

**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, 27 IONAWR 2014
MONDAY, 27 JANUARY 2014**

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

11.00 – 12.40

60% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennolyn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CHAIR	T Hennegan
IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:	Apologies sent from K Curry
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Curtice, W E Evans, P James, R Rees-Evans, K Tampin, J Williams, D Cole, J Dudley, G Jones
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	K Curry, K Pearson, A Wilcox
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	D Daycock, P Bates, E Aitken, C Davies, D Masson, S McLinden, P Thomas, Cllr G Thomas (observer), W Evans (observer) L Williams, V DeZouche, M Thomas, R Price

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Curry, K Pearson and T Wilcox.

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 reminded the Committee that the Scrutiny Training scheduled for 14:00 had been cancelled.

The Chair informed Members that Julie Owens, Democratic Services Officer had gave birth to a baby girl and that both mother and baby were doing well, Members conveyed their congratulations.

The Chair informed the Committee that Cllr Clive Lloyd recently had a heart operation and Members wished to extend their good wishes and speedy recovery.

The Chair offered his condolences to Councillor G Walker on the recent passing of his mother.

The Chair welcomed auditors Victoria DeZouche, Hugh Thomas, Lisa Williams and Ron Price and also welcomed the return of Councillor Dudley.

The Chair stated that Members should have received agenda items 8 and 10 through the post. All Members agreed they had received the papers.

A Member referred to the recent adverse weather conditions and extended his gratitude and commended efforts of the Officers and all staff who were involved in the recent adverse weather and flooding incidents within the Ceredigion area. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that he would ensure that the comments would be fed-back to those involved.

4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 OCTOBER 2013

The minutes of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 14 October 2013 were received and confirmed as a true record of the proceedings.

Matters Arising from the meeting held on 14 October 2013

A Member sought clarification on whether the Fire Authority Committee meetings were open to the public, and questioned the role of 'observers'. The Member further enquired that under the Welsh Language Act, translation facilities should be available at all Committee meetings. The Clerk informed Members that Committee meetings were open to the public and that under Section 19 of the Constitution, the Chair had the discretion to allow any Members, who request to observe, to be able to sit on the Committee.

This would allow Members to participate in the meeting, however, they cannot vote on or move agenda items. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer stated that the provision of Welsh Language translating facilities had been in practice within the full Fire Authority Committee for some time. He stated that the translation facility should be extended to all Fire Authority Committee meetings. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer further added that if Members agreed to the translating facilities to be available at all Committees this could be arranged.

The Chair respectfully informed Members to bear in mind, the costs of the translation facility. A Member suggested that the translating facilities should be available upon request, therefore not incurring any additional costs if the translation facility was not required.

As the Director of Development, who was responsible for the Welsh Language provision, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that he would forward a paper detailing the costing's of the translation facility to the next Democratic Services Meeting scheduled for the 24th February 2014.

In reply to a query, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer confirmed that a representative from Bronglais Hospital had been invited to the Fire Authority meeting on the 10th February 2014 to provide a presentation on unwanted fire signals and automatic fire alarms.

A Member requested to know the current position of the additional Wales Audit Office audit which was costing in excess of £10k. In response to the query, Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office stated that the field work had been concluded, and that the Auditor General was currently going through the findings. The comments from the findings would be included in the Annual Improvement Report, which would be available for Members before April 2014. A Member raised concern that the costs of the audit would be more than anticipated due to the length of time taken. Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office stated that total costs were not available as yet, however, Lisa Williams did confirm that the Authority so far had been charged £10,400 for the audit.

5 TO RECEIVE THE PERFORMANCE AND BUSINESS ASSURANCE REPORTS TO SEPTEMBER 2013

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced a suite of four performance documents up to December 2013 to the Committee which provided an accurate reflection of the Service's performance during the third 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 or Green (RAG) status to reflect how their Department or Command had progressed. Members were informed that of the 92 actions, 79 were on target, with 1 target being slightly off target but within the acceptable tolerance level (amber) and 4 completed.

In response to a query, the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance informed Members that some of the improvements would continue to 2014/15 Department/Command Action Plans which would account for some of the low percentages late into the 2013/2014. Furthermore, he provided Members with the assurance that improvements with targets set for the end of the year would be complete.

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

In response to a query, the Director of Service Delivery stated that the recruitment drive within Neath and Port Talbot area was a success. The drive resulted in significant improvement in appliance availability within all the Retained Duty System (RDS) stations across Neath Port Talbot Command. The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that succession planning was being implemented in order to look at future recruitment, as it currently took around 12-18 months to get a fire-fighter from showing interest in the post to being fully operational.

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 December 2013 and projected for the 2013/14 reporting period was set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Of the 34 statutory and core performance indicators which measured performance on corporate health and service delivery, 23 remained within the target tolerance. The 11 indicators that were not within target tolerance related to sickness, fires, deliberate fire injuries and smoke alarm ownership.

A Member queried the high sicknesses figures and in response the Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members that almost 80% of the current sicknesses were attributed to long-term sickness absences.

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.

It was noted that 2 of the actions were carried over from 2012/2013 with 1 recently being completed with the other ongoing. There were a total of 31 actions within 2013/2014 with 27 actions completed, 1 being within the acceptable tolerance threshold and 3 on target.

A Member requested a progress update with regard to the Portal for Members. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer informed Members of the three phase approach, the first phase was to improve the corporate website which was now complete. The second phase was to build the new internal intranet called @Work which was implemented using SharePoint enabling information to be shared within the Service. Phase three included the provision of external access where priority was to implement a booking on and off duty system for the RDS staff, which is close to completion. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer assured Members that the development of the Portal would start shortly.

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 (NIC).

It was noted that of the 14 projects currently underway, 10 were on target, with the remaining 4 being within the acceptable tolerance threshold. The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance highlighted to Members that the projects within the National Issues Committee would be reviewed due to the restructure of the NIC work streams and that these would be reported upon in the final quarter.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE POWYS COUNTY COMMAND SCRUTINY EXERCISE 23RD OCTOBER 2013

The Chair thanked Councillor K Curry for chairing the Powys County Command Scrutiny exercise which was undertaken by Fire Authority Members on 23rd October 2013 in his absence. The Scrutiny exercise explored how Powys Command managed risk through working together with partners within a large geographical rural area.

Attention was drawn to Appendix 1 of the document whereby Members agreed amendments to the title of the document.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that

- 1. The report be noted*
- 2. The recommendations made by Members which were being progressed by Officers and Directors be noted.*

7 TO RECEIVE THE REPORT ON SKILLS FOR JUSTICE 'DARE TO SHARE'

The Director of Resources introduced the Skills for Justice report to the Committee highlighting that Skills for Justice was an organisation that promotes the sharing of best practice. The Director of Resources stated that as Director of Resources and Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) of the Combined Services facility at Parc Noyadd Park, Llandrindod Wells, she was approached to provide information on the recently completed project as it was unique in Wales and innovative due to its collaborative nature. Information was gathered through an interview process of all mentioned within the report as such the attached report was compiled to highlight the challenges and the successes of the project.

Members were requested to acknowledge the report as an example of collaboration and co-location of services that has been identified by Skills for Justice as a tool to develop skills for a safer and fairer society.

Councillor G Thomas informed Members she attended the award ceremony at the millennium stadium with Officers and staff where the project won the Local Authority Building Control (LABC) Cymru Building Excellence Award. Furthermore, she wished to commend the staff involved for their determination throughout the challenges that the project encountered.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF SWANSEA COMMAND SMALL FIRES UNIT OPERATIONAL DEPLOYMENT IN 2013

Director of Service Delivery introduced the report on the Evaluation of Swansea Command Small Fires Unit Operational Deployment in 2013 which focussed on the crewing, call activity and the financial costs incurred during 2013.

The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that historical incident data indicated that around 80% of all calls in the Swansea bay area fall within the category of low risk type calls, such as rubbish, bin and small wildfires etc. The Director of Delivery explained to Members that as part of the investment in the local community the Small Fire Unit (SFU) was introduced to tackle these types of low risk calls, which fundamentally allowed the main fire appliance to be available for large scale or life critical incidents. Furthermore, the SFU vehicle was procured as a direct replacement of an old appliance stationed at Swansea West Station, thus not placing any additional financial pressures on the Service. When the vehicle was not in use as a Small Fires Unit the vehicle remained fully operational to support incidents that had restricted access or required off road support.

Members were referenced to the report's appendices where the Director of Service Delivery provided Members with a brief outline. Appendix 1 provided evidence on the activity times for the SFU, related call activity generally increasing from 14:00hrs onwards, peaking at around 20:00hrs and then gradually decreasing. Appendix 2, provided a breakdown of areas of Swansea attended by the SFU. There was evidence to suggest that the SFU attended more calls in Swansea covered by Swansea Central and Morrision stations. Appendix 3, provided Members with a breakdown into the types of incidents the SFU has attended. Appendix 4 outlined the financial breakdown for the running of the SFU in 2013/14 which was an agreed investment of £60,000. During the period of deployment in 2013 the total costs incurred has been £51,851.84 which was within the agreed target.

The Director of Service Delivery highlighted to Members that when the SFU was not deployed on fire-fighting duties, the crew were tasked with delivering Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) and other community safety engagement activities. Reports indicated that the SFU crew carried out 300 HFSC's during 2013. This in addition to other activities such as operational intelligence gathering which helps to maintain an effective response service within the Swansea Bay area.

A Member enquired about the cost of turning out a Small Fires Unit as opposed to a fire appliance. The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that the cost of the Small Fire Unit is 40% more cost effective than a fully crewed fire appliance.

A Member enquired if there had been any occasions when the Small Fires Unit arrived at the incident which turned out to be larger than what was stated in the initial call. The Director of Service Delivery explained to Members that there had been incidents where the information received by Service Control was not accurate, however, this was rare due to the call challenging process within Service Control.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9 TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2013-2014

Mr H Thomas from Carmarthenshire County Council presented Committee with an update regarding the Internal Audit Plan for the 2013-2014. It was reported that within the review of the suite of Central Financial Management Systems the Payroll (appendix 1) and Debtors (appendix 2) audits had been completed and it was confirmed that no significant issues had been found.

Mr Thomas informed Members that as part of this year's programme the organisation was part of the National Fraud Initiative where comparative data and tests undertaken by the staff at the National Fraud Initiative had been completed. This included data from payroll, creditors and pensions going back over a number of years, and these were scrutinised. Furthermore, in light of the review internal audit had also considered the Authority's suite of tests and reported that all controls that were expected to be in place were in place.

Mr Thomas stated that the Creditor and Corporate Governance audit reports had not yet been completed, however they would be complete by the end of the financial year.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

10 TO RECEIVE THE APPOINTED AUDITOR'S ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER

The Annual Audit Letter was presented to the Committee by Ms V DeZouche (KPMG) summarised the key messages arising from the Appointed Auditor's statutory responsibilities.

Ms DeZouche informed Members that due to the fact that the Auditor General had not yet completed the findings regarding electorate concerns, which could impact upon the Value for Money conclusion, the Audit could not be certified as closed. Once the findings had been reported via the Annual Improvement Report an updated Annual Audit Letter would be issued.

A Member enquired, if it was possible, that future Annual Audit Letters could include a breakdown of the areas that had been scrutinised and the costs. Ms DeZouche agreed that this could be included in future Letters.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11 TO RECEIVE THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE IMPROVEMENT ASSESSMENT AND ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER

Lisa Williams from the Wales Audit Office informed the Committee that the Auditor General for Wales was required, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to report his audit and assessment work in relation to whether Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority had discharged its duties and met the requirements of the Measure.

Lisa Williams presented the Improvement Assessment and Annual letter and stated that she was pleased to note that the Authority had responded positively to the proposals outlined in the 2012/13 improvement assessment.

The Committee were presented with the Improvement Assessment and Annual Audit letter outlined in Appendix 1 of the report for consideration. One of the key themes raised last year was the readability and accessibility of the Annual Improvement Plan 2013/14. It was noted that this had been improved upon. It was also noted that the use of technical language had also been improved by re-designing the layout of the document.

Lisa Williams highlighted within Appendix 1, that the Authority could further improve its Assessment by 'Including actual data described in the 'how success has been measured' section and Using more comparative data'. The Auditor General for Wales therefore concluded that:-

'In my opinion, and based on audit work undertaken to date the Authority has discharged its improvement reporting duties under the Measure, although there is potential to strengthen its arrangements further'

Lisa Williams informed Members that the Wales Audit Office would be undertaking more detailed work in relation to the performance management including the Authority's arrangements for planning in 2014/15. She added that the findings would be summarised within the Annual Improvement Report which would be available at the end of the financial year.

A Member queried if the Risk Register progress reports should be forwarded to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee in order to identify any risks. In response the Director of Risk informed Members that he was Chair of the Business Risk Management Group and the Chair of this Committee was also a standing Member on the Group. Lisa Williams stated that in terms of what is presented to the Authority was a matter for Officers and Members to decide, however, the Wales Audit Office would be interested in Risk Register process ensuring it captures what is required from a risk perspective which ultimately informs the objectives for next year.

A Member requested that the risk register report be brought to the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee (PASC). The Deputy Chief Fire Officer offered the Risk Register progress report to be brought to the next Performance Audit and Scrutiny Committee scheduled on the 28th April 2014.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

12 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON THE FFYNNON AND SHAREPOINT PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance informed Members that the Welsh Government had put in place interim arrangements to meet stakeholders' business critical continuity needs up to 30th June 2014 while a replacement solution was developed and delivered. Furthermore, it was reported in October 2014 that the project had been delayed and that there would be no business continuity arrangements in place post 30th June 2014 and that organisations should make alternative arrangements until such time as a new system was delivered. However, the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance stated that the Service had decided not to adopt the PAN solution for the following reasons:

1. It was still unclear what the final solution will be.
2. The cost of the final solution would be transferred to users therefore presenting an additional financial burden.
3. Indications are that not all designated Performance Authorities would be adopting PAN therefore costs for users could increase further.
4. The development of a bespoke SharePoint performance management system in house had progressed extremely well and would provide for a better long term solution for the Service.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance emphasised that the Service remained committed to sharing its performance information within the new Welsh Government solution but would not be using it as its primary performance management system.

The Head of Strategic Planning and Performance reported that the new platform was being progressed well and was confident that it would be in situ by the new reporting year, April 2014.

In response to a query the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance informed Members that the Policy Board had approved the use of existing ICT contingency funds of £15k to develop, in partnership with Method4 (SharePoint developers for the Service) a bespoke performance management system using the SharePoint platform which would deliver the same and improved functionality currently provided by Ffynnon.

A Member queried how the new system would fit in with the National Issues Committee. In response, the Head of Strategic Planning and Performance informed Members that he showcased the new developed SharePoint system to colleagues within South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and also in attendance where members of the Ffynnon User Group Meeting, (Arts Council for Wales along with various County Council) as they were in a similar position. The feedback received was good and South Wales Fire and Rescue were interested in continuing to share experiences and good practice.

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 PERSUANT TO SECTION 100(B)(4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 12:40.