

**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
19 MEDI 2016**

MINUTES

OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING

**The Caer Suite,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
19 SEPTEMBER 2016**

10.00 – 12:00

79% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

GADEIRYDD/ CHAIR: Councillor J Dudley
IS-GADEIRYDD/ DEPUTY CHAIR: Councillor R Rees-Evans

AELODAU/MEMBERS: Cyng/Cllrs: L Frayling, S Davies, K Curry,
G Thomas, A Wilcox, C Evans, J
Warman, E Williams, J Curtice, J Hale, G
Walker, T Hennegan, S Paddison, G
Tanner, E Thomas, J Williams, K
Pearson, W Evans, R Llewellyn, P
Pritchard

YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES: Cyng/Cllrs: C Anderson, P James and P
Black

YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE: C Davies, D Daycock, R Thomas,
I Cray, K Jones, M Harries, L Aitken,
C Jackson, M Miles, G Moore (Item 6,7
and 8) M Jones (Item 10).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Anderson, P Black and P James.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS

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

All Members declared a personal interest in all budget related matters.

Councillor G Thomas declared a personal interest in all matters relating to the Local Pension Board (discussed at items 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda).

Councillor J A Hale declared a personal interest by way of membership of the UNISON Trade Union and notified the meeting that he had been granted a dispensation from the Standards Committee.

Councillor S Paddison declared a personal interest by virtue of her role as Director of Rescue 365.

Councillor T Hennegan declared an interest in the Fire Cadets, following his Grandson's recent enrolment.

Councillor G Walker declared a personal interest by way of membership of the Fire Brigades Union Trade Union.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Mr Gerard Moore, Chair of the Local Pension Board who was in attendance to present items 6, 7 and 8 of the agenda.

Members were informed that Mark Jones of the Wales Audit Office would be in attendance to present item 10 of the agenda, namely a verbal update on the Audit of Financial Statements 2015/16.

It was agreed by Members for item 9 of the Agenda, namely to receive and approve a report on the Corporate Governance Assurance Statement be deferred until further notice.

4. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 11 FEBRUARY 2016.

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 3 June 2015 were approved as a true record of proceedings, subject to the following amendment:

Item 3 – Chair’s Announcements / Personal Matters – Page 2, to remove “Borough” from the wording of Powys County Borough Council, as it should state Powys County Council. It was confirmed that this would be amended accordingly.

There were no matters arising from the meeting.

5. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY HELD ON 08 JUNE 2016.

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 8 June 2016 were approved as a true record of proceedings.

There were no matters arising.

6. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16.

The Chair of the Local Pension Board, Mr Gerard Moore presented the Annual Report of the Local Pension Board for the 2015/16 reporting period to Members.

An overview of the report was provided to Members, which outlined the work carried out by the Local Pension Board for 2015/16. It was confirmed that the role of the Local Pension Board was to assist the Scheme Manager with all Pension related matters. Mr Moore stated that the Annual Report had been approved by its members on 11 July 2016 and recommended for Members of the Fire Authority to approve the content.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note and approve the content of the Local Pension Board Annual Report for 2015/16.

7. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING BREACHES OF THE LAW

Members were presented with a report on the procedures for reporting breaches of the Law, Mr Moore informed Committee that as outlined in The Pension Regulator’s Code of Practice 14 for the Governance and Administration of Public Service Pension Schemes, it was a requirement for the Scheme Manager to have a procedure in place for reporting breaches of the Law.

Mr Moore informed Members that the Service had been unable to meet the 31 August 2016 deadline for issuing the Annual Benefit Statements to Members of the Firefighters’ Pension Scheme, which had been reported to the Pensions Regulator. Assurances were provided to Committee, that the Local Pension Board would be reviewing the matter, in order to avoid such delays in the future.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note and approve the Draft Procedure for Reporting Breaches of the Law.

8. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A DRAFT FIREFIGHTER PENSION SCHEME COMMUNICATIONS POLICY STATEMENT

Members were presented with a report on the draft Firefighter Pension Scheme Communications Policy Statement. Mr Moore confirmed that the report was a requirement of the Pension Regulator's Code of Practice 14 for the Governance and Administration of Public Service Pension Scheme, which recommended that Scheme Managers implement a Communications Policy Statement.

Committee were referred to Appendix 1 and provided with an overview of the information contained within the Appendix, and it was recommended that the draft Firefighter Pension Scheme Communications Policy Statement be approved for publication.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Draft Firefighter Pension Scheme Communications Policy Statement be approved.

9. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE STATEMENT

Item adjourned until the Fire Authority meeting scheduled for 29 September 2016.

10. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ON THE AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015/16.

Mark Jones from the Wales Audit Office provided Members with an update on the audit of financial statements for the 2015/16 financial year. It was reported that there were a few important matters which were being discussed by Officers prior to the completion of the audit.

The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that Officers were working closely with the Wales Audit Office in order to finalise the Audit of the Financial Statements. Councillor S Paddison enquired as to the reason behind the delay and the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that not only were there a large number of questions asked by the Auditor, there were also certain areas of information required by the auditor, that was not readily available.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the verbal update from the Wales Audit Office on the Audit of the Financial Statements 2015/16 be noted.

11. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES ON BUDGET INDICATIONS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report on the budget indications for the financial year 2017/18 which had been directed by the Budget Corporate Planning days held in April, June and September 2016, whereby Members provided informal indication on the budget levels to be considered for 2017-18. At those meetings Members had proposed a 3.8% increase in the budget falling on the Constituent Authorities, ie a 'standstill' service level.

Members were provided with an overview of the substantial real cash efficiencies made over the last 10 years from a combination of operational and corporate initiatives which had resulted in savings of £9.0million (20%) of the budget. Such efficiencies had resulted in a reduction in staffing numbers on stations by 27% and middle/senior manager posts by 34%. The Authority's proactive approach to delivering value for money in times of austerity had resulted in the organisation becoming extremely lean.

Reference was made to an on-going public survey which attempted to seek views on various aspects of the Fire and Rescue Service and the results to date indicated that of the 2000 respondents, 80% would prefer to pay more to stop any further cuts in service delivery. It was reiterated that any further erosion would compromise service delivery and prohibit diversification activities, which would place a greater burden on Constituent Authority services such as housing and social services.

Members were reminded that it was the responsibility of the Constituent Authorities, through the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the powers contained within the Combination Scheme Order, to discharge their duties to maintain an effective Fire and Rescue Service in their areas through the Combined Fire and Rescue Authority. The Fire and Rescue Authorities' unique funding methodology was reiterated to Members and it was also emphasised that there was no requirement for the Authority's budget increase/decrease to reflect the Constituent Authority settlements.

The Chief Fire Officer provided a breakdown of the £9 million within the Reserves, the majority of which had been committed to specific projects. With regard to the savings projected, the Director of Resources provided Members with a breakdown of the validation factors which highlighted the implications and pressures to be considered as part of the budget setting process.

The Director of Resources echoed the comments made by the Chief Fire Officer and stated to Members that the Service had successfully made savings of £9.0 million (20%) with no cuts to the level of service provided to the local communities and members of the public. Members were made aware that there would be implications to service delivery should any further budget cuts be made.

Members were provided with an overview of the level of reserves and details of the

projects the Reserves had been committed to, such as the Capital Programme, Insurance and other Invest to Save projects. The budget projection had assumed all grants receivable continued and that ESMCP grants would be forthcoming from Welsh Government.

Councillor K Pearson questioned if it would be possible for the Council Tax contribution for the Fire Service to appear separately on the statement in order for constituents to understand what their contributions were for. It was confirmed by the Chief Fire Officer that the Service was not in a position to be able to do this as the funding provided to the Fire and Rescue Service was combined with the funding for the Local Authorities. However, if the Local Authorities wished to exemplify what this figure would be, then the Chief Fire Officer would fully support it.

Councillor J Warman commented on the level of efficiencies already made by the Service and emphasised the need to support the suggested increase in order that safety in the local communities is not compromised in any way.

Councillor W Evans informed Members that the general consensus at the Corporate Budget Planning events had been to increase the Service's budget, and echoed the comments made by Councillor Warman that the Service had made as many efficiencies as it was able to without compromising service delivery.

Councillor S Paddison questioned if the Service's vision to be a world leader in Emergency Response and Community Safety could be still achieved with continual standstill budgets. Cllr Paddison also stated that the demand for services provided by the Authority was increasing following the introduction of flooding as a statutory duty, together with an increase in the number of road traffic collisions being attended.

A discussion ensued amongst Members regarding the imminent settlement from Welsh Government and whether the Fire Authority's budget would be amended accordingly following the outcome of the settlement. The Chief Fire Officer reassured Members that the budget would reflect budget discussions with Fire Authority Members and the settlement accordingly, and that a collective decision regarding the budget would be made in order to achieve the best outcome for the Service.

Members deliberated the possibility of having further budget options for consideration in order to undertake a pragmatic approach and to fully consider all possible options. A detailed discussion ensued amongst Members regarding this matter. Committee voted in favour of considering a smaller increase of 2.8% falling on the Constituent Authorities.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Fire and Rescue Authority agree the following early intentions: -

- 1) That the budget is validated for inflation, pay awards and other commitments. This would result in an increase of 3.8% in the budget falling on the Constituent Authorities.

- 2) That the additional insurance costs continue to be paid for by supporting the budget by £150k from reserves. (This is a reduction of £100k on the 2016/17 year.) That there is no further funding of the revenue budget from reserves.
- 3) That in addition to the above, consideration is given to additional potential investments (including capital investments).
- 4) The resulting budget would be a minimum of £46,035,840, with £45,885,840 falling on the Constituent Authorities (an increase of £1,680,000 or 3.8%) and £150,000 falling on reserves. (Appendix A).
- 5) That an additional budget option of 2.8% increase falling on the Constituent Authorities be considered by the Fire Authority, together with consideration of the impact of the smaller increase on the Service provided.

12. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE JOINT PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE PROJECT (JPSCP).

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report to Members on the Joint Public Service Centre Project (JPSCP) and confirmed that good progress was being made with the development on the building.

It was reported to Members that difficulty had been experienced with the implementation of the Command and Control system which had resulted in a delay in the go live date from October 2016 to early 2017. The Chief Fire Officer confirmed to Members that the delay was due to Capita's failure to deliver the software requirements outlined in contract.

Committee were informed that the Service had been in discussions with Capita regarding the go live and had been reassured that there would be no impact on resilience within the Control room due to the delay. Members were also made aware that the Chief Fire Officer was in discussion with Capita regarding the recovery of any potential costs due to the delay in the go live date.

In response to a query from Councillor K Pearson, the Chief Fire Officer and Director of Resources stated to Members that the Service were in discussions with Capita with regards to the possibility of recovering any additional costs due to the extended go live date, and reassured Members that the planned ongoing revenue savings will be made albeit a year later than originally anticipated, due to the unexpected delay.

Councillor G Walker enquired on the cost incurred following North Wales Fire and Rescue Service's withdrawal from the Project, to which the Chief Fire Officer confirmed that there had been no additional costs incurred by the Service in this regard.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Joint Public Service Centre Project (JPSCP) update be noted.

13. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2015/16

The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development provided an overview of the Annual Performance Assessment for 2015/16 which outlined the Authority's performance against the improvement objectives set out within the Annual Improvement Plan for 2015/16.

Councillor G Thomas highlighted a possible discrepancy on page 5 regarding the total number of fires in non-domestic premises which had seen an increase from the previous year's average, however, still demonstrated a minus figure for the average % reduction. The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development confirmed that these figures would be checked for accuracy.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Annual Performance Assessment for 2015-2016 be approved for publication on 31 October 2016.

14. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN FOR 2017-2022.

The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development reported that in consultation with the Annual Improvement Planning Member Working Group, Heads of Departments and the Head of Service Delivery a total of 12 Draft Corporate Objectives had been developed. Attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the Report whereby Members considered the Draft Corporate Plan for 2017-2022 which was structured in line with advice provided by the Wales Audit Office and reflected the risks within the communities served.

Members were informed that the Annual Improvement Planning Member Working Group had endorsed the objectives at their meeting on the 05 September 2016 and recommended that the Fire Authority approve the Draft Corporate Plan 2017-22 for public consultation, which was due to commence on 01 October for a 12 week period.

Members were referred to Appendix 2 of the report which provided a comprehensive Communication, Consultation and Engagement Plan which had been developed to direct the consultation and communication elements of the Improvement Planning process.

Members commented on the clear information contained within the Plan, the format and the layout of the Draft Corporate Plan and were pleased with the introduction of a single integrated document which outlined all of the relevant information.

A discussion ensued amongst Members regarding the impact to the Service following the introduction of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, to which the Chief Fire Officer responded and confirmed that there would be an impact on the Service. However, it was unclear as to the level of impact at this stage. Committee learned that the Well-being objectives had been incorporated within the draft Corporate Plan, and that Service Officers along with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Authority were attending all meetings of the six Public Service Boards.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members approve the Draft Corporate Plan 2017-22 for public consultation.

15. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE WELSH LANGUAGE MONITORING REPORT 2015/16.

The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development presented the Welsh Language Monitoring report for the 2015/16 reporting period, which outlined the areas of achievements and areas for development measured against the commitments made to the Service's Welsh Language Scheme.

Committee were referred to Appendix 1 and provided with an overview of the information contained within the Appendix. It was reported that the Welsh Language Commissioner was in the process of consulting with the Service on the new standards for the Welsh Language.

Councillor R Llewellyn commented that he had been extremely pleased with the level of support provided by the Service with regards to the promoting of the Welsh Language.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members approve the Welsh Language Monitoring Report 2015/16.

16. 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.

Meeting closed 12:00.