

**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, 22 GORFENNAF 2013
MONDAY, 22 JULY 2013**

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

11.00 – 13.25

87% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennolyn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CHAIR	T Hennegan
IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:	K Curry
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Curtice, J Dudley, W E Evans, P James, G Jones, K Pearson, R Rees-Evans, K Tampin, G Walker, A Wilcox, J Williams
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	J Bayliss
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	D Daycock, E Aitken, C Davies, D Masson, J Maunder, C Jackson, S McLinden, K Jones V De Zouche, H Thomas, L Williams, R Price, Cllr R Llewellyn (observer)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Bayliss.

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.

Councillor J Williams declared a personal interest in item 8 of the agenda regarding any business relating to, or affecting Llanelli Town Council.

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PERSONAL MATTERS

A warm welcome was extended to auditors Victoria De Zouche of KPMG, Lisa Williams and Ron Price of the Wales Audit Office and Hugh Thomas of Carmarthenshire County Council.

The Chair made reference to an informative and interesting presentation provided by the Chief Fire Officer and Head Of Swansea Command at the City and County of Swansea Council meeting held on 2 July 2013.

4 TO APPOINT A DEPUTY CHAIR FOR THE 2013/14 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Councillor K Curry was proposed and duly seconded. There were no other nominations.

Upon being put to the vote,

It was RESOLVED that Councillor K Curry be elected Deputy Chair of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year 2013/2014.

In response Councillor Curry thanked Committee for the vote of confidence shown in him.

5 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2013

The minutes of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 29 April 2013 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising from the meeting held on 29 April 2013

A Member highlighted item 5, paragraphs 4 & 5 of the minutes and requested that the Chair monitor progress in relation to the Young Firefighter Scheme and recruitment of on-call employees.

6 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 5 JUNE 2013

The minutes of the special Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 June 2013 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

7 TO RECEIVE THE PERFORMANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE REPORTS TO JUNE 2013

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance introduced the Performance and Business Assurance report to the Committee which provided an accurate reflection of the Service's performance during the first quarter reporting period. Committee were provided an overview of the four Appendices set out in the report, as follows:

Departmental and Command Action Plans (Appendix 1)

Members were referred 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 91 actions, 68 were on target with the remaining 23 targets being within the acceptable tolerance level (amber). Committee were assured that the Service were acutely aware of the actions that were required to ensure that the targets would be met within required timescales.

Committee considered the key areas of performance and a number of areas requiring further clarification were addressed.

Performance Indicators - Performance against targets set for Strategic and Core Indicators (Appendix 2)

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance reported that the performance information as at June 2013 and projected for the 2013/14 reporting period was set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Of the 35 statutory and core performance indicators which measured performance on corporate health and service delivery, 20 remained within the target tolerance. The 15 indicators that were not within target tolerance related to sickness, fires, fire injuries and smoke alarm ownership.

Members' attention was drawn to the annual trends in key performance indicators and members were pleased to note that downward trend was shown for the majority of indicators which represented an improvement in performance.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance reported that the primary objective for the Service was to reduce the number of accidental fire deaths and injuries and to continue the progressive work on community risk reduction initiatives, along with the development of operational skills of front line staff.

Business Assurance Progress Report (Appendix 3)

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance 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 2012-13 recommendations, the Peer Assessment Report 2012/13 recommendations and the Wales Audit Office Improvement Assessment and Annual Audit Letter 2011/12. It was noted that of the 34 objectives, 29 were on target to be completed within schedule and the remaining 5 were within the acceptable tolerance threshold.

Corporate Projects Update (Appendix 4)

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance provided a summary of progress against the corporate projects in terms of projects pending subject to a feasibility study, projects currently running, projects completed and the projects which the Service contributed to or led as part of the National Issues Committee. It was noted that of the 13 projects currently underway, 8 were on target, 4 were within the acceptable tolerance and 1 project relating to facilities management software was off target. Committee were assured that the Service was proactively trying to resolve the issues affecting the project.

Reference was made to the Rural Response Pump project whereby it was clarified that the full debrief would be held in September 2013 in order to encapsulate /capture any lessons learnt from matters relating to the vehicle's weight and stowage issues. In the interim the Director of Delivery reported that the Project completion stage would be amended from 100% to 95%.

Following a query from a Member, the Director of Delivery confirmed that the Small Fires Unit (SFU) was utilised to attend small fires across the Swansea Bay area which allowed the station personnel to attend risk critical incidents therefore ensuring an effective use of resources.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF CREWING CHANGES AT LLANELLI COMMUNITY FIRE AND RESCUE STATION

The Director of Delivery presented the report on the review of crewing changes at Llanelli Fire and Rescue Station based on the first quarter performance data.

Committee were informed that the Self Rostered Crewing System (SRC) had been introduced at Llanelli Community Fire Station on 8th April 2013 with the intention of improving Service Delivery, Community Safety and the use of resources. The system was intended to allow for maximum resource allocation during hours of high activity but also to provide operational cover equivalent to that provided by the shift duty system during hours of lower activity.

The Committee specifically considered appendix 1 of the report which detailed the

improvements achieved in the short period following implementation. The following areas of successes were highlighted:

- That Operational response had remained entirely resilient;
- That a similar number of emergency incidents as under the previous arrangement had been professionally dealt with;
- There had been no failures to mobilise;
- The average response time from being alerted to booking mobile was the quickest out of all the Wholetime Duty System (WDS) stations;
- That the Llanelli station had maintained optimum crewing of 5 riders for 98.6% of the time compared to an average of 71.4% for the Wholetime Duty System (WDS) stations;
- Detachments into Llanelli station had reduced to nil;
- That Community Safety output under the new system had increased by 30%;
- That Sickness levels had dropped from 11.11% to 0% since the new system had been operational ;
- That the SRC system had delivered the efficiencies expected including rationalisation of staff numbers from 28 to 14 thus ensuring that optimum crewing was maintained wherever possible and also reducing the instances of over provision of resources by nearly 40% when compared to the other WDS stations;
- That Self Rostered Crewing had delivered the anticipated year on year financial efficiencies;
- That essentially, Llanelli Fire Station was delivering exactly the same (and in some cases better) service as before for almost half the cost.

Committee were also provided with an overview of the redevelopment works currently ongoing at the Station which would be completed in the Spring of 2014.

Following a query from Members the Director of Delivery clarified that a variety of factors could contribute to differing response times across wholetime stations and it was agreed that the Service would investigate the variations in response times.

A Member posed a number of questions in relation to Pontardawe and the community safety statistics, amount of overtime worked, detachments, hourly wage rates, sickness and discipline cases whereby the Chair requested that Members submit specific questions to the Director of Delivery by email or letter.

In response to a query from a Member the Director of Delivery confirmed that members of staff were aware that they should be operating within the remit of their employment of contract and in line with the guiding principles of self rostered crewing document.

Members were pleased to note the introduction of the community safety task force at Llanelli Fire Station whereby the Director of Delivery reported that a recruitment process was underway. A Member drew attention to long-term sickness levels and was assured that the Service had robust occupational health procedures in place.

Committee requested that a press release be made and further community engagement events organised as a means of highlighting the success of the self rostered crewing model introduced at Llanelli Station.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted

9 TO RECEIVE THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT REPORT 2013

Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office presented the Annual Improvement Report 2013, reporting that the Auditor General for Wales was required to publish a report on how the Authority was improving.

Reference was made to Appendix 1 of the report which outlined the Authority's delivery and evaluation of services in relation to 2011-12, and its planning of improvement for 2012-13.

Committee were informed that the report made no formal recommendations and concluded that the Authority was managing its improvement programme well, and making progress in delivering improvement in its core functions. Ms Williams noted that the report highlighted positive improvements in the following areas:

- Business planning arrangements, which provided a clearer picture of planned actions and are more outcome focused;
- Effective financial challenge management;
- Addressing proposals for improvements;
- Although there were some weaknesses in approach, the Authority's approach to public engagement was continuing to improve;
- Effective review of the Annual Governance Statement Process.

Committee noted that the Auditor General did identify three areas where greater focus should be placed to ensure full compliance with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 guidance, as follows:

- Public reporting on performance could be clearer
- Future focus should be on further reducing the instances of fire injuries and road traffic accident injuries and fatalities.
- Evaluation and reporting was better than previous years, but there was scope to strengthen public reporting and make it more accessible, in line with Welsh Government guidance.

Members were assured that the 2014-2015 Annual Improvement Plan would incorporate areas required to ensure that the final product would be fully compliant, fit for purpose with a clear explanation of the improvement objectives, the reason for them and how final conclusions of success were drawn and compared.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted

10 TO RECEIVE THE ANNUAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2013/14 PROGRESS REPORT

The Director of Resources presented the Annual Improvement Plan 2013/14 Progress report. Committee were aware that in 2010 the Fire Authority produced its five year Strategic Plan for 2010-2015. The Annual Improvement Plan for 2013-2014

represented year four of the five year cycle, which had been approved by the Authority on 11 February 2013, and the key themes were taken from that strategic document.

Committee considered the detailed progress update report on the first quarter implementation against each of the improvement objectives contained within the Authority's 2013-14 Annual Improvement Plan.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the progress being made in the implementation of the Authority's Annual Improvement Plan 2013/14

11 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CEREDIGION COUNTY COMMAND SCRUTINY EXERCISE

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance provided Committee with an overview of the Ceredigion County Command Scrutiny exercise undertaken by Fire Authority Members within Ceredigion Command on 18 April 2013.

The Scrutiny exercise explored how Ceredigion Command managed risk through working together with partners and arrangements had been made for Scrutiny Members to speak with Mr M Gilbert from Bronglais Hospital in order to investigate the 'partnership' in relation to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFAs).

Committee were informed that the Scrutiny Members, following review of appropriate documentation and questioning, had made the following seven recommendations:

1. That members were impressed with the good work of Ceredigion Command particularly in the reduction of unwanted fire signals and AFAs.
2. That Members had received a positive view of the way Ceredigion Command worked with their partners. The members particularly commended the training exercises which took place in the hospital, benefitting both the Service and their partners.
3. That Members supported seeking alternative funding from grants to assist with Community Safety projects.
4. That Members commended the successful new recruitment programme within the Command area.
5. That a letter be sent to Mr Gilbert's employer thanking them for allowing him the time to attend the meeting and congratulating him on his achievements in reducing the number of AFA's.
6. That both Mr Gilbert and Dr. Walker be invited to attend a full meeting of the Fire Authority in order that all Members could be made fully aware of their good work with the Service.
7. That the Scrutiny Exercise be commended as being thorough, informative and very worthwhile.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12 TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2013/14

Mr H Thomas, Carmarthenshire County Council, presented Members with an outline of the Internal Audit Plan proposed for the 2013/14 financial year, as agreed with the Director of Resources.

Mr Thomas reported that four areas would be considered as follows:

- Follow up of previous recommendations
- Central Financial Management Systems including Payroll, Creditors, and Debtors
- National Fraud Initiative
- Governance arrangements in relation to partnerships
- The Management and Control of the Governance Assurance process

It was noted that the Audit Plan 2013/14 would be considered in more depth by Members at the next meeting of the Performance Audit and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

13 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE SHIRLEY TOWERS FIRE AND OPERATIONAL LEARNING

The Director of Risk presented Members with an update regarding the Service's progress in relation to the recommendations arising from the investigation into the deaths of two Fire-fighters at flat 72, Shirley Towers, Church Street, Southampton on the evening of Tuesday 6th April 2010.

Committee were informed that several investigations had been instigated since the incident, involving Hampshire Police, the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service. A Coroner's Inquest assisted by London and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services had also been conducted.

The subsequent reports collectively included 156 recommendations, relating to existing policies, operational procedures, training programmes and equipment.

Members were assured that the Service's response to the publication of the Shirley Towers Reports was immediate, with the recommendations being added to the Operational Learning System and the identification of responsible officers to consider and address all recommendations. Members were pleased to note that this concerted effort involving Fire Control, the Training Department, Corporate Risk and Operational Risk Management had resulted in 138 of the 156 recommendations being addressed.

Members were provided with an overview of the 18 recommendations which remained in progress and drew attention to recommendation 2.81 which advised that local housing authorities be contacted to highlight the dangers of fallen plastic cables in the event of a fire. In response to a request from a Member, the Director of Risk agreed to

provide Members with a briefing note highlighting such dangers, which Members could present to their respective Chief Executive Officers. It was stressed however that the Service could not impose any statutory duty on Local Authority Building Controls to comply with the Service's recommendations.

Reference was made to recommendation 4.53 regarding the provision of isotonic sports drinks to firefighters at incidents, whereby Members stressed the need to investigate which ingredients and additives were included in the first instance in order to prevent adverse side effects.

Members drew attention to recommendation 2.13.1 regarding ventilation and a Member highlighted that the Service should review its tactical and mechanical ventilation procedure and consider the introduction of positive ventilation (offensive) at incidents in order to enhance the safety of firefighters.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

14 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development informed Members that the Authority achieved Bronze recognition for the Investors In People (IIP) standard in October 2010, with the accreditation period lasting for a total of three years. Accordingly, work had commenced in Spring of 2013 in preparation for the independent audit required as part of the re-accreditation process for the Service and for the separate review of the Development Directorate.

Committee were informed that during early July 2013, the independent assessment team appointed by IIP Wales visited the Development Directorate for three days, during which time they undertook a comprehensive audit against the IIP Framework. Members were pleased to note that the Development Directorate had been successful in gaining accreditation at Gold Award Standard. Feedback provided by the independent assessment team recognised the Service's key strengths in summary, as follows:-

- A strong and effective leadership and management strategy;
- A well formed sense of cohesiveness across the five departments;
- Extremely well developed learning and development opportunities;
- That Managers within the Directorate are highly effective;
- That there was support and respect at all levels, across all sectors, both in and out of management roles;
- That there was a passion for continuous improvement.

The Corporate Head of People and Organisational Development reported that currently the organisation as a whole held the Bronze Recognition. It was however hoped to achieve a higher level of accreditation during the assessment process which was due to commence in August 2013.

Committee were informed that within the Emergency Services across the UK, there were currently six gold, nine silver, and 11 bronze accreditations. However, Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service's Development Directorate was the only Gold IIP holder in the UK fire sector.

Members commended the Service for its sterling commitment to the development of staff and congratulated all involved in receiving such a noteworthy and deserving accolade. It was requested that the Service promote its success via a press release and through the annual Celebrating Success Awards.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

15 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE – ASSURANCE STATEMENT

The Director of Resources / Treasurer reported that in April 2008 the Authority had approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which was consistent with the principles set out in, and reflected the requirements of the CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) / SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers) framework: “*Delivering Good Governance in Local Government*”.

As part of that process the Authority had undertaken to annually produce a “Statement of Assurance” to show compliance with the Code.

Committee were provided with an overview of the management of corporate governance within the Authority, which was undertaken in line with the CIPFA / SOLACE framework. These included various internal and external audits on the management information, financial procedure rules and financial instructions, contract standing orders, administrative arrangements and management supervision, all of which had given general assurance regarding the control and proper administration of the Authority’s financial affairs. In addition the Wales Audit Office had reported during the year that Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority resources were being used economically, efficiently and effectively.

It was therefore the view of the Authority’s Officers that the review of the governance arrangements for the financial year 2012/13 had not highlighted any areas of major concern. Officer’s reported that in their view the existing arrangements were fit for purpose and were adequate to meet the Authority’s corporate aims. The issues highlighted in the Action Plan were being dealt with by the appropriate officers and progress would be monitored via the Policy Board and the Performance Scrutiny and Audit Committee.

In line with the Authority’s commitment to uphold the principles of Corporate Governance, a Member requested to receive further details regarding the proposed changes to the crewing arrangements in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot. The Director of Risk confirmed that Members would be provided with an update on these issues on the conclusion of the informal discussions that were currently taking place with the relevant Trade Unions.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

Committee approve the Statement of Assurance for signature by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts.

16 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL AUDIT OUTLINE 2012/13

Victoria De Zouche from KPMG, the Service's Financial Auditors (Appointed Auditors) , was welcomed to the meeting to present the Annual Financial Audit Outline 2012/13.

Victoria de Zouche informed members that the Financial Audit Outline had been prepared to meet the requirements of auditing standards and proper audit practices. The Financial Audit provided Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority with an outline of the Financial Audit work required for the 2012/13 financial statements.

The report outlined the work to be carried out by the Appointed Auditor in order to form an opinion whether:

- the accounts gave a true and fair view of the Authority's financial position;
- the accounts complied with all relevant legislative requirements;
- the accounts had been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices;
- the Authority had made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources; and
- it could be certified that the audit had been completed in accordance with the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004.

Ms De Zouche drew Members' attention to the key areas within the report including the main audit risks and proposed responses and the key milestones from which it was noted that the Annual Audit letter had been finalised in January 2013.

Members noted that the 2012/13 fee for the audit work remained at £32,900 (plus VAT), which was in line with the Auditor General's fees letter and based on the zero-based fee model for financial audit.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

17 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE REGULATORY PROGRAMME FOR PERFORMANCE AUDIT 2013/14

Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office was welcomed to the meeting and presented a report which laid out the work intended to be undertaken by the Wales Audit Office in terms of its Regulatory Programme for Performance Audit for the financial year 2013/14.

Ms Williams informed Members that during 2013/14 the Auditor General would carry out an assessment of the Authority's arrangements based on a cyclical programme of specific aspects of corporate activities each year, in addition to a programme of Improvement Studies, which were as follows:

Corporate Assessment - a thematic review of the Authority's capacity and capability to deliver continuous improvement within the Human Resources function, in line with the National Issues Committee workstreams;

'Improvement Plan Audit – a Review of the Authority's published plans for delivering on improvement objectives;

'Assessment of Performance Audit' – a Review of the Authority's published performance assessment, including testing and validation of performance information;

Data quality review – a Review of systems to ensure accuracy of performance information;

Improvement Study - Progress against the Minister's aspirations and ambitions for Welsh Fire and Rescue Authorities as articulated in the National Framework for Wales 2012 Onwards;

Additional investigations / correspondence work – The Wales Audit office would carry out an overview of governance and financial management arrangements which would focus on compliance with policies and procedures.

It was reported that the audit fee of £20,684 could be funded from within existing budget, which was the same fee as for 2012/13. Members were however informed that an additional audit had been proposed due to the above investigations, and that would result in an additional fee of £10,464 which had not previously been budgeted for.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

18 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 13:25 .