

**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
25 MEHEFIN 2012

**MINUTES
OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Conference Centre,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
25 JUNE 2012

11.00 – 12.40

87 % PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

GADEIRYDD/ CHAIRMAN:

IS-GADEIRYDD/VICE CHAIRMAN:

R Llewellyn

AELODAU/MEMBERS:

Cyng/Cllrs: J Baylis, C J Crowley,
K W Curry, J Dudley, W E Evans,
P Harris, A Harrington, T J Hennegan,
C Higgins, P James, C Lloyd, B Mills,
K Pearson, D R Rees-Evans,
G Thomas, W D Thomas,
D E Williams, G Woodham,
A Woolcock

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:

Cyng/Cllrs: T J Richards, P Sangha,
K Thomas

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:

R Smith, P Bates, E Aitken, D Daycock,
C Davies, D Masson, K Jones,
J Cameron, A Francis, S McLinden,
K M Jones, J Maunder

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T J Richards, P Sangha and K Thomas.

2 DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

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

3 ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE, THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, PURSUANT TO SECTION 100B(4)(B) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972.

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer reported that at the Annual General Meeting of the Fire Authority on the 6th June 2012, Councillor Cheryl Philpott had been elected as Chair of the Fire Authority for 2012 - 2013.

However on the 15th June 2012 the Fire Authority received notification from Swansea Council that it had revoked the nomination of Councillor Philpott as a Liberal Democrat Party representative of Swansea Council, together with Councillors Gordon Walker as an Independent representative, and Robert Francis-Davies, as a Labour Party representative. Councillor John Bayliss had been nominated to replace Councillor Francis - Davies for the Labour Party, but there had been no indication to date as to who would replace Councillors Philpott and Walker. Accordingly there were only 23 Members eligible to sit on the Fire Authority.

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer was however satisfied that the meeting of the Fire Authority could proceed despite the failure of Swansea Council to nominate replacements and requested that Deputy Chair consider an urgent item addressing the issue of replacing Councillor Philpott as Chair of the Authority as set out in Articles 19.4.4 and 19.4.5 of the Authority's Constitution and the Combination Order.

The Deputy Chair exercised his discretion not to take this issue as an urgent item as he was of the view that he could undertake the Chair's duties pro tem, and that the election of the Chair could be delayed until the next meeting of the Fire Authority in September when a full complement of Members had been appointed to the Fire Authority.

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer notified the meeting that Councillor C J Crowley had submitted an urgent report pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, which had subsequently been withdrawn and would be submitted to the next meeting of the Fire Authority in September.

4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Deputy Chair welcomed Councillor Bayliss to the Fire Authority, and reminded Members to submit their completed forms of commencement to the Democratic Services Officer.

The Deputy Chair also referred to the welcome packs which had been issued to all Members. It was noted that the packs contained useful documentation, including a filofax with meeting dates, committee representation, Members' payment scheme and code of conduct and represented value for money during Members' five year term of office.

The Deputy Chair informed Members that Councillor K Thomas was recovering from a recent stay in Hospital and it was agreed that a letter would be sent wishing him a speedy recovery.

5 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON RESOURCE PLANNING

The Director of Resources / Treasurer provided Members with an overview of the Authority's revenue budget, capital programme, efficiencies achieved and Asset Management Planning.

6 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 16th APRIL 2012

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 16th April 2012 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings subject to the following amendment of a typographic error:

Item 12, title to be amended to read:

TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 16th APRIL 2012

Following a query from Members, the Clerk / Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Democratic Services Forum would be responsible for reviewing additional minor amendments to the Constitution, as required.

7 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2012

The minutes of the Fire Authority Annual General Meeting held on 6 June 2012 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings subject to the following amendment:

Item 9, date of the Scrutiny Committee meeting to be amended to read:

28 January 2013.

8 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 JUNE 2012

The minutes of the Resource Management Committee held on 6 June 2012 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings.

9 TO CONFIRM AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 6 JUNE 2012

The minutes of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 6 June 2012 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings.

10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer introduced a report on amendments to the Constitution, as requested by Members at the Annual General Meeting held on 6 June 2012. It was noted that the formation of political groups within the Fire Authority was entirely appropriate, however, in doing so the composition of certain committees would need to be re-configured to include the Leader of the Coalition Alliance Group, subject to the rules of political proportionality, to ensure political balance and fairness. Members accordingly gave consideration to further consequential proposed updates to the Constitution relating to the composition of the Appointments Committee, the Shortlisting Panel and the Chief Fire Officer's Remuneration Panel.

In addition, minor changes were proposed to the terms of reference of the Investigating and Disciplinary committee to enable it to deal effectively with Pension entitlement issues, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) The office of Leader of the Coalition Alliance Group be specifically included in the composition of the relevant committees/working groups, subject to the rules on political proportionality.
- ii) The terms of reference for the Investigating and Disciplinary committee be amended to enable it to deal effectively with Pension entitlement issues.

11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE MONITORING REPORT 2011/12

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the Welsh Language Monitoring Report for 2011 /12, noting that the Service had adopted an incremental and inclusive approach in the implementation of its Welsh Language Scheme and had invested both time and resources to ensure compliance across the organisation. As part of the Welsh Language Scheme's monitoring process an annual progress report would be submitted to the Welsh Language Commissioner by 30 June each year. The Annual Monitoring Report contained areas of achievements and areas for development measured against the commitments made in the Authority's Welsh Language Scheme.

Members received an overview of performance areas for frontline services, management and administration of the Scheme, the linguistic ability of staff and mainstreaming the Welsh language within the Service. Members were pleased to note that the Service had performed extraordinarily well in its drive towards improving the bilingual services it delivered and the profile of the Welsh language within the Service had been raised considerably by means of the following areas of improvement::

- The Service was successful in obtaining £6,430 grant funding as part of the Welsh Language Board's Bilingual Workplaces Scheme, enabling the Service to introduce a Welsh Language Mentors Scheme, Develop a bilingual 'Welsh Corner' on the Intranet and Provide Training and Development opportunities for employees.
- Mystery Shopper exercises had been introduced as part of the Service's continuing effort to improve the level of service delivered to the public.
- During 2011 the Service won first place at the Institute of Welsh Affairs "Inspire Wales Awards", for its active work in promoting and increasing the use of the Welsh language in the workplace.

The identification of potential risks highlighted the requirement to undertake an audit of Welsh essential posts across the organisation and effective succession planning for those relevant posts, and the provision of training and development opportunities for members of staff.

Overall Members commended the report and the excellent progress made throughout the year, and extended their gratitude to all officers involved in the compilation of the report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

The Welsh Language monitoring report for 2011/12 be approved for submission to the Welsh Language Commissioner.

12 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE IMPROVEMENT PLANNING AND THE DRAFT ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013/14.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the Authority, in common with other Improvement Authorities, was required to make arrangements for continuous improvement in terms of community and corporate risk in line with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Authority's key objectives for improvement were set out in its Strategic Plan for 2010-2015 and the Draft Improvement Plan for 2013-2014 would identify specific areas for improvement for the coming year.

Members were informed that in previous years the Authority had been required to publish its improvement objectives by the end of October in readiness for the following year, however the Welsh Government had now amended the publication date to 'as soon as practicable after 31 December'. This streamlined approach would allow the Authority to better align its publication timetable with financial planning and would bring the Fire Authority in line with other Improvement Authorities.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided members with an overview of the broad themes for consideration from each of the five main focus areas of the Strategic Plan. It was emphasised that the themes were high level strategic objectives; the detail of which would be development by the Annual Action Planning Working Group, as follows:

Managing Risk – reflecting community needs in terms of Asset and Fleet Management, risk profiling, allocating appropriate resources, collaborative working and supporting community recovery post incident.

Managing People – improving internal working arrangements in terms of establishing career pathways for staff; strengthening the Service's back to work programme and improving the Service's flexible working arrangements.

Working Together – assisting vulnerable citizens by improving targeting of Home Fire Safety advice, extending existing partnership working and sharing of resources with Local Health Boards across the Service area.

Managing Resources - providing a service to meet the needs of communities in Neath Port Talbot and Swansea by developing crewing systems that would offer a more efficient use of resources, reflect the profile of the local communities, maintain 24 hour cover provided by full time staff and maintain response times.

Managing Performance - Introducing a 'Dwelling Fire Charter' in line with Welsh Government recommendations, to identify the level of prevention, protection and response that communities could expect on dwelling fire risk. The Charter would be implemented in April 2013.

Members were informed that that a comprehensive 12 week consultation period would be undertaken with a range of stakeholders between September – December 2012, which would enable the Annual Action Planning Working Group to consider the responses received and approve the plan for consideration by the Fire Authority in February 2013.

A number of staff consultative arrangements were also in place, including the Joint Consultative Forum and Negotiation meetings comprising Officers, Trade Union Representatives and Fire Authority Members.

The Leader of the Coalition Alliance Group reiterated the importance of the Annual Action Planning Working Group and requested that Members of the Group nominate a reserve from each Constituent Authority area in order to ensure optimum representation at each meeting. Members were also informed that meeting dates for the Annual Action Planning Working Group would be circulated once confirmed.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- i) The key themes for Improvement 2013-2014 be approved.*
- ii) The draft timetable for improvement planning be approved.*

13 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE RECENT ABERYSTWYTH FLOODS.

The Corporate Head of Operational Risk Management referred to the recent large scale flooding in Aberystwyth which occurred between 8th and 10th June 2012. A Silver Command Team had been set up on 9th June, working in partnership with the Ambulance, Police, Environment Agency, Highways, Air-sea rescue and Local Authorities.

Numerous resources had been deployed to the area with some 18 appliances, including 4 boats, swift water rescue teams and high volume pumping units. Assistance had also been provided by the RNLI, whose personnel had received prior training by the Service as part of the DEFRA UK strategy for dealing with flooding incidents.

Members were informed that over 150 members of the public had been rescued due to the excellent multi-agency partnership working. Search and rescue dogs had also been deployed from the Service, along with those from Merseyside and Lancashire as part of the UK response strategy. The need for further funding and investment for appropriate flood response was however apparent as the Service currently relied on funding from DEFRA to assist with the provision of fit for purpose equipment and training.

The Corporate Head of Operational Risk Management further noted that the Service had been required to undertake a large scale post flooding scene examination, which involved gaining entry into over 400 caravans in the search for casualties.

Members paid tribute to all staff involved in the rescue efforts for their swift response and unwavering support shown to the citizens of Ceredigion, whose homes and businesses had been affected by the flooding.

Furthermore a message was relayed from the Leader of Ceredigion Council who extended her thanks and admiration for the bravery shown by emergency personnel in ensuring the safe evacuation of citizens and commended the efforts of all involved in the multi-agency response.

The Chief Fire Officer informed Members that whilst the Service had no statutory duty to respond to flooding incidents and therefore received no funding for equipment in this area, there existed a significant moral responsibility to offer assistance. Members were assured that the Service would continue in its attempt to obtain funding for the required resources from a strategic perspective.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.

The meeting closed at 12:40.