

**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**

Ystafell Caer,
Pencadlys Y Gwasanaeth Tân Ac Achub, Caerfyddin
23 MEDI 2013

**MINUTES
OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Caer Suite,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
23 SEPTEMBER 2013

11.00 – 13.05

72% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

GADEIRYDD/ CHAIR:	R Llewellyn
IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY CHAIR:	G Thomas
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: K W Curry, J Curtice, J Dudley, W E Evans, L Frayling, T Hennegan, P James, R James, R Lewis, C Lloyd, K Pearson, D R Rees-Evans , W D Thomas, G Walker, D E Williams, J Williams
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Bayliss, C Higgins, G Jones, A Lewis, S Paddison, A Wilcox,
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	R Smith, D Daycock, C Davies, D Masson, E Aitken, K Jones, R Quin, S Mclinden, S Flather, J Maunder, C Jackson, H W Jones, M Jones

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Bayliss, C Higgins, G Jones, A Lewis, S Paddison and A Wilcox.

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.

Mr Hywel Wyn Jones, Chair of Standards Committee, declared a personal interest in item 11 of the agenda relating to the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Supplementary Report.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair welcomed Mr Frank Cuthbert, Head of Scrutiny, Democracy and Participation Team at Welsh Government to present items 8 and 9 of the agenda.

A welcome was also extended to Mr Hywel Wyn Jones, Chair of the Standards Committee and Mr Michael Jones, KPMG, who were in attendance to present items 11 and 17 of the agenda respectively.

The Chair welcomed Cllr Lyndon Frayling to his first full Authority meeting, replacing Cllr T J Richards as a Pembrokeshire representative on the Fire Authority.

The Chair referred to the recent successes of the Service whilst competing in the World Firefighter Games. The Authority commended all competitors from the Service who had, in total, attained a very impressive medal array of 2 Golds, 1 Silver and 2 Bronze, against intense and strong opposition.

The Chair referred to the Fire Brigades Union Industrial Action that would be taking place on Wednesday 25th September between 12 noon and 4pm. It was pleasing to note that correspondence had been received from First Minister and the Minister for Local Government and Government Business acknowledging that the Service had appropriate arrangements in place in readiness for the Industrial Action. Members were informed that the Chief Fire Officer would provide Members with a verbal update regarding the Service's contingency arrangements for Industrial Action on conclusion of the meeting.

The Chair referred to the various station open days that had been held across the Service during the summer and encouraged all Members to attend future events.

4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2013

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 24 June 2013 were confirmed and approved as a true record of the proceedings.

5 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 15 JULY 2013

The minutes of the Resource Management Committee held on 15 July 2013 were considered and noted.

A Member referred to page 7, item 11, paragraph 4 of the minutes and requested that confirmation be provided to all Fire Authority Members that defibrillators had been issued to all stations as part of the Immediate Emergency Care (IEC) initiative.

6 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 JULY 2013

The minutes of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 July 2013 were considered and noted. The following amendment was noted:

Page 6, Item 11, paragraph 4 to read *'That Members were impressed'*.

Matters Arising

In response to a query regarding item 8 of the agenda the Chief Fire Officer reported that all Members of staff should be operating in line with the guiding principles of the Self Rostered Crewing Document and any evidence to the contrary should be reported to Management.

A Member referred to item 14 of the agenda and requested a breakdown of costings required to achieve the Investors In People standard.

Reference was made to item 15 of the agenda whereby the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that an update paper on the state of negotiations would be provided to Members.

In response to a request from a Member in relation to item 17 of the agenda, the Chief Fire Officer clarified that the Authority were required to pay an additional fee of £10,464 to the Wales Audit Office (WAO) to undertake an investigation into a number of allegations made against the Service and its senior officers. It was noted that the WAO would produce a report and the Chief Fire Officer would take advice from the Clerk / Monitoring Officer with regard to its dissemination and publication.

7 TO RECEIVE, CONSIDER AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JULY 2013

The minutes of the Standards Committee held on 29 July 2013 were considered and noted. The following amendment was noted:

Page 7, item 9, paragraph 4 to read *'regarding the Ynys Môn council elections'*.

8 TO RECEIVE A PRESENTATION ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 2013

The Authority received a presentation from Mr Frank Cuthbert, Head of Scrutiny, Democracy and Participation Team at the Welsh Government regarding the Local Government (Wales) Act 2013.

9 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 2013

Mr Frank Cuthbert presented a report summarising The Local Democracy (Wales) Act 2013 which was passed on 30 July 2013. Members gave consideration to the main provisions contained within the Act in terms of its relevance to Fire and Rescue Authorities, amendments to the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011, responsibilities of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales and the structure of local authority audit committees.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report, the provisions of the Act and their impact on Fire and Rescue Authorities.

10 TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2014/15 AND COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION PLAN

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance presented the draft Annual Improvement Plan 2014/15. Members were informed that the Plan had been developed according to the recommendations of the Annual Improvement Planning Member Working Group and represented the final year of the Strategic Plan 2010-15.

Attention was drawn to page three of the document which provided an overview of the Authority's performance over the last eleven years which demonstrated significant reductions in the number of incidents attended and improvement in the outcomes of those incidents. In response to a query the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance clarified that a comparison of annual performance data would be provided within the Annual Performance Assessment report.

Members gave consideration to the three Improvement Objectives identified for 2014/15 which would be achieved through actions linked to the 'key improvement areas' contained within the Strategic Plan 2010-15, as follows:

Improvement Objective 1 - Improving internal and external communication / engagement;

Improvement Objective 2 - Managing within budget to support safer communities;

Improvement Objective 3 - Improving evaluation to inform future planning.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance reported that the adoption of the three key improvement objectives aimed to reduce the perceived complexity of previous plans, allow for clearly defined, understandable outcomes to be articulated to the reader, as well as providing clear reasons as to why these improvement objectives had been selected.

Reference was made to the Strategic Development Workshop held on 7 June 2013 whereby the feedback received from attendees had been taken into consideration in the development of the draft Plan. The Director of Resources reported the current economic climate had been discussed at length during the workshop, however it had since become apparent that the Service could face more severe budget reductions than originally anticipated. The Comprehensive Spending Review announcement was expected within the next 4 weeks, however recent indications suggested that public services in Wales could expect 'England style cuts' thereby representing significant challenges for 2014/15.

Members were provided with an overview of the Communication and Consultation Plan which set out how the Authority would engage with a wide variety of stakeholders, both internally and externally on the Draft Annual Improvement Plan 2014/15. The ten week consultation period would run from 24 September 2013 – 26 November 2013. It was the Authority's intention to hold two separate engagement events within each Command area, the first being a consistent launch of the Draft Plan and consultation at a full meeting of the Council and the second being a separate engagement event in order to further promote the plan and engage with the local community.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Draft Annual Improvement Plan 2014/15 be approved for consultation.***
- 2. That the Communication and Consultation Plan be noted.***

11 TO RECEIVE THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Chair of the Standards Committee, Mr Hywel Wyn Jones presented the report and explained that the remit of the Committee was to oversee, maintain and strengthen high standards of conduct in public office, and as part of its governance arrangements produced an annual report setting out the work it had carried out during the year.

Members were informed that the Standards Committee comprised of four independent Members and three Authority Members and was required to meet at least once a year, though as a matter of good practice the Committee had convened two meetings during the reporting period. Mr Hywel Wyn Jones stated that it was pleasing to note that no complaints had been made against Members in respect of their role as members of the Fire and Rescue Authority. Accordingly, no matters had been referred to the Committee for investigation or decision. Furthermore no requests for dispensations to speak and or vote in respect of any declarations of interest had been considered by the Committee.

Despite not having to consider any breaches of the code of conduct or requests for dispensation, the Committee had continued to be very proactive in promoting good governance and the ethical framework within the Authority. Accordingly, Members were provided with an overview of the work carried out during 2012/13.

Standards Committee members were also kept aware of good practice arising throughout Wales in the important areas of standards and probity by means of attendance at the Annual Wales Standards Committee Conference, where they were also able to discuss such issues with colleagues at other Authorities..

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the work of the Standards Committee be noted.

12 TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL FOR WALES DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT - PAYMENTS TO CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer presented Members with an update in relation to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales (IRPW) regarding payments to co-opted members.

It was reported that contrary to the Panel's 2013 recommendations, they had reconsidered their stance on a number of areas and were therefore consulting on proposed changes in advance of the publication of their next annual report in 2014, as follows:

- i. That reasonable time for pre-meeting preparation would be eligible to be included in claims made by co-opted members the extent of which could be determined by the appropriate officer in advance of the meeting;
- ii. That travelling time to and from the place of the meeting could be included in the claims for payments made by co-opted members (up to the maximum of the daily rate);
- iii. That the appropriate officer within the authority could determine in advance whether a meeting was programmed for a full day and the fee would be paid on the basis of this determination even if the meeting finished before four hours had elapsed;
- iv. That co-opted members would be eligible for the payment of a fee for attending other committees and working groups (including task and finish groups) or any other formal meeting to which co-opted members were requested to attend.

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer reported that the Panel were seeking views on the above determinations by the 26th September 2013.

A Member expressed the view that the proposed recommendations contained within the supplementary report of the IRPW were welcomed, however concerns were raised regarding the widening disparity of payments between co-opted Members and Fire Authority Members. It was further noted that payments for Fire Authority Members should be considered in line with National Park Authorities.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The Fire Authority note the supplementary report and that it's support for the changes be notified to the Panel.*
- 2. The Monitoring Officer be given delegated authority to amend the Member Payment Scheme to reflect any changes following Members' consideration of the recommendation.*

13 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION REGARDING THE MEMBER ATTENDANCE PROTOCOL

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer reported that during 2009, the Democratic Services Forum had agreed to adopt a "light touch" system to monitor Members' attendance at meetings and workshops of the Authority and its Committees. A protocol for the management of Members' attendance had been endorsed, however this had never been formally incorporated into the Authority's Constitution.

The Democratic Services Forum had considered the issue, and were of the view that the protocol be incorporated into the Authorities constitution. Members considered the protocol which outlined the Authority's general expectations of all Members in relation to attendance at meetings of the Authority, its committees and training and development activities. The Protocol required members, to take reasonable endeavours, to notify the Democratic Services Officer if they were unable to attend an Authority/Committee Meeting. The Protocol also required Members of a Working Group or Forum which included substitutes amongst their membership to take reasonable steps to arrange for a substitute Member to attend in their place.

Members generally welcomed the formal adoption of the Member Attendance Protocol, whereby it was hoped that attendance at training and development activities would improve, particularly as the majority of sessions were arranged to immediately follow diarised Fire Authority meetings for the convenience of Members and in order to reduce travelling costs.

In response to a query the Clerk/Monitoring Officer confirmed that Member attendance figures would be monitored by the Democratic Services Forum.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Members' Attendance Protocol be incorporated into the Authority's Constitution

14 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Director of Resources / Treasurer reported that the Authority produced an annual Statement of Assurance to show compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance.

Members were provided with an overview of the management of corporate governance within the Authority, which was undertaken in line with the CIPFA / SOLACE framework. These included various internal and external audits on the management information, financial procedure rules and financial instructions, contract standing orders, administrative arrangements and management supervision, all of which had given general assurance regarding the control and proper administration of the Authority's financial affairs. In addition the Wales Audit Office had reported during the year that Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority resources were being used economically, efficiently and effectively.

It was therefore the view of the Authority's Officers that the review of the governance arrangements for the financial year 2012/13 had not highlighted any areas of major concern. Officers reported that in their view the existing arrangements were fit for purpose and were adequate to meet the Authority's corporate aims. The issues highlighted in the Action Plan were being dealt with by the appropriate officers and progress would be monitored via the Policy Board and the Performance Scrutiny and Audit Committee.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members approve the Statement of Assurance for signature by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts.

15 TO APPROVE THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2013

The Director of Resources / Treasurer presented the final audited Annual Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 for approval.

Members gave consideration to the Statement of Accounts which comprised various accounting statements including the Movement in Reserves Statement, the Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Statement, the Balance Sheet, and the Cash Flow Statement which had been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the statement of accounts for the year ended 31st March 2013 be approved

16 TO APPROVE THE LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION REGARDING THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2013

The Director of Resources / Treasurer reported that the Wales Audit Office, as the Appointed Auditor and KPMG LLP, who had carried out the Audit, each required a separate letter of representation regarding the 2012/13 Statement of Accounts before the audit of the Financial Statements could be completed. It was reported that the letters presented to Members had to be approved by the Authority and then be signed by both the Treasurer and the Chair of the meeting considering the letters.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the two letters of representation be approved and signed by the Chair of the meeting and the Director of Resources

17 TO RECEIVE THE AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS REPORT 2012/13

Mr M Jones of KPMG was welcomed to the meeting and presented a joint report on the Audit of Financial Statements following the completion of the audit by the Appointed Auditor (Wales Audit Office) and the Auditor responsible for carrying out the audit (KPMG). The Audit of Financial Statements report contained details of the draft Audit opinion to be published with the Statement of Accounts, and detailed any significant issues arising from the audit.

Mr Jones commended the Head of Finance and his Team on the high standard of their work and it was noted that there were no significant matters which required reporting to Members.

It was RESOLVED that

The Audit of Financial Statements Reports – Audit 2012–13 be noted.

18 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CIPFA CONFERENCE 2013

The Chair of Resource Management Committee reported that he and the Director of Resources had attended the Annual CIPFA Conference which was held in London on 9th - 11th July 2013.

The report provided a summary of the main items of interest from what was an extremely well attended, topical and useful event. The Chair of Resource Management Committee recommended that the Authority continue to support this conference in future years, subject to the usual requirements regarding the relevance of the agenda, and value to the Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted and that the CIPFA conference remain on the Authority's standing list of conferences.

19 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE WLGA WALES CHARTER FOR MEMBER SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT – RE-ACCREDITATION UPDATE

The Head of Corporate Communication and Democratic Services reported that Mid and West Wales Fire Authority were the first Fire Authority to attain the bronze level of the Welsh Local Government Association's (WLGA) Wales Charter for Member Support and Development for Fire Authorities back in 2008.

The Authority's accreditation had since elapsed and following a directive from the Democratic Services Forum a draft application to re-attain the standard level charter status had been prepared.

The Authority gave consideration to the key elements contained within the draft submission which comprised the Member Development Strategy 2011-14, Member Training and Development Programme 2013-2014, Mentoring Framework and the Members' Cyber-lounge facility.

Members expressed the view that the Authority's approach to Member Development was innovative and demonstrated that both time and effort was invested into developing Members according to the collective requirements of the Authority and according to their own personal requirements identified in their personal development reviews.

Members welcomed the Authority's intention to re-apply for the charter and commended all officers involved in the development of the application.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report and support the submission of the Authority's application to re-attain the standard level of the Charter.

20 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION ACT 2013

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development introduced a report on the Public Service Pensions Act 2013 which came into effect in April 2013 and set out the governance arrangements for public service pension schemes. It was reported that upon its introduction in 2015, the Firefighters' Pension Scheme (Wales) would require each Fire and Rescue Authority in Wales to have in place appropriate governance arrangements for the Scheme.

Members were informed that at present the Fire and Rescue Service was responsible for managing the 1992 and 2007 Firefighters' Pension Schemes. These schemes were managed through a Service Level Agreement with Carmarthenshire County Council who act as the Service's appointed administrators.

It was reported that the Service was currently working with the Welsh Government and the other Fire and Rescue Services in Wales to establish the most effective way to put the required governance arrangements into place.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Fire Authority note the content of the report on the requirements of the Public Sector Pension Act 2013.

- 21 TO RECEIVE ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CHAIR DECIDES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY PURSUANT TO SECTION 100(B)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 13:05.