

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
17 MEDI 2018

MINUTES

OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING

The Caer Suite,
Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters, Carmarthen
17 SEPTEMBER 2018

10.00 – 12.27

84% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

Cadeirydd/ Chair:	Councillor R Rees-Evans
Is-Gadeirydd/ Deputy Chair:	
Aelodau/Members:	Cyng/Cllrs: C Anderson, A Brinn, G Breeze, K Broom, M Charles, K Curry, C Evans, L Frayling, J Hale, P James, S Joseph, R Lewis, A Llewelyn, C Mills, D Thomas, E Thomas, T Van-Rees, G Walker, E Williams, A Woolcock
Ymddiheuriadau/Apologies:	Cyng/Cllrs: M Crowley, J Curtice, T Hennegan (received post meeting), J Warman (received post meeting)
Yn Bresennol /In Attendance:	D Daycock (Clerk/Monitoring Officer), C Moore (Section 151 Officer), C Davies (CFO), R Quin (T/DCFO), R Thomas (T/ACFO), K Jones (ACO), M Harries (AM), S Jenkins (AM), P Greenslade (T/AM), C Jackson (Head of CCBD), S Mansbridge (Head of Finance), M Crennell (CFO Avon FRS), M Jones (WAO representative), C James (WAO representative)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Crowley and J Curtice.
NB: Apologies of absence were also received from Councillors T Hennegan and J Warman post meeting.

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.

The Temporary/Deputy Chief Fire Officer (T/DCFO) declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 14 of the Agenda, relating to the interim arrangements surrounding the post of Deputy Chief Fire Officer. The T/DCFO, Assistant Chief Fire Officer (ACFO) and Area Managers (AMs) also indicated that they would leave the meeting room during consideration of that item.

The Chief Fire Officer (CFO) declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 15 of the Agenda, namely the re-employment of retired firefighters and indicated that he would leave the meeting room during consideration of that item.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PERSONAL MATTERS

The Chair reported that he had agreed that an item of urgent business relating to the 2017 Wales Audit Office Plan, would be considered pursuant to section 100(B)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as he was of the view that the Plan needed to be implemented as soon as possible in order to progress the 2016/17 audit work, which had been delayed by issues regarding the 2015/16 audit. It was agreed that that the item would be considered immediately following consideration of the unaudited Statement of Accounts 2016/17 which was at agenda item 8.

The Chair was delighted to welcome back Councillor C Evans to the Fire Authority following his recent period of ill-health.

The Chair welcomed Mark Jones and Clare James of the Wales Audit Office, who were in attendance to discuss matters relating to the Unaudited Statement of Accounts 2016/17 and the 2017 Wales Audit Office Plan.

The Chair was delighted to welcome Mick Crennell, Chief Fire Officer at Avon Fire and Rescue Service, who was Mid and West Wales Service's former Deputy Chief Fire Officer, to the meeting. Mr Crennell conveyed his gratitude to Members for the confidence and trust shown in him during his tenure as Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and also for the opportunity provided to him to pursue a secondment as Temporary Chief Fire Officer of Avon Fire and Rescue Service, which had subsequently led to a substantive position. Members congratulated Mr Crennell on his recent appointment and wished him well in his new position.

Congratulations and a warm welcome was also extended to Temporary Area Manager Peter Greenslade to his first Fire Authority meeting following his recent appointment as Temporary Corporate Head of Operational Support and Improvement.

The Chair was delighted to announce that the Service had been awarded the Investors in People Platinum Award. Members were informed that of the 15,000 IIP organisations based in 75 different countries worldwide, only 1% had achieved the platinum award. Fire Authority Members congratulated the Service in attaining the very highest accolade within the Investors in People Framework, which provided clear evidence of progress towards the Service's vision to be a World Leader in Emergency Response and Community Safety.

The Chair referred to the array of events attended over the summer months, including various station open days and visits, including the Service's annual vocational achievement awards ceremony; a blessing of a new appliance at Crickhowell Fire Station; Royal Welsh Show; Talgarth Fire Station 75th Anniversary celebrations; and the Firefighter's Annual Memorial Service. The Chair also acknowledged the commitment of Firefighter Huw Lloyd, who was retiring following 44 years' service and stated that he was proud to be attending Aberaeron Fire Station that evening to formally recognise his dedication to Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

The Chair reported that in order to support family friendly working, it had been proposed that the next meeting of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee (PASC) be changed from Monday 29 October 2018 to Monday 5 November 2018. Members informally indicated that they were content with this change, and PASC members were requested to update their diaries accordingly.

Members were informed that the Service had attained the 'Firefighter's Charity Supporter of the Year' award in recognition of the significant amount of money consistently raised each year.

The Chief Fire Officer then provided a synopsis of the fire incident which had occurred at the Belgrave Hotel, Aberystwyth on 25 July 2018. The Authority and Chief Fire Officer commended the outstanding conduct of the crews in dealing with an extremely difficult incident with the highest level of professionalism and expertise. Cllr P James echoed these sentiments and reiterated the unprecedented conditions faced by crew members which had culminated in a number of unorthodox rescues, utilising the aerial ladder platform and innovative rope rescue techniques. Cllr P James was also delighted to note that firefighters Nigel Bowden and Nick Morgan had received external recognition at the Radio Ceredigion Local Hero Awards 2018 in this regard and conveyed his appreciation and gratitude for the efforts rendered by Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service. Members acknowledged the report of the CFO and unanimously indicated their gratitude and appreciation of the work of all officers involved in the incident, and their sympathy to those affected and their families.

4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE FIRE AUTHORITY MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2018

The minutes of the Fire Authority meeting held on 19 March 2018 were approved as a true record of proceedings.

Matters Arising

Page 4, item 6, paragraph 3 – The Clerk/Monitoring Officer confirmed to Cllr P James that the salary of the Deputy Chair had been reinstated as from the 6 June 2018.

5 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2018

The minutes of the Annual General meeting held on 6 June 2018 were approved as a true record of proceedings. There were no matters arising.

6 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 6 JUNE 2018

The minutes of the Extraordinary General meeting held on 6 June 2018 were approved as a true record of proceedings. There were no matters arising.

7 TO RECEIVE, NOTE AND APPROVE THE LOCAL PENSION BOARD DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

The Section 151 Officer introduced the 2017/18 Annual Report of the Local Pension Board to Members.

The summary of the report was provided to Members, which outlined the activities and performance of the Local Pension Board during the last financial year. Members considered and noted the contents of the Report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Local Pension Board Annual Report for 2017/18 be noted.

8 TO RECEIVE THE UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 2016/17

The Section 151 Officer presented the unaudited Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 to Members, electronic copies of which had been sent to all members, and which he had certified as providing a true and fair view of the financial position of the Authority as at 31st March 2017.

It was explained to Members that due to the delays with the completion of the 2015/16 Statement of Accounts, it had not been possible to comply with the timescales set out within the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 and accordingly a revised timescale had been agreed with the Wales Audit Office.

The Section 151 Officer drew attention to the salient points contained within the Statement of Accounts which followed the CIPFA code of practice and formed the basis of best practice in accordance with the relevant legislation. Attention was drawn in particular to the outturn position for the financial year ended 2017, which had seen a total of £360k being allocated to a general funds balance account. Furthermore, Members were informed that the Minimum Revenue Provision had been overstated in previous years, which had been updated for the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts and had resulted in an inflow of £648k.

The Section 151 Officer further reported that the Statement of Accounts for 2016/17 would be audited by the Wales Audit Office as soon as possible, before being recommended for approval by the Fire Authority at its meeting on 10 December 2018.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the unaudited Statement of Accounts 2016/17 be noted.

9 (form erly 17) TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE 2017 WALES AUDIT PLAN ADDENDUM

This was an urgent item agreed for inclusion on the agenda by the chair, for reasons stated above, in accordance with section 100(B) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Mr M Jones of the WAO presented the Wales Audit Plan Addendum for 2017 to Members, which had been prepared to meet the requirements of auditing standards and proper audit practices. It was explained that the work set out had to be commenced as soon as possible in order to progress the audit of the 2016/17 accounts, and that the addendum had been updated to include a plan of the work and fee of the audit following completion of the 2015/16 financial statements. The Plan informed members of the approach and broad outline of the work to be undertaken. Members were provided with an overview of the Auditor General's assessment of risks, audit approach and estimation of fees in relation to the 2016/17 financial audit work set out in the report.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

10 (form erly 9) TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE JOINT REPORT OF THE CHIEF FIRE OFFICER AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER/SECTION 151 OFFICER ON BUDGET INDICATIONS FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019/20

The Chief Fire Officer presented the report on the budget indications for the financial year 2019/20.

The Chief Fire Officer provided Members with the overall financial background and context surrounding the budget requirement recommended for 2019/20. Members

gave detailed consideration to the known budget pressures for the forthcoming year in respect of inflation increases, provisional pay award under negotiation, shift change, domestic homicide review, HMRC Officer vehicles and the implications surrounding the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Project.

Attention was drawn to section 4 of the report which set out 3 options which had previously been considered by Members. The Chief Fire Officer clarified that the budget recommendation put forth for approval related to 'option 3' which had been informed and directed by the Budget Corporate Planning days held in July and August 2018.

A breakdown of the Earmarked Reserves as at 31st March 2017 was also provided to Members, which indicated what was required to manage change and retain adequate reserves for operational management.

A synopsis of the substantial efficiencies made by the Service from a combination of operational and corporate initiatives was provided to Members, including the root and branch review of all service departments and functional areas which had identified single points of failure and areas of improvement and transformation across the organisation. The Chief Fire Officer further informed Members that the Service had been successful in its application to participate in the GovTech Catalyst innovation challenge which aimed to provide a technological solution to improving firefighter safety and operational response.

Cllr A Llewellyn referred to the dual role of Members in having to balance the requirements of the Authority and safety of the communities, against the context of the economic environment and the Constituent Authorities' settlements. In this regard, Cllr Llewellyn sought assurances that formal arrangements were now in place to ensure appropriate lines of communication between the Fire Authority and each Constituent Authority, which he felt was vital in terms of effective financial planning and raising awareness of the Authority's budget requirement for the provision of an emergency, life-saving service to the public. The Section 151 Officer replied that the matter was in hand, and indicated that a stand-alone meeting be arranged involving the appropriate officers with the Constituent Authorities across the Authority's area as a means of enhancing lines of communication and enabling detailed budget discussions to take place. This was noted.

In response to concerns raised by Cllr P James, the Chief Fire Officer assured Members that he was in regular discussions with the Welsh Government in respect of the insufficient funding from Welsh Government to cover the cost of the Firelink/Airwave communications system.

Following comments made by Cllr G Walker in respect of the recent High Court case regarding a Close Proximity Crewing System in South Yorkshire, the Chief Fire Officer clarified that the decision that the system was 'unlawful' related specifically to the Working Time Directive Regulations within South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service. In the light of this, whilst recognising that the arrangements in operation at Pontardawe and Llanelli Fire Stations were not exactly the same, the Service would be revising the crewing arrangements at these stations as it was recognised there

were similarities between the Self Rostered Crewing systems and the one in operation in South Yorkshire.

Councillor D Thomas highlighted the significant cutbacks to frontline services facing the City and County of Swansea Council and expressed the view that the Fire Authority should also therefore consider a reduced budget for 2019/20.

Cllr T Van-Rees expressed his support for the budget recommendation put forth for consideration which had been directed by Members following extensive deliberations at the Corporate Budget Planning events. Furthermore, Cllr Van-Rees emphasised that he felt that the Fire Authority's budgetary requirement was reasonable and justified as it provided an effective fire and rescue service, which in his view demonstrated the best use of resources and value for money to the public, whilst ensuring that the safety of local communities was not compromised in any way.

Councillor D Thomas proposed an amendment, which was seconded, which read:

'A flatline cash budget which would impact on operational response and require the Authority to make cuts of £1,179k to fund the pay and prices inflation.'

Upon being put, the amendment was lost.

The substantive motion incorporating Option 3 was then put to the Fire Authority, and carried.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the 2019/20 budget requirement proposals as set out be supported by the Fire Authority and that: -

- 1. the indicative budget proposal Option 3 be validated for inflation, estimated pay awards and other commitments,***
- 2. the resulting budget would be a minimum of £47,987,670,***
- 3. £47,817,670 fall on the Constituent Authorities, an increase of £1,159,000 (2.48%),***
- 4. £170,000 be funded from the Levy Equalisation Earmarked Reserves.***

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TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 2017/18

The T/DCFO presented a report on the Annual Performance Assessment for 2017/18 which outlined the Authority's performance against the improvement objectives set out within the Annual Improvement Plan and which required publication by 31 October 2018. Members considered the various objectives set out at Appendix 1, and the performance of the Service in relation to them.

Cllr A Woolcock drew attention to Objective 3 and queried the rationale for the difference in reduction targets between categories for the number of people killed and seriously injured on Welsh roads by 2020, in particular the rate of 25% for motorcyclists compared with 40% for other categories. In response, the Corporate Head of Prevention and Protection explained that the figures set out related to, and complied with the Welsh Government Road Safety Framework 2013-2020. Furthermore, a mid-term review had recently occurred, and it was noted that the targets could possibly be subject to revision from 2020 onwards.

In response to a query from Cllr P James, the Chief Fire Officer provided a synopsis of the on-call review team which had been set up with the remit of improving on-call recruitment, retention and progression.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance Assessment for 2017-2018 be approved for publication by 31 October 2018.

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TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2024 FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The T/DCFO presented a report on the Draft Corporate Plan for 2019-2024, set out at Appendix A, which had been developed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. Attention was drawn to Appendix A of the report, whereby Members considered the five-year Plan which set out the Service's six draft strategic aims and its improvement and well-being objectives.

The T/DCFO reported that the Corporate Plan and associated Improvement Objectives had been further refined and developed in consultation with the Annual Improvement Planning Member Working Group at the Corporate Planning events, and was scheduled to be published for a 10- week public consultation commencing on 1 October 2018. Members considered and deliberated the Plan.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2024 be approved for public consultation.

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EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that pursuant to section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the reason, that if they were present, it is 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

That it was in the Public Interest to do so.

M Crennell, M Jones and C James departed the meeting at this point.

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TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES' LETTER: FIRE AUTHORITY REFORM

The Chair presented an update on recent developments in respect of the Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Public Services' future Governance, Finance and Performance arrangements of the Fire Authorities.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members' noted the correspondence and feedback put before them, and that their observations regarding the future structure and governance arrangements of the Fire Authority be noted by the Chair and fed back to the Minister.

The Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Area Managers and Temporary Area Manager departed the meeting at this point.

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TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE DEPUTY CHIEF FIRE OFFICER – INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS

The Chief Fire Officer presented a report on the continuation of interim arrangements for the Deputy Chief Fire Officer post.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the continuation of the interim arrangements put in place at Principal Officer Level during the absence of a substantive DCFO, and the commencement of a recruitment and selection process for the appointment of a permanent DCFO in early 2019 be noted.

The Chief Fire Officer departed the meeting at this point.

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TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE RE-EMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED FIREFIGHTERS

The Clerk/Monitoring Officer presented a report on the re-employment of retired firefighters to Members.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the recommendation set out in the report be noted.

Exclusion of the press and public lifted – open session resumed.

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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 further items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12:27