7th NOVEMBER 2011

The minutes of the Standards Committee held on 7th November 2011 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings.

Members asked that a letter of appreciation be sent to former Chair of the Standards Committee, Meirion Howells, following his recent retirement

7 TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 14TH NOVEMBER 2011

The minutes of the Resources Committee held on 14th November 2011 were received and approved as a true record of the proceedings.

8 TO RECEIVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2012/13

The Chief Fire Officer reported that Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority continued to make excellent progress in implementing key actions in 2011/2012 with improvements throughout the year being reported periodically to the Fire Authority and relevant committees.

The Welsh Government's All Wales Budget announcement on 4th Oct 2011 had given reassurance to Local Authority bodies that the 3 year forward indication given by Welsh Government last year were going to hold overall. The forward planning already undertaken by the organization had therefore stood it in good stead for the budget setting exercise for 2012/13 and beyond, although significant reductions had still to be made over the next 3 years based on current projections.

The Director of Resources reported that the Welsh Government had also given an indication of the settlement up to 2014/15, although the 2014/15 year could become the first year of the next Comprehensive Spending Review period and was therefore potentially subject to revision.

On 18th October the individual Provisional Local Authority Settlements had been revealed with the average like for like increase in the settlements of the Constituent Authorities less than projected by the Welsh Government last year because of relative data changes that had taken place since then.

The Director of Resources reported that Nationally, there were two decisions that had yet to be made which could have a significant impact on the average Constituent Authority increase and which had been reported to the Resources Committee, namely the potential transfer of the Learning Disability Resettlement Grant into the settlement and consideration being given to a floor to the decrease in budgets. In addition to this, further data changes were to take place before the final settlement which could impact on the average settlement. In order to ensure that sufficient time was given to evaluate the Final Settlement following its announcement on the 6th December and should there

be significant changes, it was possible that a further Fire Authority meeting would be convened during December 2011.

The Director of Resources reported that the budget being put forward for consideration attempted to balance the operational requirements and priorities of the Authority with the need to play a part in the context of the economic environment and the Constituent Authorities' settlements.

The Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer had met with Constituent Authority Chief Executives and Treasurers in order to establish views and understand organisational pressures, and who had in general expressed a desire that the Fire Authority's budget increase reflected the Constituent Authorities' settlements.

Members were reminded that following an agreement with the Constituent Authority Treasurers, the cash call on the revenue account of Constituent Authorities in 2011/12 had significantly reduced by a contribution of £480k from the Authority's Reserves which was a reduction on the call on the reserve in the previous year and that it was the intention to gradually reduce the call on this reserve over the next few years.

The Director of Resources went through the 2012/13 budget requirement in detail and highlighted the following areas:

A reduction to the base budget for 2011/12 of £140,000 due to the OS mapping costs having been transferred out of the settlement. These costs would no longer be paid by Mid and West Wales FRA, however this sum could not be used elsewhere in the budget as the settlements of the individual Constituent Authorities had been reduced by this amount.

Inflation on fuel, utilities Non Domestic Rates and general inflation was expected to be reducing and a shortfall would mean an effective reduction in volume of activity.

The establishment of a longer term vehicle replacement programme awaited the result of the Transport review and subsequent Transport Strategy. Figures had been included for 2012/13 on current information, but an estimate has been included for 2013/14 and 2014/15 based on the costs of vehicles being replaced.

Using the factors identified to produce a validated budget for 2012/13 had given rise to an increase of 0.46% over the 2011/12 budget on a like for like basis.

The 3 year figures were the 2012/13 figures validated and projected forward for a further 2 years. These were therefore still subject to change and it was anticipated that there would be additional efficiencies required over the period and because of the potential long lead in time for implementation of large scale changes likely to be necessary in view of the financial forecast, early planning was essential. Members' attention was drawn to the particularly large efficiencies required for both 2013/14 and 2014/15.

It was reported that for 2012/13, the average like for like increase for the Constituent Authorities was 0% and for the Authority to set a budget that would replicate this

increase on the Constituent Authorities, efficiencies of £300,000 would need to be found in 2012/13. It was recommended that £380k of the approved budget be funded from reserves, therefore the amount falling on the constituent authorities would be £43,069,259.

At the September 2011 Fire Authority meeting it had been agreed that £1 million of the underspend from the 2010/11 financial year would be offered back to the Constituent Authorities on a one off basis. This had been discussed with the Constituent Authority Treasurers representative and a basis of distribution agreed. The intention was to reduce the 2011/12 Constituent Authority contributions by £1 million, distributed on the same basis as the original budget distribution for 2011/12. The new contribution level for 2011/12 would be £42,207,259

Following discussion it was agreed to delegate responsibility to Officers to indicate minor consequential amendments to the budget 2012/13 up to the value of £100,000. which would be reported back to the January meeting of the Resources Committee.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1) For 2012/13, the net budget at £43,449,259 (-0.23% like for like, -0.54% cash reduction) be approved***
- 2) The budget of £43,449,259 for 2012/13 be part funded by £380k from reserves***
- 3) The Constituent Authorities be requested for the balance of £43,069,259 as their contribution for the 2012/13 year.(0% like for like change, -0.32% cash reduction on their revenue account)***
- 4) The Capital Programme be approved, leading to the capital financing charges***
- 5) The vehicle replacement programme be approved***
- 6) Whilst it had been assumed that the majority of vehicles would be leased in the budget build up, it was agreed that the Director of Resources be authorised to decide on the appropriate method of financing of vehicles (be it leasing or otherwise) at the time of procurement.***
- 7) For 2011/12, a reduction in the Constituent Authorities' contributions of £1 million on the figures notified to them as part of the original budget process for 2011/12. (i.e. £43,207,259 less £1million, new contribution level £42,207,259)be approved to be reduced pro rata on the same population figures as the original 2011/12 budget***
- 8) To delegate responsibility to Officers to indicate minor consequential amendments to the budget 2012/13 up to the value of £100,000. These to***

be reported back to the January meeting of the Resources Committee

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WITHDRAWAL FROM THE MARINE INCIDENT RESPONSE GROUP (MIRG)

The Chief Fire Officer made reference to the extensive lobbying that the Service, Chief Fire Officer's Association and politicians had carried out in relation to long term funding issues over the Marine Incident Response Group (MIRG).

The Service had been advised that this had not been successful and that the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) would be withdrawing from the Memorandum of Understanding which established the MIRG as from 14 December 2011.

The withdrawal by the MCA in effect disassembled the whole of the system for call taking, resource coordination and deployment, air support and safe systems of work. The Chief Fire Officer reported that the issue was not now about funding, but about operational matters and the safety of personnel and Members were asked to note that the Authority had no statutory duty to fight fires off shore.

Given the serious safety concerns regarding the continuance of off shore firefighting without the back-up and coordination infrastructure afforded by MIRG, the Service had therefore notified the MCA that as from 14 December 2011 Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service would no longer have a declared off shore firefighting capability.

The Service's ability to respond to ships alongside in port was unaffected by the withdrawal and Members were advised that a similar withdrawal from MIRG had also been carried out by North Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. Members note the letter from the MCA and their withdrawal from the Memorandum of Understanding which established MIRG.*
- 2. Members note that the Service would no longer be providing an off shore firefighting capability after 14 December 2011.*

- 10 It was resolved that pursuant to section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the reason, that if they were present, it was likely that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within the description of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely information relating to a particular individual and information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and that it was in the public interest to exclude the public from the meeting**

11 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION FROM HELEN PRIOR, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, FIREBRAKE WALES

The Chief Executive Officer of Firebrake Wales, Helen Prior, presented a report on the work and current position of Firebrake following consideration of a request for further funding at the September meeting of the Fire Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The verbal report be noted and a further report be presented to Members on the future of Firebrake in due course.

15 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES IN WALES: STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE AND DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

The Chief Fire Officer introduced the strategic discussion document set out in Appendix 1 which had been written by the three Chief Fire Officers in Wales. He indicated that although the document considered certain potential options for the future of Fire and Rescue Services (FRS) in Wales, it was not meant to be a detailed options analysis paper or to represent a detailed business case for any preferred option. It had been written to produce discussion and debate and to allow Members to indicate which, if any, option they considered worthy of further discussion, research and development.

It was noted that the three Chief Fire Officers and Fire Authority Chairs would be presenting the document to the Minister for Local Government on the 12th January 2012 for his comment.

In response to a query, the Chief Fire Officer responded that the costings for each option had not been prepared in any detail at this stage but would be pursued in greater detail and as a priority once a preferred option had been identified. He continued that much more work and discussion with Members would be undertaken once a consensus had been reached.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Members unanimously preferred the Option set out as 6.4 of the Strategic Outline as the basis for further discussion, research and development in order to facilitate progress of this matter with the Welsh Government.