

**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 GORFFENNAF 2016  
MONDAY, 25 JULY 2016**

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

**10.00 – 12:55**

**69% PRESENOLDEB/ATTENDANCE**

**Presennolyn y Cyfarfod/Present at Meeting:**

CHAIR	Councillor E Thomas
IS-GADEIRYDD/DEPUTY CHAIR:	Councillor T Hennegan
AELODAU/MEMBERS:	Cyng/Cllrs: J Curtice, K Pearson, G Thomas, P James (departed meeting at 12:36), G Walker, T Wilcox, J Dudley, K Curry, J Williams.
YMDDIHEURIADAU/APOLOGIES:	G Tanner, S Davies, T Hennegan, R Rees-Evans
YN BRESENNOL /IN ATTENDANCE:	E Aitken, D Daycock, M Crennell, R Quin, M Harries, R Thomas

## **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Rees-Evans, S Davies, T Hennegan and G Tanner.

## **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**

A warm welcome was extended to Mark Jones of the Wales Audit Office (WAO) as the Authority's external financial auditor, who attended in relation to item 5, and Helen Pugh of Carmarthenshire County Council, who was in attendance to present a report to Members on item 6 of the agenda.

The Chair also wished the Director of Operational Support and Improvement, Rob Quin a happy birthday.

## **4 TO CONFIRM AND SIGN AS A TRUE RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 APRIL 2016.**

Councillor G Thomas noted an error on page 8, and confirmed that the reference to Vole Road should be changed to Ddole Road. It was confirmed that this amendment would be made.

### Matters Arising from the meeting held on the 25 April 2016

Councillor G Walker stated that he had received concerns from Junior Officers and Firefighters in relation to the Cobra Cold Cut System equipment. The Director of Service Delivery responded and expressed his disappointment that Junior Officers had not approached Senior Management to raise their concerns and reassured Members that the equipment was currently on trial and that a full evaluation of the equipment would be undertaken on conclusion of the trial period.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement echoed the comments made by the Director of Service Delivery and informed Members that the Service area was extremely diverse and that the equipment being trialled, had since been re-located to another Fire Station in order to fully explore its capability. Members were advised that it was important to fully trial the equipment in several locations where the Fire Station profiles were different and that feedback from personnel was essential in order to obtain an accurate evaluation on the equipment.

In response to comments made by Councillor G Walker regarding the National Framework for Wales, the Director of Service Delivery informed Members that a new Framework for 2016 had been published and that the Service was evaluating

and experimenting with innovative firefighting technologies with the primary purpose of increasing Firefighters Safety as well as the safety of members of the public.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement stated to Members the importance of responding to new technologies and equipment and undergoing full consultation and evaluation processes. Councillor A Wilcox enquired whether other Fire and Rescue Services had also been trialling the equipment, to which it was confirmed by the Director of Service Delivery that a number of other Fire Services had trialled the equipment and subsequently purchased the equipment.

Councillor K Pearson stated that she was pleased to note that the amendment had been made to the Business Risk Register update report with regards to the Security Risk now appearing as a standalone risk item.

**5 TO RECEIVE A VERBAL UPDATE FROM THE WALES AUDIT OFFICE ON THE 2015/16 ACCOUNTS.**

Mr M Jones of the Wales Audit Office provided Committee with a verbal update on the 2015/16 accounts. It was reported that the draft financial statements had been received last week, and that a focussed Audit of the accounts would commence on the 08 August.

Members were informed that representatives of the Wales Audit Office had met with the Director of Resources in order to discuss the Audit of the 2015/16 Accounts and that a further update would be provided to Members in due course.

***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee note the verbal update.***

**6 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE INTERNAL AUDIT FINAL REPORTS FOR 2015/16**

Ms Helen Pugh of Carmarthenshire County Council presented a report to Members on the Internal Audit Final reports for 2015/16. Committee were informed that an Internal Audit of the fundamental systems had been undertaken, and that all four areas were functioning properly. Members were referred to Appendix 1, namely the Internal Audit Final Report, Debtors Review 2015/16 and provided with an overview of the information detailed within the report. It was confirmed that the Debtors systems had been considered to be adequate and robust and that the Internal Auditors were happy with the arrangements in place. Committee Members' attention was drawn to page 4 of the Appendix, where it was reported that 402 debtor invoices had been raised during the 2015/16 financial year totalling £7,887,311.

An overview of the recommendations by the Internal Auditors was provided to Members, which were in relation to the concern regarding the segregation of duties and the cancellation of invoices. It was confirmed to Members, that all of the recommendations made by the Auditor had been acknowledged and accepted by the Accountancy Services Manager.

Councillor A Wilcox enquired about the total amount of debts to be written off, to which it was confirmed that the total amount was approximately £50,000 and some of the debt dated as far back as 2005. It was confirmed that in a number of cases there were no correspondence addresses', in order for the debt to be chased and that the cost of chasing payment of the debt, on occasions amounted to more than the value of the debt. The Director of Resources responded and reassured Members that the Service makes every attempt to recover all unpaid debts, and that a Debt Write Off Policy had since been introduced. Consideration had been given to taking the non-payees to the small claims court, however, the cost of taking an individual to Court against the value of the debt would need to be deliberated.

In response to queries raised by Councillor J Dudley, the Director of Resources confirmed that the Service would endeavour to recover as many non-payment of invoices as possible, and all cases would be discussed on a case by case basis. Councillor J Dudley expressed concerns with the amount of debt and that companies may see the Service as an easy target with regards to non-payment of outstanding debts and invoices. Ms Pugh reassured Members that the Service had a rigorous process to follow for debt recovery, and that the level of debt reported to be written off last year had not increased.

Councillor P James suggested that it may be beneficial for the Service to identify other ways of recovering outstanding debt, and reported that Ceredigion County Council had procured services from a debt recovery company, who had been successful in recovering a large sum of outstanding debt on behalf of Ceredigion County Council.

Appendix 2 of the report, the Internal Audit Final Report, Creditors Review 2015/16, was introduced to Members, where it was stated that there were no major issues reported for the Creditors Systems. Committee were informed that the recommendations provided to the Exchequer Services Manager had been acknowledged and accepted, and related to the requirement for all official orders to be raised prior to the ordering of goods and that there were targets of paying all undisputed invoices within a 30-day period, which the Service had just fallen slightly short of.

Committee Members were presented with an Internal Audit Memo Report on the main accounting function, at Appendix 3, where it was confirmed that the main accounting system had been audited, in order to ensure that they were working correctly, and that there were no issues to report in this regard.

Ms Pugh provided Members with an overview of the Internal Audit Final Report, Payroll Review for 2015/16 set out at Appendix 4. Committee were made aware

that the review undertaken had been a satisfactory review, where the Service had been identified as having had a comprehensive project plan in place, and that many of the delays incurred with the implementation had been predominately due to the provider of the system.

A summary of the recommendations was given to Members, and it was stated that until the new system had been fully integrated, reconciliations between the two systems should be undertaken in order to identify any anomalies. It was reported that the audit headcount exercise should continue until the new system was fully implemented, together with independent penetration testing with the Hosting Service, and that password controls should be tested and changed regularly. Ms Pugh also informed Committee that it had also been recommended that the Service consider re-introducing procedures in order to identify new and obsolete users and for backup media to be stored in a separate location to the application servers. The Director of Resources reassured Members that all of the recommendations made by the Internal Auditors had been agreed and would be implemented in due course.

Councillor K Pearson enquired whether all of the summary of issues and recommendations were on track to reach their target dates, to which it was confirmed by the Director of Resources that the recommendations made were in the process of being actioned and that all of the necessary discussions had taken place. Members were informed that Core International the Services HR/Payroll system provider had agreed not to charge for the next version of the system and would be meeting with all of the relevant team members in order to rectify the issues raised. It was confirmed that an updated report on the implementation of the agreed actions would be provided to Members in due course. Councillor G Thomas was pleased to note that the system provider was meeting with team members in order to resolve the issues.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.***

## **7 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE ASSURANCE STATEMENT.**

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.

The Director of Resources informed Members that the annual review of Corporate Governance was considered to be good practice and was a means of enabling the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives, in line with the systems, processes culture and values of the organisation.

Members were informed that the Audits undertaken had been positive, and that all recommendations made had been agreed and addressed appropriately. The

Director of Resources was pleased to report to Members that as reported in the Financial Resilience Audit, the Service had reduced its expenditure by 20 per cent and that the level of reserves had been increasing.

It was proposed that Committee, recommend to the Fire Authority approval of the Statement of Assurance set out at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report, for signature by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts.

In response to queries raised by Councillor J Dudley, the Director of Resources and Mark Jones of the Wales Audit Office, confirmed that an Audit of the 2015/16 financial accounts would be presented to Members at the Fire Authority meeting scheduled to take place in September. Councillor Dudley further enquired if the Service was no longer using KPMG to undertake an external audit, to which the Director of Resources advised Members, that the Wales Audit Office were the Service's new external auditor.

### **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that the Performance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee approve and recommend to the Fire Authority the Statement of Assurance for signature by the Chair of the Authority and the Chief Fire Officer, for inclusion in the Statement of Accounts.***

## **8 TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE A REPORT ON THE AUDIT ENQUIRIES OF MANAGEMENT AND THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE.**

The Director of Resources presented a report to Members on the Audit enquiries of Management and those charged with Governance, and confirmed that the Auditor General Wales (AGW) was responsible for obtaining assurance from the Authority that the financial statements were free from material misstatement.

Members were provided with an overview of Appendix 1, namely the responses to the enquiries of management and the enquiries of the Fire and Rescue Authority.

Councillor G Thomas enquired on the reason for the report, to which it was confirmed by Mr Mark Jones of the Wales Audit Office, that all of the Audits undertaken by the WAO, were independently inspected, and that one of the recommendations they had received from a previous audit, had been that there was now a requirement to receive assurances, in writing from the audited Authorities on how they were managing fraud.

A request was received from Councillor G Thomas for an amendment to be made to question 6, under enquiries of the Fire and Rescue Authority, where it was felt the wording should have said "are in place" instead of "should be in place". It was confirmed that the amendment would be made.

## **RESOLUTION**

***It was RESOLVED that Members approve the responses set out in the report at Appendix 1 on the Audit enquiries of management and those charged with Governance.***

### **9 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT REPORTS – QUARTER 1 2016/17.**

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;

Members received a revised document, which contained the figures for All Co-Responder Incidents.

#### **Appendix 1 - Part 1 – Our progress on Performance**

The Director of Service Delivery presented the report for quarter 1 2016/17 to Members, and stated that the Service had attended a total of 3423 incidents during the first quarter of the 2016/17 reporting period, which was reported to be a projected increase of 1.2% on the previous year. However, the long term trend was expected to remain downward. Members were informed that the Service had attended 888 fires to date, which accounted for 26% of all incidents attended, and that a positive projection had been reported for non-domestic fires. Committee were also provided with information that the Service had attended 1120 false alarm calls, which was projected to be down by 3.1% on last year, and that the Service had also attended 249 road traffic incidents to date, which accounted for 7% of all incidents attended.

It was reported to Members that the Service had been making enquiries with regards to a Ministerial Summit on Road Safety in order to have a better understanding of the issue. 90 flooding incidents had been attended to date. It was also confirmed that 90 co-responder incidents had been attended and was indicating a projected increase of 7.8%. The Director of Service Delivery was disappointed to report to Committee that there had been 2 fire fatalities and 27 injuries for the first quarter of 2016/17.

Councillor K Curry thanked the Director of Service Delivery for the informative report, and noted the increase in non-domestic and accidental dwelling fires. The Director of Service Delivery responded and informed Members that there had been no indicative areas and no trends identified with regards to the increase in fires. The Corporate Head of Prevention and Protection stated to Committee that all incident information is analysed critically in order to identify any trends and that the Service continued to work closely with all Partner Agencies. Councillor G Thomas commented that the graph columns being in blue, made it difficult to see the figures clearly. The Director of Service Delivery noted the comments made by Councillor Thomas.

## **Appendix 1 - Part 2 – Our Progress on Improvement objectives**

The Director of Service Delivery updated Members on progress in this area. It was stated to Members that reporting of the progress on Improvement objectives had been updated in order to provide additional detail on the progress to Members.

Committee was provided with an overview of the 12 objectives, where it was confirmed that Objective 1, namely the delivery of a holistic home safety intervention to those most at risk within the communities of mid and west Wales; that the priority was to make each contact count, and to also expand the Service's volunteers project. It was reported for Objective 2, that the Service had developed an arson reduction strategy and that one of the main objectives had been to deliver the operation Dawns Glow initiatives in order to continue to reduce the number of grass fires attended. Councillor G Thomas enquired if there had been an increase in fires since Council bin collection dates had been changed. The Corporate Head of Prevention and Protection reassured Members that this had been a consideration of the Service, and that no increase in trends had been identified. Councillor G Walker questioned if the Service had targeted farmers in order to inform them of the requirement to notify Fire Control, should they be having a controlled burn. The Director of Service Delivery responded and confirmed that this matter had been addressed as part of the operation Dawns Glow initiative, and that Senior Officers had discussed this issue with the Young Farmers Elders at the Royal Welsh Show.

Councillor K Pearson advised Members that she had received excellent feedback with regards to the impact with partner agencies in the Glynneath area, and asked how the Service advertised the requirement for volunteers, to which it was confirmed that the Service was still in the process of looking into this matter.

The Director of Service Delivery provided an overview of Objective 3, and in response to a query from Councillor P James confirmed that the value of the grant for Road Safety initiatives was £69,000. In response to a concern raised by Councillor J Warman, regarding the absence of cyclists in the focus area of the objective, Members were informed that the Service's delivery of the Welsh Government Road Safety Framework was focussed around all road users. Councillor K Pearson enquired whether there would be funding provided from the Police, to which the Corporate Head of Prevention and Protection stated that the discussions were taking place.

It was reported to Members that good progress continued to be made on all other objectives. The Director of Service Delivery informed Members that Objective 7 was in relation to the Service's contribution to the requirements of The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and advised Committee that Senior Officers along with the Chair and Deputy Chair had been in attendance at all six of the Local Authorities, Public Service Board meetings.

A discussion ensued amongst Members regarding Objective 12, to improve the way the Service resolves operational incidents through innovation and the use of new technology, where it was stated to Members that the Service had received extremely good feedback regarding the use of the Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV), and had been recognised as a service leader with regards to its use. The Director of Resources confirmed to Members that the Service was in the process of making enquiries, with regards to purchasing lighter personal protective equipment and breathing apparatus equipment. In response to a query from Councillor J Warman, the Director of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed that the life span of a breathing apparatus set was 10 years, with the possibility of an additional 2-year extension.

### **Appendix 1 - 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 2016/17.

The Corporate Head of Response provided an update to Members on the Emergency Services Communications Mobilisation Programme (ESCMP), where it was reported that the project was a National project to replace existing Airwave mobilising technology. The scheduled implementation date for the new technology was November 2019.

In response to queries raised by Councillor P James in relation to any potential costs to be incurred by the Fire Authority through loss of grant, the Director of Resources, informed Members that once further detail had been received from Welsh Government confirming the budget projections, an update would be provided to Members.

The Director of Operational Support and Improvement updated Committee on the Northern Workshops project, and confirmed that the discussions with Powys County Council were on-going, in order to establish the size and capacity of the workshops building to meet with the requirements of all involved parties. Councillor K Curry was pleased to note the update provided to Members on the project.

#### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that Members note the report, and progress made to date.***

#### **10 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BUSINESS RISK REGISTER UPDATE REPORT TO JUNE 2016.**

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

Members were provided with an overview of the Business Risk Register Decision Log (Appendix C) and the eight identified risks, where it was stated to Members

that following a request from Councillor K Pearson, the Security Risk now appeared as a standalone risk item on the business risk register.

A summary of the latest considerations by the Business Risk Management Group (BRMG) for each of the risks contained within the Business Risk Register Decision Log was given to Members. Members were informed that the Service continued to raise awareness amongst employees with regards to the Security arrangements within the Service. The Director of Operational Support and Improvement confirmed that a security audit of the Service Headquarters campus and Earlswood training delivery site had been undertaken and recommendations provided, which were being considered by Senior Management for implementation in due course. Members were reassured that Management continue to do their utmost, with regards to protecting the organisation from security risks.

Councillor K Curry expressed concerns that the Conference Centre building was easily accessible, as it was possible for members of the public to be able to just walk into the building unchallenged. The Chair recommended the implementation of key pad access for all staff and Fire Authority Members, in order to make Fire Service buildings more secure. The Director of Service Delivery thanked Members for the comments made, and advised Committee that the Service would continue to take reasonable precautions in relation to security measures according to risk.

### ***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.***

#### **11 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE A REPORT ON THE ABERYSTWYTH COMMUNITY FIRE STATION, PARTNERSHIP AND INITIATIVES UPDATE.**

Committee received a report on the Aberystwyth Community Fire Station, Partnership and Initiatives update, which provided highlights of what were considered to be the community benefits associated with the project.

The Director of Resources informed Members that the report had been written in the easy read format, which would be discussed in further detail at the Democratic Services Forum taking place in October.

Members were made aware that the current project rating for the Constructing Excellence in Wales initiative was standing at 99.12%, which was the highest rating for any project in Wales. It was reported that as a result of a “meet the buyer event”, five local contractors from Ceredigion had been employed on the project, and that the project was on track to achieve an excellent BREEAM rating for the building.

The Director of Resources stated to Members that students of Aberystwyth University had developed a business case for the introduction of a community enterprise, to which an individual who had a Masters in Project Management and his team members, had been successful with their business presentation.

Committee were also made aware that the Service had been in discussions with Coleg Ceredigion with regards to exploring the possibility of working with the College's Hospitality and Catering students; and that Blood Bike Wales had been invited to site one of their bikes on the premises.

It was reported to Committee Members that the project had been shortlisted for the finals of the national APSE awards, in the category for Best Public / Private Partnership Working Initiative, which were due to be held in September.

Councillor K Curry thanked the Director of Resources for the report, and commented that he had felt the project had been an excellent one, and requested for this information to be made publically available, in order to raise awareness for the positive work undertaken, and the successes of the project. The Director of Resources confirmed that she would make enquiries in this regard for Members.

Councillor P James informed Members that following approval from the Chief Fire Officer, he had taken Ceredigion Council Members to visit the Community Fire Station, and had received extremely positive comments during the visit. The facilities at the Community Fire Station, were also reported to have been excellent. Councillor James questioned if the agreement had since been signed off by Welsh Government, as he had made enquiries in order to for this to be done as a matter of urgency. The Director of Service Delivery responded and confirmed that the agreement had been signed and thanked Councillor James for his assistance with the matter.

Councillor G Walker suggested that Management enquire if the project was eligible to receive a Green Flag award for recycling, to which the Director of Resources advised Members that she would make the necessary enquiries.

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that Members note the report.*

- 12 **TO RESOLVE, THAT PURSUANT TO SECTION 100A (4) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, THAT THE PRESS AND PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING FOR THE REASON, THAT IF THEY WERE PRESENT, IT IS LIKELY THAT THERE WOULD BE DISCLOSURE TO THEM OF EXEMPT INFORMATION WITHIN THE DESCRIPTION OF SCHEDULE 12A TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972, NAMELY:**

**PARAGRAPH 14: INFORMATION RELATING TO THE FINANCIAL OR BUSINESS AFFAIRS OF ANY PARTICULAR PERSON (INCLUDING THE AUTHORITY HOLDING THAT INFORMATION).**

## **RESOLUTION**

*It was RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 for the above reasons, and that it was in the public interest to do so.*

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

The Corporate Head of Response presented a report to Members on the Joint Public Service Centre Project (JPSCP) and confirmed that progress continued to be made in all areas of the JPSCP.

***RESOLUTION***

***It was RESOLVED that Members note the report  
Exclusion of the press and public lifted – Members of the press and public were now free to re-join the meeting.***

**14 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 12:55.