

**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, Caerfyrddin  
**5 CHWEFROR 2018**

**MINUTES**

**OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING**

The Caer Suite,  
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen  
**5 FEBRUARY 2018**

**10.00 – 11.20**

**72% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

<b>Cadeirydd/ Chair:</b>	Councillor R Rees-Evans
<b>Is-Gadeirydd/ Deputy Chair:</b>	J Curtice
<b>Aelodau/Members:</b>	Cyng/Cllrs: A Brinn, M Charles, C Evans, L Frayling, J Hale, S Joseph, R Lewis, A Llewelyn, K Madge, D Thomas, E Thomas, G Walker, J Warman, E Williams, A Woolcock, T Van-Rees
<b>Ymddiheuriadau/Apologies:</b>	Cyng/Cllrs M Crowley, K Curry, T Hennegan, P James, C Mills, G Tanner
<b>Yn Bresennol /In Attendance:</b>	D Daycock, R Hemmingway, C Davies, R Quin, R Thomas, K Jones, I Cray, M Harries, S Jenkins, C Jackson, S Mansbridge, M Jones (Wales Audit Office - WAO)

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Crowley, K Curry, T Hennegan, P James, C Mills and G Tanner.

### **2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

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

All Members present declared a personal interest in matters relating to the budget setting process.

### **3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS**

The Chair extended a warm welcome to Mr R Hemingway of Carmarthenshire County Council who was in attendance representing the Section 151 Officer.

A warm welcome was also extended to Mr M Jones of the Wales Audit Office who was in attendance in respect of item 11 of the Agenda, namely the verbal update regarding the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 and 2016/17.

The Chair reported that Councillor M Crowley was recuperating from a recent illness. Members extended their best wishes to Councillor M Crowley for a speedy recovery.

The Chair referred to the Fire Authority visit to the Joint Public Service Centre on Monday 22 January 2018. It was reported that whilst Members' attendance had been disappointing, those who had attended found the visit to be worthwhile and provided an excellent model of partnership working, whereby a number of strategic benefits had been derived from the collaboration. It was also hoped that a similar visit would be repeated in the future. In response to a request made by Councillor G Walker, Temporary Assistant Chief Fire Officer Thomas clarified that the questionnaires completed by Control Room staff on 23 January 2018 related to a two-stage debrief to gather the views of staff in respect of their new working environment, the outcome of which would be made available to Members on conclusion of the process.

The Chair reported that he had been delighted to attend an event on 29 January 2018 whereby the crew and community of Tregaron officially welcomed (and Blessed) a brand-new rescue pump to its Fire and Rescue Station.

Members were reminded that an Addendum had been issued in respect of Appendix 1 of Agenda Item 7 which set out the detailed revenue budget.

Members were reminded that one-to-one training on the Core-HR system was available on conclusion of the Fire Authority Meeting and would also be repeated on 19 March 2018.

The Chair reported that Member attendance at meetings, and particularly training events, had been steadily dwindling in recent months. Whilst the conflicting demands placed upon Members was recognised by the Chair, all Members were encouraged to attend Fire Authority meetings and events where possible.

**4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 11 December 2017 were approved as a true record of proceedings, subject to the following amendment:

Page 5, Item 7, Paragraph 4: to be amended to read '*The Chief Fire Officer reported that in the light of comments made by Members, the use of reserves to support an increase in insurance premiums would no longer be used. It was also hoped that the use of reserves would not be used in future to support the budget.*'

Page 7, Item 7: A debate ensued regarding the accuracy of 'resolution v' of the minutes. The Clerk/Monitoring Officer clarified that the resolution would not bind Members in any way in future budget setting as it was an aspiration of the Fire Authority at that point in time for that report. The Chief Fire Officer further clarified that the resolution related specifically to the 2018/19 Budget Indications. Members were accordingly satisfied that the resolution was therefore accurate.

Matters Arising

Page 6, Paragraph 2: Councillor A Llewelyn expressed the view that, whilst he remained supportive of the Fire Authority's draft budget for 2018/19, the financial situation within Constituent Authorities remained severe. The Chief Fire Officer assured Members that he fully recognised the financial pressures faced by Constituent Authorities which had been demonstrated by the Authority's budget setting approach, which had revised the budget increase requested from 3.8% to 2.7%. It was reiterated that any future cuts would result in a diminution of services.

Page 6, Paragraph 6 – Councillor A Llewelyn asked about the Treasurer's meetings and whether information could be fed back to Members. The Clerk/Monitoring Officer agreed to explore this with the Chief Fire Officer and Treasurer.

**5. TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM COUNCILLOR T VAN-REES REGARDING THE COMMUNITY IMPACT FOLLOWING THE TRAGIC HOUSE FIRE AT LLANGAMMARCH WELLS ON 30 OCTOBER 2017**

Councillor T Van-Rees referred to the tragic fire incident in Llangammarch Wells, Powys, which occurred on Monday 30th October 2017, and explained that the loss of life had profoundly impacted the community of Llangammarch Wells and further afield. Councillor T Van-Rees commended the outstanding conduct of the crews at Llanwrtyd Wells, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells and Brecon in dealing with an extremely difficult incident with the highest level of professionalism. It was explained that the property was located in a remote area and it was considered remarkable that crew

members had contended narrow roads and other accessibility issues to arrive at the scene in a matter of minutes.

Councillor T Van-Rees conveyed expressions of appreciation and gratitude on behalf of the local communities and beyond for the efforts rendered by Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service and he stated that he was privileged to be a Member of the Fire Authority. Reference was also made to the ongoing support provided to the local community in the aftermath of the incident which had been particularly appreciated.

The Chief Fire Officer echoed the sentiments put forth by Councillor T Van-Rees and reiterated the unprecedented conditions faced by Crew Members in order to arrive at the scene. The Chief Fire Officer further stated that he was proud of the crew members in dealing with a challenging and difficult incident with professionalism of the highest order.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the outstanding conduct of the firefighters of Llanwrtyd Wells, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells and Brecon on the occasion of the 30 October 2017 at Llangarmarch Wells be noted.***

### **6 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18**

Mr R Hemingway presented the Budget Monitoring report for the financial year 2017/18 to Members which was based on the actual expenditure and known commitments as at 30 November 2017.

Members' attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report which showed an overall forecast underspend of £211k (0.46%) of the approved budget for the financial year. It was explained to Members that the main variations on revenue related to a projected underspend of £665k on employee costs due to a combination of staffing vacancies and salary scales being set at the top of salary bands.

Mr Hemingway reported to Members that the significant overspend of £525k within the supplies and services budget was attributable to an increase in expenditure on operational equipment and protective clothing. Furthermore, the increase in costs associated with the National Airwave project was not met by the grant funding.

Members were informed that the forecast overspend of £145k within Service Control was attributable to the delay in the go live date for the Joint Public Service Centre and a forecast underspend of £104k within the support services because of vacancies which was expected to reduce by the end of the financial year.

Mr Hemingway further reported that should the current position be maintained then the drawdown of reserves would not be required for 2017/18.

Members were provided with an overview of the expenditure on capital projects to 31 March 2018, compared against the Approved Capital Programme, as set out in

Appendix 2 of the report. It was reported that an overall overspend of £120k was currently projected for the capital programme, however it was explained that this would be more than offset by additional grant funding of £385k for vehicles.

Councillor A Llewelyn referred to the ongoing National negotiations in respect of pay and noted that any under-expenditure could be utilised towards additional costs associated with National settlements over and above the 2% budgeted for.

The Chief Fire Officer updated Committee on proposals within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service where a potentially significant pay increase was being proposed, linked to changes to terms and conditions. However, negotiations were still ongoing and further information was awaited in this regard.

Members were informed that any increase over and above the 2% budgeted for within the current budget profile, would equate to £350k-£400k for each 1% increase.

The Chief Fire Officer also provided a brief update on the National position regarding pay offers for consideration by both UNISON and UNITE.

The Chief Fire Officer agreed to keep Members informed regarding the National Joint Council pay negotiations relevant to both England and Wales.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report for the Financial Year 2017/18 be noted.***

## **TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE DETAILED REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2018/19**

Mr R Hemingway presented a report on the detailed revenue budget for 2018/19 to Members. Consideration was given to Appendix 1 of the report which provided a breakdown of the provisional overall budget of £46,808,670 into detailed budget lines. Members acknowledged that any future pay settlement over and above the 2% budgeted for would present a pressure to the Fire Authority if this was not centrally funded.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Detailed Revenue Budget for 2018/19 be approved.***

## **8 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND THE SECTION 151 OFFICER ON THE BUDGET REQUIREMENT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/19**

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report on the budget requirement for the financial year 2018/19 to Members.

It was reported that the draft budget requirement had been considered in detail at the Resource Management Committee on 13 November 2017 and the Fire Authority meeting on 11 December 2017. The Chief Fire Officer drew Members' attention to Appendix A of the report and reaffirmed that the budget recommendations remained unchanged, namely that a 2.7% increase in the budget would be required to maintain service delivery.

Councillor J Warman highlighted the challenges in arriving at a budget that would ensure a safe fire and rescue provision, whilst also taking cognisance of the consequential pressure this would have on Constituent Authority budgets. Reference was also made to the level of efficiencies already realised by the Service and Councillor J Warman emphasised the need to support the proposed budget to ensure an effective Fire and Rescue Service, which he felt demonstrated the best use of resources and value for money to the public in order that the safety of local communities was not compromised in any way. These sentiments were echoed by Councillor R Lewis.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that: -*

- A. For 2018/19, a net budget of £46,808,670 be approved, with £150,000 falling on reserves and £46,658,670 falling on the Constituent Authorities (an increase of 2.7%) (Appendix A);*
- B. The Capital Programme including the Vehicle Replacement programme attached at Appendix B be approved;*
- C. The efficiencies and pressures laid out in Appendix C be approved.*

### **9 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS 2018/19**

Mr R Hemingway presented the report on the Treasury Management Governance Arrangements for 2018/19, which was inclusive of the Treasury Management Strategy, Capital Prudential Indicators, Borrowing and the Annual Investment Strategy and had been recommended for approval by the Resource Management Committee at its meeting on 15 January 2018.

Mr R Hemingway referred to a small number of changes since the 2017/18 strategy, though Members were informed that the impact on the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy Statement would be minimal. Members were also informed that the Authority would be working towards implementing a Capital Strategy in line with timescales set by the CIPFA Treasury and Capital Management Panel.

Consideration was given to Appendix A of the report which set out the Treasury Management Strategy Statement at Section 1, Capital Prudential Indicators 2018/19-2020/21 and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy at Section 2, Borrowing Policy and

Treasury Indicators and Limits at Section 3 and the Annual Investment Strategy at Section 4.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Governance Arrangements for 2018/19 be approved by the Fire Authority, including the:*

- A. Treasury Management Strategy Statement (Section 1 of Appendix A);*
- B. Capital Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy (Section 2 of Appendix A);*
- C. Borrowing Policy and Treasury Indicators and Limits (Section 3 of Appendix A);*
- D. Annual Investment Strategy (Section 4 of Appendix A).*

### **10 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY'S CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2023 AND CONSULTATION REPORT FOR THE CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2023**

The Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the Corporate Plan for 2018-2023, which set out the strategic direction of the Service. Members were reminded that twelve Improvement Objectives had been developed to enable the Service to meet its priorities and furthermore, that 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 Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer provided an overview of the consultation process which had been undertaken during a 10-week period between 2 October 2017 and 8 December 2017 to gather the views of the public, key stakeholders and staff on the proposals contained within the Corporate Plan. The Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that whilst it was disappointing to note that a limited return rate of 50 responses had been received in total, Members were assured that all responses had been taken into consideration, and the majority of the feedback received had, in the main, been positive.

The Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the Annual Improvement Planning Member Working Group had reviewed the Corporate Plan in detail at its meeting on 29 January 2018 and, accordingly, Members were recommended to approve the document for publication on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

## RESOLUTION

*It was RESOLVED that*

- A. Responses to the Consultation (Appendix 2) be noted;*
- B. publication of the Authority's Corporate Plan 2018 - 2023 (Appendix 1) be approved;*

***C. Publication of the Consultation Report for the Corporate Plan 2018 – 2023 (Appendix 2) be approved.***

**11 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2015/16 AND 2016/17**

Mr M Jones, Wales Audit Office, presented the update on the Statement of Accounts 2015/16 and 2016/17 to Members.

Mr M Jones reiterated the update provided to Members at the Fire Authority meeting on 11 December 2017 whereby Members had considered and accepted a letter issued by the Auditor General for Wales, which set out three recommendations pertaining to the Statement of Accounts for 2015/16.

Members were informed that the revised Statement of Accounts 2015/16 had been submitted by Fire Service Officers two weeks later than scheduled on 17 January 2018. The Wales Audit Office had subsequently met with Fire Service Officers on 23 January 2018 and Mr M Jones commended the Authority for the evident significant improvements which had been made to the revised financial statements. Mr Jones highlighted that whilst some queries remained outstanding, the Wales Audit Office had resumed its audit on 29 January 2018 and would expect to receive the remaining information reasonably soon to enable the audit to be concluded in the near future, whilst also taking cognisance of their commitments and allocated work for other clients. Mr M Jones also reported that a letter to this effect had been submitted to the Authority.

Mr R Hemingway noted that he had been impressed with the clear and considerable effort made by the Finance Team to address the sheer quantity and complexity of the work required for the revised Statement of Accounts, and also recognised the multitude of different clients which the Wales Audit Office had to service.

The Temporary Director of Resources stated his appreciation for the Wales Audit Office's comments and recognition of the efforts undertaken by the new Finance Team during the previous 6-10 months. The Director added that it was hoped that the matter would be resolved as soon as possible, notwithstanding that the Wales Audit Office had allocated work elsewhere and would need to integrate the Authority's audit with other clients.

**RESOLUTION:**

***It was RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted.***

**12 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 11.20.