

**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
6 CHWEFROR 2017**

MINUTES

OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING

**The Caer Suite,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
6 FEBRUARY 2017**

10.00 – 11:05

80% 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: C Anderson, P Black, K Curry, J Curtice, S Davies, C Evans, W E Evans, L Frayling, T Hennegan, R Llewellyn, S Paddison, K Pearson, P Pritchard, G Tanner, E Thomas, G Thomas, G Walker, J Warman, E Williams, J Williams
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Hale, P James, A Wilcox
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	D Daycock, C Davies, M Crennell, R Quin, C Williams, R Thomas, I Cray, S Jenkins, M Harries, C Jackson

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Hale, P James and A Wilcox.

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 present declared a personal interest in all budget related matters.

All Officers affected by the report declared that they had an interest in relation to item 10 of the agenda, namely the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18.

Councillor G Thomas declared a personal interest in all matters relating to the Local Pension Board.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair welcomed all external observers to the meeting.

The Chair was pleased to report that Councillor P James had been discharged from hospital following an operation. Members extended their best wishes to Councillor James for a speedy recovery.

The Chair was delighted to welcome Councillor Jan Curtice back to the Fire Authority following a period of ill health.

The Chair was also delighted to note that Councillor Jan Williams had returned to the Fire Authority. Councillor Williams thanked Members for the good wishes she had received during her absence.

The Chair reported that consideration of the Statement of Accounts, and associated Letters of Representation and Audit of Financial Statements 2015/16 would be considered at the Fire Authority meeting scheduled for 20 March 2017.

The Chief Fire Officer made reference to a White Paper Consultation entitled 'Reforming Local Government: Resilient and Renewed' which outlined the Welsh Government's statement of intent about the future of local government in Wales. The Chief Fire Officer drew attention to the salient points outlined within the document and informed Members that an update relating to the consultation response would be considered at the Fire Authority meeting scheduled for 20 March 2017.

4. TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2016.

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer reported that the minutes of the previous Fire Authority meeting contained information that remained exempt, and should therefore be considered in camera, in line with the relevant provisions of the Local Government Act 1972. Members were advised 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 Paragraph 12: information relating to a particular individual, Paragraph 14: information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), and Paragraph 18: information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime; and that it was in the public interest to do so.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the above reasons, and that it was in the public interest to do so.

At this point all members of the public departed the meeting.

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 12 December 2016 were approved as a true record of proceedings.

Matters Arising

Page 14 – in response to a query, the Chief Fire Officer explained that the procedure relating to the re-employment of retired firefighters was open to all operational employees. Members were assured that each case was considered from an organisational need perspective, where an individual's retirement could present the organisation with a staffing or skills gap.

Exclusion of the press and public lifted – Members of the press and public were now free to re-join the meeting.

5. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE PRUDENTIAL CODE AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18

The Temporary Head of Finance presented the Prudential Code and Prudential Indicators for the Financial Year 2017/18 to Members which had been considered in detail at the Resource Management Committee meeting held on 16 January 2017. It was explained that within the capital programme, the Authority was required to test that capital plans were affordable and that all external borrowing and other long term liabilities were within prudent and sustainable levels. Furthermore, it was a requirement that all treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with

good practice.

The Temporary Head of Finance provided Members with a synopsis of Appendix 1 of the report, which detailed the Prudential Indicators for the 2017/18 budget setting process.

RESOLUTION:

It was RESOLVED that:

- 1) The 2017/18 Prudential Indicators set out in Appendix 1 be approved;**
- 2) The 2016/17 Authorised Limit be increased to £31,681k and the Operational Boundary be increased to £29,925k for 2017/18 for cash flow purposes.**

6. TO RECEIVE THE MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION STATEMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18

The Temporary Head of Finance presented the Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement for the financial year 2017/18, which had been considered in detail at the Resource Management Committee meeting held on 16 January 2017. The report set out the methods that the Authority would adopt to meet future liabilities and repay the principal element of loans and finance leases. Consideration was given to the Regulatory method, Asset Life Equal Instalment method and the Asset Life Annuity method for the calculation of the Minimum Revenue Provision for 2017/18.

Members were informed that the methods recommended were the same used in 2016/17, which followed the guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

RESOLUTION:

It was RESOLVED that the following Minimum Revenue Provision calculation methods be adopted for 2017/18:

- 1) That the “Regulatory Method” be adopted for expenditure incurred before or on 31 March 2009;**
- 2) That the “Asset Life-Equal Instalments Method” be adopted for expenditure incurred on or after 1st April 2009 funded by loan. The Minimum Revenue Provision first being charged in the year after the asset comes into use;**
- 3) That the “Asset Life-Annuity Method” be adopted for expenditure incurred on or after 1st April 2009 funded by finance lease. The Minimum Revenue Provision first being charged in the same year as the first lease rental payment is made.**

7. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2017/18

The Temporary Head of Finance presented the report on the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2017/18 which set out the Authority's borrowing strategy to fund the Capital Programme for the forthcoming year and which had been considered in detail at the Resource Management Committee meeting held on 16 January 2017. Members were provided with an overview of the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy set out at Appendix A of the report and Members were assured that the Policy and Strategy was regularly monitored in terms of changes to the external environment.

Councillor G Thomas made reference to minor typographical errors within the report, and the Temporary Head of Finance confirmed these would be revised accordingly.

RESOLUTION:

It was RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2017/18 be approved.

8. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE TEMPORARY CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18

The Chief Fire Officer provided an overview of the Budget requirement for 2017/18, which had been developed in conjunction with Members and Representative Bodies during three Corporate Budget Planning days. Members were reminded that a provisional budget increase of 2.8% had been approved at the Fire Authority at its meeting held on 12 December 2016.

The Chief Fire Officer confirmed to Members that following the provisionally agreed increase to the Fire Authority's budget, correspondence had been received from Pembrokeshire County Council specifically and from Powys County Council, on behalf of all six Constituent Authorities, expressing their concerns with the additional budget increase. The Chief Fire Officer reiterated the position of the Service as outlined in the presentations delivered to each Constituent Authority, in that the current provision of service delivery could only be maintained subject to sufficient funding from the Constituent Authorities.

Members were reminded that it was the responsibility of the Constituent Authorities, under the terms of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 and the provisions 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.

Councillor W Evans and P Pritchard commented that they had been unaware of the letters submitted by Pembrokeshire and Powys County Councils and emphasised their support for a budget increase of 2.8%. A number of Members echoed these sentiments and emphasised the need to work cohesively for the benefit of the citizens within Mid and West Wales to provide a safe fire and rescue provision for 2017/18.

Members also extended their gratitude to the Chief Fire Officer for the informative presentations delivered to each Constituent Authority to raise awareness of the work undertaken by the Service and allowed scrutiny of its functions.

Councillor K Pearson made reference to section 6 of the report and highlighted the difficulties experienced by dual-hatted Members who had a responsibility to set a budget that would ensure a safe fire and rescue provision, whilst also taking cognisance of the consequential detrimental impact this would have on Constituent Authority budgets. It was noted, for example, that Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council were required to make cuts of £500,000 to education, despite the 0.8% funding increase from Welsh Government. In response, Councillor P Black clarified that the figures provided in section 6 of the report were not real term cash increases.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

A. For 2017/18, a net budget of £45,585,840 be approved, with £150,000 falling on reserves and £45,435,840 falling on the Constituent Authorities (an increase of 2.8%) (Appendix A);

B. The Capital Programme attached at Appendix B be approved, leading to the capital financing charges shown as additional in Appendix A;

C. The additions laid out in Appendix C be approved;

D. The vehicle replacement programme attached at Appendix D be approved.

9. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE DETAILED REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2017/18

The Temporary Head of Finance presented a report on the detailed revenue budget for 2017/18 which had been considered in detail at the Resource Management Committee meeting held on 16 January 2017. Members gave consideration to Appendix 1 of the report which provided a breakdown of the provisional overall budget into detailed budget lines, following the Authority's approval of a budget of £45,585,840 for 2017/18.

Councillor S Paddison highlighted that part of the increase in budget provision for employees would enable the Service to undertake recruitment campaigns throughout the year in line with its succession planning arrangements.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Detailed Revenue Budget for 2017/18 attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

10. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2017/18

The Clerk / Monitoring Officer presented the Pay Policy Statement 2017/18 which was

required to be published by 31 March annually under section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011. Attention was drawn to the Appendices of the report which articulated the Authority's policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce which sought to demonstrate openness and transparency of the processes and systems adopted by the Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Pay Policy Statement for 2017/18 be approved.

11. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY'S CORPORATE PLAN 2017-2022 AND CONSULTATION REPORT FOR THE CORPORATE PLAN 2017-2022

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the Corporate Plan for 2017-2022, which set out the strategic direction of the Service. Members were informed that a suite of twelve Improvement Objectives had been identified to enable the Service to meet its priorities and the Corporate Plan put forth for Members' consideration combined the statutory reporting requirements set out within the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011 and the requirements emanating from the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer(DCFO) provided an overview of the consultation process which had been undertaken during a 10-week period between 3 October 2016 and 12 December 2016 to gather the views of the public, key stakeholders and staff on the proposals contained within the Corporate Plan. The DCFO felt that it was disappointing to note that a limited return rate of 37 responses had been received in total, however Members were assured that all responses had been taken into consideration, and the Corporate Plan had been refined, as appropriate.

The DCFO commented that the low overall response rate was not untypical of public sector consultations of this kind and could be, in some part, attributed to 'consultation fatigue'. Furthermore, the Improvement Objectives focussed upon improvement planning processes with no contentious issues being put forward which would directly impact key stakeholders.

The DCFO further reported that the Annual Improvement Planning Member Working Group had reviewed the Corporate Plan in detail and, accordingly, Members were recommended to approve the document for publication on 1st April 2017, subject to the amendment of a job title.

Councillor P Black commended the Corporate Plan in terms of its clarity, format and layout, however in terms of the consultation process he felt that the target audience needed to be reviewed to raise the level of awareness amongst members of staff and the public. The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development confirmed that a two tiered approach had been undertaken for different audiences and assured Members that the Service would strive for continuous improvement in this area to encourage feedback from all stakeholders, including members of the public and employees.

In response to comments made by T Hennegan, the Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development explained the legislative timeframe for consultation had changed, therefore minimising the opportunities for engagement with members of the public at community events.

Councillor J Warman made reference to the current running cost of the Service, which equated to 13p per day, £4 per month or £48 per year, which in his view, represented excellent value for money. It was felt that the Service's achievements, against a backdrop of financial austerity and additional pressures, was a measure of success which was to be commended.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. Publication of the Authority's Corporate Plan 2017 - 2022 (Appendix 1) be approved;**
- 2. Publication of the Consultation Report for the Corporate Plan 2017 – 2022 (Appendix 2) be approved.**

12. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE FIREFIGHTERS' PENSION SCHEMES – RISK ASSESSMENT FORM

The Head of Human Resources presented the Authority's Firefighters' Pension Schemes Risk Assessment Form to Members.

It was reported that the Local Pension Board had reviewed the Authority's Firefighters' Pension Schemes Risk Assessment Form at its meeting on 28 November 2016 and had recommended the inclusion of an additional control in relation to Annual Benefit Statements for approval by the Fire Authority. Members gave consideration to the amended Risk Assessment Form attached at Appendix A to the report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Risk Assessment Form for the Authority's Firefighters' Pension Schemes be approved.

13. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD – REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Head of Human Resources reported that the Local Pension Board had reviewed its terms of reference at its meeting on 28 November 2016 and recommended some minor amendments for approval by the Fire Authority.

The Head of Human Resources drew Members' attention to Appendix 1 of the report and Members were provided with an overview of the suggested revisions to the Terms of Reference in respect of the circulation of Local Pension Board minutes set out at

Paragraph 2.5, together with the timescales for reviewing the terms of reference set out at Paragraph 22.1.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the amended Terms of Reference for its Local Pension Board be approved.

- 14. 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 11:05.