

**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 PERFORMANCE, AUDIT  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AT ITS NEXT MEETING**

**COFNODION CYFARFOD Y PWYLLGOR  
ADOLYGU AC ARCHWILIO PERFFORMIAD  
MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**DYDD LLUN, 15 HYDREF 2012  
MONDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2012**

**SWIT CAER, PENCADLYS Y GWASANAETH TÂN, CAERFYRDDIN  
CAER SUITE, FIRE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, CARMARTHEN**

**11.00 – 12.10**

**67% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

Presennol yn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CHAIR	J Dudley
IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:	T Hennegan
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Bayliss, P James, R Lewis, K Pearson, R Rees-Evans, T J Richards, W D Thomas, K Thomas
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	B Mills, A Harrington
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	R Smith, P Bates, D Daycock, E Aitken, C Davies, D Masson, J Maunder, S Mclinden, L Williams, H Thomas, M Thomas

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Harrington, and B Mills.

## **2 DECLARATION BY MEMBERS OF ANY PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS**

All Members present declared that they had a personal interest in any business relating to, or affecting their own Constituent Authority.

## **3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PERSONAL MATTERS**

The Chair welcomed Councillor K Thomas to his first meeting of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

A warm welcome was also extended to Lisa Williams, Wales Audit Office, who was at the meeting to present items 9 and 10 of the agenda and Mr Huw Thomas and Meirwyn Thomas, Internal Auditors from Carmarthenshire County Council, who were at the meeting to present item 11 of the agenda.

## **4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JULY 2012**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2012 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

## **5 TO RECEIVE THE PERFORMANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE REPORTS TO SEPTEMBER 2012**

Committee were provided with an up to date, accurate record of the Service's performance to September 2012, as follows:

### Departmental and Command Action Plans – Overview of each improvement objective

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance reported that the improvement objectives for each Department and Command mirrored the five key objectives within the Service's Annual Action Plan 2012-2013.

Members attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the report which contained a commentary from each Head of Department or Command using a Red, Amber Green (RAG) status to reflect how their Department or Command had progressed.

Members were informed that of the 105 actions, 83 were on target with the remaining 22 targets being within the acceptable tolerance level (amber). The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the performance reports would be presented to each Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee and clarified that the horizontal arrows represented consistent progress, the upward arrows indicated an improvement in performance and downward arrows would indicate a reduction in progress.

Following a query from Members the Director of Delivery confirmed that the Service was working in collaboration with Dyfed Powys Police in order to provide training for Police Community Support Officers, however these arrangements had been temporarily suspended during the Olympics.

### Performance Indicators - Performance against targets set for Strategic and Core Indicators

The report provided performance information as at September 2012 which was projected for the 2012-2013 reporting period.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance reported that the Strategic and Core indicators were generally showing improved performance and Members were assured that all areas of reduced performance were being addressed. Members were informed that there was a projected 35% reduction on all fires attended in comparison with 2011/12.

It was explained that although the number of fire injuries were projected to reduce by approximately 25% in comparison to 2011/12, the Service's performance was off target, but within the acceptable tolerance level.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance was pleased to inform members that the number of false alarms caused by automatic fire detection continued to decrease, which reflected the success of the Service's Unwanted Fire Signals Policy.

Of the 38 statutory and core performance indicators which measured performance on corporate health and service delivery, 33 remained within the target tolerance. It was reported that there were 5 indicators that remained outside the Service's target and these related to sickness, ill health retirements and smoke alarm ownership. Following a query from Members the Director of Risk clarified that the under performance for the number of smoke alarms that did not activate could in part be attributed to a recording issue. Members were assured that the Service operated an intensive home fire safety check strategy, with major campaigns underway to encourage members of the public to regularly test their smoke alarms. It was also reported that all smoke alarms fitted by the Service were connected to mains electricity, with a battery reserve that could not be removed.

Following a query from Members the Director of Risk confirmed that following extensive collaboration with the Higher Education establishments, the Service had experienced a dramatic decline in the number of false calls received, partly as a result of stricter regulation by the establishments, including financial sanctions being imposed on students. It was emphasised that the Service had implemented a continuous proactive approach to actively engage with establishments in an aim to reduce such incidents.

#### Business Assurance Report – Progress against key audit proposals

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer reported that the Business Assurance update provided a summary of progress and recommendations that had been made as part of the external scrutiny arrangements for the Authority.

Committee gave consideration to the Annual Improvement Report 2012 recommendations and the Peer Assessment Report 2011/12 recommendations and noted that of the 26 objectives, 5 were off target but within the acceptable tolerance threshold.

#### Corporate Projects Update

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance provided a summary of progress against the 22 current corporate projects. It was noted that the majority of projects were progressing well, however 7 objectives were currently off target, but within the acceptable tolerance threshold. Members were informed that 2 projects relating to the Aberystwyth Community Fire Station and refurbishment works at the Earlswood training facility were currently on hold. Following a query from Members it was clarified that an options appraisal report was currently being developed for Aberystwyth Community Fire Station in order to ensure the most appropriate use of the site, which would also need to be financially viable. With regard to the Earlswood refurbishment Members noted that a request for external financial assistance from the Welsh Government had not been forthcoming, therefore the Service were investigating the feasibility of funding the project from the Authority's capital budget.

Following a query from Members it was explained that the Service Control Centre was relocated in 2006 to a shared facility with Dyfed-Powys Police and the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust within Dyfed Powys Police HQ at Llangunnor, Carmarthen. It was confirmed that the Service had no plans in the near future to further extend shared administrative resources with Dyfed Powys Police, although many buildings are shared and the Service is always open to further discussion.

#### **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED  
That the report be noted***

## **6 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE DRAFT ANNUAL PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR 2011/12**

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance presented the draft Performance Assessment which had been developed in accordance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. It was reported that all Welsh Improvement Authorities were required to produce a performance assessment on their achievements against the previous year's Annual Improvement Plan in terms of delivering improvement to the communities of Mid and West Wales. Due to the publication date of the Annual Improvement Plan being moved to 31<sup>st</sup> March it was necessary to publish the Annual Improvement Assessment as a stand alone document by 31<sup>st</sup> October each year.

Members were informed that, in line with the Welsh Government's collaborative agenda, a Results Based Accountability approach had been adopted which focussed on meaningful outcomes that had a direct or indirect improvement for the communities and citizens within Mid and West Wales.

Members noted the significant progress that had been achieved during 2011/12. The Service had achieved a 44% improvement in performance, compared with the previous year, in reducing risk critical skills gaps. Investment in training facilities enabled the Service to deliver the full range of risk critical training and development in the most professional, effective and efficient way using the most up to date technology and techniques.

Members were informed that 26 CCTV cameras were installed on appliances during 2011/12 and the footage captured was being used to support investigations particularly relating to fire investigation, attacks on firefighters, road traffic collisions and also to assist in operational learning. Following a query from Members, the Director of Risk emphasised that the Service operated a zero tolerance policy regarding attacks on firefighters and that the introduction of 360° CCTV cameras, which were clearly displayed on vehicles, had resulted in a decline in the number of attacks. The Service was also engaging with schools, particularly in areas more prone to attacks, as part of its proactive strategy to prevent future occurrences.

Following a query from Members, the Chief Fire Officer clarified that the co-responder vehicles had only been introduced in areas following specific requests for assistance from the Welsh Ambulance Services Trust.

Members were informed that the Performance Assessment would be updated to incorporate Wales Audit Office guidance on the use of comparative national data, which had recently been published.

### **RESOLUTION**

#### ***It was RESOLVED***

***That the report be noted and the Performance Assessment be approved for publication.***

## **7 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON FIRE AUTHORITY SCRUTINY – PROGRAMME REFRESH**

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance introduced the report on Fire Authority Scrutiny – Programme Refresh. It was reported that due to the significant changes in Fire Authority Membership in May 2012, the original scrutiny programme needed to be postponed until training on scrutiny techniques had been delivered for Members on 10 September 2012.

Members gave consideration to the revised 5 year programme of scrutiny exercises and it was reported that the schedule would be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that the focus areas remained up to date and relevant. Committee noted that some of the scrutiny exercises had been recommended to allow Members to review areas that had recently undergone audit processes.

Reference was made to the scrutiny exercise of Pembrokeshire Command scheduled for 8 November 2012 which would be tailored to focus on the 'working together' objective in line with the Command's Action Plan.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED***

***That the report be noted and the scrutiny programme for 2012/13 be approved.***

## **8 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT ON COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2011 – SEPTEMBER 2012**

The Head of Corporate Communications and Democratic Services introduced the Compliments and Complaints report for the period April 2011 – September 2012, which had been prepared in line with the Code of Corporate Governance. A total of 52 complaints had been received during the reporting period, 15 of which were determined as 'upheld'. Given the large geographical area covered by the Service it was emphasised that the number of complaints determined as upheld were extremely low. It was further reported that all complaints received had been responded to within the timescales set by the Service and no complaints had been referred to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales.

The Head of Corporate Communications and Democratic Services drew Members' attention to the 90 compliments received during the reporting period, and she stated that it was pleasing that members of the public made a concerted effort to acknowledge the sterling work of the Service and recognised that such expressions of appreciation were of value in identifying best practice and boosting staff morale.

Members requested that information regarding each complaint and compliment be included in future reports, which could be presented in a redacted format in

compliance with the Data Protection Act 1988.

**RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED***

***That the report be noted.***

**9 TO RECEIVE THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE REPORT ON PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office was welcomed to the meeting and presented a report which laid out the results of an all-Wales study undertaken by the Wales Audit office designed to answer the question '*Does public engagement enable citizens and partners to help shape what Fire and Rescue Authorities do?*'. Ms Williams assured Members that numerous examples of effective collaboration initiatives were evident, indicating that the Authority demonstrated a strong commitment towards developing its public engagement activity. A total of three proposals for improvement had been recommended by the Wales Audit Office, as follows:

- 1. To continue to develop corporate processes to promote public engagement.*
- 2. To develop methods to more robustly analyse and evaluate the results and data arising from all its public engagement activities; and*
- 3. To provide more detailed feedback to its public and stakeholders to clearly show in more detail how their input has improved services and therefore influenced what the Authority does.*

Overall, Ms Williams commended the Authority for its robust engagement initiatives and was pleased to present such a positive report.

**RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED***

***That the report be noted***

## **10 TO RECEIVE THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT LETTER**

Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office presented the Annual Improvement Assessment letter which confirmed that the Authority had discharged its improvement planning duties under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and had acted in accordance with Welsh Government guidance.

Ms Williams reported that based on, and limited to, work carried out to date by the Wales Audit Office and relevant regulators, the Authority was likely to comply with the requirement to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement during this financial year. This conclusion was reached because the Authority's business planning arrangements were now much improved and provided a clearer picture of actions planned which were much more outcome focused.

Members drew attention to the updated appendix 1 of the report whereby it was concluded that the Authority was making good progress to address the proposals for improvement identified in previous assessments undertaken by the Wales Audit Office.

Members noted the positive findings in the report that the Authority continued to manage its financial challenges effectively and was continuing to improve in its approach to public engagement.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED***

***That the report be noted***

## **11 TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME 2012-13**

Mr Huw Thomas from Carmarthenshire County Council presented the Internal Audit Programme proposed for the 2012-2013 financial year as agreed with the Director of Resources.

Mr Thomas reported that preliminary discussions had already taken place with the Director of Resources to determine the number of Internal Audit days required and to establish the following Draft Internal Audit Programme for the forthcoming financial year:

- Follow up of recommendations detailed in the 2011 – 12 Internal Audit Reports;
- A review of the Central Financial Management Systems including Payroll, Creditors, and Debtors;
- A review of the Authorised Signatory list and the procedures in place to ensure completeness and accuracy;
- Attendance at Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee;

- Periodic meetings with the Director of Resources.

The Director of Resources highlighted that a Wales Audit Office review of the Authority's Corporate Governance processes was scheduled for 2012/13, therefore it was proposed that the internal audit function focus upon detailed compliance issues.

It was reported that all reviews would be undertaken by the end of the financial year and start dates for the reviews would be agreed with the Director of Resources. This process would enable relevant staff and records to be made available and avoid disruption with progress reports being brought to the Performance, Review and Audit Committee.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED***

***That the report be noted***

- 12 TO CONSIDER ANY OTHER ITEM 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 12:10.