

**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, 25 EBRILL 2016
MONDAY, 25 APRIL 2016**

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

11.00 – 13:05

50% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE

Presennolyn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:

CHAIR	Councillor J Warman
IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:	Councillor E Thomas
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Curtice, K Pearson, W Evans, T Hennegan R Rees-Evans, G Tanner, T Wilcox, J Dudley, K Curry, J Williams, S Paddison.
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	P James, S Davies, G Walker
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	E Aitken, D Daycock, M Crennell, R Quin, M Harries, I Cray, C Jackson, K Davies

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P James, S Davies and G Walker.

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 W Evans declared a personal interest in item 9 regarding his role in the Wales Ambulance service trust

3 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PERSONAL MATTERS

A warm welcome was extended to Alison Butler of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) as the Authority's new financial auditor, Steve Barry from the WAO who attended in relation to item 5, the Financial Resilience Assessment and Helen Pugh of Carmarthenshire County Council, who was in attendance to present a report to Members on item 8 of the agenda, namely a report on the Internal Audit Plan 2015/16.

The Chair also notified Members that there was a Chief Officer's Remuneration Committee meeting taking place at 12:30, and also a Budget Setting Meeting for Members commencing at 14:30.

4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 FEBRUARY 2016.

Councillor K Curry noted an error on page 7, and confirmed that the reference to Mr Nigel Wynne should be changed to Mr Nigel Brinn. It was confirmed that this amendment would be made.

Matters Arising from the meeting held on the 29 February 2016

Councillor T Hennegan referred Members to page 9, and commented that he felt the ID badges were beneficial for identification and security purposes, however, in his opinion the photographs on the ID badges were often not examined correctly.

5 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE FINANCIAL RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT

Mr S Barry of the Wales Audit Office presented Committee with a report on the Financial Resilience Assessment for Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority, Mr Barry informed Members that the report was an extremely positive one, with Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service having reduced its expenditure by 20 percent compared to 2011-12, therefore demonstrating that the

Service had made the best use of its available resources. It was also reported that the levels of reserves were increasing.

The Committee gave consideration to Appendix 1, which detailed general key characteristics of good financial planning, good financial control and good financial governance, which would ensure the risk rating for the Authority would remain as low risk for all three elements.

Councillor R Rees-Evans welcomed the report and commended the Service on its use of good financial planning during periods of financial cut backs. These comments were echoed by Councillor K Pearson who questioned whether the level of reserves were acceptable. Mr S Barry responded and confirmed that the Wales Audit Office were not in a position to provide advice, only an audit opinion. Ms A Butler informed Members that the Fire Authority should not be seen to be building too much reserves, however, the current level of reserves held by the Authority was at a prudent level, though ultimately it was for the Treasurer to determine the level of reserves.

Councillor Pearson enquired regarding the Fire Authority “writing off” significant levels of debt as uncollectable, it was confirmed by Alison Butler that the particular wording related to details of the key characteristics which were general characteristics that applied to all three Fire and Rescue Authorities and was therefore not directed specifically at the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor K Curry commented that the subject title of the report differed to that of the Appendix, to which it was confirmed by representatives of the Wales Audit Officer that they were in fact the same item, and that the title of the report would be amended to reflect the title of the Appendix.

The Chair of the Committee, Councillor J Warman welcomed the positive report and acknowledged the good management of finances by the Authority.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the report

6 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE 2016 WALES AUDIT PLAN

Ms A Butler of the Wales Audit Office presented Committee with the Audit Plan for 2016 which had been prepared to meet the requirements of auditing standards and proper audit practices. Committee gave consideration to the outline of the financial and performance audit work required for the 2016-17 financial statements, set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

Ms Butler highlighted the content of the 2016/17 Financial audit risks outlined in exhibit 2 of the Audit Plan, which outlined the financial audit risks and proposed audit responses. The Chair of the Fire Authority, Councillor W Evans raised

concerns regarding the wording 'significant risks'. Ms Butler responded and confirmed that the terminology used within the report, such as the use of "significant", was a standard international reporting language. Councillor K Pearson asked if the sentence could be amended to state "potential risk" as "significant risk" may raise concerns with members of the general public. Alison Butler reassured Members that there were controls in place within the Fire Authority with regards to managing risk and minimising any potential risk. Councillor J Warman requested the document be amended and re-issued, to which it was confirmed that the wording of the report would be amended and re circulated to Members.

Mr S Barry reported to Members that the grant provided by Welsh Government, which had subsidised the performance audit work under the measure had ceased, and that the 2009 Measure still remained in place for the 2016/17 reporting period. Attention was drawn to the estimated audit fee set out at exhibit 4 of the Plan, whereby Committee were provided with an outline of the fee scales and the fee setting process. Committee were informed that the Fire Authority were in discussion with the Wales Audit Office with regards to the proposed fees for the audit work due to be undertaken. It was reported to Members that the Authority would now receive one yearly Audit review instead of two bi-annual reviews.

Councillor T Hennegan stated to representatives of the Wales Audit Office that Members of the Authority monitored the Audit fees closely. Councillor J Dudley noted that she felt content for the Authority to receive one annual Audit review, however, enquired whether there was an option to pay an additional sum to receive two reports? Mr Barry responded and confirmed that further discussions in this regard could take place, and should further assurance be required by the Authority this could be provided at an additional cost.

Councillor K Pearson observed that she felt the report had been written in a personal way, and as such it did not specify who had taken responsibility for the content on the report. Councillor Pearson stated that in her opinion the report should make reference to the author being the Auditor General.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.

7 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ENQUIRIES OF THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT.

Ms A Butler of the Wales Audit Office presented a report to Members which outlined the requirements by the Wales Audit Office for documented consideration and understanding on the areas of Governance that impact on the audit of the Authority's Financial Statements for 2015-16.

Committee was informed that the responses would be provided to Members at the next Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting taking place in July.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.

8 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE INTERNAL AUDITOR ON THE INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2015/16.

Helen Pugh of Carmarthenshire County Council provided a verbal update to Members on the Internal Audit Plan for 2015/16. It was confirmed that the Internal Audit was in the process of being finalised and the findings would be presented to Members at the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting scheduled to take place in July.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the verbal update.

9 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE JOINT PUBLIC SERVICE CENTRE PROJECT (JPSCP)

Karen Davies, Project Coordinator, presented a report to Members on the progress of the Joint Public Service Centre Project (JPSCP), where it was confirmed that the building work had been completed. Members were informed that North Wales Fire and Rescue Service had commenced their Control Project, and reassurance was given that the two Welsh projects were coordinating activities to ensure appropriate operational resilience remained in place. Following comments made by Members at the previous Committee meeting with regards to the Evaluation of the project, it was confirmed that this had since been strengthened within the report and additional detail provided, with particular emphasis on the Invest-to-Save Evaluation.

Councillor K Pearson enquired whether there was a deadline for the Welsh Ambulance Trust (WAST) to confirm their intention to co-locate to the Joint Public Service Centre. Karen Davies confirmed that WAST were not in a position to commit at present. It was also confirmed that there were two sets of plans for the Project and therefore should WAST decide to co-locate with the other two Services, there would be no significant impact to the Project and no costs would be incurred by the Fire Authority. Councillor Pearson further enquired whether there would be any impact on the Fire and Rescue Service's employees, to which it was confirmed that the full impact was currently unknown, however, during busy periods there had been occasions when all three emergency Services had been required to work closely together.

In response to a query from Councillor Pearson, Karen Davies stated to Members that the slight delay in the handover to the management suite area, would not have an impact on the Project and that the hand over date was scheduled to take place on 23 May. Members were reassured that there would be no additional costs incurred due to the delay.

Members were pleased to note the potential for all three emergency services to be working together. Councillor K Curry expressed his concern with regards to the funds contributed to the Project by both Fire and Rescue Services and South Wales Police, and that there may be a potential saving for WAST, should they decide to co-locate at a later date. The Project Co-ordinator, Karen Davies specified to Members that WAST would be paying costs for all of their own area, and that no additional costs in this regard would be incurred by the Fire Authority.

Councillor K Pearson questioned why there had been no Actual costs provided in the Financial Summary at Appendix 1, to which Karen Davies stated that there were still outstanding invoices to be received. Members were further reassured that no additional costs would be incurred by the Fire Authority, as an agreement was in place with South Wales Police that the Fire Authority's committed costs would remain at £1.6 million. Karen Davies informed Members that the £1.6 million covered the expenditure of the building costs, fit out costs and building fees. Councillor Pearson further enquired why there had been a reported overspend on staff costs, whereby it was confirmed that this was due to the Project requiring further integration which was more complex and therefore required additional staff, however, it was reported to Members that the costs incurred remained within budget.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.

10 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE PERFORMANCE AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRESS REPORT – QUARTER 4 2015/16.

The deputy Chief Fire Officer presented committee with the report on performance and improvement, which contained an Appendix which was broadly divided into three areas;

Part 1 – Our progress on Performance

The Director of Service Delivery presented the report for quarter 4 to Members, and stated that the Service had attended a total of 13577 incidents during the 2015/16 reporting period, which was an increase of 5.2%. Members were informed that this increase may be due to the increase in the number of co-responder calls the Service had been attending. The Director stated that it was pleasing to note that the number of Fires attended had decreased in the 2015/16 reporting year, and it was acknowledged that this was mainly due to the on-going prevention work being provided by the Community Fire Safety department. A slight increase in the number of Road Traffic Collisions was also reported, and as such Members were advised that the Road Safety Manager would be working with Road Safety partners in each local authority, in order to provide a multi-agency response. Flooding incidents had also seen an increase, which was influenced by the bad weather conditions. Members were informed that the Service was proactively working with

partners and local authorities in order to reduce the number of flooding incidents attended.

Members were referred to the handout circulated with regards to hoax calls following a number of questions raised by Members at the previous committee meeting. It was confirmed that the number of hoax calls, received by the Service represented 1.8% of the overall fire calls received, and that the call challenging currently in place within the Control room appeared to be working, as there had been a reduction in an eight-year period. The Director of Service Delivery informed Committee Members that there had unfortunately been 4 fatalities and 144 injuries due to fires for the 2015/16 reporting period. Members were reassured that the Service continued to work hard in order to reduce the number of deaths and injuries.

Councillor K Pearson queried whether the wording of a “pleasing increase” on page 3 and page 8 of the report in relation to co-responder incidents was appropriate, and the comments made were noted by the Director of Service Delivery who confirmed that the wording would be amended. In response to a further concern raised by Councillor K Curry regarding Road Traffic Collisions which may have been caused due to an unforeseen illness whilst driving, it was stated to Members that the Service would continue to educate young drivers and would encourage a change in driving behaviours for all road users, as well as offer road safety advice and guidance to college students and work with Local Authorities with regards to road risks, in order to provide a focus from a multi-agency perspective.

Councillor J Curtice thanked the Fire Service for their response to two flooding incidents to the same person, who had informed Councillor Curtice of how well the Service had dealt with the incident. The Director of Service Delivery thanked Councillor Curtice for her kind comments. Councillor T Hennegan, stated that he was fully supportive of the Fire Service’s proposals with regards to reducing the number of Road Traffic Collisions and questioned whether the number of fire fatalities was correct. It was confirmed by the Director of Service Delivery that the number of fire fatalities reported was indeed correct.

The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that the Service had undertaken some analysis of Road Traffic Collisions and reported that there was no common denominator for the incidents, other than that bad weather had been a major factor. Councillor Hennegan remarked that in his opinion, a reduction of speed limits in built up areas from 40mph to 30mph would be beneficial.

The Chair, Councillor Wynne Evans commented on the importance of educating cyclists and motorbike riders in order to reduce the number of bike fatalities; and noted that in order to reduce flooding incidents, it was important for properties not to be built on high risk flooding areas. In response to the comments made, the Director of Service Delivery informed Members that the Service would be working closely with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) with regards to pre-planning for potential flooding incidents. The Chair added that in his opinion collaborative working with the Local Authorities would be beneficial, in order to reduce the number of flooding incidents. Councillor J Dudley responded and expressed her

concern that with the budget cuts being faced by the Local Authorities, it may be difficult for Local Authorities to fully assist and enquired if there was a Local Authority within the Service area who had a higher number of flooding incidents attended by the Service. The Director of Service Delivery answered that a further analysis would need to be taken in order to identify the necessary data.

Councillor S Paddison expressed that in her opinion, the use of black boxes being fitted in vehicles for car insurance purposes would help with seeing an improvement to individual driving patterns. The Director of Service Delivery agreed with the comments made by Councillor Paddison. Councillor K Curry observed that there were some inaccuracies with the figures provided in the report, to which the Director of Service Delivery noted the comments made and informed Members that this matter would be looked into and addressed. In response to an enquiry made by Councillor K Pearson, the Director of Service Delivery clarified that incidents attended at garages and summer houses were recorded under the domestic premises' category.

The Chair of the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee conveyed his support for Ministerial involvement with regards to Road Safety and stated that he felt that the number of incidents occurring on the M4 motorway had increased. Councillor Rees-Evans echoed the comments made by Councillor J Warman in this respect. The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that the Service would discuss the matters raised concerning the number of Road Traffic Collisions with the Welsh Government and the National Issues Committee.

Part 2 – Our Progress on Improvement objectives

The Director of Service Delivery updated members on progress in this area.

Councillor K Pearson requested further details regarding the appointment of the temporary in-house graphic designer, to which the Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development clarified to Members that the Service had previously had a Service Level Agreement with Carmarthenshire County Council, and that due to the positive impact on the Service's brand identity and the costs associated with the Service Level Agreement, it was more beneficial for the Service to appoint a full time graphic designer on a temporary basis.

In response to a further enquiry from Councillor Pearson the Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development confirmed that an agreement had been made for staff from the Corporate Communications and Business Development department to work within the Community Safety department one day a week, in order to ensure a consistent approach to communication across the Service.

Part 3 – Our progress on Corporate Projects

The Director of Service Delivery presented part 3 of the Appendix to the report and reported on the progress of Corporate Projects as set out in the Service's Annual Improvement Plan 2015/16.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement provided an update to Members on the Cobra Cold-cut System which was located at Morryston Fire Station. Members were informed that the term on the initial trial period was to be potentially extended in order to further assess its impact. Committee were also made aware that the Service was in the process of engaging with other firefighting technologies and further updates would be provided over the next six-month period. The Chair of the Fire Authority, stated that he was fully supportive of the new firefighting technologies being trialled by the Service. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement reassured Members that the Cobra Cold Cut System was an additional piece of firefighting equipment to assist firefighters at operational incidents.

Meeting adjourned 12:30 for a comfort break

Meeting re-convened 12:40

The Corporate Head of Resources provided an update to Members on the Aberystwyth project and confirmed that the students who had been working on a marketing project were due to deliver their presentations week commencing 28 April at Aberystwyth University. It was reported to Members that the project continued to make good progress and was on schedule for completion in the first week of July. It was also reported that the project was running at a 98% recycling rate for the zero waste programme, which placed the project as one of the highest performing in Wales.

Committee Members were informed that the project was on target to attain an excellent rating within the BREEAM accreditation and that the apprenticeship scheme had been beneficial to the local community, with a female carpenter having completed 14 weeks on the site of the project.

The Corporate Head of Resources updated Members on the progress of the Northern Workshops project and advised Committee that discussions and negotiations continued to take place with Powys County Council. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement informed Members that the location of Ddole Road in Llandrindod Wells had been agreed and further discussions were taking place regarding the requirements of the Service. It was reported that the project had an estimated 18-24-month time frame for completion.

Following a query raised by Councillor K Pearson regarding the Safe Well and Independent Living project (SWAIL), it was confirmed by the Corporate Head of Prevention and Protection that the grant funding received from Welsh Government did cover all of the Mid and West Wales area.

Councillor K Curry was pleased to note the 98% recycling rate for the zero waste programme, as well as the excellent BREEAM accreditation for the project and felt that the success of the Service in this regard, should be publicised to members of the public. Councillor Curry also advised Members that it was only the workshop that was closing at the Powys County Council depot in Pen-Y-Bont.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.

11. TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUSINESS RISK REGISTER UPDATE REPORT TO APRIL 2016.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement presented the Business Risk Register Update Report to April 2016 to the Committee.

Members were provided with an overview of the Business Risk Register (Appendix A) and the seven identified risks.

Councillor K Pearson queried why the Security Risk had been absorbed into Business Continuity, to which the Director of Operational Support and Improvement responded that this matter was due to be considered at the next Business Risk meeting. Councillor T Hennegan thanked the Director of Operational Support and Improvement for promptly resolving a potential risk within the Swansea area. Councillor J Dudley made enquiries with regards to Industrial Relations due to the impending Swansea Bay and Neath/Port Talbot crewing changes, to which the Director of Service Delivery responded and informed Members that the shift system was going live on the 13 May, as this allowed consideration for periods of annual leave, and therefore as little disruption as possible to all personnel.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.

12 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS FOR THE PERIOD 01 APRIL 2015 – 31 MARCH 2016.

The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development provided Committee with an overview of the Compliments and Complaints report for the period 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016, which had been prepared in line with the Code of Corporate Governance. Members were informed that a total of 29 complaints had been received and investigated during the reporting period, which was a decrease of 12 from the 01 April 2014 – 31 March 2015 period. 16 of the complaints were determined as 'not upheld', 11 of which were 'upheld', 1 complaint was withdrawn and 1 complaint was ongoing.

The Head of Corporate Communications and Business Development drew Members' attention to the 53 compliments received during the reporting period, which was an increase of 20 from the 01 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 period.

Councillor J Williams commented that she had been concerned that Carmarthenshire Command had received the highest number of complaints, however, was pleased to note they had also received the highest number of compliments. Councillor K Curry was encouraged by the increase in the number of compliments received by the Service, and requested a report to highlight the success of the Aberystwyth Community Fire Station project for Members, to be presented at the next committee meeting. The Director of Service Delivery noted the comments made by Councillor Curry.

RESOLUTION

It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.

- 13 **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**

The was no other business. The meeting closed at 13:05.